

Monergism

THE PRIVILEGE OF THE SAINTS ON EARTH

BEYOND THOSE IN HEAVEN

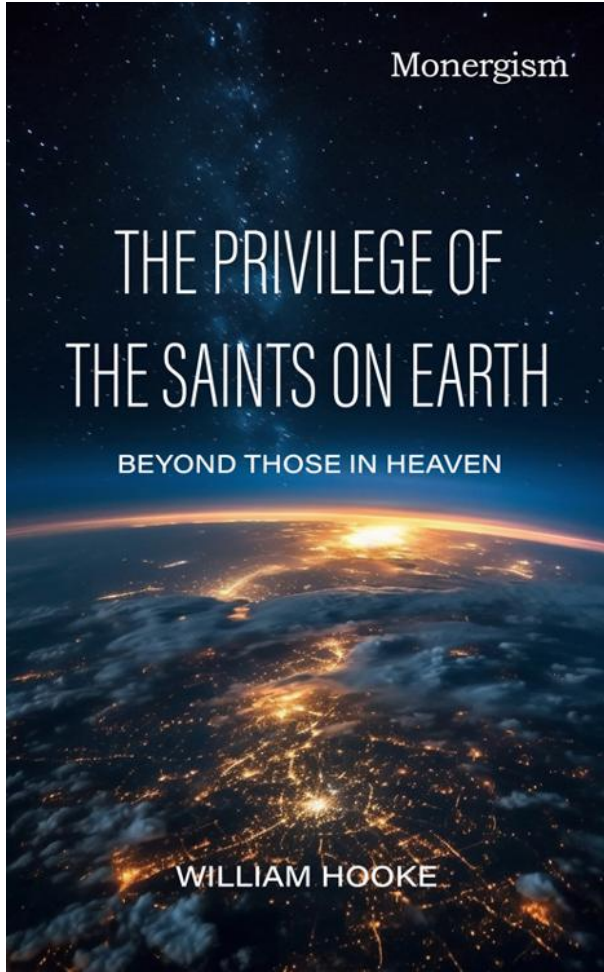
WILLIAM HOOKE

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In respect of Gifts and Graces exercised, Duties and Services performed, sufferings and Trials undergone by them, which the Glorified are not capable of.

Being The Sum of a Discourse upon a part of Hezekiah, Song of Thanksgiving after his Recovery from his Sickness.

To which is added, A short Discourse of the Nature and Extent of the Gospel-day, reaching from the Destruction of the Old, to the erection of the New Jerusalem out of Zech. 14. 5,7.

By WILLIAM HOOKE,

Preacher of the Gospel.

London, Printed for John Wilkins, and are to be sold at his Shop in Exchange-Alley, next door to the Exchange-Coffee-House, over against the Royal-Exchange, 1673.

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas (Logan West, David Jonescuc, Alex Sarrouf)
www.puritansearch.org

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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the archaic text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimiles. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may if uncaught. My apologies in advance where this error does occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority

of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in archaic script in the original facsimiles.

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TO THE READER.

The greatest and highest Honor of the reasonable Creature is to serve him, who is the best Good, and last End. Herein do we communicate with Angels, whose glory it is that they are Ministering Spirits, always beholding the face of God our Father for this very purpose. How diligent then should we be to lay hold on, and to improve all opportunities of service, seeing our time is so short, our work so great, and our salvation nearer than when we first believed? The Son of God hath given us a glorious pattern herein, I must work the work

of him that hath sent me, &c. Christ Jesus our Master improved all opportunities, went up and down doing good, filling all places where he came with the favor of his Doctrine and Miracles, because he knew his time was short, and the recompense of reward at hand. The serious thoughts hereof would exceedingly spur us to a holy diligence, especially considering that Heaven is a place not of work but reward, where the Saints will be divested of serving and honoring God in many of these ways, wherein now (through grace) they are enabled to bring much glory to his Name. Many Graces, Duties, Gifts have here their place, while we are Viatores, but shall have no room when we come to be Comprehensores.

And this is the design of the worthy Author in this little Tract: viz. to set before thee the great opportunities thou hast of service to God, while thou art on this side Heaven, beyond what are to be enjoyed there. Were this thoroughly weighed, how would Holiness be promoted, Saints thrive, Families flourish, Churches revive? We should not so passionately desire death merely to be rid of all sufferings, but should prize life, if with it Christ Jesus might be magnified. It is glorious work that God calls his Saints to 'ere they get to Heaven. Is not suffering for Christ, glorious work? Is not the exercise of Faith, Hope, and Patience, glorious work? To do good, and to communicate both to the bodily and spiritual necessities of Saints and others, is not this glorious work? In a word, to propagate pure Religion, & undefiled, to the generations to come, is not this glorious work? Why, herein are the Saints on Earth privileged beyond those in Heaven, where there is no room for the exercise of these Graces, and Duties.

Oh! who would not pray that he might live to do God service? Spin not out precious time unprofitably. Pray that thou mayest be counted worthy of this calling (which is indeed a high calling) and fulfil all the good pleasure of his Goodness, and the work of Faith, Hope, and Patience, with power, that the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE PRIVILEGE OF THE SAINTS ON EARTH, BEYOND THOSE IN HEAVEN

For the Grave cannot praise thee, Death cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit, cannot hope for thy truth.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: The
Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. - Isaiah 38
18, 19.

The words are a part of Hezekiah's thanksgiving for his recovery
from his sickness (beginning at the ninth verse.) This good King was
not simply afraid of Death, as appeareth, ver. 3d. But

First, He had then no Son to succeed him in the Kingdom, (for
Manasseh was not then born) and he was solicitous for a Successor,
and the fulfilling of God's Promise to David, which we have four
times expressed, (viz. 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 16. 1 King. 8. 25. Psal. 89. 28,
29. & 132. 12.) In all which places we find this Promise to David, that
there should not fail a Man of his Seed, to sit upon the Throne of
Israel, so that his Children took heed to their ways, to walk before the
Lord in truth, as David their Father had done. Here was a Promise
with a Condition. And hence it is, I suppose, that Hezekiah in his
Prayer (verse. 3d) makes mention of his fulfilling that Condition, viz.
That David's Children must take heed to their way, (if they desired to
sit upon his Throne) that they walk before him, as David had done.
For, saith Hezekiah, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I
have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, & have
done that which is good in thy sight. As much as to say,

Lord! I hope thou wilt not cut me off, and leave the Kingdom without an Heir of the Seed of David, seeing thou didst promise him that thou wouldest not; provided that his Children took heed to their way, that they walked before him as David did. And, through thy Grace, I have so walked in my measure, and therefore, I hope, thou wilt not take me away, who have performed the Condition.

So that Hezekiah (though a very good Man) was afraid of Death; yet not simply, but lest the Kingdom should want an Heir of the Seed of David.

And this that I have said confirms the Opinion of those that say, that Hezekiah was loath to die, because then he had no Heir; though that was not all the reason.

For, Secondly, He was also loath to die in God's displeasure, so as a Child of God may do. For God doth testify his temporal displeasure many times against his own Children. If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments: If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments; Then will I visit their transgressions with the Rod, and their iniquity with Stripes. And he testifies it sometimes in their death, as he did in the death of the Prophet that came out of Judah, and Prophetied against the Altar in Bethel, who was slain by a Lion for his disobeying the Word of the Lord.

And Hezekiah was afraid, that God had some controversy with him, and he was loath to die in God's displeasure. Peradventure, he was somewhat lifted up with his miraculous deliverance from the Host of Sennacherib, mentioned in the former Chapter: For God did wonderful things, as you know, to effect that deliverance, and this sickness was immediately after the destruction of Sennacherib's Army; for that happened in the 39th year of Hezekiah's life, who lived fifteen years after his recovery from his sickness, which two numbers make the whole number of Hezekiah's years, which were 54, 2 King. 18. 2. So that this sickness of his fell out presently upon that great deliverance. And the good Man was not so thankful

(perhaps) as he should be, but somewhat elevated. For this was his weakness after his recovery. His heart was lifted up, and he rendered not again according to the benefit done to him, for which God was angry with him. What the sin was, I will not positively determine, only I thus conjecture; but that he apprehended God's displeasure for his sin, is evident from the words immediately before my Text, saith he, Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. Therefore, it seems, his sins lay before the face of God, till his recovery, and upon this account he was loath to die.

Thirdly, He was loath to die, as fearing what should become of his Reformation. For he knew what became of Jehoshaphat's though he left a son behind him; and of Jehoiadah's, though he left a well-educated Nephew behind him. Add hereunto, that he found the Church in a very deplored condition, when he came to the Crown. And as for his present Reformation, it had not lasted so long as his Father's Deformation and Idolatry; and his Reformation had scarce taken root as yet; therefore he was willing to live longer, and not, as yet, to die.

Fourthly, That which made him the more unwilling, was the nature of his Disease, which (by the Remedy, and way of Cure, a lump of Figs laid for a Plaster upon the Boil, Ver. 21.) I say, which by the Cure, seems to have been the Pestilence: And he was not willing to go to Heaven that way; though good Men may die of that Disease, and many times have done. But yet a Child of God would, for several Reasons, willingly decline that way of dying, if it might stand with the good will and pleasure of God.

Thus you see the Reasons why Hezekiah was loath to die.

Now then being recovered, and having a lease of his life for 15 years granted him, he writeth down his thanksgiving, as much affected with God's mercy towards him, verse. 9, &c.

In the Text read unto you, there is,

1. A Declaration of the state of the Dead, as to the loss of all opportunities ever to praise and magnify God any more, or to hope for his truth in this world.

Secondly, An Assertion of the opportunities enjoyed by the living, thus to praise God, and to make known his Truth, that is, His Truth and Faithfulness in his Promises. For, I conceive, Hezekiah hath here a special respect to the Truth and faithfulness of God in his Promise made to David and his Seed, in the forementioned Texts of Scripture.

And therefore it is very likely, that Hezekiah made known this Truth and Faithfulness of God to his son Manasseh, who was twelve years old when Hezekiah died. Though Manasseh (it seems) did little mind it, or made any good use of it. That Point of Doctrine, which I shall insist upon, is this, That

Doctrine.

There are opportunities of service to be performed to God in this life, which are not to be enjoyed after death.

Or thus,

The people of God may do that for him in this World, which they cannot do in Heaven.

David therefore makes an Argument of it in his Prayer, and sad Complaint in his Sickness: For, saith he, in death there is no remembrance of thee; (not but that the Saints in Heaven do remember God, (for they see him there) but they cannot keep up his memorial any longer among the living; he goes on) In the Grave who shall give thee thanks? The like we have in the 30th Psalm, entitled, A Song at the Dedication of the house of David, viz. after his return (as 'tis conceived) from his victory over Absalom, who had dreadfully defiled David's house with Incest, in abusing his Fathers Concubines; which house therefore David endeavors to purge and cleanse in a solemn holy manner at his return, and to dedicate it anew to God.

And in that Psalm he showeth, how he cried to the Lord in the day of his trouble, when Absalom rose up against him, & when he was afraid of his life, and was loath to die by the hand of his son; saith he, What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy Truth? And dark deserted Heman makes use of the same argument, Psal. 88. 10, 11. Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? And shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the Grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Saith he, Thy people may make known thy wonders in this life, but not in the Grave.

But then, do not the Saints, when they are dead praise the Lord?

Yes; But the Psalmist speaketh not of that, but of praising God, and declaring his loving kindness, faithfulness, and righteousness in the land of the living. And all their service that way is at an end, except by Miracle any be raised from the dead, as Lazarus and Tabitha were. So Psal. 115. 17. The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. And hence saith David, I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord, Psalm. 118. 17. As much as to say, there is no declaring of them after death!

But what are those services that may be done here, which cannot be done in Heaven, that so we may see the Point in Instances?

They are many; and let me begin with these in my Text.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee. i.e., He shall praise thee before the Children of Men in the Land of the living. Now, this is a glorious service, containing as much as is imparted in the first Petition of the Rule of Prayer, i. e. Hallowed be thy Name; which, though it be a service done in Heaven, yet in the presence of glorified Saints only, without any propagation of praise to the Name of God, for that is the privilege of the Saints while they live in this world,

where they make the Name of God known to them, that knew it not before. This is the first and highest Petition of all in our prayers, and therefore of greatest concernment.

Secondly, There is another service in my Text, which cannot be performed in Heaven, and it is contained in these words, The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. And is not this also a most blessed service? For it contains what is imported in the second Petition in the Rule of Prayer, (viz.) Thy Kingdom come. For this is one excellent way of advancing and enlarging the Kingdom of God in this world, (viz.) when Parents shall make known the Truth and Faithfulness of God to their Children. To which purpose consider, Psal. 78. 2, 7. Deut. 4. 9. and 6. 6, 7. And this is the great service of the Saints upon Earth, both Ministers and People. The things (saith Paul to Timothy, 2 Epist. Ch. 2. Ver. 2.) That thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. And this is a service, which cannot be done in Heaven. For the dead Saints cannot contribute ought to the enlarging of the Kingdom of Grace in this World; and as for the Kingdom of Glory, there are but two ways of enlarging that, which are by the departure of the Saints on Earth to Heaven, and by the Resurrection; in neither of which doth God use the service of the glorified Saints at all.

The care therefore of the choicest Saints hath been, not only for the time of their lives, but for the Generations to come, that they might know what God had done. The time would fail to tell of Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Paul, whose Epistles close with this Doxology and hearty desire of glory to be given to Christ in the Churches forever. The truth is, the whole Scripture is a Book of the Acts and Monuments of the Lord's wonderful works in gathering, and building, protecting, saving, and doing good to his Church, and that for this end, that the Generations to come might put their hope and trust in God. And this was the unanimous design of the Pen-men of holy Scripture. This shall be written for the generations to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

Thirdly, Here in this world the Saints may live exemplarily, blameless and harmless, as the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And this is a great service also; For

First, Hereby some may come to be converted, 1 Pet. 3. 1. and so the Kingdom of God is enlarged by this way also. And

Secondly, Many hereby will be convinced, and left without excuse in that great day. For this is one way whereby the Sains shall judge the world; they shall judge it exemplarily, and (in concurrence with Christ) sententiarilly: Now (I say) this is a service, which cannot be done in Heaven; where, First, There is no evil person: Nor Secondly, Any need of examples for the glorified Saints to walk by, who are all perfect, and under the immediate and sole Government of the Spirit of God. There is but one example in Heaven, and that is the exemplary cause of the glorification of our bodies, viz. The glorified body of Christ. For in this life the Saints conform to the grace of Christ actively, and at the Resurrection, they conform to his glorified body passively, as to their pattern.

Here in this world the Saints have opportunities of reproving Sin, confuting Errors, instructing the Ignorant, warning the Unruly, comforting the Feeble minded, praying for their Relations and Friends, &c. Now there are no such things in Heaven, where there is no Sin, no Error, no Ignorance, no Unruliness, none Afflicted, no praying for Relations. I remember how dying Mr. Rollock was much offended with a Kinsman, for desiring his Prayers when he should come to Heaven. God will have but one Intercessor there.

Hence they may do good to the bodies, of Men. For they may feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, lodge the harborless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned; whereas in Heaven there are no necessities or wants.

Here the Saint, may suffer for Christ & give a testimony to his Cause, and to the Truth, by the loss of their Relations, and Friends, of their Goods, Health, Ease, Credit, Liberty, Houses, Lands, Countries, Life, &c. For, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them. And this is such a service, as the very Angels are in no wise capable of.

So that you see, there are many services which the Saints may do here for Christ, which they cannot do in Heaven.

Indeed, if they could return to this life again, they might do such works as these. For when Lazarus was raised from the dead, he entertained Christ again. And when Tabitha was raised from the dead, it is very probable that she fell to her good Works and Alms-deeds again, to her making of Coats and Garments again for the poor, as she had been wont (Act. 9. 39.) But these are rare examples of the returning of the dead Saints to this world again. For as the Cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave, shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him anymore.

Lastly, There are some gifts of grace which cannot be exercised in Heaven. For,

First, Here the Saints do believe, whereas in Heaven Faith is turned into Vision. Here they walk by Faith, and not by sight, as they shall do in Heaven. And Faith is a gift of Grace, whereby God is much glorified; for it empties and humbles the Heart, and carrieth it forth to Christ, and glorifies God in all his Attributes. Whereas in Heaven the Saints have all in hand, and therefore they live by sight, and not by Faith. There is but one thing there to come to them (to the completing of their happiness) and that is, the resurrection of the dead, in the Faith whereof they live, but yet this Faith is of another nature, then that which justifieth and saveth in this life.

Secondly, It followeth hence, That here, in this life the Saints do exercise Hope, waiting for the good which is held forth in the Promise, which their Faith believeth they shall have. Whereas in Heaven, Hope is turned into fruition and enjoyment. For Hope (that is, the thing hoped for) that is seen, is not Hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? There is no hope in Heaven (the Fathers to the Children cannot hope for thy Truth, as Hezekiah here saith) except it be of the Resurrection, whereof the Saints have a most joyful expectation. They are glad, and rejoyce, in that their flesh doth rest in hope. Not that their flesh doth hope, but that resteth, and their Souls hope for its rising again.

Accordingly it followeth, That here in this life the Saints do exercise their patience, which ceaseth in Heaven, because our hope ceaseth there. For patience is the servant of Hope, (1 Thes. 1. 3.) called there the patience of hope; For if, we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. There is nothing in Heaven to put our patience to it.

It is true indeed what the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 13. last. Now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity. Because Charity (i. e. Love) never faileth; (ver. 8.) that is Heavens grace in a Spiritual manner. But yet, notwithstanding, even Love itself hath a larger Object here in this world, than in Heaven. For there is a Love here, which cannot be exercised there. And that is,

To love our enemies, which is the Command of the Gospel, and a great Duty, and was one of the last Acts of Christ upon the Cross, Luke 23. 34. And the very last Act of Stephen the Protomartyr, who was never like to act it more, Act. 7. last.. Lord, saith he, lay not this sin to their charge.

Here in this life you may love all Unregenerate men, and show it in your desires and endeavors for their conversion.

Here also you may exercise a Love of sympathy with all, both good and bad, in their sufferings. But in Heaven there is no room for this Love.

And as these gifts of Grace forementioned do greatly glorify God, but cease in Heaven; so do Parts and common-Gifts also cease there. For whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; or, whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; or whether there be knowledge (that is imperfect, mediate, and the communication of it to others) it shall vanish away. And yet Prophesying is much to God's glory. For, He that Prophecieth, speaketh unto men to Edification, Exhortation, Consolation. And Tongues do also edify. So likewise for knowledge.

So that put all this together, and there is much to be done here, whereby God may be glorified, and men edified and benefited, which cannot be done in heaven.

And thus you see the Point made good in several Instances, That there are opportunities of service to be performed to the Lord in this life, which are not to be enjoyed after death.

Quest.

But if it be thus; why have some of the Saints mentioned in Scripture desired to die?

Answer.

Some of the Saints have done ill in so doing, but others upon good ground.

First, Some of them have not done well in desiring death, for they have passionately desired it, and to their own loss, if God should have answered their desires herein. For instance. 1. Moses, he was the meekest Man upon the Earth, yet he seems to be in a passion, when he said, If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand. Why? Was there no remedy, but God must kill him, and

presently too, if the burden of the people lay a little longer upon him? This was a passionate expression and desire of death. And had he died there presently, he had incurred a double loss (to say no more in it) 1. He had been cut short of the opportunity of doing that eminent service in conducting the people through the Wilderness. For he lived 38 years longer, and did much for God and his people during that time. 2. If he had died then out of hand, he had not died, and been buried so honorably, as he was afterwards upon Mount Nebo, even by God's hand.

2. And though Job was a patient Man, yet he passionately desired death. Oh! Saith he, that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for: Even that it would please God to destroy me, that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off. Whereas God meant Job better than so, (viz.) to turn his Captivity, and to give him twice as much as he had lost, and the full number of his former Children, and so, to double their number also; showing him, that his first number was not last. Moreover, he shall yet live 140 years longer to serve and honor God in this world. Again,

3. Elijah was a Man subject to like passions as we are, and being persecuted by Jezebel, he requested for himself that he might die, and he said, It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my Fathers. Whereas God intended better for him, (viz.) that he should live yet longer, and finish his Testimony against Ahab, Jezebel, and Ahaziah, and then be carried triumphantly to Heaven in a fiery Chariot. So

4. Jonah would needs die in a fret, Oh Lord, saith he, Take I beseech thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die, than to live. No, Jonah was not in case to die at present, God would not take him at his word, but he must live yet longer and repent.

Secondly, As for some others of the Saints, death hath been desired by them, and not impatiently, nor any way sinfully, but very well, and upon good ground. You know

1. Just and devout Simeon, when he had taken up Christ in his arms, he blessed God, and said, Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; and the ground of this request lies in the words following—according to thy Word. His Prayer, it seems, was grounded upon a word from God. For as God had told him, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ; so he had promised him, that then he should die, and so his Prayer was grounded upon a Promise.

2. And as for Paul, He desired to depart, and to be with Christ, which (saith he) is far better, i.e., for me. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of Faith. So that 1. When he desired to die, he looked upon the benefit thereof abstractedly, and absolutely, but not comparatively. 2. When he looked upon it on comparison with the benefits of life, he was not so positive in the desire of death, but having done great service, and, that too, a long time for Jesus Christ (for then he was Paul the aged, Philem. ver. 9.) and being then in prison at Rome, he hung for a time in Aequilibrio, mid-way between two, till at last the Scale turns to a desire to live, further to serve Jesus Christ, and his Church and people. For though Paul was then in prison, yet he did very much good there, which had been lost, had he then gone to Heaven. For his bonds furthered the Gospel. And they strengthened the Brethren, and wrought upon several in Caesar's Palace. And there be converted Onesimus; and there he wrote his Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the second Epistle to Timothy and that to Philemon. In all which are many excellent Points of divers kinds, which greatly conduce to the Churches edification: And better a thousand times that Paul had been kept 20 years out of Heaven, than that the Church should have wanted these Epistles.

But is it not lawful then in any case, to desire to die?

Yes; with subjection to God's will, in case especially there are appearances that a Man's work is at an end. For a Child of God may live so long, that his faculties may be impaired, his strength decayed, his spirits spent, and he may be full of pain too, and so shut up, that he can do little good. And as Job saith, A servant that hath wrought hard all the day, and is weary, earnestly desireth the shadow. And so it is with a Child of God in this case. The weary body naturally desireth the bed. And sometimes God makes a clear discovery to some of his servants, that their work is at an end. Thus it was with Paul, I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith. And it is with gracious Souls; as with the Fruit of the Tree, which when it is ripe, drops naturally from it. There is a Spiritual instinct, inclining the Soul of a Believer Heavenward, when the Fruit is ripe: So that they come to their graves, as a ripe Shock of Corn cometh in its season. And a desire to die in such a case is still the better, when it proceedeth from a longing to be freed from sin, and a desire to be with Christ, Phil. 1. 23.

Application.

If there are opportunities of service to be performed to God in this life, which are not to be enjoyed after death; and, that the Saints may do that for God in the world, which they cannot do in Heaven; we are then 1. Informed,

That Heaven is the place of the Saints reward, and not of their work. When they die, they cease from their labors, and their works do follow them. They do not follow the Saints, as if the Saints were there to follow their work, but they follow them to be rewarded and crowned. For their course is now finished, their race is run, and henceforth is laid up for them a Crown of Righteousness. Heaven therefore is not their working-place, but their resting-place; they rest from their labors; there is much to be received there, but nothing to be done there, but to live in the high praises of God and the Lamb to Eternity.

If our opportunities die together with us, then we are further informed, That (as there is no working in Heaven, so) there is no returning after death to work again in this world. If a Man die, shall he live again? No, saith Hezekiah (ver. 11.) I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the Gates of the Grave; I shall nor see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the living, I shall behold Man no more with the inhabitants of the world. That is, I shall no more appear before the Lord in his Sanctuary, to perform anymore service there to him.

As if he should say, I shall see the Lord in Heaven, but I shall see him & serve no more in the Land of the living, which I desire to do. For when Isaiah brought him the welcome tidings of his recovery, one of first things that he saith to him is, what is the sign that I shall go up to the House of the Lord? For a King to go to the House of the Lord, and to lead the way to the Worship of God, was a very glorious service. He looked upon it as a very great mercy, to see and serve the Lord in the Land of the living; but he thought he should see him so no more, nor behold Man anymore with the inhabitants of the world; and therefore he should return no more.

Men have but one Soul, and but one opportunity to act for the eternal salvation of it; when they are dead, the Eye that hath seen them, shall see them no more, and he that goeth down to the Grave, shall come up no more.

And therefore it was not Samuel risen from the dead, but the Devil that appeared and spake to Saul in the house of the Witch at Endor. For the appearance ascended out of the Earth in the house of the Woman, which was in the Tribe of Issachar, whereas Samuel was buried at his house at Ramah, which was in the Tribe of Benjamin. Besides, he was buried in his Grave-clothes, whereas he is described rising in his Mantle. And he was (as all the Saints are after death) at rest; where as he that is there called Samuel saith to Saul, Wherefore hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And it is not in the power of

all the Devils in Hell to disquiet the Saints after death. Other Reasons I might urge, but these may suffice.

The dead return not again; as David said of his Child, when dead, I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. Opportunity is a part of time, and hath nothing to do in Eternity. Neither is there any regress or returning, but by miracle from the Land of forgetfulness.

2. Instructed in matter of Reproof,

To such as live long, and do but little; whereas we may reckon our lives by the good that we do in this world. For as for lost time, it cannot come into the account of our lives; and it is a pitiful thing to be old only in time: And all the good of many stricken in years will lie within a very little compass; and to be an ancient Man or Woman of two or three years old, sounds like a Contradiction.

So teach us (saith Moses) to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. And surely this is one special way of numbering our days; to know how long we have lived in serving our Generation, and what time we have spent that way: and he never applied his Heart to Wisdom, who hath not learned so to number his days.

There are but two lives, that can be lived in this world, viz. a Natural, and a Spiritual; and all live the first, but few the second: whereas it is our wisdom to live spiritually; and so to live, is to live, First, for the Generations that succeed us, so as Hezekiah here desired to live. Secondly, To live for Eternity. To live only a natural life; is for Brutes, and not for Men.

And therefore you that are entered into years, and have done but little, are justly reprehended, as having lived more like Fools than wise Men.

Secondly, What shall we say to such as have lived to no purpose at all? All that they have done, hath been to eat and drink, and make a number. And there are multitudes of these, who have profaned their

lives, in not answering the end of them. They are mere Earth-cumberers, and such who have lived only to themselves.

Thirdly, But (which is worse) some have lived to wicked purposes, having spent their days in sin, and been offensive both to God and Men, who as last will come to die like Jehoram, without being desired. And such another was Hezekiah's Father, even that King Ahaz, who when he died, was buried like Jehoram, and not brought into the Sepulchers of the Kings of Israel. And such another was that persecutor Jehoiakim, for whom they lamented not, saying, Ah Lord, or ah his glory. Oh! These are to be exploded out of the Land of the living; For Men shall clap their hands at them, and hiss them out of the world; he never did good work while, he lived, and he shall have never a good word when he dieth. So much for Reprehension.

This Point instructs us in matter of Humiliation. What hath been said, should humble even the very best of God's people, in that they have done no more service for Jesus Christ in their Generation. You have (possibly) done something for him, but you might have done more: You might have praised him more, declared the Truth more to your Children; you might have projected and designed more for the glory of God, and the good of Posterity; you might have devised liberal things, & lived more exemplarily, been more zealous of good works, more edifying in your conversation; you might have adventured more for Christ; and whereas you have gained two Talents for him, you might have gained five. Truly (for my part) I might have done more, and it humbleth me that I have done so little. I remember it is said of Doctor Usher in the Narrative of his Life and Death, that when he was a dying, he was humbled for his omissions. And indeed they are great sins, and the judgment of Christ, at his appearing, will pass much upon good works on the one side, and omissions of them on the other. And therefore we had need to sit in judgment upon ourselves for our omissions before we die. For it is not enough to do good sometimes, but we should be rich in good works, and prepared unto every good work, always abounding in the work of the Lord, giving a portion to seven, and also to eight, going

about as Christ did, doing good. And he that is thus exercised, is fit to live, and fit to die.

But let us be humbled this day for our neglects. For have not our hearts sometimes checked us, upon reviews of the loss of our opportunities to do such or such a good work? Saith a gracious and tender heart, when he is come from such a person, or such a place, or such a company, or occasion;

Alas! what have I omitted? I might have put in such a word for Jesus Christ, I might have reproved such a sin, or given such or such counsel, or stopped such a vain discourse, or given such an example, or moved for such a good work, &c.

Alas! who knows the errors of his life this way? And therefore this consideration calls for deep Humiliation, and self-judging at this time.

3. Exhorted.

We are here Exhorted, and the Point affords Exhortation several ways.

To do all the good you are able, during your abode here below, seeing death will put an end to all your opportunities. If God enable you to speak a good word to his honor, and to the edification of others, when you lie a dying, you are never like to do so much good again to Eternity. When you take your leave of the world, you take your leave of doing good. And therefore you had need bestir yourselves, while your Bodies and Souls abide here together.

Whatsoever therefore thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.

And suppose you have done well hitherto, like a good and faithful servant, be not yet weary of well doing, but up and be doing still, and

in due time you shall reap, if you faint not. What a deal of good had Hezekiah done, before he fell into this sickness? He destroyed the Monuments of Idolatry, set up a notable Reformation, brought back the Tribes of Israel to the Lord God of their Fathers. And yet you see here, he is willing to live longer to do more. So Peter had done much good in his time; you know he converted about three thousand Souls at the beginning of his Ministry, he had a most happy hanel, Acts 2d. And yet he takes another opportunity, and sped well. And after this, he passeth through all quarters, and came at last to Lydda, & Saron, and Joppa, & you know what good he did in the house of Cornelius, &c. At length he becomes old, & then he writes to the Saints; For, saith he, I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavor that you may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

First, saith he, I am aware of death approaching.

Secondly, I will therefore do all the good I am able, both with my Tongue and Pen.

Thirdly, I will endeavor that the good I do may live when I am dead; that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

Even thus we should endeavor to live in this world after our departure. Survive your Funerals, and out-live your deaths. For it is not enough that we shall then live in Heaven, but we should endeavor to be doing of that good while we live, that may make us live on Earth; even when we are dead. And in this way the memory of the Just shall be blessed, and the Righteous had in everlasting remembrance. It is the Saints happiness to have Glory, and Honor, and Immortality in Heaven; but it is much to the glory and honor of God for the Saints to be immortalized on Earth, and to live in their

good Examples, good Counsels, good Names, and good Works, when their Souls are shining in Heaven. Particularly,

1. Dilate and diffuse the praises of God, and make his Name glorious to the utmost of your power. And let this be often sounding in your ears. The living, the living he shall praise thee. Speak much, and live much to his praise. Let the high praises of God be in your mouths. Ainsworth, and the Dutch Interpreters render it, Let the exaltations of God be in your throat, and it suits with the Original, as also with the Translation of the 70.

The Exaltations, i.e., the lifting up of God in his Name, Attributes, Precept, Promises, Threatening's, Providences, &c. let them be in your throats, i.e., exalt your voices in exalting these praises, cry with the throat, and lift up your voices like Trumpets. And this argues, that God's praises comes from your hearts, when they are thus sounded, as it were from your throats. And this work exalteth you, and that as high as the Heavens, for it is the very service of Heaven, only it is a greater service, seeing the Proclamation of God's praises upon Earth, tends to the propagation of them, so as it is not in Heaven.

And truly, he that is good at this, is good indeed. He is no Hypocrite; for he is a self-denying man, and one that loves God far above himself, one that lives in God, and delights in him, and gives him the highest place in his heart. Do what you can therefore this way, and it will redound to a singular evidence of your sincerity.

2. Endeavor also the Propagation of Christ's Kingdom; pray for it, and according to your capacity promote it.

You may remember what is written, Psal. 72. 15. where it is said of Solomon in the Type, and of Christ in the Truth, He shall live, and to him shall be given of the Gold of Sheba, Prayer also shall be made for him, and daily shall he be praised. Why? Must we pray for Jesus Christ? Yes, by all means. Of all that we pray for, we must be sure to

pray for Jesus Christ, but not considered personally, but Mystically. You know how the people, and the children prayed for Christ, when they cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. The words are taken out of the 11th Psal. ver. 25, 26. They cried, saying, Hosanna, that is, Save, I beseech thee. It is as much as, God save the King, send now prosperity. It is meant especially of Christ as King, Christ and his Kingdom. And we never say, Thy Kingdom come, but thus we pray for Christ, who prayeth for us every day, or else we should be in a very sad case.

And truly, if the Kingdom of Christ be within us, we shall be very solicitous and active for the Kingdom of Christ without us, which Kingdom of his this day is in a very low condition, as to the professed power and purity of the Gospel. And yet if we can do little or nothing else, yet we may pray for the Kingdom of Christ. Let us therefore lay the state thereof to heart this day. How often do the Saints under the Old Testament, pray for the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus under the New? Say they, God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; That thy way may be known upon Earth, thy saving health among all Nations, &c.

Mark ye, That singular blessing, which God commanded Aaron and his Sons to pronounce upon the people of Israel, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The godly in David's time turned it into prayer for the enlarging of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus under the Gospel, accounting it a great blessing to themselves, to have it enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles; though (yet) it was to be accomplished in the rejection of the Jews; but it is (as if we should say) Let God do what he pleaseth with a Nation, so that his Gospel may be propagated, and his Kingdom enlarged in the World. If God's way may be known upon Earth, and his saving health among all other Nations, We should account that the Lord is merciful to us, and blesseth us, and causeth his face to shine upon us; We should love the Kingdom of Christ above all the Kingdoms in the World, and

That it shall come to pass in the last days, that the Mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the Mountains, and exalted above the Hills, and that all Nations shall flow unto it. You know what great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart Paul had for his Brethren the Jews, and kinsmen according to the flesh; and yet he magnified his Office, in that he was the Apostle of the Gentiles. That is, he accounted it to be a glorious Office to be a Preacher to the Gentiles. So that, Let the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus come, whatsoever become of any Kingdom, or of all the Kingdoms under Heaven.

Thirdly, Live exemplarily, that your patterns may survive you, and live when you are dead. Thus Paul lived, Brethren, saith he, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample. And he denied himself, to make himself an example to others. You know, saith he, how ye ought to follow us (viz. in orderly walking in your particular Callings) for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you. Not because we have not power (that is, nigh to be maintained at your charge) but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, to follow us. And thus also he did unto the Corinthians. For thus did Christ deny himself to give us an example, Joh. 13. 14, 15. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Consider also, 2 Cor. 8. 9. For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And when Paul took his leave of the Elders of Ephesus, who were never like to see his face more, he leaves his example with them; I have, (saith he) coveted no man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel; Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me; I have showed you all things, how that so laboring, ye ought to support the weak.— The like did Samuel. Thus also David left his example behind him, for God set him up for a pattern to all

succeeding Kings in Israel, whose Life and Reign God therefore measureth by their care to follow him, as you may read frequently in the Books of the Kings and Chronicles. For of such & such Kings it is said, They walked in the ways of David; and of others, that they did not so walk. Examples are very prevalent in utramque partem, either one way or the other, either for good or evil.

And therefore so walk according to God, that others may follow you, seeing your example will live whilst you live, yea, and when you are dead too. For it will be said, such a one lived thus, and walked thus, and thus he behaved himself in his family, and thus in his fellowship with the Saints, and thus in his dealings with his neighbors, and with all men; and thus he carried it under his trials and oppositions in an evil day, and this and that was the Rule he walked by. For he was a wise Man, or she was a wise Woman, and very conscientious, and tender-hearted, and sincere, and active, and stirring, and zealous for Jesus Christ, and fearful to give the least offense, and ready to every good work, and pitiful to the poor Saints, his Heart, and Purse, and House were open for Jesus Christ. And he was a just and peaceable Man, and one that could govern his Spirit, and Tongue, and that could keep down his passions, and one that was a mortified person, dead to the world, and the things thereof, &c. Now, what a blessed example is this? And what a glorious report? What an edifying pattern, and for the glory of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ? Yea, this example will preach your funeral Sermon, (you need no other to do it) and it will keep you alive when you are dead, and immortalize you upon Earth, make you of blessed memory indeed, and to be had with the righteous in everlasting remembrance; when the names of others shall be written in the Earth, which will soon be obliterated, and quite blotted out; and when it shall be said of them as of Hezekiah's Father, by way of reproach, This is that King Ahaz. And such a good example many have left behind them, and we are ever and anon speaking of such as these are, whose names are as a precious Ointment, and which were embalmed when they died, with the Graces, Virtues, and good Works of their Lives, that still they send forth a sweet savor to surviving posterity. And thus was that

good Woman's name embalmed, who poured out a very precious Ointment on the Head of Christ against his burial. Verily, saith Christ, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this Woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. So that this good Woman is still alive in her memory, and she hath thus lived these 1600 years and more, and shall never die so long as the world standeth. And such another was Tabitha. And the like I may say of many more, whose names are recorded in holy Writ, who obtained a good report, and though they are now dead, yet still they both speak, and are spoken of.

Brethren, will ye think upon these things; And will ye now study & endeavor to live exemplarily, and to live lives for posterity, and so to live converting lives, and convincing, and edifying lives; yea, and to live the lives of such, as must be the world's Judges? And will it not be greatly to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to your Eternal Consolation, to hear of your lives and examples in that great day of Christ's appearance, when your examples shall have their resurrection as well as your bodies, when Christ shall produce your patterns before all the world, and convince and judge the ungodly world by them? As if he should say to those on his left hand, who lived in your days, and saw your examples;

Loe, do you see these Men and Women on my right hand, who lived thus and thus in your sight, and gave you a blessed example, which either you censured, or were unwilling to follow; they lived and conversed in direct opposition to you; they lived so and so, when you did thus and thus: Therefore they shall be your Judges.

Methinks I cannot speak enough of this Subject, which is of very great moment, viz. the transmission and recommendation of patterns to posterity, as one grieved, that I can see no more of it, but rather such a common and ordinary kind of walking, as hath little or nothing of singularity in it.

Alas! How few, that profess the fear of God this day, are writing of Copies for posterity to walk by? And where is singularity of life to be seen? Yea, how many are there among the Professors of the Gospel, by whose failings we may learn more than by their Virtues? And this I speak to my grief; Oh, let your light so shine before Men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Jesus Christ there speaks of the light of good works and good examples, which are visible to standers-by, and such as do occasion them to glorify our Heavenly Father.

And know thus much also, That Men live much by example, either on the one side or other. And where good examples are given, God expecteth that others should follow them, and that not only the examples of the living, but of the dead also, For what saith the Apostle? Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. The Apostle there speaketh of such as had been their Guides, but were now dead; for the words in the Original are not, remember them: that have the rule over you, but, remember your Rulers, i. e. Ministers of the Gospel, who are now with the Lord. And he exhorts the Hebrews not to forget their Faith, and holy lives, who had no other end in their conversations and good examples, but God's Glory, and the Salvation of them that beheld them.

But I must pass from this Particular, though somewhat loath to leave it, and should much rejoice, if what I have said of it, may take place in all your hearts and lives.

Live exemplarily, that your patterns may outlive you, and edify others when you are dead. And this is a work which cannot be done in Heaven. And take heed of scandals and visible infirmities, which edify beholders to ruin. For there is a sinful mischievous edification, of which the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. 8. 10. For if any Man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the Idols Temple: Shall not the Conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things

which are offered to Idols? The word rendered, Emboldened, is Edified in the Original. You may so live in your Examples, that you may edify and teach beholders to sin in following them, as Jeroboam the son of Nebat did, who made Israel to sin. And many that profess to the Gospel, do so live and walk, the Consideration whereof is very sad and miserable. O beware of giving such examples, for they will diminish your glory in Heaven, if you shall be so happy, at least, as to arrive there. But so much for this 3d Particular.

Embrace and improve all opportunities of appearing and speaking for Christ (another service peculiar to the Saints on Earth, who cannot speak a word for Christ in Heaven.) And many such seasons are providentially administered to us, viz. sometimes of reprov- ing sin, both in such as fear God, and such as fear him not. In the Scriptures you find the Saints reprov- ing one another; Moses reproveth Aaron, and Nathan David, and Hanani Asa, & his son Jehu Jehoshaphat, and Paul Peter, and one private Brother another. And how often also do the Saints in Scripture reprove the wicked and ungodly? I need not give you Instances for that. It is not enough that we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but we must also reprove them. We must appear for Christ, his Truth, his Rules, and Glory; or where is our love to him? Sometimes you shall hear cursing, and swearing in your presence, sometimes reproaching, slandering, filthiness, foolish talking, and sinful jesting; sometimes you shall see Covetousness, Pride, Passion, Anger, and uncomely Language, and sometimes inordinate affections, and sometimes gross omissions of duty either to God or Man. Here now are opportunities of doing a service for Christ, and of appearing and witnessing for him, so as you cannot do hereafter in glory. In such cases therefore consider your duty, and what the Lord requireth of you, who will take it very ill, if you have never a Tongue for him. And do not say, I am loath, or I am afraid to speak, and it will be ill taken, or I shall do no good by testifying, or I shall be accounted a busy- body; but attend your duty, and leave the event to God; only beg Wisdom, which is profitable to direct: And however a Reproof take, or speed, yet you have done a better service for Christ, than any Saint

in Heaven can do. I know, indeed, that such testimonies for Christ are seldom well taken, but that ariseth from the pride of Man, and however, that must not hinder your duty, for I am sure, that the with-holding such testimonies, when you are called to give them, is very ill taken by Christ; and if he take them well, let proud spirits take them as ill as they please.

The like I may say as to the opposing of Error and Heresies, according to your capacities, and of informing and instructing the ignorant, when a season is offered, and of warning the unruly, &c. And you know not, but you may do much good in such cases, and your work may live when you are dead; however your reward is with the Lord, for whom you have performed this service.

There are other good and gracious Offices to be discharged, which cease when you are dead. I did briefly mention some of them in the Doctrinal part. Let me now exhort you to attend them also; As to pray one for another, which Duty ends with our Lives. For (as I have said) God will have but one Intercessor in Heaven, but here he requireth many. Here we may, yea must be trading one with another, viz. Prayers for Prayers, Ministers with people, and people with their Ministers, and one Saint with another: Not but that we must pray for others also.

Oh! What a trade did Paul drive this way? I have sometimes thought, what a Catalogue of Churches and Saints he had to commend to God in his daily prayers. How many Churches did he usually pray for? Saith he to the Church at Rome, God is my witness, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. The like for the Church at Ephesus, saith he, I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. So for the Church at Philippi, saith he, I remember you always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy. And thus too, he saith, he prayed for the Church at Colossus. The very same for the Church at Thessalonica, We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing, your work of Faith, labor

of Love, and patience of Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ — And doubtless, had he written Epistles to all other Churches, we should have heard of his prayers for them. Neither did he pray only for Churches, but also for several Saints in particular; For he saith, that he prayed for Timothy night and day; that is, Morning and Evening, the whole put for the part. And as for Philemon, he saith, That he made mention of him always in his prayers. What a Catalogue then had Paul of Churches and Saints to recommend to God in his daily prayers? For it is very likely, that he prayed for many more, than we find in his Epistles.

And as he prayed for the Churches, so he desireth to be remembered in their prayers. For, as I said, he drove a holy trade this way. He begs the prayers of the Church at Rome, in the very Language of a Beggar for an Alms. Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered. —So of the Church at Ephesus and of the Philippians, and of the Colossians, and of the Thessalonians, and of the Hebrews; (for the greatest Apostle had need of the prayers of the meanest Christian) only he begs no prayers of the Church at Corinth, in his first Epistle to them, as looking upon them under many and great offenses, for which he there reproveth them: Nor of the Churches of Galatia, whom he looked upon as greatly backslidden from the Faith: And he would not trade with broken men. But here you see, I have given you a notable example for your imitation in this Point. Pray therefore for one another, and trade together as you shall see occasion. Yea, you must pray sometimes for such as never desired it. So likewise, if you do hear of the afflicted condition of such and such of the Saints, suppose in great poverty, or in prison upon the account of Christ, and a good Conscience, or in some great distress otherwise, or under sickness, and in danger of death, look upon your selves as obliged to put up one Prayer for them. You know what the Apostle saith, Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Remember them; How? To sympathize with them, to pray for them, and (to your power) to help and relieve them.

And think it not enough, that you pray for Saints, but perform the like service for sinners also; for your prayers may contribute much to their conversion, as Christ's prayer, Luke 23. 34. did to the conversion of many that were his enemies, Acts 2. and Stephens prayer (probably) was heard in the conversion of Paul.

And be sure to pray for Children, and Children's Children, that they may live in the sight of God, and bear up his Name in their generations.

Neither rest in particular persons, but pray also for the Churches of Christ this day, in whom he is so much concerned, as exercising his special Government in and over them. Pray therefore for their peace and purity, and progress in holiness, and that they may be edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and comfort of the Holy Ghost, be multiplied. And this is to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And when you hear of a Church bereft of its Pastor, pray to the chief Shepherd, to supply the empty room with a meet successor: As Moses said in another case, Let the Lord, the God of the Spirits of all flesh, set a man over the Congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in, that the Congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no Shepherd.

Oh sirs! There is a great service to be done for Christ by prayers, during the opportunity of our intercession, which dieth together with us. What great things have been, and still are done by prayers? By these was the Church delivered out of Babylon, and Peter out of Prison. By these was Zion built. By these is the Gospel upheld, the enemies thereof bridled, and liberty obtained, &c. And when God will do great and wonderful things, he will gather his praying Saints together, and pour out a mighty Spirit of prayer upon them.

Sixthly, Comfort the feeble minded, and support the weak. Speak a word in due season to the weary. For sometimes you shall meet with such as want it, and who walk in darkness and see no light, and are ready to complain like Heman, Psal. 88. at large. In such cases, Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, and say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not. And this (it seems) was Jobs practice. He strengthened the weak, and his words upheld him that was falling. And if they were in affliction, the moving of his lips asswaged their grief. For, heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad. And this savoreth sweetly of the Spirit of Christ, who would not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. The words are diminutive, for the meaning is, he would strengthen the bruised Reed, and blow up the smoking Flax. For he carries his Lambs in his bosom, that is, he tenders them, and lays them near his heart.

As when the Church was in affliction, and sick of love, he stays her with flagons and comforts her with Apples; his left hand is under her head, and his right hand embraceth her. Not his right hand under her head, and his left hand embraceth her; for that is not next the heart of Christ. He is our High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, & hath compassion on us in just proportion. He speaks to the heart of the trembling Haemorrhoids, when she fell down at his feet, and saith unto her, Daughter be of good comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole, go in peace. And he takes part with that brokenhearted sinner that sat behind him at his feet, weeping, and washing, and wiping, and kissing them, and rebukes censorious Simon; and saith to her, Thy sins are forgiven, thy Faith hath saved thee, go in peace. Oh the sweet Spirit of Christ! Let the same mind then be in you which was in him. And comfort them that are in trouble, with the comforts wherewith you yourselves have been comforted of God; And be kindly affectioned one toward another in brotherly love. And when the case requires it, show yourself a son of Consolation.

Seventhly, In Heaven (you know) are no necessities, whereas here are many, which will give occasion therefore to such service as Heaven hath no need of. For here are poor Saints, and the poor are always with us, who sometimes want Food, sometimes Clothing, sometimes Lodging, sometimes Money, &c. You then that are able must follow Job's example; saith he, I have not withheld the poor from their desire, nor caused the eyes of the Widow to fail, nor eaten my morsel alone, but the Fatherless hath eaten of it also. Neither have I seen any to perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering, but his loins have blessed me, and he was warmed with the fleece of my sheep. The stranger did not lodge in the street, but I opened my door to the Traveler, &c. and the eyes of our Lord Jesus are much upon such good works as these; for he beheld how the people cast their money into the Treasury. Heaven affordeth no such objects of your Love and Compassion.

There are indeed many Beggars at Heavens Gates, but never a Beggar within Heavens doors. And there are many Widows and Fatherless Children here, but never a Widow nor Orphan there.

Brethren, Be ye then merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful. And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. And it is that which will lengthen out your lives. Mercy, even to the brute, creatures, shall prolong your days, much more then to Men, especially to the household of Faith. Lazarus shall rise, and have a new lease of his life to entertain Christ again. And so shall Tabitha to make Coats and Garments for Widows again. Life is well bestowed upon merciful ones. And life is the time of acting this Grace, for bowels are shut up in Heaven, and no pity shall be showed to the nearest perishing relations in the day of Christ. Again, Here you may entertain Jesus Christ in his Members, and Ministers. Here you may be fellow-helpers to the Truth and Gospel. And what says John of that? We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the Truth.

And, saith the Apostle, Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares. We cannot entertain Angels in Heaven, (for they have their places there as well as we, and there we are rather entertained by them, Zech. 3. 7.) but here it hath been done, as by Abraham and Lot. And though we cannot expect to entertain them as they did, yet, (if we could) what is that to the entertainment of Christ himself? And if we entertain his Members at our houses, or do any Office of Love for them, we do it unto Jesus Christ.

Eighthly, Let us be willing also (if need be) to suffer for Christ, which is a service peculiar to this life. But I say, If need be, because we are not to cast ourselves upon suffering, uncalled. We must take up, but not make a Cross. But when the providence of God, and his Word calleth us to witness for Christ to the loss of ought that is nearest and dearest to us, let us remember, that this is one of the services, which termineth with our lives, and cannot be performed in glory. It hath indeed been our portion hitherto to escape those sufferings, which many of our brethren have undergone. But have we been sufferers in affection? Have we been prepared for the Cross? Or, have we not been among the fearful? And have we sympathized with our Brethren in their sufferings? And have we accounted them happy that have endured, yea, and their sufferings honorable for the sake, and in the quarrel of such a Lord and Master? Consider what I say: For it is a very honorable thing to suffer for Christ, his Gospel, and Kingdom. For the Spirit of God, and of glory resteth upon all such. And what are all the sufferings of this present time, in comparison with the glory which shall be revealed in us? But though we have escaped what others have undergone, yet we know not what may be our portion, as to suffering before we die. Perhaps there is the more behind. God hath appointed the number of them that shall suffer for Christ. And who knows what God hath appointed for him this way? But whatever it be, Heaven will put an end to it, where are no sufferings but Crowns, even incorruptible Crowns of glory. You know what is said of them that came out of great tribulation, they were clothed with white Robes, and had palms in their hands.

Ninthly, Exercise those fruits of the Spirit, which are proper to this life. You have heard of several, as Faith, Hope, Patience, love to Enemies, and to Men out of Christ, Sympathy, common gifts for Edification, Communication of Knowledge, which is mediate in this life.

All these are the gifts of the Spirit on this side Heaven, in the exercise whereof God is much glorified, and others edified, which is that which should be the scope and aim of us all.

Tenthly, and lastly, There is one thing more, which we are exhorted to do in this world, which cannot be done after death, and it is a very great service, and highly incumbent on us, and I was willing to reserve it to the last place, that it might the rather abide by us; and it is this, Endeavor to transmit pure Religion and undefiled to posterity, by commending it to your Children. The Fathers to the Children shall make known thy truth. And we may run it through Fatherhood at large. But;

Let me speak of Domestical Fathers, that is, Fathers of Families. This is a great matter, and is the special work of the godly in their generations. How else shall that be made good, which is written, His Name (that is, Christ's) shall endure forever, his Name shall be continued as long as the Sun. Some render it, His Name shall be continued as a son continueth his Father's name, for the Original Jinnon, or Janin cometh of Nin, a son. As if one should say, Filiabitur nomen ejus, or sobolescet nomen ejus, as Tremellius renders it; That is, Christ shall not only himself live forever in his person, but his Name also shall endure forever, and be derived to his Children, who therefore shall prolong his days, (as Children mete out their Fathers mortality) in bearing his name, being called Christians, and the sons of God, and the Children of Christ. And this shall be (saith the Psalmist) before the Sun, that is, as long as the Sun endureth.

Now God will use means to bring this to pass, and what are those means? One special one is this, The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. For how should the Name of Christ be childed from generation to generation, (as some render it) if care be not taken by Parents to Child Christ's Name downwards to their Offspring; that his Name may be put upon their Children, by being not only Christians by Baptism, but by Regeneration. And this is one of the great works and ends of our lives; for Hezekiah, here mentioneth, First, Praising of God, and Secondly, Making known the Truth to our Children; which was a great Statute in Israel, and obligeth us no less than them: saith the Psalmist, I will open my mouth in a Parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our Fathers have told us: We will not hide them from their Children, showing to the generations to come, the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. Here

1. Are such as are worthy of the name of Fathers, viz. who transmit to posterity the Truths of God contained in the Scripture, so as these here did, as appears in the sequel of the Psalm. And
2. Here is the only infallible sort of Tradition, viz. that which delivereth to posterity, what God first delivered to the Prophets, Apostles, and holy men of God, and is now contained in the Scriptures.
3. From these words we are taught, that the godly in every age ought to have the same care to transmit the Word of Truth to their posterity, as their Ancestors had to transfer it unto them; and so to pay the debt which they owe to their godly Ancestors, unto their succeeding Children: for our Children are here called their Children, verse. 4th. And if you descended not from such Parents immediately, yet (peradventure) mediately you did. However, this here is your duty, out of love to God, to Truth, and your Posterity. Mark therefore what followeth in the same Psalm. For God established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers, that they should make them known to their Children, that

the generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be born, who should arise and declare them unto their Children. You see this transmitting of the Truth and true Religion to Posterity, is God's love and Testimony, because it testifieth and witnesseth for God, and against us, if we break it. And this Law and Testimony we have several times in Moses. So that the Law and Testimony is, to transmit the Truth to Posterity. For God did not deliver the Truth, and true Religion to a person or people for the use of themselves alone, but for the benefit of their Children also: And he never loved the Truth truly, who is careless, whether it die with himself, or out-live him.

Let such Parents and Masters look to it, who have been negligent in instructing their Children and Families. The handing of Religion from Parents to Children, & from the Living to the next succeeding Age, is a standing part of our Generation-work. It is said of David, That after he had served his generation, he fell asleep. And truly, such as fall asleep before, go to bed before they have done their work, and that is the way to make them start, as many do, when they are newly setting themselves to sleep.

Oh sirs! Care and pains for the godly being of posterity, is a great and necessary business. I many times think of the care and endeavor of the nine Tribes and half, lest their Children should lose their interest in the God of Israel. To which end they built the Altar Ed, as they tell the two Tribes and half in their Apology. Say they, The Lord, God of God's, The Lord, God of God's he knoweth, and Israel he shall know that we have not done it in rebellion, to turn from following the Lord, &c. But we have done it rather for fear of this thing, lest in time to come your Children might speak unto our Children, saying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you; ye Children of Reuben, and Children of Gad, ye have not part in the Lord: So shall your Children make our Children cease from fearing the Lord: Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an Altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for Sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between us and you, and

our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before him with our Burnt-offerings & our Sacrifices, and with our Peace-offerings, that your Children might not say to our Children in time to come, ye have no part in the Lord, &c. Here you see the care and endeavor of the two Tribes and half for the preservation of the true Religion, and way of God's Worship among their posterity, which is the Point that I am now pressing. I beseech you lay it to heart; for I fear that many are guilty in this matter, and that posterity is like to be little beholding to them. Admit of a few Expostulations, and consider,

What will your Children and Servants say, when they come to succeed you, and peradventure die at last in their sins?

Lord, our Parents and Masters did not make known the Truth to us; they did not Catechize and Instruct us; they did not deliver to us the form of sound words, nor any brief sum of the Articles of Faith, and true Religion; but we lived and died in ignorance, for they had no care of our Souls; and if others dealt thus with their Children and Servants. Religion itself might have perished, as we have done.

Now would not this be most miserable? And are you willing to be thus indicted by your Children and Servants in that great day.

Doth not Hezekiah here say, The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth? And is it not expressed as a duty, and a great one too? And doth not Hezekiah look upon this as one of the great works to be attended in this World, without which it is not worth while to live? Hezekiah indeed had no son at this time, but he resolveth here, that if God shall give him one, he will make known the Truth and Faithfulness of God to him; for he looks upon it as his duty, when he saith, The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. And what is the reason, that many are so ignorant this day, but because they wanted Family-instruction from Parents and Masters? For it is not enough, that such do live under the preaching of the Gospel, if they want instruction in the Families wherein they have lived; the

want whereof makes the Ministers Plow to go so heavily. Oh let not the Children and Servants rise up in judgment against you, and charge their ignorance and damnation upon the neglect of your duty towards them.

Thirdly, Consider with whom God hath betruſted the Goſpel and true Religion.

1. He puts his Miniſters in truſt with it. For, ſaith the Apoſtle, We are allowed of God to be put in truſt with the Goſpel. And it is a great truſt, and we muſt be faithful in the diſcharge of it; and you muſt not be offended if we deal plainly with you.

2. He betruſteth all his people with his Goſpel and pure Religion, expecting their diſcharge of this truſt by their utmoſt endeavors to tranſmit it to poſterity, as you heard but even now from that Text, Psalm 78. 3, —7. For he doth not, as I ſaid, put the truſt into your hands for yourſelves only, that you ſhould make uſe of it during your lives, and then die, and let others that ſhall come after you ſhift for themſelves; for this were to be cruel, like the Oſtriches in the Wilderneſs, who leave their Eggs in the Earth, and warm them in the duſt, forgetting that the Foot may crush them, and the wild Beaſt break them; but he expecteth and requireth your faithfulneſs, and utmoſt care and labor to recommend the ſame Religion to your Children and Servants that live with you. And what ſaith Solomon? My Father taught me, and ſaid thus and thus to me, Prov. 4. 4. And my Mother alſo taught me, and ſhe ſaid ſo and ſo to me, Prov. 31. — But how have you taught thoſe that are under your care? And what have you ſaid to them? And where is the Altar Ed, that you have built for them, as a wiſſeſs and memorial of the true Religion and Worſhip of God, which you have commended to them? No marvel that Religion decayeth in many Families, when their Governours have wrapped up their Religion in a Napkin, and profeſſed only for themſelves, and not for them that ſhould come after them. You that are guilty in this part, will have a ſad reckoning to make, when you ſhall be called to give an account of your diſcharge of that truſt,

which is commended to you, and have never an Ed to witness your care of conveying the Truth to the generation to come. Know therefore, that it is your duty, according to this trust committed to you, to turn and wind your Religion for God's Glory & the advantage of posterity; which, if you neglect, take heed you be not numbered among the wicked, and slothful servants, and have your portion with them.

Consider the common care of Parents to bequeath their Houses, Lands, and Goods to such as are to succeed them. They leave their substance to their Babes, saith the Psalmist. And the inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations, and they call their Lands after their own names. That is, they are thoughtful for the upholding of their Families, and the continuing of their names from one generation to another. But as for the Gospel, which they profess, and the Religion which they own, they have little or no care at all. They leave their Earthly substance to their Children, but that which is the most substantial thing of all, they leave it not to them; and they leave their names to their Children, but the Name of God and Christ they leave not, nor have they any care, that Christ's Name be named upon them, by endeavoring to make them Christians indeed, according to their duty, as the Psalmist saith, I will make thy Name to be remembered in all generations. They care not that his Name should be childed from generation to generation. Truly it were just with God, that their names should be blotted out from under Heaven, who love their own names better than Christ's.

Consider the Covenant that pious Parents are entered into with God. For when God saith, I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed; He expecteth and requireth, that Parents do not only give up themselves, but their Seed also unto God. As Hannah said in her prayer, If thou wilt give unto thine Handmaid a Man-child, I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life: She spake indeed of more than an ordinary devoting him to the Lord, viz. in the way of Nazariteship: But yet she bound however, to have given him back to the Lord, in

and by an ordinary way of dedication, common to herself with all Parents, who are bound to this duty by the Law of Nature, and by many commands in the Word of God, which I have already mentioned. Train up therefore a Child (or Catechize him) in the way he should go. So did David deal with Solomon, as you have heard, and so Lois with Eunice, and Eunice with Timothy, and so the godly Fathers in their generations. It was as you have heard, a Testimony and a Law in Israel. And when you brought your Children to Baptism, you did solemnly engage unto this duty. For the Covenant which gave your Children right to that Ordinance, and which sealed it to them, strongly obliged you to give them up to God in the use of all such means as he hath appointed.

And therefore you are a Covenant-breaker in the neglect of this duty, which is the ruin both of many Children and Families, as of Eli's in particular, and yet Eli did reprove his sons, but did not do his utmost. And this is the reason why many Children of godly Parents prove lewd and vicious, and their Families at last, lose all power of godliness, if they grow not loose and profane. For it is with Children, as with the Flowers in your Gardens, which without care and culture will soon degenerate. Remember therefore your Covenant, and attend the terms thereof, which concern you in relation to your posterity. And say, I am not only naturally, but also federally bound to use all means to train up my Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to serve the purpose of God as to their Eternal Salvation.

For do you think it enough, that you breed them up to live in this world? And is it enough that you provide Meat, and Drink, and Apparel, Portions, and Trades, and ways of livelihood for them? Or, that you give them civil Education, and teach them how to carry themselves as men? Will you love their bodies, and neglect their souls? Do you know the price of your own souls, and not of theirs too? Or, are not theirs as precious as yours? Or, is it all one to you where you spend your Eternity, and whether you go to Heaven or Hell? In the mean-while, where is your Religion? Where your love of

God, and Godliness? Where your Conscience as to your Covenant? Or, what care have you, that Godliness may flourish in the next generation, who take not the course that it may thrive in your own Family? Take heed lest you prove to be a Hypocrite at last. Oh, remember the care of good Manoah, when the Angel told him, he should have a son; But, saith he, How shall we order the Child? And what shall we do unto him?

And seeing you are a Covenanter with God, and have given up your Children to him, who hath accepted of them, and sealed the Covenant to them; you should now consider, that they are his Children, his Sons and Daughters, as well as yours, as he expressly calleth them. And he puts them out to you to Board and Breeding, and you must give an account to him, how you have bred them up for him.

And what? Will ye rob God of his Children, and bestow them upon the world, or sacrifice them to devoured, and cause them to pass through the fire, as God challengeth those Parents in the aforesaid place of Ezekiel. I mean to be devoured of that roaring Lion, and (not to pass through the fire, but) to dwell with devouring fire, and with everlasting burnings. Doth not Nature teach Men to propagate their kind? And doth not Grace teach them to propagate the Truth, and true Religion? Without the first, Mankind would perish; without the second, Religion would soon be extinguished: or, have you more care to uphold the World, than to propagate the Gospel of Christ's Kingdom? If so, you are no better than a Man or Woman of this generation.

I perceive, there are many Bills presented for prayers in behalf of ungodly Children. It is well, if their Parents have not been wanting in their duty towards them. If they have not, let them not despond as to the success of their endeavors. I have lived to see the blessed fruits of pious Education, and that though Children so Educated have gone astray for a while, yet they have been graciously reduced at the last, & made their Parents joyful. And I think, it is not usual, that a Father

should be a true fearer of the Lord, and one that conscionably dischargeth his duty towards his Children, and yet all of them should prove ungodly, and none of them be converted sooner or later, but perish in the uncircumcision of their hearts. Perhaps Parents may not always live to see it, but it is well enough if their Children come to Heaven after them.

I have insisted the more upon this Point, it being the great duty of my Text, and of such concernment as to generation-service.

The Exhortation reacheth Ecclesiastic Fathers, such as are the Ministers of the Gospel. For such Fathers also to their Children shall make known the Truth. And that is the reason why we make known those Truths to you, viz. that we may discharge our duties to our Children, that you may discharge the like to yours. And every week, and every Sabbath, and every Sermon we preach can testify, that we are careful to make known the Truth unto you. For we have kept back nothing that was profitable for you, nor have shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God. For as John saith to Gaius, We have no greater joy, than to hear that our Children walk in truth, even in the Truth that we make known unto them. And let all that fear the Lord, bless his Name, that in such a day as this is, there are yet such Spiritual Fathers, who know the Truth, and labor to make it known to their Spiritual Children. For the time may come, that you may want them, when the Truth which is now made known to you by us, may be impugned by them that shall come after us.

There are also Scholastic Fathers, who have the care of training up Children in Learning, and these have their place as well as the former in the fifth Commandment. And a great advantage is put into their hands to make known the Truth unto their Children, as well as to inform their understandings in a way of Human Learning. And I know no Calling, nor Relation, excepting that of the Ministry, that hath the like opportunity of making known the Truth unto posterity.

There are likewise Fathers Political. For there is the Father in the Family, the Father in the Church, the Father in the School, and the Father in the Common-wealth, or Country. And some think, that Naaman's servants called him Father, because he was a great Commander and Prince in his Country, to which also he had been a Father, having wrought great deliverances for the same. However, such a Father was the good King in my Text, and he owns himself as such a one in the very entrance of his Reign, when he was but 25 years old: For saith he to the Priests and Levites (exhorting them to their duty) My sons, be not now negligent, for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that you should minister unto him, and burn Incense. They were (themselves) Fathers, for Hezekiah calls them God's Ministers, and so they were Fathers to Hezekiah; but as he was their King, he was their Father, and they his sons. They his Spiritual Fathers, he their Political, and so, he was not only Pater patriae, but also Pater patrum, not only the Father of his Country, but the Father of his Fathers, i.e., the Political Father of those who were his Fathers Ecclesiastically. But here is no opportunity of speaking to such Fathers as these, whose duty it is also to make known the Truth unto their Children, as Hezekiah did, as appears at large in his Reformation, 2 Chron. 29th, 30th, and 31th Chapters.

There are Fathers in age, gravity, & seniority, viz. such as are well stricken in years. Such are they, 1 Tim. 5. 1. Rebuke not an Elder, but entreat him as a Father, the younger Men as brethren, the elder Women as Mothers, the younger as sisters. The Elder here is not a Church-Officer, as some (perhaps) may think. For though it is Presbyteros in the Original, yet the same word is applied to Elder Women also, in ver. 2. <H&G>, the Elder Women, or (as if I should say) The Presbyteresses. So that the Apostle here speaketh only of the several degrees of Age in each Text, Elder and Younger, calling the Elder Men Fathers, and the Elder Women Mothers, and the younger Men and Women, Brethren and Sisters. And that this is the true meaning of the Apostle, appears also, Titus, 2. 2, 3. where the Elder here, is called Aged there.

Now there is a duty also incumbent upon these, as touching the transmission of the Truth to the generation to come. Make it known therefore by your Examples, Counsels, Encouragements upon all occasions; for you have heard much, and seen much, and known much, and treasured up experiences, and therefore certainly, you should have much to say to such as are of the younger sort, and your years, gravity, wisdom, experiences will the better recommend the Truth unto them; for there is an honor due to you also, by virtue of the fifth Commandment.

Let me commend to you that Text of Scripture, Oh God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works; Now also when I am old, and gray-headed, Oh God, forsake me not, until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to everyone that is to come. The Psalmist was now an old Man, one of much experience, being taught of God from his youth; and as God taught him, so he taught others: For saith he, Hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works; Hitherto, that is, to old Age, for now he was aged, and gray-headed. And had he not done well? And was it not time now to die? Yes, he had done very well, but yet he is willing to live a little longer, to do more, and therefore (saith he) Forsake me not, until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to everyone that is to come. As if he should say, I am willing yet to live a little longer to do more generation-work, there is a care and zeal for posterity upon my heart, there are young people ready to come after me, and peradventure they will listen to the Counsel of an old experienced servant of God; and upon this account I am willing to spend a few days more upon Earth, to serve God and Posterity, without which it were not worth while to live.

Think upon this Text of Scripture, you that are old and gray-headed, and improve the little remainder of your lives to serve the succeeding generation. For you do not love Religion, if you do not love that it should live when you are dead; neither are they worthy of experiences, who dig and hide them in the Earth. When God had

showed his singular care and power in the preservation of his Church against her Enemies that attempted the ruin thereof, saith he, Walk about Zion, go round about her, tell the Towers thereof, mark ye well her Bulwarks, consider her Palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations following. So when God ariseth to build up Zion, and appears in glory upon the prayers of his poor people, This must be written for the generations to come, that the people which shall be created may praise the Lord.

Lastly, There are such, who though they are not called Fathers, yet are called Elders, viz. the Members of the Gospel-Churches. And they are so called, not in respect of age, but of state in these Gospel-times, wherein the Church is past her non-age, and is now in an Elderly state, requiring more Knowledge, Wisdom, Strength, Seriousness, Gravity, and Solidity in the things of God. How should such, as these walk before others, so as to answer the Character of Elders? Let such take heed then of carrying it below their state. It is not for Elders to behave themselves like Children. I have thought many times of that description of the Gospel-Churches in the Revelations, and how little it is answered this day by many that relate to such Societies. Take heed then of scandals, answer your State, live up to your Privileges, shine in Holiness, that you may adorn the Doctrine of God and our Savior, and commit and commend your State, Examples, and holy Lives unto the Generation to come, that they may attain to the knowledge of the Truth, by your walking in it; and say, These Truths and Ways of holy Walking were made known to me by the Gracious, Grave, and serious Lives of such as did relate unto the Churches of Christ.

The Exhortation hitherto hath been to do all the good we are able, during our abode here below, seeing death will put end to all our opportunities. And I have propounded to you several Particulars wherein to be exercised this way.

Now before I proceed to any further Use of Exhortation, Let me mind you of that which may conduce to the attendance of this Duty, and

that is, an heart enlarged unto public service. For that which greatly hinders the prosecution of this work, is the narrowness and straightness of the Spirits of Men, whose concernments are commonly bounded within themselves. Therefore you must endeavor to abound in love.

First, To the glory of God. For this was at work in Hezekiah's heart, when he said, The living, the living, he shall praise thee. This was uppermost, this was the first thing that was in his Eye, in his desire of prolongation of life. For indeed, it is the chief good of Man, whom God made for himself, and who therefore is to have this end continually in his aim, and to be often thinking, What shall I do to glorify God? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to him be glory forever, Amen. And all is lost that ends not in him that is Omega, to whom you may well afford this honor, when you consider that he is Alpha. He that is the first, must be the last. Take heed then of a narrow selfish Spirit, which never looks so far as to this end; and that makes many so unactive for God, and his Glory. You must therefore believe more, and love more, and then you will act to this end more, &c.

Secondly, Your love to the glory of God must extend to the Generations to come. You must not therefore limit it to the present Generation, and never be concerned that God may be glorified in future Ages, even to the Worlds end: But your desires herein must reach to the very end of the World. For note the words of the Apostles Paul, To God be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen. His love to God's glory ran through all Ages even to Eternity. And so should your love do, or else you do not sincerely love it; neither indeed can you love that his Glory be upheld during your own time, and not love the continuance of it to the Worlds end.

And such was the love of the Saints in the Scriptures, to the praise and glory of God; say they, We will show forth thy praise to all generations. And therefore,

1. They desired the continuance thereof to the Worlds end.
2. They would also endeavor it. With my mouth, saith the Psalmist, will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations: And this hath been their care still, That the people which shall be created may praise the Lord. Thus you must love God's Glory both Intensively, and Extensively.

As you must love the Glory of God, & that it may be extended to future Ages; so likewise you must love his Kingdom, or else you will never attend this great work unto which you have been exhorted. God's Kingdom, Power, and Glory must go together in your prayers.

And this was much upon Hezekiah's heart, when he said, The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. For he doth not say, I will make known thy Truth to my Children, though he purposed so to do, but the Father, that is, every Father that feareth God, not only in my time, but in the generations to come. Thus must your love be extended to the Kingdom of God, and, Thy Kingdom come, must be always in your desires and endeavors. Come; how long? Even to the end of the world, and never cease coming, till Christ himself come. Now if this be upon your heart, and if you love that Christ should reign in the world, you will do your utmost to promote it, in your capacity, in attending to the several Particulars propounded.

As you love God's Glory and Kingdom, so must you love his Gospel. For it is the Word of the Kingdom; That is, The Word whereby God's Kingdom is erected, enlarged, governed, perfected. It is that in which, and by which our Lord Jesus doth reign in the world, viz. as to his Spiritual Kingdom therein, of which I now speak especially. And you see in my Text, Hezekiah's love to the Truth, and to the making of it known from Generation to Generation; whereas the Gospel is the Truth, <H&G>, the Truth with an excellency, called therefore, The Word of Truth, and The Word of the Truth of the Gospel: The Truth made known not by the Light of Nature, but by Revelation; a mysterious Truth, and therefore a great Truth, that we use to say, As

true as the Gospel. Now if you love this Truth, (as you have cause enough so to do) you will do anything that may tend to the publication and propagation of it, by your prayers, pains, purses, Counsels, &c.

Fourthly, As you must love God's Glory, Kingdom, and Gospel, so you must love Souls. The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth. Therefore the Father must love the Souls of posterity, and have a zeal for the salvation of them that shall succeed. And this will quicken your endeavors to the service of your Age, when you shall look upon the Souls of successors as of equal value with your own, seeing the ransom given for all Souls is the same.

And it is a blessed thing to be a lover of souls: it makes a man like unto Jesus Christ, whose love to Souls shines in his own blood, wherein the kindness and love God our Savior towards Man appeareth. His kindness and Philanthropy, i. e. love towards Man. For God and our Savior are great lovers of Men; so should we be. And Christ's delights were with the sons of Men from eternity. We should not therefore terminate our love in Men's bodies; we should love the Jewel far above the Cabinet, and be frequently looking upon Men's Souls.

1. In comparison with our own, and

2. In the Blood of the Son of God; and

3. In relation to Eternity; especially the Souls of such as are near to us. And the enlargement of our affections this way will amplify our endeavors. In Heaven we shall love Souls that are saved, but here we must love Souls that they may be saved; A work which determineth in Glory.

Now all this requireth a public Spirit, and a heart carried far beyond ourselves. For a narrow Spirit acteth within a narrow compass, and is limited to private concernments. And that is the reason why there is so little Generation-service performed. All Men seek their own, and

not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Whereas our care should extend far beyond our own salvation; and love to God's Glory, future Ages, Christ's Kingdom, Gospel, and precious Souls, should all have a large room in our hearts and affections.

Thus you have had a great deal of work set before you, which will die together with you. And to quicken you to it,

Consider, That you know not how soon you may leave this world: As Isaac said to Esau, I am old, and know not the day of my death, and yet he lived 43 years after that. Few men in Scripture knew the day of their death, so as Hezekiah here did, to whose life 15 years were added, and he resolveth to spend them for God's Glory, and the good of Posterity. So do you as for the remainder of your days, which may not be a quarter so many as his.

Only have a care to perform better than he did. For when he was recovered, he rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him. Why? What was the matter? His heart was lifted up. Hezekiah saith here, The living, the living he shall praise thee, as I do this day; Yea, but how many days did this continue: For by and by he is praising himself. Ye see the deceitfulness of the Heart of Man. This by the way.

Only consider the uncertainty of the opportunity, and how soon it may be at an end, and that the dead cannot praise God, nor they that go down into silence. Now your Tongues may speak for God, and so may your Lives, and Examples too; but shortly there will be nothing but silence.

Oh! Be not silent before death, for then you will be silent forever. Peradventure you have spoken too little already, in order (I mean) to the work of your day. Speak therefore and act to God's honor, and the benefit of others, whilst you live, or forever hold your peace.

I have laid several particulars before you, concerning the service of this life; & have you not been wanting in many of them? And is not

your day also far spent? And are not the shadows of the evening stretched out? Make it up for the future, as far as your remaining days will give you leave. And to this end.

Consider the account you are to give when your opportunity is ended. What saith the Apostle? Everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God. And this is the very next thing after death. It is appointed unto Men once to die, and after this the judgment. Once to die, not twice; for there is an Emphasis in that little word, once, as appeareth by the next verse, So Christ was once offered, &c. And after this the judgment. 1. Dye. 2. But once. 3. Men, that is, all Men. 4. Then to judgment; and there is a statutum est upon all this four. And the judgment will pass upon your managing your present opportunities. For when the Lord cometh, he cometh to reckon; so when you go to the Lord, you go to reckon, viz. how you have praised him here among the living, how you have endeavored to further his Kingdom, according to your capacity, how you have lived exemplarily, embraced and improved all opportunities to appear and speak for Christ; how, and for whom you have prayed, how you have comforted the feeble minded, and supported the weak, supplied the outward wants of the Saints according to your ability, how you have stood for Christ in a suffering time, how you have improved those Gifts of Grace which are proper to this Life, how you have endeavored to transmit pure Religion and undefiled to your Posterity, by recommending it especially to your Children.

I tell you these are the great things, and all of them are the Work of the Living, and not of the Dead. How far you have attended them hitherto, you best know; If you have been wanting, you had need to make up in repentance, what hath been lacking in duty; and a great part of your repentance must be exercised in fruits worthy amendment of life. For so soon as ever your Soul is quit of its earthly Tabernacle, you must presently appear before God's Judgment-Seat.

Consider the greatness of the reward of good and faithful servants. They shall have as much joy as their hearts can hold. For they must

enter into it, seeing it cannot enter into them. Neither the Sufferings, nor the Duties and doings of this present time are worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. But our Eyes are too seldom upon the recompense of reward, nor do we consider what God hath prepared for them that love him: Whereas, did we seek for Glory, Honor, Immortality, we should continue patiently in well-doing. But few that fear God have Faith enough to take in the exceeding eternal weight of Glory that is prepared for them. If glorified Saints were to return to live again upon Earth, they would double and triple their duties beyond what they did in former times. For, what do they think when they are entering into the joy of their Lord? What? All this Glory, all this Joy, a Heart full, and a Heaven full, and to Eternity also, and that for so few imperfect services? And must I now spend Eternity in the enjoyment of God, and do none of those services anymore for him, which were proper and peculiar to my temporal life? And must I be on the receiving hand as to all this Glory forever and forever? Certainly, if it were possible, This would make the Saints repent in Heaven, that they had done no more for Jesus Christ on Earth. But if such thoughts were incident to glorified Saints, they come too late, when once they are in Heaven: Now is your time to be working for that inestimable reward. When therefore you come to God, you must have a full persuasion, not only of his Being, but Bounty, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, as the Apostle speaks. But remember that it must be diligently. And be you never so diligent, he will abundantly reward it. And if Saints could but look into Heaven, and see how 'tis there, before they come thither, they would soon double their diligence, and work their fingers to the stumps for Christ. But many want Faith to believe so great a reward, or to apply it to themselves, as that which God will certainly bestow upon them after their work is ended.

Consider yet further, That the good you do upon Earth may increase when you are dead; and as that increaseth, so shall your glory still be enlarged. For though the least Glory above is inconceivable, and the words there spoken unutterable, yet there are abundance of Argumentations in Heaven, and they who at their first entrance,

wore but single Crowns, after a while wear double ones. For it is said, God will give to every Man according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his doings. So that, if their former doings on Earth do fructify after they are dead, God will reward them according to the Fruit thereof. For not only their works, but the fruit of them also doth follow them. And so do the evil works of wicked men follow them, as Jeroboam's did for above three hundred years together after his death; for that at last he felt a sevenfold Hell for what he did at first. Upon this account it is conceived, that Dives desired Abraham to send Lazarus to go and preach to his five brethren, that they might avoid that place of torment; why? Is there charity in Hell? No, it was not out of love to his brethren, but to himself, because he had corrupted them with his wicked life, and left a bad example behind him, which they followed, therefore he desired, that they might (if not be saved, for that I think a damned Soul cannot desire, yet that) they might not for his cause and example be brought into that place of torment, because this would be the increase of his torment too. In like manner on the other hand, the glory of the Saints receives increase as their labors and pains are fruitful, as Divines say of Paul's glory. One Heaven is too much for the best Saint that ever lived, were not the reward of Grace, and yet your Heaven shall multiply according to the fruit of your good doings which you left behind you.

And this will be instead of doing good in Heaven, when the Saints leave that behind them, which keeps fructifying after they have left this world.

Why? What is that which they may thus leave behind them?

Their good Works and Words, and Examples, and holy Lives, their Instructions, Exhortations, Counsels, Encouragements, their remarkable Actions and Sufferings for Christ. By all which they act and speak even after death. And there is no other way that I know whereby to do good when you are in Heaven. And in this way shall the glorified Saints know in Heaven, whether the good works which they left behind them do fructify, for they shall find and feel it in

their enlarged Crowns, further Augmentations, and additional Glories. And then they shall break out into new Songs of praise to God and the Lamb, for helping them to sow their Seed on Earth, which still fructifieth after they are gone to Heaven. And in this way a Father may convert his Child, or Children after his death, as (as I doubt not, but) many have done. And then he heareth of it in Heaven, two ways.

1. By his additional Glory.

2. By the joyful Acclamations of the Angels for the conversion of a sinner.

Wherefore let us endeavor so to live here a little while, that our good Works may live when we are dead, and act when we are at rest, and speak when we are gone down into silence, and bring forth fruit unto holiness, when we are in endless happiness; and bring Souls to Heaven after us to tell us that our good Works, and Words, and Examples, Instructions, Exhortations, Counsels, sufferings, Graces, are yet all alive and well, and like to yield a further Crop and Harvest of Joy and Honor to them that sowed them before their death. Oh, it is a blessed thing, and the Wisdom of Saints to leave a stock of good Works behind them, whereby to have a Trade going here on Earth, which will afford them fresh Incomes of Glory, whilst they are already shining as the Sun in the the Kingdom of their Father.

And thus much for the first Use of Exhortation, to do all the good we are able, during our dwelling here on Earth.

2nd Branch of Exhortation.

Let the second Exhortation be to call upon you to value your Opportunities, & to make the best improvements of time whilst you are in the Land of the living, so as the World is often called. For Hezekiah began now to consider the price of time, who but lately was at the Gates of the Grave, and deprived (as he thought) of the residue of his years, that is, which he might have lived according to the

ordinary course of Nature. Saith he, Mine age is departed, and removed from me as a Shepherds Tent, That is, which the Shepherd removeth from Plain to Plain, according to his occasions, as the matter shall require.

Now I am living here, by and by my Body must lodge in the Tent of the cold Grave, and my Soul return to God that gave it. I have cut off like a Weaver my life, he (that is, God) will cut me off from the Thrum, Ver. 12. I have cut off my life by my Sins, and God hath cut it off by his righteous hand upon me. Saith he, I reckoned till morning, Ver. 13. I shall be dead by the morning. And now Hezekiah begins to prize time, and cries, The living, the living he shall praise thee. Thus when once the swift Shuttle of your life is come to a Thrum, then you will see the value of Opportunity, and cry, The living, the living, &c. and reckon till the morning, and say, There is but one day more between my life and Eternity. And it may not be long ere that Morning or Evening cometh. For little did Hezekiah a few days before think that he had been so near unto death, being now but thirty-nine years old, and God having wrought so wonderfully for him in his late preservation from Sennacherib: For saith he, Behold, for peace I had great bitterness. God lately destroyed the Host of the King of Assyria, and gave me peace, and I said, I shall now die in my Nest, and multiply my days as the Sand, but I little thought of such a sickness to ensue my peace.

It seems he was surprised; and so may you be, if you look not well to it, for God now gives fair warning of it. They that will not prize Opportunity, shall have an opportunity to prize it: If they prize it not living, they shall prize it dying. Wherefore manage your seasons for the best ends while you have them, and fill up your days with duty, and be not so eager upon the World, and the things thereof. Opportunity is a golden Mattock to dig for Heavenly Treasure; do not wear it out, as many do, in digging for Pebbles, and at your latter end become a fool.

Beware therefore of idleness on the one side, and cumbering yourself with Worldly Occasions on the other; but consider, wherefore hath God given you life and time, but to be serviceable in your day, and to work for him in whom you live. He did not give you time to play the Truant, and design and labor to be rich, and to grow great in the World, and to arrive at such a Revenue, and proportion of worldly Estate; but he sent you into the World to do his work, and to improve your Time and Talent for him.

And therefore, when the World, or the Flesh is putting such Employments upon you, which will devour much time, and divert you from the one thing necessary, tell them; That you must give an account of your time, and you must not rob your Lord and Master of his hours, which he sent you to improve in his service, &c.

And certainly it is an undervaluing also of Heaven, to think to go thither, and to do little or nothing for God upon Earth, though yet the recompense of reward is purely gracious, or of mere Grace, let our Labors for the Lord be never so many; for what are all our Studies, Works, Sweat, and blood, and Spirits, and Cost; and Care, and Time expended upon Christ, in comparison with an exceeding Eternal weight of Glory? Prize therefore and improve your times.

Here are several of you that are young, or in your middle age, or about Hezekiah's years. Call yourselves to an account, and inquire of your own hearts what you have done: Peradventure but little for God, and what will turn to a comfortable account. What then, if God should now lay you (as he did Hezekiah) upon your sick Bed, and threaten to cut off the Thrum of your lives? Would you not with him turn your faces to the wall, and weep sore? And yet I tell you, Hezekiah had done a great deal of Work for God, during the time of his Reign unto this sickness. He lost no time, but fell hard to the Work of Reformation in the first month of the first year of his Reign. And he did a great deal during his fourteen years before his sickness, and he did it also in Truth, and with a perfect heart.

But still, what have you done, if you were now as near the gates of the grave, as here he was? And to these Gates you must come at last, and pass through them also to the highest Tribunal, to answer to this Question, What hast thou done? How hast thou improved time, occupied with thy Talent, filled up thy Relations, maintained good Works for necessary uses, been active for the highest end?

Peradventure you will plead your small capacity, and that you are but of mean degree, an obscure person, and exercised in Low Employments, and of weak parts, &c.

Yea, but still what saith Hezekiah? The living, the living he shall praise thee. And are not you living? Are you not alive? For any Man or Woman living may praise the Lord, or else Hezekiah saith not well; But it is true what he saith, for any Man living may do his generation-work. Is your capacity than such, that you cannot praise the Lord? What saith the Psalmist? Praise ye the Lord; who? Kings of the Earth. Yea, they are in a capacity indeed. Such as Hezekiah may do much that way, they are great Men, and have great opportunities. But what followeth? Kings of the Earth, and all people: Princes and all Judges of the Earth. Both young Men and Maidens, and old Men and Children. Let them praise the Name of the Lord. Men and Maids, old and young, all may; and all must attend the service, none excepted.

And therefore plead not your mean capacity, but serve your age according to your Talent. For he that had but one Talent, doth not say, Lord, I had but one, and what can a Man do with one? My fellow-servants had, one five Talents, the other two, and they might well employ and improve them. No, he saith not thus; He was convinced that one Talent might be improved to advantage as well as five, and that everyone is bound to be Trading for God with what he hath given him; for, saith the Text, He gave to every Man according to his several ability. So that all of them had an ability, though several: One had a five-fold ability, another a twofold, another a single. And he that had but a single capacity, was called to an account

for his unprofitableness, and cast into outer darkness. The meanest therefore among you hath some ability, and woe be to him, if he doth not improve it. A young Man, a Servant, a poor Man, a mean Man, may do many things in tendency to God's Glory, and the good of others, whilst he is living, and the living, the living, he shall praise thee.

You that are stricken in years, you have much to account for. For you have lived long, and perhaps are now grown old, but have you been old Traders? Yes, as to a worldly account: Yea, but there is another, and a better Trade, & what have you done therein? God will call you to a reckoning for your worldly Trade, and especially for your Spiritual. You have gained thus much in the world, he will say, but what redounds to my share of all that you have done? This is the great Question. Think ye; Oh how many opportunities have you out-lived, which will never have their Resurrection: If therefore you should say as John Baptist's hearers, what shall we do then? I answer,

First, Be humbled for your former neglects, and misspense of time, who in doing much, have hitherto done nothing; and judge yourselves for your omissions, before your Lord and Master calleth you to account. For if you judge your selves, you shall not be judged.

Bring forth fruit meet for Repentance. For though it is as impossible, that your former individual opportunities should return, as that you should grow young again, yet God may please to minister new occasions to you upon your repentance, whereby to bring forth fruit in old age. It seems, that Nicodemus was an old Man when he came to Christ by night; For, saith he, Can a Man be born when he is old? As much as to say, As I am. But when he is converted, he thrives apace, and comes to Christ at noon, and owns him in the place of public Judicature, and is a mean to dissolve the Session. And afterward he owns Christ crucified, and is at much cost to embalm him, when his Disciples deserted him. The Old Man got the start of

them all, and of many others that set out before him. So it is sometimes, The first are last, and the last first.

Now therefore bestir yourselves, and redeem lost time by improving what remaineth to the utmost, and see what you can do with a little remnant of life, and whether you cannot grow as fast as Old Nicodemus did. Project improvements of life, which is a kind of Save-all, now that your light is near extinguishing.

Make up in affection what may be wanting in action. If you cannot do much, yet love much. and you have cause enough to do so, in that God hath given you to live so long, who have done so little. If our Servants should work no better for us, than many have done for God, we should soon turn them out of doors. And therefore love the Lord the more, and that will also provoke you to do the more.

Stir up others to work for God, that what you cannot do by your own hands, you may do by others. For you shall have a share in their good actions, who work by your incitement. What good was done by the hands of thousands in the days of the reforming Kings of Judah, is still imputed to the Reformers that set them on work, as you may see in the Reign of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. And though the persons employed might act from Principles of Hypocrisy, as some (at least) did in Josiah's Reformation; Yet the works were done in sincerity, as to the Reformers: They were done in Hypocrisy as to the Instruments, in sincerity as to the principal Agent.

Your time therefore is but short, and you cannot do much with your own hands, see what you can do by others, as by your Wife, Husband, Children, Relations, Friends, Neighbors, and it shall be imputed unto them, if they do it sincerely, but to you howsoever, if you did set them on work in the uprightness of your heart.

Pray for death-bed Grace, Faith, Hope, Patience, Peace of Conscience, composedness of Spirit, & such a frame as is fit to glorify God, and edify others at your last farewell to friends. This is that

which we should all pray for, and it is that which God is pleased to grant to some, and it is a great mercy where it is vouchsafed, for it is not so eminently granted unto all that fear the Lord. Had Hezekiah now died, his Distemper was so violent, that he could not have died so comfortably, I reckoned till morning, that as a Lion, so he will break all my bones: From day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. Like a Crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a Dove: Mine eyes fail with looking upward: Oh Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me. But they that have done but little for the Lord, and are not now like to do much, had need to pray more, especially, that thus they may finish their course.

And if God grant you this mercy, you may perhaps do as much good dying, as ever you did living. The few words of the penitent Thief have done good to thousands, though he was a Man that never did good, but much evil, till he was converted upon the Cross. And thus much for the Exhortation to value Opportunities, and to make the best improvement of time while it lasteth.

3rd Use of Exhortation.

If there are opportunities of performing service to God in this world, which are not to be enjoyed after death, and that the Saints do that for God here, which they cannot do in Heaven; Then, be not too eager in your desires to die. It was Jobs weakness, though indeed he was then in great distress and misery. He longed for death, and digged for it more than for hid Treasures. We must not be too forward to dig our own Graves: We may prepare them, as Joseph of Arimathea did, and also we must prepare for them; but let us not dig them impatiently, or importunately.

Life is a great mercy, yea, and length of days. It is annexed to the obedience of the fifth Commandment. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation. Why? Will not a Child of God be satisfied without length of days? Yes, he is satisfied to die when God pleaseth. If God will take him away sooner or later, he is satisfied. It

is said of Abraham, Isaac, David, and Job, that they died full of days. And it was true, both passively, in that they were old Men; and actively, in that they were well satisfied to live so long. And therefore Job left off digging for death, long before he died. Peradventure you have your exercises both outward and inward, and withal you have good hopes of a blessed state in a better world; and now you long for death, and would fain be gone. Take heed, it is time enough to go to a glorious Eternity, and when you are there, you will never say, you came not thither soon enough. Here is, more service for you to do: Do not love your Reward beyond your Work. A lazy servant will be often listening to the Clock, or looking upon the Sun, and longing for the Evening, not minding so much his Work as his Wages.

It is said of Jehoiada also, that he was full of days, when he died, being one hundred and thirty years old. He was full of days passively, and full actively, he was satisfied with this great length of days, and very well contented and thankful to live so long. He was deep in years (I suppose about, if not above, a hundred years old) when his Nephew Joash came to the Crown. For he lived to see Joash married, and after that the Temple repaired. And he died not long before Joash, who reigned but forty years. But few men lived so long in those days, and yet he did a great deal of good service unto the last. And when he died, they buried him in the City of David among the Kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God, and towards his house. And the most of it was done in his old Age.

4th Use of Exhortation.

If the people of God can do more service for him on Earth than in Heaven; Be exhorted to prize their lives pray for them, and improve them. If Hezekiah here had died of his sickness, the people of God would soon have missed him, as when (at last) he died, they did, for you know what came after. Consider what a deal of good ceaseth with the life of a good Man: It is true, his Works live, but his working is dead. Ministers shall preach no more; Church-Officers rule no more, dispense no more; Benefactors lay out themselves no more; public

Spirits act no more. True; their Examples, Sayings, Writings, Memory, Fruits of their former Works may survive: But their persons, personal acting's, delightful presence, sweet fellowship, wholesome Counsels, and ready helpfulness are dead and gone. Whereas these are great mercies, and many will say so when they are gone, who made but little of them while they had them. You know how the Elders of Ephesus, and the Brethren at Miletus wept at Paul's parting, sorrowing most of all, that they should see his face no more; and yet after that he lived many years, and wrote an Excellent Epistle to the Church at Ephesus. Oh, how would they have wept, had he then died at Miletus! But few precious ones are prized enough till dead, and perhaps not then neither. The Israelites did not sufficiently value Samuel when he grew old, but when they had tasted what Saul was, and that Samuel also was taken away by death, then they all lamented him. Yea, and Saul himself also wanted him, who little regarded him whilst living. Bring me up Samuel, saith he to the Witch at Endor. He that before would not go to Samuel, will now go to the Devil for him. Bring me up Samuel; Yes, Rake him by all means out of his Grave: And, oh, that Saul could but once more speak with Samuel!

How few are they who have a just valuation of these living mercies, or that duly lay to heart the loss of them? For it is our duty also to bewail the death of such, as when the Church lost Stephen, devout Men carried him to his burial; and made great lamentation over him. Oh know the price of living Saints, especially the most useful ones.

You that are Children, and have godly Parents, who have made known the Truth to you, take heed you think not they have lived too long; but know that it is your mercy, if they die full of years, and come to their Graves in a full age, like as a shock of Corn cometh in its season. Improve their lives, and lament their deaths. Sarah was an hundred twenty and seven years old when she died, and yet Isaac lamented the loss of her for the space of three years, and nothing could comfort him, but his marriage with a dear Rebekah. I beseech you love and honor your godly Parents, beg their continuance with

you, and your profiting by them, and be very obedient to the first Commandment with a Promise. Joash had that benefit by his old Uncle Jehoiada, who was instead of a Father to him, that it went well with him and his Kingdom while he lived, but miserably with both afterwards. Many Children have lost themselves together with their Parents.

Consider what I say. And then you that have such Ministers of Jesus Christ, as labor in the Word and Doctrine, and watch for your Souls, prize them, pray for them, and improve them, for you know not the consequences of their removal.

5th Use of Exhortation.

Lastly, Seeing there is more service to be done on Earth than in Heaven; how should this exalt Christ Jesus in our hearts, and enlarge them in love to him, who as he wrought so much for us on Earth, so still is he at work for us in Heaven? He, He is the great Worker in the highest World. You know what he saith in his prayer to his Father, I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished, the work which thou gavest me to do. Yea, but we are to understand it of his Work upon Earth, for his Work in Heaven is not as yet finished, nor will before the end of the world.

Alas! We can do little for Christ in Earth, and less in Heaven. Yet Jesus Christ, whether in Earth or Heaven, is still at work for us. It is not with him as with us. Heaven takes the work out of our hands, but it puts it into his. For thither is he gone to take and keep possession, and to prepare places for us. There he executeth his Mediatorial-Office, continually appears and makes intercession for us, sheds abroad his Spirit, gives Commission to the Angels, and Gifts unto Men, calleth and gathereth in his Elect ones, enableth us to work on Earth, governs the World, upholds his Church, and subdues their Enemies. All the Work of Heaven lies upon Christ's hands; and it is well it doth, of what would become of us on Earth!

And as this should raise our Esteem and Love of Christ, so should it quicken us the more to work for him on Earth, seeing he is still at work for us in Heaven. He wrought above thirty years for us here on Earth, but in Heaven above sixteen hundred, and thus he will continue his work to the end of the world.

To him therefore be glory, and honor, forever and ever. Amen.

**A SHORT DISCOURSE OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF
THE GOSPEL-DAY, REACHING FROM THE
DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD, TO THE ERECTION OF THE
NEW JERUSALEM:**

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Light shall not be clear, nor dark.

But it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. - Zach. 14. 6, 7.

By W. H.

London, Printed for John Wilkins, and are to be sold at his shop in Exchange-Alley, next door to the Exchange-Coffee-House, over against the Royal-Exchange, 1673.

COURTEOUS READER.

Thou hast added a brief Treatise of the nature of the Gospel-Day in its Rise, Progress, and Perfection. The Morning of which Day (beginning in the Apostles times) had much darkness mingled with a little light. You know what stiff and earnest contentions there were

for the Jewish Rites and Ceremonies; yea, the very Articles of Faith called in question, the Spirit of Anti-christ working even then in the Evangelical Churches, which in after Ages grew to a greater height in the exaltation of the Man of Sin. But still the Light and Purity of the Gospel prevailed, though sometimes the darkness was such, as to threaten an utter extirpation: God raising up some faithful Witnesses in all Ages to hold forth, and vindicate the Light against all that opposition made against it. The Truth had its Champions even then, when the whole World wondered after the Beast. And from them to us it is continued by an uninterrupted succession, being still of a growing and increasing Nature like the path of the Just shining more unto the perfect day. What cause have we to bless God that we see the Truth and Gospel going on conquering and to conquer all Error and Opposition? Well, the night is far spent, and the day is at hand, and go, let us cast off the Works of Darkness, and put on the Armor of Light, and so much the more as we see the Day breaking, when Shadows shall flee away, & Light shall overspread the face of the whole Earth. Peace, Truth, Holiness, and Comfort shall then abound. In the mean time it is no wonder if Light and Darkness conflict together. Light of Peace with Trouble, of Truth with Error; and go, let us not be secure, God may soon bring a Cloud over our Peace and Liberty. And let us also who are of the day be sober, bearing with and forbearing one another, forasmuch as yet we know but in part, and see through a Glass darkly; but when the Evening of this Gospel-Day cometh, the Lord shall be one, and his Name one; Zech. 14. 7, 9.) one heart and one way, Jer. 32. 39. In the Faith and Hope hereof, Let all the Children of Zion rejoice, and endeavor to be a People prepared for the Lord.

Reader, I shall detain thee no longer from this useful and seasonable Discourse. The blessing of God go with it, and make it fruitful, so prays

Jan. 18th 1673-4.

Thy Servant in the Gospel. H. J.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark.

But it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. - ZECH. 14. 6, 7.

This Chapter begins with the revenge of God upon Judah and Jerusalem for their crucifying the Lord of glory (Ch. 13. 7.) of which vengeance Christ himself foretold, and he calls them days of vengeance, where he amplifieth what the Prophet here speaketh briefly.

Yet God threateneth to be avenged on the Nations that dealt thus with Jerusalem and the Jews. They should have no thanks for this their service, as minding only the fulfilling of their own wills, and not God's; (Ver. 3.) But though Jerusalem should be overthrown, and the Temple burnt, and the Temple-Worship abolished; yet the Lord would have a care of his Church, and make way for the conversion of the Gentiles, and expose the Truth and Way of his Worship to the open view of the Jews and Gentiles from East to West.

For the Truth and Way of God's Worship, and of Salvation was pent up before Christ's coming, in the narrow confines of Judea, and obscured also, and darkened with shadows and Ceremonies, as Jerusalem (the Seat of God's Worship) was with Hills. But now all should be laid open before all the world, from East to West. And this here is signified by an Allegory of the cleaving of Mount Olivet (one famous Hill being put for the rest) in the midst towards the East, and towards the West, whereby the City of God (which is the Church) should no longer be obscured, but patent, all Shadows and Ceremonies, and Partition-walls being removed. This, I suppose is the purport of Vers. 4.

After this followeth a very great Commotion, compared to that great Earthquake in King Uzziah's days, which made Men to flee for their lives. But it is to be understood Spiritually (viz.) of Christ's voice in the Gospel, shaking, not the Earth only, but also Heaven; whereby a great change is made even in the Church, by the shaking and removing of the Ceremonial-way of Worship, and the Partition-wall, and causing both Jew and Gentile (as many as would be saved) to flee to the Gospel, and Gospel-way of Worship, and Christ therein, from the wrath that is to come: This, I conceive is the meaning of Ver. 5.

Only, whereas it is said, And the Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee; This may be meant, Firstly, Of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to set up his Gospel-Kingdom, whither his Elect should be gathered unto him their Head: But lastly, and chiefly of Christ's second coming, whereof Paul makes mention, speaking of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints. For this Chapter leads us so far, that nothing remaineth but this last and great coming of Christ, unto which the Prophet cannot forbear to look, and he looketh at it with much Faith and Joy.

1. In that he applieth the Lord God to himself. The Lord my God shall come.
2. In that he turneth his speech unto him. And all the Saints with thee.

Briefly as for the Chapter, it begins with the destruction of the Old Jerusalem, and endeth with the erection of the New.

And whereas there is a Day spoken of, so and so described as in my Text, It is the day or the time, that lieth between these two Jerusalem's, Old and New. It is not a Natural or Artificial day, for such a day cannot suite with the scope of this Prophecy; Nor was there ever any such day, wherein it was lighter in the Evening than in all the day before. And therefore by Day here, we must necessarily

understand a large tract of time, for so Day is many times taken in the Scripture, particularly the time of the Gospel is called the Day of Salvation. And it is called that Day, sixteen times in this and the two preceding Chapters, which treat of the last times, wherein such work is to be done, as will take up many hundred years, as you may see if you consult the Chapters at leisure.

And you see here when this day began, (viz.) when the Gospel was first published, viz. about the time of the destruction of the Old Jerusalem, or somewhat before it, and continueth to the setting up of the New.

Let me then put all the description of this day together into one Point, and it is this.

Doctrine.

The Gospel-times, unto the conversion of the Jews, are one day intermixed with Light and Darkness, known to God, in the evening whereof it shall be light.

First, The Day here is plainly meant of the times of the Gospel, till the days of the new Jerusalem. For you find this Day again, Vers. 8. and again, Vers. 9. & so, till you are led to the conversion of the Jews, and the New Jerusalem, Ver. 10, 11. to the end.

Secondly, This day is one day. 1. A Day. 2. One.

A Day. And that for these Reasons.

1. In that it hath light in it all along. For Christ and the Gospel run through it. And these carry light with them where ever they come. It is true, there is a mixture of darkness in it, yet it is not called night; but, because it hath light in it, therefore is called Day; for the better part carries the denomination.

2. It is a Day in comparison with the dark times under the Law, especially the times immediately preceding the coming of Christ, when besides the shadows of Ceremonies, there was great darkness of ignorance.

3. It is such a Day, as is distinguished with remarkable periods, (viz.) of Seals, Trumpets, Vials, even as the Natural day is with hours, and distinct divisions. This we see at large in Johns Revelation.

4. It is a Day, in that it hath in it a blessed opportunity of working, Luke 19. 42. Joh. 9. 4. & 12. 35.

5. A Day, in that it hath a Morning, and an Evening. The Morning began with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, when the day-spring from on high did visit us, and the people that sat in darkness saw great light. And the Evening lies in my Text, immediately before the Jews conversion. Thus it is a Day.

It is One day, i.e., one and the same from Morning to Evening. And 'tis so upon two accounts.

First, In that every part of the day is mixed with light and darkness, though not equally mixed, for sometimes it is more light, sometimes more dark, but more or less light and dark always. And so the day is one and the same for constancy of light and darkness, though not for the equality of both.

Secondly, One and the same, and like to itself, because there is in it but one and the same Covenant, and way of Administration according to what God hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but also Heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are made that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. The Legal Administration was shaken and removed at the coming of this day, but the Evangelical shall remain to the very end of it. And hence it is, that the Church still appears in all the Periods of this day, under the same form to the very last, viz. of four living Creatures and twenty-

four Elders. And thus it is unus idemque dies, One and the same day from first to last. This is the Second Branch of the point, 'tis One day.

Thirdly, It is such a Day as is intermixed with Light and Darkness, so that it is neither Day nor Night, verse. 7. But why then is it called a Day in the same Verse? The meaning therefore is, that it is neither perfect Day, nor perfect Night; but yet such, as may well be called a Day for the reasons aforesaid, only with intermixtures of Light and Darkness.

But what is the Light, and what the Darkness?

The Light is the light of Truth: for these two go together; Send out thy Light and thy Truth. And the Darkness is the darkness of Ignorance, Error, Heresy, Idolatry, and Superstition. And such a mixture there hath been in this Day, and will be to the very Evening of it.

The clearest part of this Day was in the Morning thereof, when the Apostles lived; yet even then there was a mixture of this Darkness. The Churches in Galatia were infected with the leaven of false Teachers, mingling Law and Gospel in the point of Justification. And some in the Church at Corinth denied the Resurrection of the Dead; and others held that it was already past, (as Hymenaeus and Philetus) and their word did eat like a Gangrene. And some such there were that turned the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, &c. Both Peter and Jude give us a sad character of them. And in John 's time, there were many Antichrists and Apostates from the Faith, and many false Prophets were then gone out into the World, who denied that Christ was come in the Flesh. And Pride and Ambition began then to appear in Diotrephes. And false Apostles we meet with several times; and with Balaamites and Nicolaitans in the Church at Pergamos, and the woman Jezebel, a false Prophetess, and a Seducer in the Church at Thyatira.

You see the Morning of this Day, red and lowering, presaging foul weather throughout the remainder of it. In the times succeeding the Apostles, arose the Simonians, Menandrians, Carpocratians, Cerinthians, Ebionites, Marcionites, Apollinarians, &c. which did somewhat darken the Primitive Day, wherein yet there was a comfortable mixture of Light held forth by Irenaeus, Lactantius, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Cyprian, and others. Afterward arose the Arians, (who denied the God-head of Christ) greatly obscuring the Day, but were opposed by Athanasius, Hilary, and several others, and condemned by the Nicene Council. Not long after, the Heresy of Macedonius (who denied the Personality of the Holy Ghost) was condemned by a Council at Constantinople; And so was the Heresy of Nestorius, (who held that Christ had two Persons, as well as two Natures) opposed and condemned by a Council at Ephesus, not long after the same time. Opposite to this Heresy was that of the Eutychians, who held Christ to have but one Nature; confounding his Natures, as the Nestorians had divided his Person. For thus we find most of the Primitive Heresies to be about the Natures and Person of Christ, the great Light of the World, which the Prince of Darkness endeavored to extinguish, that so he might turn this Day into Night. But still you will find that there was Light in opposition to his Darkness. And when afterwards the Devil stirred up Pelagius to assert the Freedom of Mans Will, God raiseth up Augustine to oppose him.

Only what shall we say about the close of the Sixth Century, when the bottomless Pit was opened, out of which there arose a smoke, as the smoke of a great Furnace, insomuch that the Sun and Air were darkened by reason of the Smoak. Where now was the Light? And where was the One Day in my Text? Yea, and as the Centuries increased, so did the Darkness, by a continual succession and series of Errors and Heresies, for many Hundreds of years together. And you know what dark Lights the Schoolmen were in their Generations, who did rather obscure than illustrate Theology.

These things are true; And a man had need of a great deal of knowledge in Church-History, and the Centuriators, to give particular satisfaction in this point, and it would also require a large Discourse.

I shall therefore give you some general grounds of Proof, that still the Light did run through the darkest Times.

First, Christ promised that the gates of Hell should never prevail against his Church, and that he would be with it to the end of the World.

Secondly, It is held by several Learned and Orthodox, That the Seven Churches of Asia had their Antitypes, one after another, throughout the day of the Gospel in my Text. And then, surely there was always Light in the Candlesticks.

Thirdly, When Christ began to show John things to come, the First thing that he showed him, was God sitting upon his Throne, with the Church round about Him, and so described, as you know, Revel. 4. For in showing John things to come, at so great and vast a Prospect, God must needs show him great and dreadful things, as. He did under the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials. And therefore at the very entrance of this Discovery, God secureth to John the safe condition of the Church in all times, and lets him see that his Eye was still upon that, as standing round about his Throne encompassed with ten thousand times ten thousand of Angels, that so what sights soever John should afterwards see, he might be assured, that the Church was safe enough. For God is before, and his Angels behind the Church. And hence it is that ever and anon the Church puts up her head in such and such periodical times, and days of danger and darkness in the Revelations.

Fourthly, When God intended great Mutations in the World, He made provision for his Church and People; so that the four Angels must not hurt the Earth, nor the Sea, nor the Trees, till the Servants

of God were sealed in their Foreheads; and the number of the sealed was 144,000.

And when the four first Trumpets sounded, though there followed always a sore judgment, yet still a third part escaped under every one of them; And with this agreeth that of Zechariah, Two parts shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein.

And when again the fifth Trumpet sounded, and the mouth of the bottomless Pit was opened, out of which a dreadful smoke ascended, and Locusts out of the smoke, they had not power to hurt the grass of the Earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only those men, which had not the Seal of God in their foreheads, Rev. 9. 4

Fifthly, If we come to the Sixth Trumpet, which began to sound about the Year 1300. when the Ottoman Power arose, which yet continueth to this day; it was a very dark and dismal time, yet not void of Light. For the Waldenses and their Followers were up long before that time, and Wycliffe arose somewhat about the same, and (as I take it) Bernard. Afterwards John Huss and Jerome of Prague. But seeing the time was so doleful, and that it might well be admired, what was become of the Church, and where the Light was to be seen; our Lord Jesus Christ cometh down from Heaven, in the form of a mighty Angel, clothed with a Cloud, and a Rainbow upon his Head, and his Face shining as it were the Sun. For this was in the dark times of the Sixth Trumpet, when although Christ was much clouded to the World, and little of him seen, yet the Sun did shine through the Cloud, even in those times; for he was mindful of his Covenant, signified by the Rainbow. And moreover Christ had in his Hand a little Book open; so that there was some Light shining in those very dark times.

Sixthly, When Antichrist was at his greatest height, a little before the Light so brake forth, that some Reformation began, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, appeareth standing on Mount Zion, and with him a Hundred and forty-four Thousand, having his Fathers

name written on their Foreheads: showing us, That Christ had his Church in the times of the greatest Apostasy, and that there was not wanting Light in Darkness. The sealed Number (Rev. 7) ran through (about) a thousand years, and at last lifted up their heads upon Mount Zion.

Seventhly, Suppose the rise of Antichrist should commence (as it is apprehended) between the fourth and fifth Centuries, you know the rise of the two Witnesses contemporates therewith; after which they continue their prophesying, during One thousand, two hundred and sixty Daies, a day put for a year. And so too, upon this account, the darkest Days did not want the Light of the blessed and everlasting Gospel; yea, so much Light, as to uphold the denomination of a Day.

But since the Second spring of the Gospel, arising from the Light introduced by Luther, Melanchthon, and the German Theologues, it is visible to the eyes of Adversaries, how the Darkness hath declined, and the Light shined more and more to this very day. And thus it will be light and dark, light as to Truth, and dark as to Ignorance, Error, Heresy, Idolatry, and Superstition more or less unto the very Evening of the Day.

Secondly, In this day there is a mixture of Light and Darkness in another respect, viz. Trouble mingled with Tranquility, and Persecution with Liberty. You know the sad times under the Seals, by the rage of the Roman power against Christianity. Yet some liberty was now and then enjoyed, and silence in Heaven for half an Hour. You have heard also of the Arian Persecution under Constantius, Julian and Valens, yet all liberty was not destroyed. For though Persecution and Liberty in their height are inconsistent, as light and darkness, the one in its height expels the other, yet there was an interchange by the succession of one to the other sometimes, if not an intermixture of both as to a moderate degree. For though Persecution and Liberty have not stood together in one and the same time and place in their height, yet as for the light of the Gospel, and Truth thereof, that hath sometimes shined in showers of Persecution,

like as we have now and then seen the Sun to shine, and the Rain to fall at one and the same time.

And thus you see how the Day of the Gospel hath all along hitherto been intermixed and interchanged with light and darkness. The light of Truth and the darkness of Error, the light of Liberty, and the darkness of Persecution. And thus much for the third Particular of the Point in hand.

Fourthly, This one day thus intermixed, is known to God. In some respects it is known to us, and hath been known to others before us, (viz.) that there is such a day, and thus intermixed as aforesaid. But it is known to God, so as it is not known to us.

First, It is known to him as the Efficient of it. As it is said of the Natural day, The day is his, the night also is his, he hath prepared the light of the Sun. And again, I form the Light, and create Darkness; I make Peace, and create Evil; I the Lord do all these things. Thus it is with this Gospel-day; The Lord is the Former of it, who hath determined the times before appointed.

Secondly, This day is known to God, as being wholly in his power to order all things in it after the Counsel of his own will. He knew the end from the beginning, and what lieth in the Womb of this day, from the Morning to the Evening of it. He knew what light, and what darkness there would be in every period of the day, whereas we know not what a day may bring forth; and little did we think a year ago what Light of Liberty we should now enjoy, nor do we know what darkness of trouble and confusion may arise again ere long. We look sometimes, for good, and lo, evil cometh, and we wait for Light, and there cometh darkness. For it is not for us to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. We cannot make a Divine Almanac, and define what day (in this great day) it shall be calm, & what day tempestuous, what day it shall shine, and what day rain. We know not the Ordinances of Heaven, nor can we set their Dominion in the Earth; we cannot lift up our voices to the

Clouds, that abundance of Waters may cover us; neither do we know the way where the Light dwelleth, and as for Darkness we know not the place thereof. Known unto God are all things.

Thirdly, This day is known to God, in the Hebrew Phrase of knowing, which includeth also the affections. And therefore this day is so known of the Lord, that it is regarded and cared for by him. His Eyes are upon it, that nothing falls out in it, but by his special Providence. And though darkness hath sometimes increased, and far prevailed in this day, yet the Light was never extinguished, nor ever shall: He hath still preserved a Lamp, as he did in the Kingdom of David, at the lowest ebb thereof. About one hundred and fifty years ago, when darkness lay upon the face of the Earth, presently God commanded light to shine out of darkness, which hath continued and increased unto this very day.

Fourthly, This day is known unto God, in respect of the termination of it, which we know not. For what great mistakes have there been, about the time of Antichrist's ruin, and the calling of the Jews?

We know in the general, that this Day shall have an Evening, and that in the Evening it shall be light: But when this Evening shall be, we know not; we cannot take the Light and the Darkness at the bound thereof. But God doth perfectly know the Epoque of the reign of the Beast, and his Number, 666. And thus this day is known to the Lord, and to the Lord only.

Fifthly, In the evening of this day it shall be light.

First then, What is this Evening? It is the darkest part of this Day, throughout which there was still more or less Darkness intermixed with Light, as you have heard, but now at the Evening-time there shall be more darkness than in any of the preceding parts of the Day: How else were it an Evening?

But how can it be, that the Evening should be so dark, and yet that at Evening-time it should be light?

1. In some respects it shall be the darkest part of the Day, for it will be a time of very sore Troubles, Wars, and rumors of Wars, and great Commotions. For I cannot tell where to fix this Evening, but under the Sixth Vial, which shall be poured out upon the great River Euphrates, That the waters thereof may be dried up, and the way of the Kings of the East prepared: In which words is held forth (as our best Interpreters hold) the conversion of the Jews. At what time The three unclean Spirits, like Frogs, shall go out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, & out of the mouth of the false Prophet, which are the spirits of Devils, working Miracles, and going forth to the Kings of the Earth, and of the whole World, to gather them to the battle of the great Day of God Almighty. And that must needs be a very sad Evening, especially in respect of trouble, great oppositions and commotions. For there shall be as terrible Signs and Presages fore-running the erection of the New-Jerusalem, as there were before the Destruction of the Old. *Hinc illae Tenebrae.* But how then shall it be light at this Evening time.

Secondly, In some respect therefore, it shall be the most lightsome part of the Day hitherto. And indeed it will be the light of the Evening, that will very much occasion the Darkness of it: I mean the Light of the Truth, that shall then shine forth, shall darken the Kingdom of the Beast, and cause his Followers to gnaw their very Tongues for pain. For that is under the Fifth Vial; and if the Kingdom be full of Darkness, it must needs be that Christ's Kingdom will then be full of Light. For the Witnesses will be risen long before the effusion of the Fifth and Sixth Vials, and Antichrist be greatly consumed with the breath of Christ's mouth, viz. in the Preaching of the Gospel. And therefore in this respect, it must needs be a lightsome Evening, and a time of greater Light than ever shined since the days of the Apostles.

Thus you see what a time the Evening shall be.

But shall this Evening then determine this Day, so that the Conversion of the Jews shall become another Day?

No; But as this Day is one and the same, and constant to itself, as we have heard, so shall the Day of the Jews Conversion, and the time following be one and the same day with this. But how? Not in respect of Light and Darkness intermixed, so as in the Day before the Evening, but in respect of one and the same Covenant, and way of Holy Administration still continued: For the Ordinances now used shall be continued to the coming of Christ.

For it is observable;

First, That this dark Time is not called, The Evening; but the Evening-time, Quo tempore advesperascere, & Nox esse solet: At what time it begins to be Evening; or, to look like an Evening, and the Sun seems to be setting. And therefore

Secondly, Though it is called an Evening-time, yet there is no Night said to follow it. Sol occubuit, Nox nulla secuta est. It is such an Evening, wherein the Sun setteth, and no Night succeedeth. It is true, One would little expect light in the Evening, especially more light than in the Day before. But such an Evening-time is this, after which shineth the greatest Light that ever was seen since the days of Jesus Christ.

You see then what this Evening is.

Secondly; What is that Light, that shall shine so gloriously at the Evening-time, especially at the end of it?

Answ. It is the same in kind and quality with that which shined before this Evening-time, only it differeth in degrees. For now the Light shall excel, and that shall be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet; Arise, and shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, &c. Now (as I may say) the light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun; and the light of the Sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven Daies: Yea, The Sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the Moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy

God thy glory. The Sun shall no more go down, neither the Moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light.

But wherein shall this Light consist?

First; There shall be a great effusion of the Spirit of God in those times, whereof a Pledge was given in the Morning of this Gospel-day. It shall come to pass in the last days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh. And the like we find in the words following my Text; And it shall be in that Day, that living Waters shall go out from Jerusalem, &c. And hereby is meant the Spirit of God with his Gifts and Graces, compared to living Waters. And these I take to be the same with Ezekiel 's waters, which rose at last to a very great depth.

Secondly, Hence it followeth, That there will be a very great light of Knowledge in this Day, so that there shall not be so much need, as now there is, for one to teach another; saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know him from the least to the greatest. And that shall be the time especially, when The Earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the Waters cover the Sea.

Thirdly, This Light of Knowledge shall have a great influence into the Hearts and Lives of Men, who shall shine eminently in Holiness; insomuch that the inscription upon the Fore-head of the High Priest shall then be put upon the bells of the Horses, and the very Pots in Jerusalem and Judah shall be Holiness to the Lord; Even Carters, Cooks, and Kitchen-Maids shall then shine in purity of life, and there shall be no more the Canaanite in the House of the Lord of Hosts.

Fourthly, That Day shall shine with the Light of Peace, Tranquility, and Joy, for these go together, Esth. 8. 16. Swords shall then be turned into Plough-shares, and Spears into Pruning-hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more.

Fifthly, In that Day there shall be the Light of Comfort; for this will follow necessarily from all the former; and the Consolation will be

both External and Internal, viz. When the Spirit of God, the Comforter, shall be poured out so plentifully, and when the Spirit shall have his Day, as the Father and the Son had theirs. And when Knowledge, Holiness, and Peace shall abound on the Earth; when Turk and Pope, and all that oppose the Kingdom of Christ shall be destroyed, and Satan bound and confined to the bottomless Pit, during the Thousand years. I say, This must needs be a very comfortable time. Great then shall be the peace of Zion's Children, when God shall make her an eternal Excellency, and a joy of many Generations, when violence shall no more be heard in her Land, wasting and destruction within her Borders; but men shall call her Walls, Salvation; and her Gates, Praise; and when they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, who shall turn the former Mourning of his People into Joy, and comfort them, and cause them to rejoice from their sorrow, For they shall come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

And thus you see the Light that shall be at the Evening-time, and the Doctrine cleared in the several parts of it; the Uses whereof now follow.

Uses.

First. What hath been here said answereth that Challenge of the Papists; Where was your Church before the Days of Luther? We answer, Where the Light was. For though great Darkness was introduced by Antichrist for many years before the breaking out of the Light in the days of Luther, yet there hath been always a mixture of Light in the obscurest times, and there the true Church hath been. There have been Witnesses to the Truth ever since the rise of the Man of Sin, and their testimony witnesseth to the true Church, distinct from Antichrist, in that it witnesseth to the Light where the true Church hath always dwelt, which Church still professed against the Additions and Impositions of the Man of Sin, hating and

abominating his Idolatrous Corruptions and Superstitious Inventions, and held to the Faith and Truth of the Gospel. And as this Church, like the Light, did still bear witness to itself: So did the continual opposition made against the Light and Truth professed, bear witness to the same. And therefore we remit the Papists to their own oppositions and persecutions, for an Answer to their Challenge. Yea, and this true Church hath been visible at all times to them that are of the Light. (For what can men in darkness see?) The Day, you hear, hath been one all along, and therefore the Sun did never set in it, and the Light hath still been, *Index sui & tenebrarum*, A discoverer both of itself and of darkness. All things that are reprov'd (or discover'd) are made manifest by the Light: For whatsoever doth make manifest, is Light. And therefore the true Church hath always seen both herself and the false Church; but the false (wanting Light) could never see the true.

Use 2.

The Doctrine may serve to show us the parallel between the Day of the Gospel, and the Day of them that do profess it, which is also intermixed with Light and Darkness, so that it is neither Day nor Night. For,

First, There is Knowledge mingled with Ignorance, and Truth with Error, even in the best of God's Children, who know but in part, and prophesy in part, till that which is perfect, in another world, is come. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know, even as we are known. Thus it is, and thus it will be, till our Sun is set, and then it will be perfect light.

2. There is also Trouble mingled with Tranquility, Adversity with Prosperity, Light of inward Peace and Comfort with inward Doubts and Darkness, whiles we live here below.

Use 3.

We are showed, That the darkest time of the Gospel-Day is yet to come. For that time is to be expected in the Evening, which is the darkest part of all the Day. Only this Darkness will not be (as I conceive) in respect of the withdrawing of the Light of Truth, but of the Light of Peace and Tranquility: For at the Evening of this Day, Men shall look unto the Earth, and behold Trouble, and Darkness, and Dimness of Anguish. And this will immediately precede the Conversion of the Jews, through the opposition of Turk and Pope.

For this will be the time when the Kings of the Earth, and of the whole world shall be gathered together to the battle of the great Day of God Almighty. At what time Men shall beat their Plough-shares into Swords, and their Pruning hooks into Spears.

But though that will be the darkest part of the Day, yet we must expect gloomy times till then, though with intermixed beams of Light, wherein God will still be setting this over against that, to the end that Men should find nothing after him. And thus God will Chequer out the Gospel-day, till that be fulfilled which is spoken by the Prophet Isaiah, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And seeing the day shortneth, and the shadows of the Evening begin to be stretched out, let us expect no more Days of Tranquility and Peace, but Wars, and rumors of Wars, Nation lifting up Sword against Nation, and learning of War, the confused noise of Battle, and Garments rolled in blood; For the Man upon the red Horse is gone forth, to whom power is given to take Peace from the Earth; and nearer the Evening still the darker. That which concerns us, is to be in a Posture of Humiliation and Preparedness, for the reception of these dark Dispensations. Here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints.

Use 4.

Let what hath been said be for Exhortation.

First, To pray for the Conversion of God's ancient people, the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for whose sakes they are beloved. Till when, the Day shall not be clear nor dark, but then the Sun shall no more go down, nor the Moon withdraw itself, but the Lord shall be an everlasting Light, & the days of mourning be ended. Therefore hold not your peace day nor night, ye that are the Lord's Remembrancers, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth.

Secondly, Though you want the Light of Peace, be thankful and improve the Light of Truth. For it is a mercy that we have this part of the Light, though we want the other; and of the two, it is far the better, seeing we should part with Peace for Truth, but not with Truth for Peace.

The Text saith, It shall come to pass in that day, that the Light shall not be clear nor dark; or (as after the Original) not be precious nor thickness, which showeth us, that the Light of Truth is precious, and though that of Peace is so likewise, yet not of equal value; for Christ came not to send Peace on the Earth, but the Sword, by the publication of the Truth; which was of so great esteem with Him, that He bore witness to it to the Death, even when He witnessed a good Confession before Pontius Pilate concerning the truth of his Kingly Power and Government, which the Apostle adjureth us to attend, as of great moment, though Pilate slighted it, saying, What is Truth? For he did not propound that question for satisfaction, in that he stayed not for an answer, but showed thereby, that he looked upon truth, and particularly that truth, concerning the Kingly Power and Government of Christ, as a pitiful Cause whereon to hazard the Life of Christ.

Oh! The Truth there confessed by Christ, is a precious Truth, a very great Truth, and the Foundation of many Truths, which Christ sealed with his Blood, which therefore we are adjured in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before

Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, to keep without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us then love the Truth, and this Truth, and improve it.

Thirdly, Seeing the Gospel-day is not equally lightsome in all the periods of it; how thankful should we be, that we were born in a Time and Place of Light? For great was the Darkness, and little the Light, about Six or Seven-score years past, when England lay under the Darkness of Antichristian Ignorance; since when, it hath been turned from the Valley of the shadow of Death, into a Valley of Vision. This heighteneth the account of the Land we live in, for the enjoyment of so great a mercy, as no other Nation this day hath enjoyed the like, especially as to the clearness of the Light that hath shined in it. And though it will not be accompanied with outward peace, yet it will not want inward, if we keep close to the Light, and live up to it in this our Day.

Fourthly, This Day being thus intermixed with Light and Darkness; Let us not wonder, nor be offended, that there are such varieties of Persuasions, differing one from another, and therefore all of them cannot be of the Light, whatever is pretended by them that do profess unto them; but the Light hath influence upon some of them, and Darkness upon some other. So that God's Heritage is unto him as a speckled Bird, which the Birds fly roundabout against her: But however let us not fly one against another, lest we fly against ourselves, whiles we have our several feathers and colors in this one Bird; but let us bear with one another as to particular Light and Darkness, so long as we are all enlightened with the saving Knowledge of the Truth.

We ought not indeed to be Sceptics in Religion, but everyone to be persuaded in his own mind, yet in some things peradventure thou art in the Light, and I am in the Dark; in others, the Day perhaps shineth unto me, and not to thee. Let us yield to the Dispensation of the Day, and keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; and if in

anything we are differently minded, God shall reveal even this unto us: Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. For thus there are some in the Visible Church, who are be-misted, when others are enlightened, and yet all agree in Fundamentals, who ought to live in Unity, and the Stronger to exercise Charity towards the Weaker; that God, who hath begun to enlighten them in other things, will acquaint them in due time with those Truths, whereof at present they are ignorant: For it is God alone who revealeth the Light unto us. And He that formeth the Light, and createth Darkness, may in some things make it Day to one man, and night to another. We are all (who truly fear the Lord) Children of the Light, and of the Day, and not of the Night, nor of Darkness, as to our states, yet as to particular apprehensions in Truths of an inferior nature, it may be Day to one & Night to another. And thus it will be till the Evening cometh, but then there shall be one heart, and one way, one Lord, and his Name one.

Use 5.

Lastly, What hath been held forth, administereth a word of Comfort, That this Gospel-Day is known to the Lord, from the Morning to the Evening of it. He knoweth the Light and also the Darkness, and who are in the one, and who in the other, and how far. And therefore He knoweth what is done by the Children of the Night to introduce Darkness, and to obscure the Day of the Gospel. For the Day is his, and the Night is his, He formeth Light and Darkness, and therefore he ordereth the Rulers of the Darkness of this world, that no more either of Ignorance, Error, Heresy, Superstition, and Idolatry on the one side; or of Tribulation, Persecution, and hostile Opposition to the Truth and Peace on the other, shall prevail further than He hath determined. And whatsoever He hath appointed to be the portion of this Day, as to the darkening of it, yet it is our Comfort, that the Day is known to the Lord, and that He will have a care of it. For he seeth the Darkness as well as the Light of the Day, the darkness and the light are both alike to Him. He hath seen the Day from the Morning of it to this moment, and hath ordered and disposed of the darkness

of Ignorance, Error, Heresy, and Idolatry, and likewise of Affliction and Persecution in it, in times of Pagan, Arian, or Antichristian opposition. And his care of this Day is no less towards the Evening of it, nor his love to it, & ability to see to it, any less than in the Morning, or Noon of it. He that said, I have seen I have seen the Affliction of my People which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their Task-masters; for I know their sorrows; knows all the Sorrows and Sufferings of his People in this Hour of the Gospel-day. It was a very dark Night with Israel in Egypt, when God spake these words to Moses; for then was fulfilled in the Truth, what was signified to Abraham in the Type, when a horror of great Darkness fell upon him. And yet, I have seen, I have seen, and I know, saith the Lord, in the midst of that horrid Darkness.

And therefore however the Day prove, and Clouds and darkness arise, as perhaps they may do, marvel not at the matter, for he that is higher than the highest regardeth. Men and Devils may be high, but God is higher, yea, higher than the highest, which is a degree above the Superlative. God hath a care of his Church and Gospel, & of such as Preach it, and profess it, only it is our duty to be humbled for the sins of Churches, Ministers, Professors, which may otherwise the more darken and embitter the Day that we are now entering into, which calleth us to Prayer, Humiliation, Mourning, and Reformation, wherein if God assist us, it shall be well in the end; and though weeping may endure for a time, yet joy cometh in the evening. For it shall come to pass, that at Evening-time it shall be Light.

FINIS.

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions October 2023. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068