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The Rest and Reward
of
The Dead who die in the LORD.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the Funeral

O F

WILLIAM WOOD JUN^R,

I N

the Church of Saba,

June 6th 1759.

By HUGH KNOX

Pastor of the Church of CHRIST in that *Island*.

— *Wherefore I praised the Dead which are already
dead, more than the Living which are yet alive.*

SOLOMON.



A M S T E R D A M,

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T O
WILLIAM WOOD Esq.

Captain of the Island of Saba.

S I R,

The Respect I have for your absolute Command, and that Pleasure, with which I would be always thought ready to gratify you, in a reasonable Request, have prevailed with me to prepare the following Discourse for the Press, as nearly as I could recollect it.

Nothing indeed but this, and the many Obligations of Friendship, You have laid me under, can justify my Conduct in exposing to View so *mean* a Performance, which was the Fruit of but two or three Hours hasty Study; and that too at a Time, when both my Body and Mind were

very much indisposed, either for Composition, or the publick Services of the Sanctuary.

I approve not much of preaching funeral Sermons; especially when the Character of the Deceased cannot fairly bear to be recommended, to the Imitation of Survivers: And I must confess, that one of my greatest Encouragements in preaching this, and permitting it to be published, has taken its Rise from the truly exemplary Nature of your *dear* and *only* Son's Character contained in it. May the rising Generation be engaged to imitate, the Virtues of this hopeful Youth! May they be inspired with a noble Ambition of deserving that truly excellent Character, in which his Memory here shines, with a real and unfeigned Lustre! A *Character*, which does Him a more substantial Honour, than the most pompous Titles of worldly Dignity: — And a *Character*, which should afford more
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Comfort and Satisfaction to yourself,
and his afflicted Mother, than to
have seen Him distinguished, by the
most opulent Circumstances of un-
sanctified Wealth, or glittering in the
greatest Pomp of sublunary Grandeur:
For, while *the Memory of the Just is*
blessed, and the Righteous shall be had in
everlasting Remembrance; the Name of
the wicked shall rot and moulder
away, altho' embalmed by the Riches
of a Cræsus, or engraved in the
triumphal Arch of an Alexander.

I am utterly regardless of the Cen-
sures of the Critic. My End will be
sufficiently obtained, if, thro' di-
vine Grace, the following Discourse
may be made effectual to recommend
a virtuous and Godly Life, from the
engaging Motive of that glorious and
eternal Reward, with which it is in-
separably connected; — If it can alle-
viate your Grief, under the Loss of
an *only Son*, who, you have the grea-
test Reason to believe, is now in the

actual Possession of this exalted Blessedness; — and finally, if it can engage the rising Generation, especially those of his Acquaintance, seriously to consider their latter End, and to make Religion the Business of their early Youth; that, like Him, they may taste the Comforts of it, in that awful Hour, when nothing else can possibly give Peace, and Stability, to their departing Spirits.

I am,

S I R,

With unfeigned Regard,

Your Servant in the

Gospel of CHRIST.

July 10th.
1759.

H U G H K N O X.

The

The Rest and Reward of the Dead
who Die in the LORD.

REV: XIV: 13.

— *I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write; Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

History informs us of a certain Nation, whose Custom it was to mourn at the Birth, and rejoice at the Death of their Relatives; because, say they, Children, at their Birth, enter into a World full of Trouble, and full of Sorrow; but Death puts a final Period to all the Miseries, and Afflictions of this mortal Life; introduces the Deceased into a State of Tranquility

quility and Repose, and therefore should be matter, of Joy, rather than Mourning to the surviving Kindred and Friends. This Conduct does not seem entirely void of reason; and certainly, if Heathens could thus argue; Christians, who have *Life and Immortality brought to Light by the Gospel*, have infinitely greater Reason to be, *at least* reconciled to the Death of such of their Relatives, as *die in the Lord*.

The Text plainly lays a Foundation for *Comfort, under the Loss of Relations*, and *and for support against the Fears of Death*. The blessed JESUS, foreseeing the calamitous Circumstances, into which his Church would be brought, and the extreme Sufferings, which his professing People would endure, both by Pagan and Antichristian Persecutors, thought proper to support the Faith, Courage, Patience, and Fidelity of his Disciples, by many encouraging Promises, to these, who should persevere, with undaunted Resolution in the Profession and Practice of his Religion; amongst which, that in our Text merits a principal Consideration.

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The emphatical Manner, in which the Words are delivered, bespeaks the mighty Importance of their Subject, and has an Evident tendency to awaken our attention and Consideration. They are ushered in, by a *Voice from Heaven*; The Beloved Disciple is charged to *Commit them to writing*; and the holy Spirit of GOD gives his *concurrent Testimony, to their Truth and Importance!*

If we confine the meaning of the Text, to Times of persecution and Martyrdom; the original Words may be as well translated, *Blessed are the dead, which die for the LORD, i, e, which lay down their Lives, for the Testimony of JESUS, and become Martyrs, for the Faith and Profession of his Religion.*

But there seems no necessity, nor any sufficient Reason, for making this Limitation; our common Version being as grammatical, and much more comprehensive than the other; and it is very certain, that, not only Martyrs, but also all others who sincerely embrace Christianity, and perse-

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severe until Death, in the Belief of it's Doctrines, and in the practice of it's most holy Precepts, may be said, with great Propriety, *to die in the LORD*; or, as St. Paul Expresses it, * *to Sleep in JESUS*.

I shall therefore, at present, take the Words, in this their Largest, and most extensive Sense; as representing unto Us, that happy and Blessed State, which all Good Persons enter upon, immediately after Death. *Blessed are the Dead, which die in the LORD, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow Them.*

In farther explaining, and improving these Words, it seems necessary, FIRST to shew, what we are to understand by *Dying in the LORD*; for to such only the Promise is here made, that *they shall rest from their Labours, and that their Works shall follow them.* — SECONDLY to shew in what Respects. Such are Blessed. — THIRDLY to shew the Period, when this
their

(*) 1 Theff: 4. 14.

their Blessedness commences; which seems plainly intimated in these Words, *from henceforth* — FOURTHLY to make some practical Improvement of the Whole; and then I shall be naturally led, in the — FIFTH and last place to give a brief Character of the Amiable Youth, whose mournfull Obsequies have been the Occasion, of my addressing You, at this Time.

1st. THEN I am briefly to shew, what We are to understand by *Dying in the LORD*; for to Such, and Such only is the Promise of Blessedness made in the Text. *Blessed are the Dead, which die in the LORD.* — If therefore, (waving the Peculiar Consideration of Martyrdom, or *Dying for the Testimony of JESUS*) we consider the Words, as they stand in our English Translation; to *die in the LORD*, will signify to die in a State of Friendship and Favour with God, thro' the Merits and Mediation of CHRIST. To *be in the LORD*, signifies, to be savingly united to Him, by a sincere Faith, and fervent Love: and of Consequence, He

who dies in this happy Condition, *dies in the LORD*; dies a true Member of his Mystical Body, and an Heir of that glorious and eternal Inheritance, which he has purchased, for the Children of Light. It would be too tedious, at present, to enumerate the various Marks and Evidences of this blessed Union; it may suffice to observe, in general, that Those may be Justly presumed to *Die in the LORD*, — Who have had their Peace made with GOD, thro' the Blood of his Son's Cross; — Who have sincerely repented of their past Sins, with firm Resolutions, and hearty Endeavours after Newness of Life, and better Obedience; — Who have taken GOD for their GOD, and Everlasting Portion; — Who have embraced CHRIST as their SAVIOUR, their Righteousness and Strength; who have relied upon his precious Merits alone for Salvation, — submitted to his Authority, as their King and Lawgiver, and received the sacred Declarations of his Will, as the only, unerring Rule of their Duty and Obedience; — Who have made it their honest Endeavour, to maintain a Conscience void of Offence towards GOD
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and Man, — to rectify and refine their Passions, — to purify, exalt, and spiritualize their Affections, — to discharge the various personal, and relative Duties of Life faithfully; — and finally, who having submitted to all the Sufferings and Afflictions, of the present Life, with a filial Resignation and complacency, peacefully resign their departing Spirits into the Hands of the *Father of Spirits*, with a humble Expectation of the Mercy of GOD, unto Eternal Life. Blessed are those Persons, whom the LORD, at his coming, and at the Hour of their Death, shall find thus qualified, and thus employed: Such shall assuredly *Rest from their Labours, and their Works shall follow Them*. But I proceed in the

II^d: PLACE, to enquire, in what Respects Such are blessed; or, wherein their Blessedness consists.

And this is plainly intimated in the Words, under two Particulars — 1st. *they rest from their Labours*; and 2^{dly}. *Their Works do follow Them*. I shall therefore

Experience, and therefore not to be disputed. Every Man feels it in himself, and sees it in others. No State, no Condition of Life can exempt us from a Share in the Great, and manifold Afflictions, which are incident to Humanity: Nor can the very best of Men claim a Privilege, above others, in this Respect, while in a State of Trial and Probation.

THE *Personal* Labours and Troubles of human Life, would appear to be countless in their Number, and many of them grievous in their Nature and Circumstances, if we consider the weakness and helpless Condition of our Infantile State, — the Vanity of Youth, — the Cares of Manhood, and the Infirmities of a Decrepid old Age; — The Legions of inward Diseases, and the Numbers of outward Accidents and Disasters, to which our Bodies are daily exposed; and by which they are rendered, as it were, Engines of exquisite Torture to the Soul, by means of their strict and intimate Union with it; — The Miseries of an unhappy Constitution, or a melancholy Temper, to which the very
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Blood and Spirits of many naturally dispose them; — The tyrannical and rebellious Nature of the Passions, in our present imperfect State, which often depose Reason from its Throne, throw the Soul into many Tumults, and prove the unhappy Occasion, of much Sin and Misery; — The Losses in our outward Estates, — The Crosses and Disappointments, which we meet with, in most of our Designs and Expectations; — The Perfidy and Inconstancy of Friends, and the malicious Treatment of Enemies; — The Snares and Temptations which Accompany a prosperous Condition, and the Anguish and Misery which attend a State of Adversity; — The Cares and Labours, which are necessary to supply the continual Wants of our Bodies, and the Dangers and Temptations which hourly threaten the Destruction of our Souls.

AGAIN; if we consider Man in a *Social or Relative* State; we shall find his Labours to encrease in Proportion as his social, and relative Connections in Life are encreased. The relative States of Magistrate
and

and Subject, of Master and Servant, of Husband and Wife, of Parent and Child &c. have Each of them their peculiar Incumbrances, which often render them very Grievous and insupportable: as is evident from the following Instances; the Care of Families, and Kind concern for near and dear Relations; — Our solicitude for their Happiness; — Our tender Sympathy with Them, in their Sufferings; our Anxious and restless Desires to help, and comfort Them, in their Distresses, and the tender Sorrow and Regret we suffer, when we cannot relieve Them; — From the Loss, and Grief we Endure by being deprived of dear and necessary Friends; — and above all, from the heart-breaking Violence, that we suffer, when Death snatches away from us, those Objects of our tenderest Affection; which, by the Laws of God and Nature, are most intimately *Parts of ourselves.*

ALL these are sore Labours, which beset us on Every Side, in this *Valley of Tears*, and of which we have a most quick and sensible Feeling.

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BESIDES

BESIDES; If we Extend our Views a little farther, and Consider the Calamities of War; — The Devastation of Countries, and Depopulation of Cities by Famine, Pestilence and the Sword; — The Multitudes of our Fellow-creatures, who are daily groaning under the heavy Yoke of Tyranny, or tortured, under the Iron Teeth of Persecution; — the Distress of the Needy; — the Lamentations of the Oppressed, and the Cries of desolate Widows, and helpless Orphans: as we are Parts of human Nature, such Scenes of Misery cannot but affect us; and the more refined and virtuous our Sentiments are, the more sensible and painful will our Feeling be, of these general Calamities, under which so great a Part of our Species is daily suffering.

THESE Labours, the Christian Endures, in this Life, in common with Others. But he has another Set of Sorrows, peculiar to Himself, arising from those new Views, and refined Sentiments, with which Christianity has inspired Him. How sharp are the Conflicts, which arise in the Good Man's

Man's Breast, from the Opposition of the Flesh against the Spirit; from the Power and Prevalency of Indwelling Sin, and from those violent Assaults of Temptation, against which he is continually watching, and striving. — What Struggles to maintain his Integrity, and preserve his Innocence, amidst the Contagion of universal Depravity, and prevailing Lusts! — what Pangs of bitter Remorse does he feel, from those inward Irregularities of Desire, which are either freely Indulged, or intirely unnoticed by Others! — what anxious Fears distress his Soul, when his heavenly Hopes are eclipsed, by some intervening Cloud of Guilt, or when the Evidences of his good Estate God-wards are darkened, or embarrassed, by some irregular Step, or criminal Indulgence! How does He mourn, when deprived of sensible Communion with God in Ordinances, or when he feels a Carnal Indolence, lying heavy upon his Soul, and Impeding its vigorous Efforts Heaven-ward!

NOR Can the real Christian be an unconcerned Spectator of the Wickedness and

Impiety of Others. If we have any Zeal for God's Glory, any real Concern for his Honour, or any Bowels of Compassion for the perishing Souls of Men, we cannot help being affected with Sorrow, to see the Obstinacy, and Thoughtlessness of Sinners, many of whom, perhaps, are nearly related to Us; to see immortal Spirits wilfully, and knowingly plunging Themselves into the Abyss of endless Misery, and rushing headlong, with open Eyes, into the Tophet of Unquenchable Fire, by a Course of open rebellion, against the UNIVERSAL KING; — To hear the Name of God profaned by licentious Tongues; to see his Sabbaths broken — his Sanctuaries left desolate — his Ordinances forsaken — his Laws neglected, and his Gospel despised. It cannot but touch our Souls with Grief, to see the Great Progress of Atheism, Infidelity, and Immorality, under the Clear Light of the Gospel; and to see so great a Part of the World utterly destitute of the saving Knowledge of God, bowing down before dumb Idols; or paying that Homage to the Host of Heaven, which is only due to their adorable Maker. Good Men in every Age,

have

have been much grieved, and afflicted, by these Things (*) *The righteous Soul of Lot was vexed from Day to Day, by hearing the filthy Conversation, and seeing the unlawful Deeds of the wicked Sodomites.* (†) *Rivers of waters ran down the Eyes of David because Men kept not God's Law. He beheld the Transgression of the Wicked, and was grieved because they kept not God's Word.* We also see, how deeply the Wickedness and Desolation of Gods People affected Good Jeremiah. (§) Nor need I farther observe the Sufferings of Persecution, which in a greater, or lesser Degree, are the certain Portion of all, who live Godly in CHRIST JESUS. (‡)

ALL these are Afflictions peculiar to Good Men, in this Life; and which those feel most sensibly, who are most eminent for piety and real Goodness. These are the *many Tribulations, thro' which we must pass into the Kingdom of Heaven*; the Discipline of our spiritual Warfare, the Tryals of our Faith, and the Proofs of our Love

(*) 2 Pet. 2: 7, 8.

(§) Jer. 9: 1, 2.

Lam: 3: 48 - 51.

(†) Ps. 119: 136, 158.

(‡) 2 Tim. 3: 12.

Love , Patience , and Fidelity to G O D. While we are here Below , we are Probationers for Heaven , and Affliction is that Furnace , by which our Souls are purified , refined and sublimated : and thus qualified for Soaring , on the Wings of Faith , and Love to that Region of perfect Peace and Serenity. But , altho' it must be confessed , that these Calamities contribute much to the real and spiritual Advantage of Christians , thro' the wise and gracious Superintendency of G O D , who brings Light out of Darkness , and Good out of Evil , and causeth *all Things to Work together for Good to them that love Him* ; yet , it must be Likewise confessed , that *no Affliction , is , for the Present , Joyous , but Grievous*. All these Labours are real and sensible Evils , under which the very best of Men groan and are burdened , in this mortal State , notwithstanding that they bear them with Patience , and Resignation to the divine Pleasure.

Is it not therefore a great Blessedness ,
for

(*) Hebr. 12 : 11.

for the Children of God to rest from these various, and manifold Labours; to be discharged from this Warfare, and to find a safe Retreat in the silent Grave, from the Cares, Sorrows and Afflictions of this tumultuous World? Those solitary Mansions of the Dead seem'd no inconsiderable Relief, in the Eyes of Job, when under the pressure of heavy Afflictions: *There, says he, the Wicked cease from Troubling, and the Weary be at Rest; there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor: The small and the Great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master. (*)* — Is it not a comfortable Consideration to the People of God under all their Afflictions, to be assured, that the Key which opens the Gates of the invisible World, will usher Them into a State of perfect Repose and Tranquillity, beyond the Reach of Fear or Danger, of Sorrow or Trouble, of Sin or Temptation; — that the *Jordan* of Death will seperate Them, from all the Labours and Fatigues of their Wilderness-State, and land Them safe upon the shores

(*) Job 3: 17 &c.

shores of Eternity ; where They may look back, with a heart-felt Joy, on the tempestuous Ocean of Time, thro' which they have been safely conducted by the Guidance of divine Grace? Oh! how will the Christian Exult, and triumph when He finds Himself. *Absent from the Body! and present with the LORD!* when Death shall have opened the Prison Doors of his Flesh, knock'd off the Fetters of remaining Infirmary and Corruption, and translated Him, quick as Lightning, to that new Jerusalem above, where God Himself *shall wipe away all Tears from his Eyes, and where shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more Pain. (*)*

2^{dly} NOT only do Those who *die in the LORD, rest from their Labours; but their Works do follow Them.* But alas! how impossible is it, for Us to describe this positive Part of the Saints Blessedness, in a separate State ; that *Exceeding great and Eternal Weight of Glory, which. Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered*
into

(*) Rev. 21 : 4.

into the Thoughts of Man to conceive. ()*
 And indeed, as it is impossible for Us to
describe what we cannot *conceive*; so it
 is much better, and safer for Us, to con-
 template the positive Glories of Heaven,
 with silent Wonder, and believing Admi-
 ration, than fruitlessly to attempt a De-
 scription of Them, beyond the plain inti-
 mations of Scripture.

THE Glories of Heaven would lose
 much of their native Grandeur, could
 they be supposed level to our finite Capa-
 cities, and dark conceptions. Even He,
 who, by a peculiar Favour, *was caught*
up into the third Heavens, declares that
 He *heard unspeakable Words*, from its blef-
 sed Inhabitants, (†) *which it is impossible*
for a Man to utter: expressive, no doubt,
 of their sublime Ideas, and exalted Joys.
 This, however, we may affirm with cer-
 tainty, that the positive Blessedness of the
 Saints there, must be Something worthy
 the infinite Magnificence, Goodness and
 Generosity of a God! — Something
 worthy

(*) 1 Cor: 2: 9.

(†) 2 Cor: 12: 4.

worthy the exuberant Overflowings of his Love, and the incomprehensible Richness of his Grace! — Something worthy the boundless Merit of the SAVIOUR'S Blood; and which must give a fuitable Display, of the infinite Importance of the Scheme of Redemption! In Heaven, GOD is said to *make known the Riches of his Goodness on the Vessels of Mercy, whom he hath afore prepared unto Glory.* (*)

He will display, as it were on a *Theater*, the infinite Riches of his Glory to his People, and give Them a convincing Proof, how great, and how Good a Being He is. There they shall *See Him as he is*, cloathed in all the Rays of resplendent Majesty; and this sight shall not only render the Spectators happy, but also assimilate Them, into Somewhat of the same Likeness, and make Them partake, according to their Capacities, of the same Felicity; for, adds the Apostle, *They shall be like Him.* (†)

OH! the unspeakable Blessedness of that Knowledge, which shall see GOD as He is; which

(*) Rom. 9: 23.

(†) 1 Joh. 3: 2.

which shall contemplate the Perfections of his Nature, the Myſteries of his Providence, the Grandeur of his works, and the unfathomable depths of his Love to the Sons of Men! — Oh! the inconceivable Joy and Felicity of that State, wherein glorified Saints ſhall be ever chooſing, ever delighting in the ſupreme Good; — Ever drinking large Draughts of that celeftial River of pure Pleaſures, which flows at God's Right Hand; and ever partaking of that Fulneſs of Joy, in his Preſence, which ſhall pervade, and replenish every Capacity of their immortal Spirits!

A BLESSEDNESS this, ſufficient to charm, and captivate every Intelligent Mind, even amidſt the moſt flattering Offers of Sin, and ſenſual Pleaſure, which ſurround and ſollicit Us in our preſent Circumſtances; and yet, this is aſſuredly the Bleſſedneſs of *Thoſe, who die in the LORD.*

THEIR *Works ſhall follow Them*, ſays the Text. Scripture Phraſes, like this, are not to be ſo underſtood, as tho' future Bleſſedneſs was a proper *Debt* due to Us, and pleadable by Us, as the Reward of our

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Good Works. Such an Interpretation is neither agreeable to the Analogy of Faith, nor to the Reason of things: for altho' *Death is the proper and deserved Wages of Sin*, yet *Eternal Life is the meer unmerited GIFT OF GOD, thro' JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* (*) Alas! *we are at the best but unprofitable Servants.* (†) *All our Righteousnesses are*, in point of Merit, but *as filthy Rags.* (§) There is so much Defect, and Imperfection adhering even to our most virtuous Actions, and our most devout Services, that they cannot stand the Test of our own impartial Examination, much less of the holy and Heart-searching God! nay; so far are our Good Works in themselves, from meriting Life, that their Many Deficiencies really deserve Death; for *if GOD should be strict to Mark Iniquity*, even in our holy Things, *who could stand Justified in his righteous Judgement?* (‡) — And therefore, the Gospel directs our Eyes to the meer unmerited Grace and Bounty of GOD, as the only Source of all the saving Mercies

(*) Rom. 6: 23.

(†) Luke 17: 10.

(§) Is. 64: 6.

(‡) Ps. 130: 3.

Mercies We now Enjoy, and of all the Happiness for which We hope. *By Grace we are saved, thro' Faith; and that not of our selves; it is the Gift of GOD: not of WORKS,* adds the Apostle, *least any Man should boast.* (*)

HENCE you see the Notion of Merit, strictly speaking, is formally and entirely destroyed by the Apostle; and could we even suppose our Works meritorious, yet they are so infinitely disproportionate to the heavenly Blessedness, that the latter can in no proper Sense be called a Reward of the former: St. Paul declares this of the Sufferings of Persecution and Martyrdom, which certainly claim the first place in the Catalogue of Good Works. *I reckon, says He, that the sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory, which shall be revealed in Us.* (†) Indeed, the only Merit, which we can plead with safety before GOD, is his own Mercy, as it is Exercised thro' JESUS CHRIST.

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(*) Ep. 2: 8, 9.

(†) Rom. 8: 18.

YET GOD is pleased sometimes to propose Heaven, under the Notion of a Reward, in order to quicken our Zeal and Diligence in Well-doing. Thus we are encouraged *to fight for the Crown of Righteousness. (*)* — *To press towards the Mark, for the Prize of our high Calling. (†).* *To run with Patience our Christian Course, for the Joy set before us. (§)* — *And to be steadfast, unmoveable and abounding in the Work of the LORD; from the Hope that our Labour will not be invain. (‡)* — In a Word, GOD has established such a Connection, between our Diligence in his Service here, and our future Happiness, that we are taught to Regard the heavenly Blessedness as, in some Respects, a Recompence of Reward, thro' the Merit and Mediation of JESUS CHRIST. In this Sense therefore, our *Good works, and these light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, work out for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory. (**)* — In this Sense, may we
hope

(*) 2 Tim. 4: 7.

(†) Phil. 3: 14.

(§) Hebr. 12: 1, 2.

(‡) 1 Cor. 15: 58.

(**) 2 Cor. 4: 17.

hope that *our Works shall follow us*, and remain with Us for ever, in the substantial Fruits of a glorious and eternal Reward. — In this Sense, we may reasonably believe, *that our Prayers, and our Alms go up as a Memorial before God*, like those of pious Cornelius; (*) and that, by Charitable Deeds We may make to our selves *Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*; that when We fail here, they may receive Us into everlasting Habitations. (†) In this Sense, those who cast their Bread upon the Waters, may expect to find it after many Days; (§) and such, as lend unto the LORD, by having compassion on the Poor, may assuredly Expect an abundant Reward. (**)

THE Works of the Saints will, doubtless, be the Rule and Measure of their Reward, altho' they cannot be its meritorious Cause; for, *every one shall receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether Good or Bad.* (‡) And this, we see, is exactly agreeable to CHRIST's own Re-

(*) Acts, 10: 4. (†) Luk. 16: 9. (§) Eccl. 11: 1.

(**) and Prov. 19: 17. (‡) 2 Cor. 5: 10.

Representation of the future Judgment. (*). — Nor are we to doubt, but the Degree of Blessedness will also bear a Proportion to the Degree of Services, or Sufferings, we have gone thro', in the Cause of CHRIST upon Earth; this seems not obscurely intimated in holy Writ. (†) — Upon the Whole; we may be assured of it as a most certain Truth, that GOD *will not forget, our Work and Labour of Love, which we shew unto his Name*; but that our most private Services, our most secret Prayers, Tears, Groans and Desires, which are the Fruit of a true Faith, and the Offspring of a sincere Love, are now written in the Book of his Remembrance, and shall be *openly and abundantly* rewarded, *on the Day*, that great and Important Day, *when He shall make up his Jewels.* (§) — How Great an Argument, how strong an Encouragement is this, not only to real Piety, but also to indefatigable Diligence, and high Attainments in the divine Life; seeing, We shall shine, with a distinguished Lustre
on

(*) See Mat. 25: 38. to the end. (†) Dan. 12: 3. and 2 Cor. 15: 41, 42. (§) See Mat. 6: 6. and Mal. 3: 16.

on the Day of Retribution; in Proportion to the Degrees of our Zeal, and Activity in the Cause of God and Virtue, in this World! — But in the

III^d: PLACE We here find the Time limited, when this Blessedness of departed Saints shall commence: — it is *from henceforth*; namely, from the Hour of their Departure, out of this Life. —

HERE is no intermediate State of *purgatorial Sufferings*; no intervening *Lethargy*, or *Insensibility of the Soul*; no Procrastination of promised Happiness: But an immediate, instantaneous Fruition of Blessedness. No sooner are the Labours of the Day finished, and the Shadows of the Evening advanced; but the Labourers are called Home to Enjoy their Rest, and receive their Wages. (*) — The penitent Thief (who, according to the Romish Doctrine of Purgatory, certainly needed that Place of Purification, as much as any Man) received the Promise of being *with his LORD, in Paradise*, the very *day* of his Departure. (†) —

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(*) Mat. 20: 8.

(†) Luke 23: 43.

Lazarus, at the Instant of his Death, was transported *by Angels into Abrahams Bosom*, and was *Comforted*; whilst Dives finds himself as instantly, in the Place of Torment (*) — Nor can We suppose, that Saint Paul dreamed of any Delay of Blessedness, when he desired so earnestly *to be absent from the Body*, that He might *be present with the LORD* (†). — That the Blessedness of the Saints will be greatly augmented, by the Reunion of their Souls with their glorified Bodies after the Resurrection, and general Judgment, when all the Capacities of their entire Nature shall be replenished with an adequate and compleat Felicity, is not indeed to be doubted; but still, methinks, it is evident from a Variety of Considerations, that there is a *Rest from Labour*, and a *Satisfaction of Happiness* allotted to the People of God, from the very Moment of their *Sleeping in JESUS*. *Blessed are the Dead which die in the LORD*, from henceforth *yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours*, and their Works do follow Them. But I proceed in the
IVth:

(*) Luk. 16: 22, 23.

(†) 2 Cor. 5: 8.

IVth: PLACE to draw a few practical In-
ferences from the Doctrine — And

1st: IT is obvious, how strongly the Doc-
trine of our Text recommends Faith in
CHRIST, and a holy Life. Those, who
are intitled to this Happiness, must of Ne-
cessity be *in the LORD*, and be adorned
with such *Good Works*, as are the natural
Fruits of *Faith*, and *Love*. Now *Faith* is
that Grace, which unites Us to CHRIST,
incorporates Us into his mystical Body, de-
rives spiritual Life from Him, the Head of
Divine Influences; and which makes Us Par-
takers of his Holiness here, and intitles us to
that peaceful, and incorruptible Inheritance
of the Saints, in Light hereafter (*). —
Let Us, therefore, *put on the LORD JESUS*
CHRIST, by a true Faith, *and not make*
Provision for the Flesh to fulfill its Lusts, (†) as
ever We hope to partake of the Blessedness
described. For Such only are intitled to
Indemnity, before the Tribunal of GOD,
and to his eternal Favour, *who are in*
CHRIST

(*) See John 1: 12. and 3: 16, 36. and 15: 5. and
1 Joh. 5: 5, 12.

(†) Rom. 13: 14.

CHRIST JESUS, *and who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* (*) — Let my Hearers, therefore Consider well, that the *Blessedness*, in the Text, is not promised to All indifferently; but only to Such as *die in the LORD*; and that, in Order to *our Dying in the LORD*, it is necessary that our Life here should be *a Life of Faith, upon the Son of GOD*, and of sincere *Holiness*; *without which, none shall see his Face in Mercy.* (†) — There is, in Short, a necessary and indispenfable *Connection* between *present Holiness*, and *future Happiness*; and therefore, *Everyone, who hath this Hope in Him, purifieth Himself, as GOD is pure.* (§) And, certainly this *glorious Hope* has a sufficient Importance in it, to enforce the severest and most self-denying Doctrines of the Gospel, upon our Practice, would We impartially consider it; and let it have but the same Influence upon our Minds, which sensual and carnal Motives daily produce. With what Care and Diligence, with how much Sweat and Fatigue are

(*) Rom. 8: 1.

(†) Gal. 2: 20, Heb. 12: 14.

(§) 1 Joh. 3: 3.

are our *worldly Hopes* daily pursued, altho' so unsatisfactory in their Nature, and so short in their Duration! Is it not therefore, Matter of Wonder, that such *grand Hopes* as those of the Christian, so *glorious a Rest*, so *great a Reward*, and so *substantial a Blessedness*, should not be pursued with a Diligence, proportionate to their superior Excellency, and infinite Duration! And would not one be tempted to think, that *those excellent Things*, which are spoken of the celestial City of our God, and which are promised to his Saints, are neither *hoped for*, nor *believed* by multitudes of professing Christians, who seem so *careless* and *inactive*, in the Work of their heavenly Calling! And does not this seem an experimental Proof of that awful Scripture, which informs us, that but *Few shall be saved*, of that *great Number*, which are externally *called*, to the Priviledges of the Gospel? (*) — Again —

2^{dly}: THE doctrine affords us a powerful Consolation, against the Fear of Death;
a Fear

(*) Mat. 22: 14.

a Fear, by which *many, during their whole Lifetime, are subject to Bondage.* (*) — Nature shudders and shrinks back, at the thoughts of a Diffolution; and Sin, which is *the Sting of Death*, still augments the Terror and renders it almost Insupportable: But Christianity banishes this Troubler of our Peace, and gives Nature a Courage and Fortitude, against *this last Enemy*, which no Human Principles, or moral Considerations could possibly inspire. Adored, therefore, be that Grace, which teaches Us to sing, that triumphant Song, even in the nearest Views of our last Conflict; O *Death, where is thy Sting?* O *Grave, where is thy Victory?* *The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but thanks be to GOD which giveth us the Victory, thro' our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* (†).

How courageously may the Christian march against that Enemy, over which He is assured of a compleat Victory, by Him who hath *destroyed his Power!* — How effectually do the sure Hopes of a glorious Rest,

(*) Heb. 2: 15.

(†) 1 Cor. 15: 55, 57.

Rest, and an Eternal Reward, enlighten the *dark Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and change the *King of Terrors* into a *Messenger of Peace*, and an *Harbinger of Endless Felicity*! — How contentedly, yea, how Joyfully, may the Good Man receive the Summons of Death, when He considers it as a necessary Passage to Rest and Happiness; and when he reflects, that the very Moment he ceases to be miserable here, he shall find Himself, in actual Possession of that blessed *Inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away*! — „ O LORD, do thou encrease this Faith, and strengthen this Hope in Each of our Hearts; that we may thence derive a strong Consolation, and an unshaken Confidence at the Hour of our great Change! O do thou suffer None of Us, to forfeit this glorious Privilege, by a Graceless, unbelieving, ungodly Life; from which we can Expect nothing but Horror, Remorse, and Despair in our dying Moments, and an Endless Eternity of unmixed Misery!” — Again —

3^{dly}: THE Doctrine is Excellently calculated to support our Minds, under all the
In-

Injuries , and Afflictions , we may meet with in this World.

THE Heathens, indeed, could promise Themselves a Retreat by Death, from the Miseries of this Life; and many of Them, upon this Principle, had Recourse to Self-murder, under the Pressure of heavy Afflictions; not Knowing, or, at least, not considering, the terrible Guilt of such a horrid Action: But, all beyond the Grave was, to Them, *a Land of Darkness*. The Immortality of the Soul, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, altho' *strenuously urged* by Some of their Philosophers, was but *slenderly believed* by the Generality; and their Notions of a future State, as they were meerly conjectural, so they were very insufficient Motives for *holy Living*, and *patient Suffering*. But, as *Life and Immortality are* clearly brought to Light by the Gospel: The Christian is not only taught to expect a *Rest*, by Death, from all the Labours and Afflictions of this Life; but also *an exceeding Great, and Eternal Reward*. He is enabled to regard Affliction, as the Chastisement of a kind
and

and loving Father, who intend's his Good, — as the Medicine of his Spirit, — and the necessary Means of his Perfection. He is taught to regard Patience under Sufferings, and Resignation to the Will of God, not only as necessary Duties, but rewardable Virtues; the faithful Exercise of which will be abundantly recompenced, in another World.

WHAT a substantial Support is this, therefore, amidst the Calamities of this present Life, to be assured, that *all these are working together for Good to Them that love God*; and that *the Comparatively light Afflictions* of this Life, *which are*, as it were, *but for a Moment, work out for those*, who bear them patiently, in Obedience to the Will of God, *a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory! (*)* — What Consolation may the afflicted Christian find, in that divine Sentence of the inspired Apostle, (†) *We rejoice, says He, in Hope of the Glory of God: and not only so, but we Glory in Tribulation also, knowing that Tri-*
bulation

(*) 2 Cor. 4: 17.

(†) Rom. 5: 3, 5.

bulation worketh Patience ; and Patience, Experience ; and Experience, Hope ; and Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of GOD is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the holy Ghost, which is given unto Us. —
Once more

4^{thly}: AND LASTLY; The Doctrine in our Text ought to prevent our indulging an immoderate and excessive Grief, upon the Death of our pious Friends, or Relatives.

IT is, indeed, natural and innocent to mourn, and lament such Losses; otherwise JESUS would not have *wept*, at the Grave of Lazarus. (*) It would rather be a Proof of an *unnatural Insensibility*, than of *Christian Resignation*, to be entirely unconcerned upon such Occasions. As it is an unspeakable Loss to the World, so it is an honest Occasion of Tears, and Lamentations, when *the Righteous perish, and when merciful Men are taken away; when the godly Man ceaseth, and when the faith-*

(*) John, 11: 35.

faithful fail, from among the Children of Men. But, when we give an immoderate loose to those Passions, and refuse to be comforted; this is to *mourn as those, who have no Hope*, and to indulge an Excess, which is very displeasing to GOD, and very inconsistent with the Genius of the Christian Religion. *Blessed are the Dead, which die in the LORD.* Are, therefore, Our deceased Friends or Relations among this happy Number? — Have they believed in CHRIST, and governed their Hearts, and Lives, by the Precepts of his Gospel? — Why then should we be inconsolable? — Do we regret their Blessedness, and lament their Felicity? — Would we willingly bring them down again from *Abraham's Bosom*, from the beatific Vision, and from the noble Company of Angels, Saints, and Martyrs, and involve them afresh in all the Labours and Calamities of this wretched Life? — Is our immoderate Sorrow for their Happiness, a Good argument of our Love to Them? Or, does not such a Behaviour rather argue Want of

Consideration, or of Christian Hope? — Surely, the incomparable Gain of Such should reconcile us to the loss of their Company here; and engage us to adore that Sovereign LORD, of the invisible World, who has *taken them away from the Evil to come*, and put them in Possession of a Happiness *large* as their Wishes, and *durable* as their immortal Spirits. Let Those, therefore, who are exercised with such Trials, learn to moderate their Grief, by Christian Principles; quietly to submit, and resign to the wise and merciful Providence of GOD; and, above all, to make it their *principal* Concern to be *Followers of Them*, who, *thro' Faith and Patience*, now inherit the Promises. (*)

I am now in the

Vth: AND last Place, to pay a small Tribute to the Memory of the Deceased; whose premature Death has been the Occasion of Our Meeting together, at present,

I KNOW, indeed, that the Panegy-
rics

(†) Heb. 6: 12.

rics and Encomiums, commonly bestowed in funeral Sermons, are generally suspected of *Partiality*, and *Prejudice*; and, perhaps, not entirely without Reason.

DEATH is apt to renew, and retouch all the soft and tender Traces of Friendship, between the Living and the Dead; — to bring into our Remembrance every endearing Accomplishment, and friendly Disposition of the deceased; to throw a Vail over their Infirmities, and to set their Virtues in *advantageous Perspective*, before us. Hence, we can scarcely refrain from being lavish, in the Praises of our deceased Friends. The tender, and affectionate Sentiments, which this final Separation awakens in our Minds, often engage us to exceed the Limits of Truth in our Commendations, and paint their Virtues by *Superlatives*.

HOWEVER, my Brethren, I need not be tedious in drawing the Character of the amiable Young Person, who is the Subject of this Description: The general

Knowledge , which most of my Hearers had of Him , and the universal good Character, which he justly sustained , with all who knew Him , render this unnecessary and impertinent.

I HAD the Pleasure of his Acquaintance, nearly four Years; a great Part of which Time , I lived under the same Roof with Him ; and therefore can say , from my own certain Knowledge , that he has left but few Equals , of his Age and Opportunities , in any Thing truly laudable and praise-worthy ; so far as I am capable of judging , or distinguishing real Merit.

GOD had endued Him with excellent natural Parts ; with a tenacious Memory , a Good Understanding , a solid Judgment , and a Prudence , which were truly surprising , and far above what are common to his Years and Education : nor did He , like many , neglect those Gifts of Heaven , or *bury those Talents in the Earth* ; He was diligent in embracing every Opportunity of cultivating, and improving

proving his Mind; doing for others, what Good Offices lay in his Power.

WHILE GOD permitted Him to enjoy any Degree of Health, He was a Lover of Company, and of Books; but always preferred such of both, as afforded the most solid Improvement.

IT may be justly said of Him, as it was of Timothy, *that from a Child he knew the holy Scriptures, which make wise unto Salvation, thro' Faith in CHRIST.*(*) And, we may safely apply to Him, what David ascribes to the Man, whom he pronounces blessed; that (†) *his Delight was in the Law of GOD, and, that in his Law did he meditate both Day and Night.* The lively Oracles of GOD were his daily Companions, and Counsellors; in so much, that, I believe, I may safely venture to affirm, that no Day has passed, for some Years, when Health would permit, wherein he has not had Recourse to these *Fountains of Truth*, these *Words of Eternal Life*.

(*) 2 Tim. 3: 15.

(†) Ps. 1: 2.

Life. It was his Custom also to read the Holy Scriptures, (not as too many do) in a light, careless, and superficial Manner; but with great Reverence and Attention; deliberately pausing upon the sacred Text, and studying to know the spiritual Sense, and Meaning of what He read: And, indeed, the Fruits of this serious Application, to the Study of the Scriptures, were very conspicuous; not only in his general Behaviour, but also in that superior Degree of spiritual Knowledge, of which He he gave some very convincing Proofs in Conversation, notwithstanding his great Modesty. —

HE was of a grave, sober and composed Spirit, far above his Years; and would often censure the Levity, and Inconsideration of Youth, in very severe and judicious Terms. He had a true Zeal for the Glory of God, was charmed with the Excellency of Virtue, and had a holy Indignation against all the Vices and Corruptions, of the present Age; often expressing his wonder, *how the Patience of GOD could bear with the Indignities*

ries and Affronts, which he daily received from his guilty Creatures. He had the best Talent in giving Advice, that I ever knew a young Person possessed of; and that Kind of Advice too, which requires the greatest Delicacy and Prudence; I mean, advice to superiors.

He was naturally of a tender, compassionate, and sympathetic Temper; ready (as the Apostle expresses it) *to rejoice with Those who rejoice, and to weep with Those who weep* (*); feeling the Miseries, and sharing in the Happiness of all around Him.

His behaviour, to his Parents, was truly exemplary; and fit to be a pattern to the rising Generation: his only Care, in that Relation, was to honour and obey Those, whom God had set over Him; without the least Symptom of that stubborn, rebellious, undutiful Temper; which alas! is but too common in the Children of this froward Generation.

FROM

(*) Rom. 12: 15.

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FROM such Principles, and such a Behaviour in private Life, and in so *green an Age*, what might have been expected, had God lengthened out the Span of his Life to *Manhood*, and *gray Hairs*? what a shining Ornament, in Church and State, might this promising Youth have made, improved by Experience, and Education? — What a Comfort to his aged Parents? what an affectionate Husband? what a tender Father? what a faithful Friend? what a useful Member of Society? and what a Blessing to the World would these Principles have, probably, produced, had his Life been prolonged?

BUT GOD, the wise, the merciful GOD has seen fit to give such uncommon Virtue a short date, and an early Reward; — GOD, the gracious Disposer of our Lots, has thought proper to add those Years and Days to a *happy Eternity*, which he has taken from a *dangerous, and miserable Life* upon Earth! Let us therefore, with submissive and resigned Hearts, bid welcome to his sovereign and adorable Pleasure!

I HAVE

I HAVE only to add a few words, concerning his Behaviour in his last Sickness; and then, I shall have done.

GOD WAS pleased *early* to visit him, with a *loathsome Disease*; a tedious, lingering, discouraging Indisposition; nor did he *despise the Chastening of the LORD*, nor *faint, when he was rebuked of Him*. He had such a becoming sense of the Goodness and Justice of GOD, and such a deep Conviction of his own Unworthiness, as suppressed every repining Thought, and every murmuring Expression, against the divine Providence. He very well knew, that GOD *does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*; and therefore *He contentedly bore the indignation of the LORD, because he had sinned against Him*. (*) His whole Behaviour, during his last Sickness, was a lively Exemplification of the Words of good old Eli: (†) *It is the LORD, let Him do what seemeth Him Good*; Or, rather of those *more expressive Words* of his divine Master; *not my Will, O Father, but thine be done*. (§).

UPON

(*) Lam. 3: 33. — Mic. 7: 9.

(†) 1 Sam. 3: 18.

(§) Luke 22: 42.

UPON asking Him, one Day, whether he did not feel Regret at being deprived of the Pleasures, and Enjoyments of Life, so soon. He answered, No; *that he heartily blessed GOD, who had thus early made Him sensible of his Weakness, and Mortality; and who, by that Means, had prevented him from being corrupted, by the Sins of the Times; for that, had he enjoyed a perfect Health, he might, probably, have been as corrupted and debauched, as many other Youths, whom he pitied, and whose Practices he abhorred, and despised.*

THIS was a Proof, not only of his absolute *Resignation* to the Will of GOD; but also, that his Affliction was *blessed* and *sanctified* to Him.

UPON conversing with Him lately, more than once, concerning his spiritual State, he gave me very comfortable Evidences of the *Truth*, and *Sincerity* of his Religion; of his *heartly Sorrow* for Sin; of his *Faith*, *Trust* and *Dependance* on the *Merits* of CHRIST, for *Justifying Righteousness*, and *Salvation*; and of his *Hopes of Acceptance*
unto

unto Eternal Life, only thro' the Satisfaction, and Atonement of the great REDEEMER; pronouncing all his own Righteousness, and imperfect Obedience, as of no Merit, or Avail, in Point of his Justification before God; and wishing, and longing to depart, and to be with CHRIST.

LET, therefore, his Parents and Relations *comfort themselves with these Words.* Let them *mourn, as those who have hope,* that, as He *has died in the LORD,* so He is now enjoying the *Blessedness* of those, who *rest from their Labours, and whose Works follow Them.*

Now, my Hearers, *especially* my young Friends, let me recommend the Example of this amiable Youth to your Imitation. You see, from this Instance, that You cannot be too soon provided against the Fears, and Attacks of the *King of Terrors.* Behold, the Judge is at the Door! The Time of your Departure is also approaching; and, for what You know, Death may, this very Moment, be commissioned to seize on your Vitals! O beware, that

He overtake you not impenitent, and unprepared! Beware, that he find You not in a graceless, christless State! If so, your unavoidable Portion will be Eternal Misery; a *Misery*, which will be aggravated by all the Warnings, you have had to *consider your latter End*, to *mind the Things which belong to your Peace!* while it is therefore called *to Day* with You, lay hold on the promised Blessedness. Break off your Sins, by an *immediate*, and *unfeigned* Repentance. Secure an Interest in the Favour of GOD, by Faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST: then, shall you be *safe* here, and *happy*, eternally *happy* hereafter; which may GOD grant, thro' JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

T H E E N D.

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