

A

Funeral Sermon

Occasioned by the

DEATH of the Reverend

Mr. *William Collins*,

Late Minister of the Gospel in

London;

Who died the 30th of *October*, 1702.

Preach'd the 15th of *November* following.

To the Church of Christ
lately under the Pastoral Care of the Deceased
Mr. *William Collins*.

Beloved in our Lord,

'TIS not with out some regret that I permit the following Discourse to come abroad, having so lately ventur'd to expose my self upon a like occasion. I speak thus, because I am conscious of my unfitness to write in an Age so Critical and Censorious. I had much rather that on this Occasion Days should have spoken,¹ than one who is so vastly inferior to the Deceased in Grace, Learning and Years. And I have often thought, since I preach'd on the Death of your Excellent Pastor, that a Sermon so mean to celebrate the Memory of a Man so Great, would be interpreted rather a Slight than a Token of Respect. And tho you, my Brethren, have been pleas'd to think favourably of it, yet I fear that Learned Men will hardly forgive me, that I have ventur'd on a Task so much above me: However I have this satisfaction, that I have done the best I could within the short Limits allow'd me; and 'tis design'd well, however it succeed.

My Brethren,

'Tis under your Umbrage that I expose it to Publick View, not that I expect you should answer for my Faults; tho this I must say, 'tis your Fault that you had no better a Sermon: But such as this is, I hope, since you caus'd it to be preach'd, and now to be publish'd, you will let your Prayers meet mine at the Throne of Grace, that it may be serviceable to the true Interest of Religion. And if God shall bless it to any good purpose, to Saints or Sinners, I desire he may have all the Glory; while I have so much Honour as to be employ'd as an Instrument in the Divine Hand to promote the common Salvation. I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among them that are sanctified; And subscribe my self,

Your Servant for Jesus sake,

JOHN PIGGOTT.

¹ Job 32. 7.

JOB XIV. 14.

– *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my Change come.*

IN this Life we meet with great Exercises and Trials, as did the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness. God leads us through many Difficulties and Hardships to humble and prove us, in order to make us meet for a more happy State.

Eliphaz, tells us, That *Man a born to trouble, as the Sparks fly upward,*² *i.e.* naturally. And *Job* in the beginning of this Chapter, of which my Text is a part, assures us, That *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.* So that to repine at what is inseparable from Humanity, (consider'd as fallen) is in effect to be displeas'd that we are Men. And with as much reason may we murmur that God did not create us Angels, or that we are not immediately translated to Heaven, without taking a Journey of several Years from the Womb to the Grave; Heaven being the only Place exempt from Inconveniency and Trouble, where alone is no Sin or Sorrow, Clamour or Pain: But in this lower Region every Day is opening to us a new Scene of Misery, in which we may behold the Vanity of the World, and the Frailty of Human Nature. No part of our time but hath its portion of Care and Trouble assign'd to it. *And*, as our Saviour hath told us, *sufficient to the Day is the Evil thereof.* So that Life and Misery seem only to be several Names for the same thing. I speak of Human Life indefinitely, whether that of a Prince or a Beggar; for those that are rais'd to the highest pitch of Honour in this World, meet with many things that occasion their disquiet and uneasiness, as well as those that stand upon lower Ground. Indeed it must be own'd, there is a visible difference betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked *now* in some respects. Yet the Dispensations of Divine Providence are promiscuously administer'd to both. The most *Excellent of the Earth* are not exempted from those Diseases and Troubles that lead down to the gloomy Shades of the Grave. *Man cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not.*³ A very elegant Description of a Man's natural Frailty: A *Flower* quickly grows up and appears beautiful, but as suddenly is destroy'd by a rude Hand, or blasted by the Wind, or wither'd by the Sun. *He fleeth as a Shadow, and continueth not:* The Sun is no sooner set, or wrapt in the Mantle of a thick Cloud, but the Shadow doth suddenly disappear and entirely vanish; so uncertain and so fading is the Life of Man. *And dost thou open thine Eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*⁴ *q.d.* Dost thou strictly observe my ways, that thou mayst find cause to punish a Creature so mean as I am? Am I capable of contending with Heaven, that thou *bringest me into judgment with thee?* *i.e.* Thou hast rebuk'd me by thy Judgments, and tho I have been constrain'd to plead with thee, *yet thy Dread hath made me afraid. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*⁵ The Seed of Believers are polluted, as well as the Children of Infidels: I own (as if he should say) that I am originally defil'd; but since tis the common Lot of all Men, let my Misery rather move the Divine Pity, than excite the Rigours of inflexible Justice to punish me in a peculiar and terrible manner. *Seeing his Days are determin'd, the number of his Months are with thee, thou hast appointed his Bounds that he cannot pass; turn from him that he may rest, till he has accomplish'd, as a Hireling, his Day.*⁶ *q.d.* Relax and abate the Troubles I groan under, till I have finish'd my Course, and liv'd out the residue of my limited Time. And when that is come, *Man lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*⁷ The *Heavens* shall not absolutely cease to be, but to be as they now are. The Apostle *Peter* indeed speaks of the *Heavens passing away with a great noise;*⁸ and assures us

2 Job 5. 7.

3 Ver. 2.

4 Ver. 3.

5 Ver. 4.

6 Ver. 5, 6.

7 Ver. 12.

8 2 Pet. 3. 10.

that they shall be *dissolv'd by Fire*,⁹ i.e. they shall be wonderfully refin'd. I see no reason to conclude that their *Substance* shall be annihilated, tho they may pass under a considerable Change in regard of their *Qualities*;¹⁰ when Man shall awake from his mortal Slumber, and spring from his Bed of Dust. Upon which *Job* utters a very pathetick Wish; *O that thou wouldst hide me in the Grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until thy Wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!*¹¹ In which words he desires that God would either *ease* him of his Afflictions, or put an *end* to his Life and them together. In the beginning of the next Verse, he proposes a Matter by way of Query, which may carry in it an Affirmation accompanied with Joy; *If a Man die, shall he live again?* As if he should say, Is it true? Yes I find it is, he shall undoubtedly *live again*. Some indeed give the words a quite different turn, and make the Question equivalent to an absolute Denial: *If a Man die, shall he live again?* i.e. (say they) he shall not, namely in this World. And accordingly they understand the Change that *Job* speaks of in the Text, to be no other than the Change of his Condition in this Life, from a low and adverse, to a flourishing and prosperous State. Which Sense seems forc'd and not genuine: For we do not read that God ever reveal'd any such thing to *Job*; and no doubt, if there had been such a Revelation, he would have spoken of it to his Friends, which would have repel'd the Force of their Censures, and not a little tended to his own Vindication. Moreover, upon the supposition that *Job* had such a discovery concerning the end of his Afflictions, and future Advancement even in this Life, he would not have been such a remarkable Instance of Patience. Nor can I think we should have heard from him any Expressions inconsistent with such a Revelation, as there are several scatter'd through this Book. Finally, This Sense does not accord with the Context, which speaks plainly of a natural Death, and a proper Resurrection. I therefore chuse to understand the former part of the Verse according to the first Sense I mentioned, viz. That if a Man died, 'twas certain he should rise again. But then follows the Text – *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my Change come.*

There are two Senses in reference to this *Change* mention'd in the Text, which I shall distinctly consider and improve. First, Some by *this Change* in the Text, understand *that Change* that shall be made upon the Body at the *Resurrection*; and then 'tis as if *Job* should have said, “All the Days that are appointed for my lying in the Grave, shall my Soul wait in Heaven for the revival of my Body, which shall pass under a mighty Change at the Resurrection of the Just.” And of this mind are some very *Learned and Judicious Interpreters. And if the words are understood in this Sense, then this *waiting* must refer to that *Disposition* which is in the Spirits of *just Men made perfect*: which Desire does not in the least create any Uneasiness or Impatience, for that would damp their Joys, and interrupt their Felicity; but it is such an *Expectation*, and such a *Waiting*, as consists with the ease and pleasure of an happy Spirit. And certainly 'tis very agreeable to the Rational Nature of this Immortal Substance, to wait for the *change* of that Body it was created to inhabit: seeing 'tis assur'd it shall be endow'd with a vast accession of new Qualities, when 'tis rais'd from the Dead to be put on a second time.

I shall therefore briefly recite a few things with respect to the Properties of the raised Bodies of the Saints, to shew that 'tis rational for a happy Human *Spirit* to wait for such a *Body*.

First, The Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection shall be *spiritual*; so says the Apostle, *It is sown a natural or *animal Body, it is rais'd a spiritual Body.*¹² Observe, 'tis a *Body* still, 'tis a material Substance, only sublimated or rais'd to a higher degree of *fineness*. Our Bodies now *are gross and sluggish*, and do very much hinder the Aspirations of our Souls; but hereafter they shall be *refin'd*

9 Ver. 12.

10 Psal. 102. 26, 27.

11 Job 14. 13.

* Mercerus and Scultetus in Loc. See also Mr. How's *Blessedness of the Righteous*, P. 210, 211. &c.

* Ψυχικόν

12 1 Cor. 15. 44.

from the Dregs of Matter. I do not mean that they shall commence *Spirits*, but that they shall be *greatly purified*. There is a vast difference betwixt certain Portions of Matter now; for instance (as I have elsewhere shewn) *betwixt the animal Spirits in the Brain, and the grosser parts of the Body; betwixt a Lump of Clay, and the refin'd Matter of the Air; betwixt the Earth, and the Sun that shines upon it; yet all these are material Substances*. And if we can discover so great a difference in material things *now*, we may conclude we shall discern a much greater *hereafter*, when the Bodies of the Saints shall be rais'd and refin'd to that degree, as to answer the Description of the Apostle, who assures us they shall be *spiritual Bodies*. And this not only on the account of the Improvements that shall be made on such Bodies by the accession of new Qualities; but on the account of their being better fitted to serve the Spirits that shall govern them. Here our Bodies are heavy Weights, and great Incumbrances to our Spirits; but the time is hastning when the *Noble Machines* shall be as serviceable to our Souls, as was *Elijah's* fiery Chariot, which convey'd him into that Presence where Spirits shine with the Beauties of Holiness, and burn with the Ardours of Divine Love: The *natural Grossness* of our Bodies now, is the occasion of much **Ignorance and Sin: They are as thick Veils to hinder our prospect, but at the Resurrection they'l be as transparent Mediums to promote our Knowledg*. They shall be fit Vehicles to serve our Spirits, and agreeable Helps to our Devotion. That our Contemplations *now* on the Material and Intellectual World, are mightily hinder'd by the grossness of the Organs of our Bodies, is too evident to be deny'd; for when the Eye is assisted by Art (as a †Learned Man remarks) it is let into a new World of Creatures, and an infinite agreeable variety of Motions, Figures, and Contextures, which we can discern nothing of by our naked Sight: But this, and much more, after the Resurrection shall be discover'd by the naked Eye. O what admirable Traces of Wisdom and Power shall we discover in the other World, where God and Saints shall reside! *Here* with what confusion and disorder do we both think and reason about abstracted Truths! But *hereafter*, how clear and ravishing Views shall we take of the most perplex'd *Phenomena* of Nature, and the deepest Mysteries of Grace, when our Bodies shall be *elevated* and made *spiritual*, as well as the Capacities of our Souls enlarged! To how great a degree they shall be rais'd and refin'd, I dare not determine; tho I think 'tis a very probable account which is given by an Ingenious †Man, *viz.* "That our Bodies in the Resurrection will continue always the same, without *Perspiration*, or any other evacuation¹³. The *Springs* will always have the same *bent*, the *Motions* will all be equally regular, the same continual *Round* of the same pure vigorous Spirits, and the same Blood moving for ever in a brisk but even Circulation." There will be nothing to rebate their *Vigour*, or slacken their *Motion*; their *Imploy* will not exhaust their Spirits, and therefore they'l have no need of Recruits:¹⁴ *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.*¹⁵

Secondly, The rais'd Bodies of the Saints shall be *Immortal and Incorruptible*: So the Apostle affirms, *For this Corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must put on Immortality.*¹⁶ Our Bodies shall be deliver'd from *all Diseases* as well as from *Death* it self; and indeed without this an Immortal Body would not be a very desirable thing. The unequal Temperature of Human Bodies now, and the jarring Principles that compose the feeble Structure, do help forward their Decay and Ruin: But nothing that is troublesom and uneasy, shall ever infest the Bodies of the Saints after they are rais'd from the Dead. They shall enjoy an entire freedom from Pains and Diseases; and a compleat deliverance from Corruption and Death: *For when this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal shall have put on Immortality; then shall be brought to pass*

* See Mr. Joseph Stenett's *Sermon at the Funeral of Mr. Belcher*, P. 29, 30, 31, 32. and also P. 57.

† Dr. Tennison now ABp. of Can. in his *Serm. on 1 Cor. 15. 53.* Pag. 14.

‡ Dr Hody's *Resurrection of the (same) Body asserted*, Pag. 203.

13 This should be evacuation, [Ed.] Evacuation. *Physiology*. The process of discharging (waste matter, etc.) through the excretory organs (now esp. from the bowels); an instance of this process; a manner in which it takes place. *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

14 Recruits. A means of acquiring, developing, or renewing something. Obsolete. *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

15 Rev. 7. 16.

16 1 Cor. 15. 53.

*the saying that is written, Death is swallow'd up in Victory,*¹⁷ or for *ever; so as that it shall never have any more power over the Bodies of the Saints: which being rais'd incorruptible, and greatly refin'd, shall be no more subject to Sickness or Death, but be as immortal as the Spirits to which they will be united.

The antient Philosophers in their Writings have asserted a great many odd Notions, tho I think none more unaccountable than that which is advanc'd in the *Platonick System*, viz. The Doctrine of the *Restitution of the World*. The substance of which Doctrine is this, viz. That in a certain space of time every thing that had been acted in this World should be transacted over again; so that such as had liv'd and died in Ages past, should in Ages to come live again as long in the World as they had before, and then die out of it: and that these Changes should run in a Circle for ever. By which kind of vain Philosophy they would infer Corruption and Mortality after the Resurrection. But the Christian Institution admits of no Doctrine so uncomfortable and absurd: for our Blessed Saviour is very express, when he gives a Return to the captious Enquiry of the *Sadduces* concerning a Woman that had seven Husbands, *Whose Wife of the seven this Woman should be at the Resurrection?* In answer to this, our Lord shews them, that they went upon a false Principle, and that their Ignorance of the Scripture was the cause of their Mistake. The false Principle they went upon, was, that there would be marrying and giving in marriage after the Resurrection. To which our Saviour answers, *But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither married nor are given in marriage.* And then subjoins this solid Reason, *Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels.*¹⁸

Thirdly, After the Resurrection, the Bodies of the Saints shall be *strong*. In this the Apostle is also express – *It is sown in Weakness, it is rais'd in Power.*¹⁹ How feeble are the Saints now! and how small a matter disorders the Human Structure! *Man in his best Estate is altogether Vanity*, in regard of his natural Frailty, as well as his moral Conduct. And we are said, *To have our Foundation in the Dust, to dwell in Houses of Clay, and to be crush'd before the Moth.* An Hair or a Fly, a little Heat or a little Cold, a noxious Vapour or a contagious Atom, is enough to unpin the Fabrick, and throw down the Tabernacle we dwell in: But when this shall be rais'd and rebuilt, it shall be so strong, as not to suffer by smaller Accidents, or a greater Force; its Strength shall be so advanc'd, that its swiftest Motion shall be without weariness, and *its Life*, as durable as *Eternity*, shall not draw upon it the least decay: We shall then be like the Angels, whose Property 'tis to *excel in strength*.

Fourthly, The Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection shall be *Celestial* and *Glorious*. Of both these Epithets the Apostle speaks: *And as we have born the Image of the Earthly, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.*²⁰ It's call'd a Heavenly Body, from the place of its abode: a Place so pleasant, that the Inhabitants of it, the sinless Angels, cannot describe it in its utmost Beauty and Glory: How low then must be our Conceptions of it, while confin'd to this dark and misty Region! Yet the Holy Scriptures say as much concerning that, and the Glory of the rais'd Bodies of the Saints, as is necessary and convenient for us to know.

What Spectacles of Horror are the dead Bodies of the Saints, when laid in the Dust! But when God shall raise them from those Beds, that *Corruption* with which they lie down shall put on *Incorruption*; so that they shall appear with a great Lustre and Glory upon them. For tho the Body is *sown in Dishonour, it shall be rais'd in Glory.*²¹ How deform'd soever some Men are when they die,

17 1 Cor. 15. 54.

* Εἰς νῆκος often signifies for ever, as 2 Sam. 2. 26. Job 36. 7. Nor is the Phrase us'd in any other Sense in the Septuagint. Vid. Dr Whitby. in Loc.

18 Luke 20. 35, 36.

19 1 Cor. 15. 43.

20 1 Cor. 15. 49.

21 Ver. 43.

yet all the Saints shall be rais'd without any thing defective or redundant. Such as descend into the Grave, crooked, maim'd, or blind, shall come forth streight in admirable Proportion, with Eyes sparkling like Flames. Those that have sunk into the Earth with Wrinkles and Furrows, the Marks of Old Age, shall spring from thence with a sprightliness of Youth, set off with a lively Colour, and a heavenly Air. The Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection shall have so great a Lustre and Beauty upon them, as shall excel the most celebrated Beauties in this World. The Children of the Resurrection will be without any Spot or Wrinkle on their Bodies, as well as without any Stain upon their Souls.

No doubt but *Adam*, while innocent, was a very glorious Creature; and therefore an excellent Author is of opinion, That the Bodies of the Saints, after the Resurrection, shall be just as *Adam's* was before his Fall; only with this Advantage above it, that they shall neither need Recruits nor Evacuations.²² But with submission to that learned Gentleman, I cannot but think that the rais'd Bodies of the Saints will in other respects excel *Adam's* in Innocency, because I find 'tis not *Adam's* Body before his Fall, but the Body of our Blessed Saviour since 'twas rais'd and glorify'd, that is made the Model and Pattern by which ours is to be form'd: For the Apostle, speaking of our Lord, says, *Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, &c.*²³ Now concerning the *glorious Body* of our Blessed Saviour, we may give some faint guesses at it from the Lustre of his Countenance, and the Glittering of his Garments, when transfigur'd in Mount *Tabor*, before *Peter, James, and John*. One Evangelist says, – *His Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light.*²⁴ Another says, *That as he pray'd, the Fashion of his Countenance was altrer'd, and his Raiment was white and glistering.*²⁵ *His Face did shine as the Sun.* No Creature in this World has so visible a Glory as the Sun, and therefore the Glory of Christ's Countenance is compar'd to it; not but that it might much excel it, and for ought I know, all the Beams of Light that issue from that Globe of Fire, do greatly fall short of the Lustre of our Saviour's transfigur'd Countenance: And I the rather think thus, because the Lustre that was on the other parts of our Saviour's Body, tho cover'd with Garments, seem to have shot pointed Rays of Glory upon the Garments, which made them appear like Light, *white and glistering*. And all this seems to be but a Preludium to the greater Glory our Lord was to put on after his Resurrection.

And if his Body was so glorious when it was but a mortal Body, what Beauty, what Lustre, what Excess of Glory does it shine with, now 'tis a spiritual, impassible, immortal Body! And what Excellencies shall the Bodies of the Saints share, when form'd after this bright Pattern at the Resurrection! But,

Again, how far the glorify'd Spirit may tend to advance the Lustre of the rais'd Body, I cannot tell: for we may observe now, that according to the Serenity of the Mind, is the Vivacity of the Countenance. The Peace and Satisfaction which reign'd in *Stephen's* Breast, might be one reason of that Seraphick Air that appear'd in his Countenance a little before his Martyrdom; tho I deny not but there might be something extraordinary in this Martyr's Case. But add to all this, that at the Resurrection, the finishing Strokes shall be given to the Spouse of Christ, that his Bride shall then be set off with the brightest Ornaments, and the most glittering Attire; that the Marriage of the Lamb being come, the Spouse shall be without Spot or Wrinkle, in all respects prepar'd to consummate the happy Nuptials.

Thus have I faintly describ'd the rais'd glorify'd Bodies of the Saints; but alas! the half has not been told you, all Images are too dark, all Colours are too dead, all Words too narrow, and all Thoughts

22 Dr. Hody.

23 Phil. 3. 21.

24 Mat. 17. 2.

25 Luke 9. 29.

too low, fully to delineate a Glorify'd Body. Yet the little, the very little that I have said, being laid together, may show the Reasonableness of a Spirit's waiting in Heaven with Delight and Pleasure, till that vile Body it dropt at its Ascension thither, be rais'd and fashion'd like the glorious Body of our Blessed Saviour. Before I pass to the second Sense that is given of the *Change* mention'd in my Text, I shall briefly name two or three Inferences from what has been said.

(1.) The Spirits of Just Men in Heaven are not *now* so perfect as they shall be *hereafter* at the first *Resurrection*. That the Spirits of Just Men departed are *perfect* in a comparative Sense, cannot be *deny'd*; but that they shall be rais'd to a *higher degree of Perfection*, must be necessarily *granted*: for 'tis certain they were created to *dwell in Flesh*; and 'tis as certain they are not so happy, while *naked Spirits*, as they will be when *re-united* to their rais'd Glorified Bodies. So that when the Author to the *Hebrews* speaks of *the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*,²⁶ it must be understood with some limitation; for while they wait for a Good which they *do not enjoy*, they are not so perfect as they will be when that is *obtain'd*. 'Tis true, such Spirits have finish'd the Work which God gave them to do in this World, before they were remov'd to the other. They are perfectly deliver'd from all Trouble and Sorrow, all Sin, and Temptations to it; they are enter'd into the Possession of the Heavenly Inheritance; in the Injoyment of which they shine with a Perfection of Knowledg, Holiness, and Love: *They know as they are known*, they love as they are lov'd, and they *are holy as God is holy*. Which *subjective moral Perfection* does not exclude, but suppose that they possess such a *natural Perfection* as is proper to glorify'd Human Spirits while uncloth'd: for we must always keep in mind, that God originally design'd they should *dwell in Flesh*; and consequently they are not so perfect as they will be when their Bodies are rais'd, refin'd, and glorify'd, in conjunction with those Spirits they did formerly inhabit.

(2.) If the Bodies of the Saints shall have such an accession of new Qualities when rais'd from the Dead, how careful should we be of such Bodies before they die? I mean, that they may not be abus'd to any vile purposes. If we are Believers, our Bodies are *the Temples of the Holy Ghost*; and we live in the expectation, that these very Bodies that are so often sick and indispos'd, press'd with natural Necessities, and by a variety of Accidents render'd weak and infirm, shall be rais'd incorruptible and immortal. Do we live under the Influence of such a Hope? Have we such glorious things in view? Surely this will restrain us from using any of the Members of our Bodies, as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin. This is an Inference made by the Apostle *John* himself from a like Proposition: for when he had spoken concerning the Objects of the Christian Hope, with respect to our *likeness to Christ*, and our *seeing of him as he is*; he adds, *And every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*.²⁷ Indeed those that expect *hereafter* a *Mahometan* Paradise of sensual Pleasures, may *now*, with out any contradiction to their Hopes, indulge and gratify their carnal Appetites. But it would be a very monstrous and absurd thing for one, that expects his Body at the Resurrection, to be fashion'd like the Glorious Body of his Saviour, to give up all the Members of it to be constantly employ'd in the Service of Sin.

(3.) How should the Hopes of a Glorious Resurrection *hereafter*, support and comfort us *now* under the Infirmities of a mortal Body! There is hardly any thing in this World that gives us more uneasiness and trouble than our frail and infirm Bodies; what with the Diseases that attend them, and the Clogs they are to our Souls, Christians generally *groan, being burden'd*: But the time is coming when we shall know no more Sickness nor Pain, when we shall neither feel Diseases, nor fear Death; all Complaints shall be silenc'd, and *all Tears be wiped from our Eyes*. Therefore let such as have flourishing Souls in languishing Bodies, sustain themselves with this thought, that tho they drop into the Grave through Weakness, yet they shall be rais'd by Infinite Power, and be

26 Heb. 12. 23.

27 1 John 3. 2, 3.

endow'd with such a Beauty and Strength as shall neither change nor decay, but both exist and continue for ever. The Apostle *Paul*, after he had told the *Thessalonian* Christians, that our *Lord himself should descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God; that the Dead in Christ shall rise first;*²⁸ adds, *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*²⁹

(4.) If the Spirits of the Just in Heaven wait with pleasure for the Resurrection of their Bodies, then the Spirits of the Wicked *now* in Prison expect with terror the Resurrection of theirs. *All that are in their Graves, our Saviour assures us, shall come forth: They that have done Good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil to the Resurrection of Damnation.*³⁰ With what new Qualities, the Bodies of the Wicked shall rise, I'll not determine, because the Scripture is silent in the matter: This I may venture to affirm, that they'l be so fram'd as to undergo what shall be allotted them to suffer; as for their being Immortal, 'tis that they may exist under the greatest and most exquisite Torments. So that the departed Spirits of the Wicked must needs tremble, while they expect the Resurrection of their vile Bodies to be rejoin'd to their guilty Souls, which together shall *suffer shame and everlasting contempt.*

There are other Inferences which might be deduc'd, but I forbear, and shall now proceed to consider the second Sense which Interpreters give of the *Change* mention'd in the Text; and that is, *the Change we pass under at Death.* Understanding the words thus, as they represent the pious *Disposition*, and the firm *Resolution* of *Job*, with reference to his own Death; 'tis necessary that I briefly touch on these four things.

First, That I treat of *Death* under the Notion of a *Change.*

Secondly, That I consider this *Change*, as appointed or predetermin'd.

Thirdly, That I tell you what is imply'd, *in a Person's waiting for the appointed time of his Change.*

Fourthly, the Use and Improvement of the whole.

First, I am to treat of *Death* under the Notion of a *Change.* And the Text confines me to speak concerning this *Change* as it respects a *good Man*; tho there are some things that are common both to the Righteous and the Wicked in this *great Change*, which will unavoidably fall in: Yet I shall principally insist on this *Change* as it refers to the Righteous.

And,

(1.) Death dissolves the close Union that Heaven hath struck betwixt Soul and Body. Indeed, the *Modus* of this Union will remain a puzzling Enquiry, even among Men of the deepest penetration: but this we know in regard of its Effects, 'Tis a Union so close and near, that the Spirit cannot grieve without affecting the Body, nor the Body receive a Wound, without occasioning a painful Sensation in the Mind. Yet Death parts these near Associates, and fixes 'em a great distance one from the other. The Fabrick of the Body shall moulder into Dust, and the Spirit that animated it shall be recall'd by him that *form'd it. Then shall the Dust return to the Earth, as it was, and the Spirit unto God that gave it.*³¹ Now the best of Men cannot pass under this *Change* without some natural Reluctancy. The Apostle *Paul*, who had *a desire to depart, and to be with Christ,*³² signified, that he was not *desirous to be uncloth'd, i.e.* to die merely that he might put off his Body, and be rid of one constituent part of himself; but that he might be *clothed upon*, that is, that he might have immediate

28 1 Thess. 4. 16.

29 Ver. 18.

30 John 5. 28, 29.

31 Eccl. 12. 7.

32 Phil. 1. 23.

Glory and Bliss, in regard of his Soul, and that hereafter his Body might be glorified in conjunction with his happy Spirit. Thus you see Death makes a great Change, but 'tis the way to Immortality; and tho it parts these dear Intimates, yet the Righteous are not thereby remov'd from their Happiness, but rais'd to a better enjoyment of it, as the following Particulars will more fully demonstrate.

(2.) Death changes the *Place and Abode* of a good Man. The Body that *walk'd* upon this Earth, is *buried* under it, and fix'd in the common Repository of the Dead: the Soul that us'd to be aspiring after Communion with God, is immediatly caught up to Heaven with him. Here the Spirit of a good Man sojourns in a frail Tabernacle, but at Death it shall be received into Everlasting Habitations: So that in regard of his Soul, he exchanges Earth for Heaven; in respect of his Body, he parts with a Dwelling for a Coffin, his Ornaments for a Shroud, and his easy Bed for a dark and silent Grave. Indeed, there are but a few Souls that have ground to hope for the *former*, therefore the generality of Men dread the *latter*.

(3.) As consequent hereupon, the Righteous at Death change their Society, and that much for the better. In this World, the Children of God are constrain'd to converse with the Heirs of Hell. Now as these two Off-springs have different Parents and different Interests, so they have vastly different Inclinations; which must make their conversing together very disagreeable, and occasion much trouble and sorrow to the Righteous. But Death, which lets 'em out of this World, will let them into another, where they shall have Society more harmonious and sutable. Here the best Men have their Imperfections; and tho they are Children of the same Father, Disciples of the same Lord, Heirs of the same Kingdom, and are travelling under the Influence of the same Spirit to the same Celestial Country, yet they are too apt to *fall out by the way*. So that sometimes the Conversation of good Men proves a Scandal and Grief to one another; but so soon as they are absent from their Bodies, and present with the Lord, they shall enjoy the most sweet and endearing Society. Death lets 'em out of Prison into Paradise; they leave the *Communion of Saints* on Earth, to join with the General Assembly and Church of the First-born written in Heaven, where they shall not only associate with the Spirits of Just Men consummated, and with an innumerable Company of Angels; but that which is best of all, they shall be present with Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, who has endear'd himself to 'em by his indefective Obedience, unparallel'd Sufferings, by his justifying Blood, and renewing Spirit, through which they obtain'd a rightful Claim to the Glory of Heaven, and were render'd meet for Converse with that Society to which they are advanc'd. O happy Change! to pass from a peevish ill-natur'd World, into that Blessed Place where there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore! Where **“there's neither Pride nor Envy, Jealousy nor Strife, Weakness nor Folly, to render them uneasy to themselves, or each other: they are like flaming Tapers in a Branch of burnsih'd Gold, which so mingle their several Lights, that at a distance they seem to be but one, tho indeed they are many.”* O thrice happy Change! to be rais'd to such blessed and agreeable Society, where there is not a Sigh heard, a Tear dropt, nor a Complaint utter'd, but all the Signs of Sorrow are utterly banish'd: For as the Inhabitants of Heaven live in unstained Light, so they dwell in perfect Love; and while they mingle their Hallelujahs, which they offer to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever, there is not the least Discord, but the truest and most perfect Harmony.

(4.) As there is a *Change of Society* consequent on Death, so there will follow a *Change of Work and Employment*. While we carry about us an ensnaring mortal Body, we must watch and pray, combat and fight; but at Death *our Warfare shall be accomplish'd*. We shall have run our Race, finish'd our Course, and fought the good Fight: and tho we die *struggling* with the Enemies of our

* Mr. Nathanael Taylor's *Sermon on 2 Cor. 5. 8. Pag. 11.*

Salvation, we shall die *victorious*; for every true Saint dies *more than a Conqueror through him that hath loved him*.

Here we are forced to be constantly on our *guard*, and often to be actually *engag'd* with Principalities and Powers; but when our Bodies *drop* into the Earth, and our Souls *ascend* to Heaven, we shall enter into Mansions too high for the Storms of this Region, and too strong for the Attacks of Devils. Now, I say, as we shall change our Place and Society, so we shall our Work and Employment; for no Change can free us from the Duty we owe to our God. That we shall perform Duties in Heaven, is beyond all doubt; 'tis irrational to think that Angels and Men should dream away Eternal Ages in doing nothing. Indeed, the extent of our Ministration in Heaven, I mean the whole of what we shall do, and enjoy in the invisible World, we must be content to be ignorant of, till we have pass'd out of Time into Eternity. This we know in general, there will be no need of Gospel-Ordinances, nor of the exercise of Suffering Graces; but we shall love God, and admire him, adore and praise him, know him, and be like him, and unweariedly contemplate his Glory with new Extasy, and Eternal Wonder. In a word, we shall be deliver'd from all Moral and Penal Evils, and be advanc'd to the highest Happiness and Glory, a Happiness that shall be as durable as the Author of it. Finally, this Happiness shall immediately ensue upon the Change we pass under at Death. That a Spirit uncloth'd of its Body, is capable of acting in a separate State, none can deny that own the immortality of the Soul. Moreover, a good Man's Soul is as fit for Heaven in *articulo Mortis*,³³ as ever it will be. There is no refining Fire to purify departed Spirits: The Popish Purgatory is an absurd and visionary thing, reflecting great Dishonour upon the Sacrifice of Christ; however it may promote the secular Interest of the Priests. Again, Christ hath made every thing ready to receive all that *die in the Lord*; and there are many places of Scripture that either plainly express it, or from which it may be clearly infer'd. One that plainly expresses it, is our Saviour's Promise to the Thief on the Cross; *And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*³⁴ And another from which it may be strongly infer'd, is that of the Apostle Paul; *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*³⁵ Now if the Apostle, who liv'd a Life of Communion with God here, had not expected upon his Death presently to have pass'd into the blissful Presence of his Lord, we cannot rationally think he would have been in any strait, to have fix'd his Choice; for certainly a little enjoyment of God here, is far better than no enjoyment at all; for none there can be if the Soul falls into a deep Sleep, and passes into an unactive State. But this Notion I have elsewhere confuted, and therefore shall hasten to the second General Head; which is,

Secondly, To shew you that the time of our Change by Death is appointed or predetermined; about which it will be necessary briefly to state the Matter, and then to prove it. I shall explain it by these three Propositions, to prevent Mistakes.

(1.) No Man's Days are so determin'd, as to justify the neglect of Prayer, or the disuse of Food or Physick. He that has fix'd in his own Counsel how long we shall live, has determin'd that ordinarily Food shall support our Lives, and Medicines correct those Maladies that infest our Bodies.

The Word of God directs us in a time of Sickness and Danger to look up to Heaven; for tho he already knows what we want, yet he will still be enquir'd of by us for all we need. And indeed under all our Illness and Indisposition of Body, we are principally and in the first place to seek to God, and then we may lawfully address to Physicians. *Asa* might, very innocently have sought to the Physicians; therefore his Sin did not lie in a bare Application to them, but in his seeking to the

33 Latin, literally: in the article of death [*Ed.*]

34 Luke 23. 43.

35 Phil. 1. 23.

Physicians, and *not to God*.³⁶ And this gives me a fair occasion to reprove the madness, and censure the folly of some Pretenders to Religion, who seldom concern themselves about their Souls, till the Physicians have given over their Bodies as past cure; the Minister is the last person that is thought of, tho he has more to do with the Sick than any of the *great Masters of the other Faculty*. Yet alas! the sick Person must be stupified with Opiats, and brought into the very Agonies of Death, before we can have an opportunity of speaking to him, or praying with him.

(2.) The Days of wicked Men, through Intemperance and other Vices, are much shorter than in human probability they might have been according to the course of Nature. The wisest of Men has told us, that *the Fear of the Lord prolongeth Days; but the Years of the Wicked shall be shortned*.³⁷ A Man that is meek and temperate, prevents many Diseases, that overtake him who gives up himself to Passion, and runs into all excess of Riot. *Solomon* speaking of *the Fear of God, or Religion*, says, *It shall be Health to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones*.³⁸ These words are not to be understood, as if Religion would maintain such as embrace it in a constant state of Health: No, but that the Virtues it recommends are proper to promote Health, and to prevent Diseases. For nothing is more evident, than that some, thro their Excesses, corrupt the Mass of their Blood, and bring Rottenness into their Bones, by which means they live less time than might have been expected according to the course of Nature. 'Tis plain that some *die in Youth*, because *their Life is among the Unclean*.³⁹

(3.) Tho God has fix'd the Period of Human Life, yet it is not so determin'd as to lay any Person under a fatal necessity of Self-murder, or the commission of any other Sin that may hasten his Death. What Christ himself suffer'd, was according to *the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledg of God*: Yet that did not fix either *Judas* that betray'd him, or the *Jews* that crucified him, under such a fatal necessity of committing those Facts, as to force the Faculties of their Souls: to suppose which, would be at once to render them *innocent*, and to make God the *Author of their Sin*; a Consequence not less blasphemous, than the Principle is absurd from which it is infer'd. So in the Case before us, tho God has fix'd the Period of Human Life, yet not so as to constrain any one to put an end to his own Days: if any Man forfeit his Life to publick Justice, and so his Days are *cut off in the midst*, the Sins that brought him to his shameful Exit are not to be charg'd on the Divine Decrees, but on the Corruption and Obstinacy of his own Will.

Having thus stated the Matter, I shall endeavour to prove that God hath *predetermin'd, and fix'd the Period of Human Life*. I am well aware that I am fallen on a very nice and disputable Point, but my Time will not allow me to wade into the Controversy; I shall therefore undertake, in a very few words, to establish the Principle which I think is advanc'd in the Text (understanding the Change mention'd in it of Death) by other parts of Divine Revelation.

The Holy Scriptures assure us, *That to every thing there is a Season, and a Time to every Purpose under Heaven*;⁴⁰ *i.e.* a Time fix'd in the Divine Decrees: and 'tis presently subjoin'd, *A Time to be born, and a Time to die*.⁴¹ Moreover, if God hath *predetermin'd* things of lesser moment, it seems rational to conclude that things of greater importance come within the compass of his Decrees. The Apostle *Paul*, in his Oration to the *Athenians*, affirms, that God hath *determin'd*, not only *the Times before appointed*, but fix'd the *Bounds of Mens Habitations*.⁴² If the Places of our Dwellings are *predetermin'd*, much more the Period of our Lives.

36 2 Chron. 16. 12.

37 Pro. 10. 27.

38 Prov. 3. 8.

39 Job 36. 14.

40 Eccl. 3. 1.

41 Ver. 2.

42 Acts 17. 26.

Again, it must be allow'd that the Time of our Blessed Saviour's *Death*, as well as of his *Nativity*, was predetermin'd in the Eternal Counsel of God: For as he came into the World in the Fulness of Time, so he went not out of it till that Time was fully come which the Father had determin'd he should Continue here: Therefore 'tis said of his Enemies, that tho' *they sought to take him, yet no Man laid hands on him* (they were restrain'd) *because his Hour was not yet come.*⁴³ Now Jesus Christ was made like to us in all things, Sin only excepted; so that I think it not unreasonable to conclude, that the Day of our Death is predetermin'd, as well as that of our Saviour's.

There are several other Mediums that Learned Men go upon in this Controversy, which I shall not so much as name; I have time only to refer you to two ample Testimonies of Scripture, which I think will both elucidate and confirm the matter: *Is there not an appointed time to Man upon Earth? Are not his Days also like the Days of an Hireling?*⁴⁴ Both at these Questions carry in them a strong Affirmation: *Is there not an appointed Time to Man upon Earth? q.d.* Yes, there certainly is, God hath fix'd and appointed such a Space of Time for his continuance in this World. *Are not his Days also like the Days of an Hireling? i.e.* they certainly are. And this further illustrates and confirms the Matter; A Hireling hath a Time of Service prefix'd, which when expir'd, he is discharg'd from his Labour: So Man having liv'd to the Period Heaven has fix'd, can continue in this World no longer; as another Passage in the Book of *Job* does expresly affirm: *Seeing his Days are determin'd, and the Number of his Months are with thee; thou hast appointed his Bounds that he Cannot pass.*⁴⁵ But I hasten,

Thirdly, To tell you, what is imply'd in a good Man's waiting for the *appointed Time of his Change*.

1. It supposes and implies an Apprehension and Persuasion, that the Change he expects will be for his Advantage. It may be said of a threaten'd Misery, that People rather *fear* its approach, than *wait* for its coming; Waiting is an Act of Hope, and the proper Object of Hope is an absent Good. *Hope that is seen, is not Hope; for what a Man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*⁴⁶ Evil consider'd as future and approaching, is the Object of Fear; but being present, it's the Occasion of Sorrow. But what we are said to hope and wait for, we apprehend as good: So that such as wait for their great Change aright, look on Death as a Friend, and not as an Enemy. The Wicked rather *fear* than *wait* for their Change; they think of Death under the Notion of a King of Terrors, but the Righteous wait for it as a Messenger of Peace: and the reason of both is obvious, for the former at Death quit their imaginary Happiness for real Misery, whereas the latter have good ground to believe they shall pass from an imperfect, to the most desirable and compleat enjoyment of God.

2. This Waiting implies a profound Submission to the Will of God, both with respect to the fixed Time of his Change, and the Things that lead to it.

(1.) This waiting for our Change, implies a profound Submission to the Will of God, in regard of that Time he has fix'd for it. We may all say with *Isaac*, *We know not the Day of our Death*; yet if we wait for our Change aright, we are content to depart this Life at the time that Heaven hath appointed, be it sooner or later. O, says such a Soul, He that is the Lord of all my Time, has a Right to contract or lengthen it; He that breath'd into me the Breath of Life, may stop it when he pleases, and call back that Spirit which he first gave. I am content with God's predetermining the Time of my Exit, because he is infinitely wise, and can best order the Season of my Removal out of this World, who fix'd the Moment of my coming into it.

43 Joh. 7. 30.

44 Job 7. 1.

45 Job 14. 5.

46 Rom. 8. 24, 25.

(2.) This waiting for our Change, implies a Submission to the Will of God, in bearing those Afflictions he shall think fit to lay upon us in the way to it. There are a great many Difficulties which most good Men struggle through, before they arrive at that Place, *where the Wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary are at rest*. Besides the Cares and Disappointments of this Life, besides the Treachery of pretended Friends, and the Malice of open Enemies; there are Hosts of Diseases that our Bodies are incident to, some loathsome, and others painful, that try the Graces of good Men to the utmost; so that e'er they are aware, they slide into Fits of Impatience: but the Grace of God, that has the ascendent in their Souls, soon corrects their Disorders, and silences their Complaints; and then, like the Holy Psalmist in his Afflictions, *they are dumb, and open not their mouths, because God does it*. For being satisfied with God's appointing the time of their Death, they are also willing to undergo those intermediate Evils which he sees fit to bring upon them, *to weaken their strength in the way*, till they sink down into the Dust of Death. And they endure Chastisement as Children, they are neither stupid nor impatient, they do not *despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuk'd of him*.

(3.) Waiting for our Change, implies a making of frequent and serious Reflections on the shortness and uncertainty of our Time. He that waits aright for his great Change, frequently considers how swiftly his Time passes, and how soon there will be a Period put to it: That he is not to continue long in this World, but is hastening to the other. 'Tis remarkable, that tho *Jacob* had liv'd 130 Years, when he stood before *Pharaoh*, yet he lets him know, that *the days of the years of his Life were but few, as well as evil*. But alas, how much is Human Life shorten'd since that time! I observe, that *Job* in the Text resolves to *wait all the Days of his appointed Time*: He does not speak of Weeks, or Months, or Years, but of Days, certainly to denote the brevity of Human Life. The Apostle *James* compares our Life to a *Vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*.⁴⁷ A Vapour is a fit Representation of the Life of Man, for the shortness of its continuance, and the suddenness of its departure. Now he that waits for his Change aright, lives every day as if it were to be his last: I know, says such a Divine Soul, *the Time is short*, and it will not be long before the Angel shall swear by Him that lives for ever and ever, that Time shall be no more; and since my Time is so short and uncertain, I will demean my self like a Stranger upon Earth, and as a *Citizen of Heaven*, and will constantly beg, *That God would so teach me to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart to Wisdom*.

(4.) Waiting for our *great Change*, implies the exercise of the utmost Diligence to be *actually* prepar'd for it. Every true Saint is *habitually* ready for Death, but there are but a very few that are *actually* prepar'd: all that are brought into a State of Reconciliation with God, and united to Christ, that are justified by his Blood, and renew'd by his Spirit, are *habitually* fit to die; but an *actual* Preparation for Death, such as the Apostle *Paul* had, when in so great a degree he was crucified to this World, and the World to him, that he could say, *He was willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord*, but very few enjoy; however such an excellent Temper is labour'd after by all such as wait aright for their great Change. I proceed now to the Improvement of the whole.

(1.) I infer, That God never design'd this *changing World* for our *Eternal Abode*. Here we have no continuing City, the Fashion of this World is passing away; this can't be the Center of our Rest, because there is nothing in it to satisfy the boundless Cravings of an Immortal Spirit. We should not be in awaiting posture, if we had *Hope only in this Life*: but, blessed be God, we that are Christians have solid ground to expect a better and a more durable State! This Life insensibly glides away like a rapid Stream, and it will not be long e'er the time of *waiting* for our Change by Death shall be

⁴⁷ Jam. 4. 14.

over; and tho after this we shall expect with pleasure the Resurrection of our Bodies, yet in the intermediate Space we shall enjoy such refin'd Delights as shall give us, not only a just Idea of that State we were originally design'd for by the Author of our Beings, but an experimental Relish of the Pleasures belonging to it.

(2.) How stupid and criminal are such, who instead of daily expecting their *great Change*, banish all serious Thoughts of Death from their Minds! *who put the evil Day far from them*, and cannot tell how to think of the Horror and Silence of the Grave, that they must be buried out of sight, and lie in a Bed of Stench and Rottenness. I confess, if the thrusting these Thoughts from your Minds would prevent *this Change*, there would be some shew of Reason in what you do: But alas, whether you think of Death or not, it is making hasty Advances towards you; therefore be prevail'd with to give your selves the liberty of a few serious Thoughts about this matter. Will your Change be the better, or the easier to come, if unlook'd for? No surely, but much the worse; for then it will overtake you while you are unprovided for it: And what will be the Consequence of that? Why, immediately after your falling by the *first Death*, you'l sink down under the Power of the *second Death*. You'l not only be *swallowed up* in the Heart of the Earth, but *drop into* a Lake of Fire. O, be no longer unconcern'd about your *great Change*, but familiarize the Thoughts of Death, and resolve with *Job* in the Text, *To Wait all the Days of your appointed Time till your Change come*.

(3.) If the Inhabitants of this lower World have reason to expect such a Change as you have heard, then none of them are fit Objects of our Trust. Those that share the greatest Honours both in Church and State, are as frail as Persons in the most abject condition. Therefore, *Cease ye from Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*⁴⁸ Don't place a mighty Confidence in your Rich and Potent Friends; for it they should not alter in their Respects to you, yet this Change of Death may overtake them, before they have done you the Service you expected from them. *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help; his Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth, in that very day his Thoughts perish.*⁴⁹ But make sure of an Interest in an unchangeable God, a God that abideth the same, *of whose Years there is no end*; a God, whole Love is, like himself, Unchangeable and Everlasting.

(4.) If God has predetermin'd the Period of Human Life, then we ought not to be anxiously desirous to die before the Time that He has fix'd. I know that some good Men, under great Afflictions, have *chose Strangling, and Death rather than Life*:⁵⁰ And with great impatience have wish'd for the Hour of their departure out of this miserable World. But this was their Infirmary, and indeed is too common a Crime among some People, who upon small Provocations, as well as under greater Trials, rashly wish they were dead; not seriously considering how great a Change Death will make. For a Man to wish he were dead, is to desire his Eternal State may be determin'd; and to do this precipitantly, when he knows not whether he shall go to Heaven or Hell, be sav'd or damn'd, is frenzy and madness. Moreover, for such as have good Hope, through Grace, of being happy after Death, yet impatiently to desire their Dissolution, barely on the account of the Pains and Inconveniences they groan under here, 'tis also criminal. For tho the Apostle *Paul had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, and was willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord*; yet he was content that God should chuse for him: And 'twas not the Trials he met with here, but the prospect he had of a more ravishing and cornpleat enjoyment of Christ in Heaven, that made him sit so loose to this World, and desire a remove to the other.

(5.) Let us all live in the expectation of our great Change. Why does God chasten us with sore Pains, and with pining Sickness? but to put us in mind of a *greater Change* that will shortly

48 Isa. 2. 22.

49 Psal. 146. 3, 4.

50 Job 7. 15.

overtake us. And as one observes, Every dying Year, every declining Day, every drooping Flower and falling Leaf, are but so many Emblems of our certain Mortality. And alas, if Sickness do not blast us in the Bud, if we don't wither in the Bloom of Youth, the slower Decays of Age will be sure to mar our Beauty, and cause us to bend towards the Earth, till we drop into that from whence we were taken. O, who of us are in a waiting Frame, looking and expecting when we shall go hence? Do we live as if every day would be our last? God has in Wisdom and Mercy hid from us the Time of our Death, that we might be *always ready*.

(6.) If God has predetermin'd the Period of Human Life, then 'tis unreasonable for any to murmur against Providence, when their near Relations are remov'd from 'em by Death. Let it quiet and satisfy our Minds, that God fix'd the time of their Departure; he call'd 'em in his own time, and has a Sovereign Right to do so, without *giving any Account of his Matters to the Children of Men*.

The Holy Angels, that are frequently employ'd in Messages of Providence, probably are unacquainted with the Reasons of the Divine Procedure: and surely *we that are but of Yesterday and know nothing*, may be content to have these things hid from us. For this we are sure of, that God does all things wisely, and therefore well, yea even those things which appear to us full of Terror; as does that Providence which has silenc'd that Excellent Minister, in whose Place I now stand.

I must confess I am no *Friend* to the Flatteries that are too commonly us'd in Funeral Discourses: nor am I an *Enemy* to the just Commendations of such as *die in the Lord*; whose extraordinary Worth may give occasion for it, and be very instructive to those that survive. So that in *Charity* to the Living, and in *Justice* to the Dead, I shall now attempt to say something of that Learned and Judicious Minister of Christ, Mr. *WILLIAM COLLINS*, whom God has suddenly remov'd from the midst of us.

I design not a History of his Life, nor am I capable to delineate the several Branches of his Character; yet something I would say, that may give you an Idea, tho it be not so perfect a one as I could wish, of this Great Man.

'Twas early that he discover'd an Inclination to Study and Books, and his Progress in Learning was swift and sure. When he had pass'd thro Grammar Learning, and had had the Approbation of one of the most severe Criticks of this Age,⁵¹ he began to travel; and, if I mistake not, before that time, God had made him sensible of Sin, and drawn him to his Son. When he came abroad, not going so far as he at first design'd, he remain'd a considerable time in *France* and *Italy*; where he finish'd the Course of his other Studies preparatory to that of Theology, to which he closely apply'd himself upon his Return to *England*.

I shall not mention the encouraging Offers he had to join with the National Church, which he judiciously refus'd; for 'twas Conscience, not Humour,⁵² that made him a Dissenter.

I need not say how well he was prepar'd for the Study of Divinity by Nature, Learning, and Grace, for his Proficiency therein soon appear'd; and after he had pass'd a little time preaching in the Country, he had a very remarkable Call by this Church: for the very Day he receiv'd the Letter that invited him to *London*, he had solemnly kept by himself in Fasting and Prayer, for Direction about disposing of himself for the constant Exercise of his Ministry; and receiving this in the Close of that very Day, he look'd on it as an Answer of Prayer, and therefore consented to make you a Visit: which having done, and this Church having had sufficient Proof at his real Piety, as well as of his

51 Dr. Busby.

52 Humour: usual or permanent mental disposition; constitutional or habitual tendency; temperament. Now rare. *Oxford English Dictionary* online.

Gifts and Abilities, you gave him a unanimous Call to the Pastoral Office. And how well he rose up to the Qualifications of an Evangelical Bishop or Elder, as recited by the Apostle *Paul*, you of this Church know; and I believe will own, *That he was blameless as the Steward of God, not self-will'd, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre: But a Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good Men, Sober, Just, Holy, Temperate: Holding fast the faithful Word, as he had been taught, being able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince Gainsayers.*⁵³ He was apt to teach, and able, upon a sudden, to bring forth something proper for the use of Edifying, out of that excellent Stock of Divine Knowledg that he had treasur'd up; having more than once, when disappointed of that Help he expected, gone into the Pulpit, and preach'd an excellent Sermon, in the Opinion of competent Judges. Yet tho he was thus qualify'd, he did not serve God nor you with that which cost him nought, but apply'd himself to close Study for every Sermon, when his Health would admit.

The Subjects he ordinarily insisted on in the Course of his Ministry, were the great and important Truths of the Gospel, which he handled with great Judgment and Clearness. How would he open the Miseries of the Fall! And in how moving a manner would he discourse of of the Excellency of Christ, and the Virtues of his Blood, and his willingness to save poor awaken'd burnd Sinners!

How well did he distinguish betwixt Justification and Sanctification, exalting the Imputed Righteousness of Christ, without undervaluing the Work of the Spirit! So that his Sermons were useful under the Influence of Divine Grace, to convert and edify, to enlighten and establish, being drawn from the Fountain of Truth, the Sacred Scriptures, with which he constantly convers'd in their Original Languages, having read the best Criticks, Antient and Modern; so that Men of the greatest Penetration might learn from his Pulpit-Discourses, as well as those of the meanest Capacity.

He did not affect a flaunting swelling Stile, but always spoke what was Strong and Manly, becoming the Weight of those Truths he deliver'd. He did not study to amuse, but instruct his Hearers; not so much regarding what would please as profit them, always having on his Mind a Sense of the Worth of Souls: and therefore he constantly advised his Brethren of the Ministry to take the greatest Care they could to help forward the Salvation of Sinners, to exalt Christ, and not preach themselves.

He had a rich Stock of Experience as well as of useful Knowledg; he felt what he preach'd, and liv'd on that Food he imparted to others. I don't mention his Skill in Physick,⁵⁴ which he had well studied, as being no Branch of his Character as a Divine. Yet under all these excellent Attainments, he was one of the most modest humble Men that ever I convers'd with. How did this Grace make him shine! which is one of the brightest Ornaments of the Christian Life.

How low would he stoop for Peace! And how would he bear with the Infirmities of his weak Brethren! That such as would not be wrought upon by the Strength of Reason, might be melted by his Condescension and good Nature. He was Prudent as well as Peaceable, Charitable as well as Courteous; one that could forgive and forget Injuries, one that was above resenting the Affronts that some Men love to offer to Persons of his Character. He was not addicted to utter hard Censures of such as differ'd from him in lesser Matters, but had a Love for all Saints, and constantly exercis'd himself in this, *To keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.* He was a Person of unaffected steady Piety, free from the wild *Raptures* of Enthusiasm, and the dull *Formalities* of Superstition. When he was not discoursing of profitable things, he generally

⁵³ Titus 1. 7, 8, 9.

⁵⁴ The art or practice of healing; the medical profession. or The science of the human body, its diseases, and their treatment; medical science. *Oxford English Dictionary* online. The first meaning is most likely [Ed.].

employ'd himself in Meditation; for ordinarily when he left his Studies and came abroad, in the after part of the day, he usually fixt on some Text of Scripture for the Subject of his Meditation as he pass'd the Streets; so that he had a constant savour of Divine Things on his Spirit; and like the *Wise Man* spoken of in the Book of *Proverbs*, *His Lips did disperse Knowledg*. He was very communicative, and ready to inform those he convers'd with. And I must ever own, to the Honour of his Memory, that he acted towards me, not only like a *Friend* but a *Father*, both in directing and encouraging me in my Studies. He has often clear'd up that to my Understanding, which before was perplext and obscure. He has pray'd with me, and comforted me; but he is absent: O! how do I miss my Guide and my Friend? And do not you, my Brethren? I am sure you do. What is the Lord a doing! What Removes has he made! How can we forbear to cry out, *O the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof!*

As for you that were under his Care, you lay near his Heart; and *how greatly he long'd for you all in the Bowels of Christ*, I am his Witness: I, did I say? The God in whose presence I stand, and at whose Bar I must shortly appear, is his Witness. I speak this with so great solemnity, because he mention'd it to me with such Affection and Tears, and told me how glad he would have been to have seen you settled with a Judicious Learned Minister before he died; but God saw meet to remove him before this desirable thing was accomplish'd.

Indeed he was not apprehensive of his Death in the time of his last Illness, but had some kind of hope that he should have recover'd. Yet I cannot but look on it as a remarkable Providence, that he should be directed in the course of his Ministry to fix on those words, *Then saith he unto his Disciples, The Harvest truly is plenteous, but the Labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest.*⁵⁵ And that the *last Sermon* he ever preach'd should be from them; I pray God it may have a due effect upon all that heard it, for you'll hear him no more. But from the last time of his appearing in the Pulpit, I am presently brought to his Sickbed.

As he was constantly calm in his Mind in the time of his Health, so he was during his last Sickness. Upon the first Visit that I made him, I enquir'd how things were betwixt God and his Soul? He told me, That *he blessed God all was well*. And all along he was very easy with respect to Life or Death; he had for a great while sat so loose to this World, that he had no such desires of Life as should imbitter his Death, or such fears of Death as should render his Life uncomfortable. For when a Minister, with whom he was very intimate, took notice of his Weakness, and apprehending him in danger, said to him, *Sir, I hope you are not afraid to die*: He answer'd, with great presence of Mind, and a chearful Countenance, *I bless God, I have not been afraid to die this forty Years*. My Brethren, some Men may talk high, and look big when they are in Health; but for a Man to speak thus in the view of Eternity, seems to argue not only great strength of Faith, but a bright and unclouded Assurance of the Divine Love.

He was, during his Illness, much inclin'd to sleep; so that he seldom spoke unless he was press'd to it. We were sometimes ready to flatter our selves with the expectation of his Recovery, but a few days put an end to our Hopes, and his valuable Life. He was a Servant to the Prince of Peace: He preach'd a Gospel of Peace, and he had a peaceful Death. *Mark the Perfect, behold the Upright, for the end of that Man is Peace*. I know to mention his Death, is like striking a Dagger to some of your Hearts, and I confess it has almost put a Period to my Discourse. I won't say what I feel my self, and with what a struggle I speak to you; 'twould be an ease could I stop here, and mingle my Sighs and Tear with yours.

55 Mat. 9. 37, 38.

But, my Brethren, let us abate our Sorrows, because the Soul of our deceas'd Friend is happy in Heaven, and his Memory shall be blessed upon Earth, *Whose Praise is in all the Churches of Christ*. And let me add, whatever you have heard, and learn'd, and seen in him as a follower of Christ, that do.

Now to you his sorrowful surviving Half, consider the Stroke that is given was by the direction of Heaven; and tho you have lost a valuable Relation, one that is nearer and better is yet left; *Your Maker is your Husband*. He that has taken your dear Consort from you, had a better Right in him than you; therefore a submissive Silence becomes you under this terrible Stroke.

To you the tender Branches of his Family, and the Children of his Body, don't forget the Counsel of your deceas'd Father. Remember the Instructions he gave you in the Things of God, and the Concerns of your Souls; how he pray'd with you, and for you: May every one of you so serve the God of your Father in this World, that you may spend an Eternity with him in the other.

To you, my Brethren of the Church; bless God that you enjoy'd your Excellent Pastor so long, but mourn that you got no more good from him, who took so much pains with you.

Indeed your Circumstances are deplorable, God seems to have a Controversy with you; search out the Causes of his Displeasure, and humble your Souls before him; bear one another's Burdens, follow the Things that make for Peace, and those whereby you may edify one another: Be earnest at the Throne of Grace, that God would give you a Pastor after his own Heart, that shall feed you with Knowledg, and help to nourish up your Souls to Eternal Life. *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every Good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever.*⁵⁶ Amen.

This text was transcribed from image files generated from the Google Books version of John Piggott's book, *Eleven Sermons Preach'd Upon Special Occasions* (London: John Darby, 1714), 242-286 (<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=ARkHAAAQAAJ>). The original is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

Note: In the original text, there were a number of marginal references (mainly Scripture references). These have been rendered as footnotes in this text. The position of these footnotes were assigned by the transcriber and any inaccuracy in their positioning is his alone.

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⁵⁶ Heb. 13. 20, 21.