

A

Funeral Sermon

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

Of the Reverend

*Mr. Thomas Harrison,*¹

Late Minister of the Gospel in *London*:

Who departed this Life *Aug. 14. 1702.*

Preach'd the *23d* of the same Month.

¹ Thomas Harrison (or Tho. Harrison) is listed as representing the Petty France Church at the 1689, 1690, 1691 and 1692 in the Narratives of the General Assembly's of the Baptized Church of England and Wales "Asserting the Doctrine of Personal Election, and Final Perseverance". Thomas Harrison left the Petty France church at the end of 1699 to take over the Lorimers' Hall church (which would be the congregation Piggott is addressing); Dr Samuel Renihan (personal communication).

To the Church of Christ lately under the Pastoral Care of the Deceas'd Mr. *Thomas Harrison*.

Beloved in our Lord,

THE Death of every ordinary Christian carries something in it very awful and instructive, much more the Removal of an Excellent Minister. As the Stroke of Providence is greater, so the Voice of it is louder; and as it admonishes those that survive to prepare for an Invisible World, so it does distinctly report the Displeasure of Heaven: For as Princes discover their Resentments in foreign Countries by calling home their Ambassadors; so does the Prince of the Kings of the Earth show how much he is displeas'd with our Unprofitableness under the Means of Grace, when he calls them home that were Dispensers of the Bread of Life.

How such a Providence is to be improv'd, I have briefly suggested in the following Sermon; which was preach'd at your joint Request, and is now publish'd at the same Instance. I know, He, whose Death occasion'd it, was dear to you: and tho the Character I have given of him be very imperfect, I have some Relief in this, That his Works will praise him better in the Gate, than I have done either from the Pulpit or the Press. These, these shall be a more lasting Eulogy to his Name, than if I had scatter'd all the Flowers of Oratory on his Hearse.

As for the Discourse it self, and the Defects it may have, the Auihor has no Apology for exposing them and himself in an Age wherein so many think accurately, and write politely, but what is commonly us'd on such occasions.

However, such as the Discourse is, I give it up at your Desire, and venture it abroad under your Patronage. Whatever be its Entertainment in the World, if it is but profitable to the Church, or serviceable to others, you'll have your end, and I shall not not miss of mine; who am

Your Servant for Jesus sake,

JOHN PIGGOTT.

2 Tim. IV. 7, 8.

I have fought a good Fight, I have finish'd my course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his Appearing.

OUR Knowledg here is imperfect, and the Intricacies of Divine Providence do greatly amaze us: Yet this we may lay down for a certain Principle, That all the Acts of God's Sovereignty which are display'd in the Government of the World, are conducted by unerring Wisdom. For the great Apostle assures us, that *God worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will.*² Righteousness is the Habitation of his Throne, tho Darkness does encompass it about. We know not indeed what God does now; but we shall perfectly know hereafter:

*For when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*³ The Time is hastning when the unsearchable Wisdom, the impartial Justice, and infinite Goodness of God shall shine forth with a flaming Lustre; and we shall see a Beauty and Harmony in all the dark Scenes of Providence, which were too hard for our Reason, and a great Exercise to our Faith, while we abode in this misty Region.

We are assembled at this time in the House of Mourning, not to arraign the Conduct of Heaven, but to humble our selves under God's Mighty Hand, who has remov'd from the midst of us, One under whose Shadow we have sat with great delight. The Almighty has broken to pieces an Earthen Vessel, that was excellently stock'd with Heavenly Treasure: He has extinguish'd a burning and a shining Light: He has sealed up a Star in sudden and thick Darkness, which he held in his Right Hand; so that we are depriv'd of its comfortable Light and its useful Influence. And how can we but mourn our Loss? Yet let this Consideration prevent an immoderate Grief, that He, in whose Place I now stand, could say upon solid Grounds, when he drew near the Period of his Life, with the great Apostle in the Words of the Text, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finish'd my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness which the Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his Appearing.*

This second Epistle to *Timothy*, of which the Text is a part, was written by the Apostle *Paul*, when he was a Prisoner at *Rome*, and after he had made an appearance more * than once before *Nero* the Emperor. And 'tis generally thought, both by Antient and Modern Writers, that this was the last Epistle which he wrote; and therefore *Chrysostom* says of it, *That it was as it were his last Will and Testament.* And indeed the Words immediately preceding the Text, signify to us that he was very apprehensive⁴ of his approaching Death: *For* (says he) *I am now ready to be offer'd, and the time of my Departure is at hand.*⁵ From the manner of the Expression we may conclude, that he expected a very sudden but violent Death, that he should share the Honours of Martyrdom: For the Original is very expressive ἤδη σπένδομαι,⁶ *I am now offer'd*, or, *I am already pour'd out*, (he alludes to the manner of Libations in Sacrifices) *and the time of my Departure ἐφέστηκε,*⁷ *is instant.* He seems every moment to be expecting his Death, and represents it so near, as if he had been not only

2 Eph. 1. 11.

3 1 Cor. 13. 10.

* As may be collected from 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17. as also from the Postscript to this Epistle. Vid. L. E. du Pin. *Evangelical History*, 2d Part, and Echard's *Church History*.

4 Apprehensive. Having an apprehension or notion; understanding, realizing, conscious, sensible. Const. of or subordinate clause. Archaic. *Oxford English Dictionary*, online.

5 Ver. 6.

6 I believe it should be rendered ἤδη σπένδω [Ed.]

7 I believe it should be rendered ἐπίστημι [Ed.]

drawing to Execution, but as if the sacrificing Knife had been at his Throat. Whether the Menaces of the Emperor made the Apostle so apprehensive of the nearness of his Death, or whether he had a new and special Revelation concerning it, as the Apostle *Peter* had of his, 2 *Pet.* 1.14. or whether that Apprehension was from both, I will not determine: But upon the whole, we find, he was not at all surpriz'd. He had Peace reigning within, and a Record abiding on high, and he exults like one that was more than a Conqueror: *I have fought a good Fight, I have finish'd my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judg will give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his Appearing.*

In which Words we may take notice of these two general Parts.

First, The Apostle's Relation of his Conduct in this World: *I have fought a good Fight, &c.*

Secondly, The joyful Expectation he had of consummate Happiness in the other World: *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c.*

I begin with the first of these, the Apostle's Relation of his Conduct in this World, about which he affirms three things:

- I. That he had *fought a good Fight.*
- II. That he had *finish'd his Course.* And
- III. That he had *kept the Faith.*

I. The Apostle affirms that he had *fought a good Fight.* This, as well as other Phrases in the Text, are Agonistical;⁸ and 'tis more than probable, that he alludes to the celebrated Exercises that were in vogue amongst the *Grecians*, who being acquainted with these Customs, well understood the Force of the Expressions that are us'd here and elsewhere in the Apostle's Writings. *I have fought a good Fight:* The original Word is of great extent, and may be refer'd to any of the four illustrious Strifes in use amongst the *Greeks.*⁹ *I have fought a good Fight;* or, as they may be turn'd, I have striven a good Strife. Either way the Sense is the same; and they signify to us, that the Christian Life is a Life of Warfare: But that a Gospel-Minister's Life is so in a very eminent regard, appears, in that he is not only to struggle thro the ordinary Difficulties of Life, and the Temptations that are common to Christians as such; but his honourable Post in the Church exposes him more to the Hatred of bad Men, and the Malice of Devils, than if he stood on lower Ground: for being rais'd somewhat higher by his Office than an ordinary Christian, his Enemies multiply in Number, and increase in Vigour; for 'tis not the Sacredness of the Minister's Calling that will secure him from violent Temptations and pressing Sorrows.

Tho our Apostle was an *incarnate Seraphim*, as Dr. *Bates* somewhere calls him, on the account of his Zeal in the Service of his Divine Master; yet how many spiteful Reflections and malicious Censures did this excellent Man fall under, both with regard to his personal Conduct, and the Discharge of his Apostolick Function? And what Ministers of the Gospel are there that discover any Zeal for lessening the Empire of Satan, and enlarging the Kingdom of the Messiah; but they soon find themselves encompassed with Enemies of various sorts? Sometimes they are attacked by secret Fraud, at other times with open Force; sometimes persecuted by profess'd Enemies, at other times betray'd by false Friends. 'Tis a tedious troublesom War that every private Christian, but remarkably every Minister, is engaged in. Now Fighting supposes Enemies, and these, as I hinted

8 Relating to or characteristic of the events of an agon or public celebration of games; of or relating to such games, or combat, athletic feats, or strenuous struggle or competition generally. *Oxford English Dictionary*, online.

9 These four could be the main categories of the ancient Olympic games: equestrian events, combat sports (wrestling, boxing, and the pankration, a type of all-in wrestling), running events (stadion) and the pentathlon (discus, jumping, javelin, running and wrestling) [Ed.]

before, are many and strong, who oppose the Work of God in the *Hearts of Believers*, as well as the Work of God in the *Hands of Ministers*. We are not only to encounter the Flesh and the World, which occasion'd that Caution of the Apostle, *Abstain from fleshly Lusts that war against the Soul*;¹⁰ but we are oblig'd to contend with the fallen Angels: For, says the same Apostle, *We wrestle not with Flesh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, with the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and with Spiritual Wickedness in high Places*. Every Christian, but eminently every Minister, has an Army of Devils to contend with. Now notwithstanding the Fatigue and Toil, the Difficulty and Hazard which attends the Christian Warfare, this great Apostle acquitted himself like a good Soldier of Jesus Christ; who speaks in the Text as if he was trampling his Enemies under his Feet, and was just ready to take hold of the Crown he had been fighting for: *I have fought a good Fight*. But before I pass to the second Head, I would briefly suggest to you the Reasons for which he calls this a *good Fight*.

1. It might be called a *good Fight*, from the *Goodness of the Cause*. 'Tis the Cause of God and Religion that is defended and maintained in the Christian Warfare, which refers to the Rights of the Godhead, and to the Happiness of Human Spirits: For the Apostate Angels would rival God in his Throne. Now in our contending with these Principalities, we do our utmost to vindicate the Rights of the Deity, and to expose the Pride and Tyranny of those malignant Spirits: and what is the necessary Consequence of this, but the Defence of Religion in general, and particularly the securing the Interest of our immortal Souls? Which is to act agreeably to the highest Reason, and suitably to the Dignity of Human Nature, as renew'd and chang'd. In a word, the Wisdom and Goodness of God are wonderfully display'd in twisting our Duty and Interest together; so that the faithful Discharge of the former is not without the considerable Promotion of the latter.

2. It might be called a *Good Fight*, in regard of the *Goodness of his Call*. A Man may have Right on his side, and mast favour the best Cause in the World; but things must be adjusted by the Supreme Powers, and from thence must proceed a *Legal Call*, before such a one can lawfully take up Arms against an approaching Enemy. 'Tis not in the power of private Persons to act at pleasure in such Affairs, without a Call from those in whose hands the Government is lodg'd, whether in one or more. Our Great Apostle in the Text acted from a very signal Call: for while he was fighting under the Banner of Satan, an Excess of Divine Light encompassed him round, and threw him to the Earth: But it was in order to raise him to Heaven; for it was follow'd with a powerful Voice that broke thro the Air like Thunder, and pierc'd to the very Center of his Soul. For being awaken'd and convinced that he was imbark'd in a bad Cause, and under the Wrath and Curse of God, it pleased the Lord *to reveal his Son in him*,¹¹ *that he might bear his Name before the Gentiles*,¹² and fight under the Banner of the King of Zion, both as a Christian and as an Apostle. And tho every Person has not so remarkable and so extraordinary a Call as this excellent Apostle; yet every Christian has a good *Call* to a Spiritual Warfare. We own this Call when we voluntarily give up our selves to the Father, Son and Spirit in Holy Baptism; which solemn Profession, and putting on of Christ, can involve in it no less than a Resolution in the Strength of Divine Grace to oppose the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Moreover, all the Exhortations that are scatter'd thro the Sacred Volume to press upon us the Duty of Mortification, are Motives to this Spiritual Warfare. In a word, the Sound of the Gospel-Trumpet is not only to proclaim Liberty to Captives, but to engage all that follow the Lamb to take up Arms against Sin and Satan.

3. The Apostle might call it a *good Fight*, in regard of the *Excellency of the General*, under whole Banner he and all other Christians fight.

10 1 Pet. 2. 11.

11 Gal. 1. 16.

12 Acts 9. 15.

The Church of Christ is like a well disciplin'd Army, and not like a tumultuous Rout;¹³ and there is a great Beauty and Lustre upon those Societies (who together make up the Universal Church) where the several Officer's whom Christ has appointed, move in their own proper Spheres. Yet these, with ordinary Christians, own the same common Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, who as Generalissimo of this Army marches in the Van. He that is the Head of the Church, is the Captain of our Salvation, and the Royal General under whose Banner we fight: And who would not engage under a Person of such good Conduct, who leads out to certain Victory? One who has infinite Wisdom to direct, and irresistible Power to defend those that follow him, and to destroy all that oppose him. He is a General us'd to fight, and us'd to conquer.

4. 'Tis a *Good Fight*, because of that excellent Provision which God hath made to furnish all that engage in it, with suitable Armour and other necessary Supplies. If a Man has never so great Courage, or never so good a Cause, if he's naked and unarmed when an Enemy approaches him, his Heart will almost die within him. But God hath taken effectual care in the Christian Warfare to furnish us with Arms proper to defend our selves, or to offend our Enemies. A Recital of the several parts of the Christian Armour, this Apostle hath given in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, where he exhorts Christians, *To put on the whole Armour of God.— Having your Loins girt about with Truth, and having on the Breast-plate of Righteousness; and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace: above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked: And take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance and Supplication for all Saints.*¹⁴ In this Enumeration, as several have remark'd, there is no mention made of Armour for the Back. The Reason is evident; for those that are good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, *must set their Faces like a Flint,*¹⁵ and never turn their Backs in Fight. And as the Weapons of the Christian Warfare are spiritual and not carnal, so they are mighty only thro God, and destructive only to the Enemies of God. The Christian Institution nowhere enjoins us to go on Pilgrimages bare-foot, or to submit to the Penance of scourging our Flesh for the Disorders of our Spirits. These are the base Contrivances of the Popish Party, who would have Thongs and Whipcord as necessary Weapons in the Christian Warfare, as the Sword of the Spirit, and the Shield of Faith.

Moreover, shouldst thou begin to faint thro thy constant Toils in War, God has promis'd *to give Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might he encreaseth Strength;*¹⁶ *and that as our Day is, our Strength shall be.*

5. The Apostle might call it a *good Fight*, in regard of the *Excellent Company* in which Christians engage under the Banner of Jesus. For in the Christian Warfare we fight in company with all the good Angels that are in Heaven, and all the good Men that are upon Earth. The Author to the *Hebrews* assures us, That all the good Angels are *ministring Spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be Heirs of Salvation.*¹⁷ Now 'tis generally thought, that among other good Offices these kind Spirits do us, ** they do oppose the evil Angels, and defend us against their Assaults, countermining their malicious Designs and Attempts upon us.* Then as to good Men, tho they have their single Conflicts, yet other Christians assist 'em therein by their Advice and Prayers; so that in our spiritual Warfare we may consider our selves as fighting in company with Elect Angels and

13 A group of people gathered or assembled together; a company, a troop; a gathering, a crowd. Obsolete; or more likely, A disreputable group of people; a violent or unlawful mob; a gang of criminals or ruffians; (also) a violent horde. Later in weakened sense: a disorderly, disorganized, or unruly group of people; a boisterous throng; a crowd, a mob. *Oxford English Dictionary*, online.

14 Eph. 6. 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

15 Isa. 50. 7.

16 Isa. 40. 29.

17 Heb. 1. 14.

* Vid. Tillotson's *2d Posthumous Vol.* p. 166.

Redeemed Men, who compose but one Army under the Conduct of the Prince of the Kings of the Earth.

How ambitious lately were some Persons of a Martial Genius of fighting under the Banner of an Illustrious Hero, I mean *William*, the Third of Glorious Memory?¹⁸ But how much more desirous should Christians be to fight under the Banner of the Son of God, in company with all the Angels in Heaven and good Men upon Earth?

6. The Reward that awaits those that are Victors, proves that 'tis a *Good Fight*. In other Fights many Soldiers fall, and never see on which side the Victory turns; but in this Warfare, tho thou diest in the Heat of Battel, yet thou art victorious. But what that Reward is that shall be bestow'd on such as *fight the good Fight of Faith* (for so the Apostle elsewhere calls this Fight) you will hear when I speak to the latter part of the Text, to which I shall hasten.

II. The Apostle affirms, when he was in the view of Death, *that he had finish'd his Course*. Here he compares his Work, both as a Saint and as an Apostle, to the running of a Race; which comprehends all that a Christian is concern'd about, both with regard to Faith and Practice, while he abides in this World. It imports the Exercise of all Christian Graces, the Performance of all personal and relative Duties, together with a constant Subjection to the Authority of the Son of God in the practice of every Gospel-Ordinance; which things are the great Ornaments of the Christian Life: for as the Stars beautify the Firmament, so do these things give a Lustre and Beauty to the Conversation of Christians. But farther, it imports a vigorous Opposition to whatever meets us in the way of Duty, and a surmounting all Difficulties *in the Strength of the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*.

A common Race cannot be run without great Strength, extraordinary Activity, and unwearied Perseverance. The first is oppos'd to Weakness, the second to Sloth, and the third to Apostacy: So that by this Allusion in the Text the Apostle sets forth the great Difficulties and the arduous Labours he met with, and pass'd thro in the discharge of his Duty. And when he cries out, *I have finish'd my Course*, 'tis as if he had said, "Tho I have met with great Opposition in my Race as a Christian and as an Apostle, yet I have forc'd my way through by the Aids of omnipotent Grace; and as I am just closing my Days, so have I finish'd the Work which God gave me to do: And as I have suffer'd for the Testimony of Jesus already, *that Testimony* I hope to seal with my Blood; for I expect no cheap and easy Victory. Yet the assurance I have of Divine Strength, when I shall suffer the pains of Martyrdom, makes me speak as if I had laid down my Life already, and was just receiving my Reward."

So that, upon the whole, the Apostle did in Patience possess his Soul, as he had *with Patience run the Race that was set before him*.¹⁹ He bore the Evils God saw meet to bring upon him, and quietly waited for that Good which God had promis'd to give to him. In a word, he was so conscientious in the whole of his Conduct, that he was ready to appeal to Heaven for the Sincerity of his Heart, and to all those he had labour'd amongst for the Unblamableness of his Life. He so discharg'd all his Obligations both in a publick and private Capacity, in his excellent Deportment as a Christian, and in his abundant Labours as an Apostle, that he could say with respect to both, when on the Confines or the Dead, *I have finish'd my Course*.

18 William III, by name William of Orange, also called William Henry, prince of Orange, Dutch Willem Hendrik, prins van Oranje, (born November 14 [November 4, Old Style], 1650, The Hague, Netherlands—died March 19 [March 8], 1702, London, England), stadholder of the United Provinces of the Netherlands as William III (1672–1702) and king of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1689–1702), reigning jointly with Queen Mary II (until her death in 1694). *Encyclopædia Britannica*, online. His overthrow of King James II of England in 1688 is often called "The Glorious Revolution" [Ed.].

19 Heb. 12. 1.

III. He affirms, *That he had kept the Faith*. Faith here may be either taken for the Grace of Faith, or the Doctrine of Faith. If we understand it in the former sense, then the Apostle would signify to us, That he had liv'd a Life of Faith, in the constant Exercise of that excellent Grace. *We walk by Faith, not by Sight*, says this Apostle; and elsewhere, *The Life that I live in the Flesh is by the Faith of the Son of God*. And if we understand the Words thus, I do not see but that they may comprehend that Faithfulness also which * some would have to be meant by his keeping the Faith, viz. That Faith he had plighted to God, when dedicated first by the Vow of Baptism, and afterwards *separated to the Work of the Ministry by the Imposition of Hands*. He had faithfully discharg'd those Promises and Vows which he made on both occasions.

But by Faith in this place I chuse rather to understand the *Doctrine of Faith*. And then the Apostle's affirming, *that he had kept the Faith*, may imply these things.

1. That he had kept the Doctrine of Faith uncorrupt in his Preaching: That as he received it without Mixture, so he preached it to others in its own native Purity and Lustre. That which this Apostle said concerning the Holy Supper of our Lord, he could say of every part of the Doctrine of Faith; *For I have received of the Lord that which also I deliver'd unto you*.²⁰ He never taught for Doctrine the Commandments of Men: Nor did he thro Cowardice conceal, or for Interest corrupt any Branch of the Doctrine of Faith that was committed to him. Therefore in his valedictory Discourse to the *Ephesian Christians, he takes 'em to record that he was pure from the Blood of all Men. For* (says he) *I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God*.²¹

And tho some thro Ignorance, and others thro Malice, might misinterpret what he spoke to an end quite different from what he design'd, yet he testifies for himself and his Brethren, *That they had not handled the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the Truth, commending themselves to every Man's Conscience in the sight of God*.²² In all the Sermons of our Apostle the unsophisticated Doctrine of Faith was delivered with the greatest Clearness and Strength
But,

2. By the Apostle's keeping the Doctrine of Faith, may be intended his Defence of it against the bold Encroachments of false Teachers, who did their utmost to corrupt the Christian Faith. I have not time to take notice of the * *Dogmata* that were broach'd by *Simon*, and afterwards propagated by the *Gnosticks*, with a design to debauch and subvert the Christian Religion. I can only say in general, that it was the unwearied Endeavour of this excellent Apostle in his Epistles to the Churches, as well as in publick Disputes, to detect the Errors both of *Jews* and *Pagans*, and to defend the Doctrine that he deliver'd from the Exceptions that were made against it by all sorts of Enemies; that neither the antiquated Ceremonies of the *Jews*, nor the superstitious Rites of the *Gentiles* might be mix'd with the pure Doctrine of Faith, which was deliver'd to the Saints. Indeed in things of an indifferent nature, he became all things to all Men, that by any means he might gain some. But when the great Articles of the Christian Faith were struck at, he was so far from complying with the Humour and Design of the false Apostles, that he would not *give place by subjection, no not for an hour*.²³

3. The Apostle's keeping the Doctrine of Faith, may refer to that special Care that he took to hand it down uncorrupted to Posterity. Thus much may be collected from the Charge this Apostle gives to *Timothy* in the second Chapter of this second Epistle, ver. 1. *Thou therefore, my Son, be strong in*

* Vid. *Bishop of Sarum's Sermon at the Funeral of the ABp of Cantebury*, p. 9.

20 1 Cor. 11. 23.

21 Acts 20. 26, 27.

22 2 Cor. 4. 2.

* Vid. *The Opinions of Simon and the Gnosticks, recited by Echard in his General Ecclesiastical History*, p. 231.

23 Gal. 2. 5.

the Grace that is in Christ Jesus; and the things that thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach other also. So that when the Apostle says he has kept the Faith, 'tis as if he had said, have not only preached it in its Purity, and defended it against the Attempts of others to adulterate it; but I have taken care that it shall be transmitted uncorrupt to Posterity after my Decease.

4. By keeping the Faith, may be intended that farther Testimony the Apostle was just ready to give to the Doctrine which he had preach'd, by sealing it with his Blood. For he had before signified how well he was reconcil'd to the Death of a Martyr for the *Christian Cause*. For tho many Brethren besought him with a Flood of Tears not to go up to *Jerusalem*, because of the Prophecy of *Agabus*; Paul answered and said, *What mean ye to weep and break my Heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.*²⁴ And 'twas the flaming Zeal of this Apostle to promote and spread the pure Doctrine of Faith when he was at *Rome*, that provok'd the Emperor to hasten his Death: For by his preaching there, 'tis reported that God made him an Instrument to convert one of the Emperor's *Concubines*, and his *Cupbearer*, to the Christian Faith. So that this Lion resolv'd to wreak his Malice upon the Holy Apostle, who being a *Roman*, was beheaded immediately after by *Nero's* Command. And as this Great Doctor of the *Gentiles* fought in Faith, and run in Faith, so at length he died not only in the Faith, but for it; sealing the Truth of that Faith which he preach'd with his own Blood; being born up under all his Trials by the eye he had to the Recompence of Reward. And this leads me to the second part of the Text,

The joyful Expectation which the Apostle had of consummate Happiness in the other World. *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his Appearing.* Wherein are these Six things considerable to be insisted on.

- I. What the Apostle expected, and that was *a Crown of Righteousness*.
- II. From whom he expected it, and that was *from the Lord the Righteous Judg*.
- III. Under what Consideration he expected this Crown, and that was as a free Gift: *The Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me*.
- IV. The Time when he expected to receive it; that was, *at that Day*, i.e. the Great Day of Judgment.
- V. The Certainty and Ground of his Expectation: *Henceforth it laid up for me*.
- VI. The Interest that other Saints have in a Crown of Righteousness: It shall be given (says he) *not only to me, but to all them also that love his Appearing*.

- I. What the Apostle expected, and that was *a Crown of Righteousness*.

By which Expression he can intend no less than the compleat Happiness of the future State. We may observe, that in the Holy Scriptures there are several chosen Comparisons made use of by the Holy Ghost to set forth the Excellency and Glory of the Life to come. Sometimes 'tis represented by the Streams of a pure River; by the Joys of a Marriage-Festival; by a magnificent Structure that has in it many Mansions; by an Inheritance in Light; by a uniform City; by a glorious Kingdom, and in my Text by a glittering Crown.

In the former part of the Text I told you, that the Apostle alludes to the *Olympick* Exercises in use among the *Greeks*: In this latter part, when he comes to speak of the Reward of the Faithful, he seems also to allude to that Reward that was bestow'd on such as succeeded in the aforementioned Exercises, which was a Crown compos'd of the Branches of some Tree, which is therefore called by

²⁴ Acts 21. 10, 11, 12, 13.

Lucian φύλλος στέφανος, a leafy Crown. But the Crown mention'd in my Text is more excellent and more durable; for elsewhere it is called, *an incorruptible Crown, a Crown of Life, a Crown of Glory*; but in the Text *a Crown of Righteousness*. So that it will be necessary briefly to answer these two Questions:

1. Why the Happiness of the Saints in the other World is represented by *a Crown*?
2. Why 'tis called a *Crown of Righteousness*?

1. Why the Happiness of the Saints in the other World is set forth by *a Crown*?

1st. This is to signify the Recovery of that Dominion which we lost by our Apostacy from God. We were at first created with a Dominion over the Creatures; but they in a great measure shook off their Subjection to Man upon his Disobedience to God: Now our Saviour recovers us from our abject State by his Obedience and Sufferings, thereby purchasing for us *a Crown*, i.e. a future State of Happiness, wherein we shall have as much Dignity and Dominion as becomes Creatures of our Order. A Crown is an Emblem of Majesty, and notes the Imperial Honour and Kingly Dignity to which the Saints shall be rais'd in the other World. The Apostle lets us know that the Children of God on Earth *are joint Heirs with Christ*; but the Expression in the Text signifies, that in Heaven they shall be *joint Regents* with him: And so he has elsewhere Promis'd, *That if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*. And says he, *I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.*²⁵ And, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his Throne.*²⁶ Upon which, one observes, That after victorious Obedience, the Saints shall be taken into Sovereign Alliance with Christ, and reign for ever.

2dly, The Saints Happiness in the other World may be set forth by a Crown, because it signifies Riches and Plenty as well as Honour and Dignity. And accordingly we are told, That in the Divine Presence *there is Fulness of Joy, and at God's Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*²⁷ These are pure unallay'd Delights: but here our most exalted and sublimated Pleasures are mix'd with Ignorance; for I speak of intellectual Pleasures. As for those that are more gross, that strike our Senses, they are not to be nam'd with the Delights of Heaven, for they vanish in the Comparison. So that upon the whole we may conclude, that that Fulness and Variety that is to be enjoy'd in Heaven, shall always please and satisfy the enlarged Capacities of Human Spirits. And that this Satisfaction shall never decay, but abide for ever, is plainly express'd, in that it is elsewhere call'd a Crown that fades not away. In a word, the Assurance that our Crown shall be incorruptible and eternal, is of so much weight, that without it our Crowns would sit uneasy on our Heads: for the thoughts of enjoying an uncertain Felicity would make us pause in the midst of our *Hallelujahs*, and damp all our Joys. But,

2. Why is the Crown in the Text call'd *a Crown of Righteousness*? I answer,

1st, Because 'tis purchased by the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Blood by which we are redeem'd from Hell, is the Price of the Crown we expect in Heaven. There was Value enough in the *one Offering* of the Son of God, to merit for us a Crown of Life. Death is spoken of in Scripture as the proper Wages of Sin; but Eternal Life is mention'd as a gratuitous Gift thro Jesus Christ our Lord: 'Tis freely bestow'd with respect to us, but due to the exuberant Merits of the Son of God.

25 Luke 22. 29.

26 Rev. 3. 21.

27 Psal. 16. 11.

2dly, It may be call'd a Crown of Righteousness, as 'tis the Reward of Righteous Persons. *Verily*, says the Psalmist, *there is a Reward for the Righteous*. Tho * a Righteous Man is made so by the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to him, and the Infusion or Implantation of the Graces of his Spirit in him; yet God delights to crown his own Gifts: He makes us Righteous, and then rewards us as Righteous Persons. *He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting.*²⁸ And we are assur'd, that Christ *will render Eternal Life to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality.*²⁹

3dly, This Crown in the Text is called a Crown of Righteousness, because 'tis bestow'd according to the faithful Promise of the Righteous God. The compleat Happiness we expect to enjoy in the other Life, God has put into Promise in this. As the Chosen of God are called according to his Purpose, so they are eternally sav'd according to his Promise: *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*³⁰ Indeed God was at liberty whether he would enter into such an Engagement or not; but having plighted his Faithfulness, * he is a Debtor to his Promise, and we are sure he'll be true to his Word. *Hath he said, and shall not he do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Our God is a faithful God, a God of Truth; which will be abundantly display'd at the *Great Day*, when according to his righteous Promises he shall crown all the faithful Followers of the Lamb.

II. We are now to consider from whom the Apostle expected this Crown of Righteousness; and that was from *the Lord the Righteous Judg.*

That our Blessed Saviour is here meant, is very evident; for the Scriptures abundantly testify, That he is the Person ordain'd by the Father to administer the Judgment of the Great Day. Christ as God has an original Right to dispense Rewards and Punishments; but as Mediator, 'tis a delegated Right. *The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son:*³¹ i.e. The Father judgeth no man immediately; but Jesus Christ, as sustaining the Character, and discharging the Province of Mediator, shall be Judg of Quick and Dead; and 'twill be one of the last Acts of his Mediatorship to dispense Rewards and Punishments, and these he shall dispense as a *Righteous Judg.* 'Twas prophesied of him, *That he should not judg after the sight of his Eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his Ears: But with Righteousness shall he judg the Poor, and reprove with Equity.*³² As God, our Saviour is essentially Holy and Righteous; and as Man, *he was Holy, Harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners.* So that we have the greatest assurance that we can have, that our Lord's Proceedings in Judgment will be according to the strictest Justice. The Rule in the final Judgment will be most equitable, the Evidence certain and full, and the Sentence impartial. So that our Lord *will be clear when he judgeth:* for every disobedient Rebel shall be struck with a defenceless Silence, when doom'd to an eternal Prison of Fire; and every Child of God, when crown'd, shall applaud the Righteousness of Christ as a Judg, in bestowing that Reward which he purchas'd as a Saviour.

III. Under what consideration did the Apostle expect this *Crown of Righteousness*; and that was as a *free Gift, which the Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me.*

* See a *Funeral Sermon on Mrs. Elizabeth Ewer*, by Mr. Tho. Harrison, p. 7, 8, 8, 10.

28 Gal. 6. 8.

29 Rom. 2. 6, 7.

30 Rev. 2. 10.

* Promittendo se Debitorem fecit. *Aug.*

31 John 5. 22.

32 Is. 11. 3, 4.

Tho this Crown is a fruit of Christ's Purchase, yet 'tis also an effect of Divine Bounty, for 'tis freely given with respect to us. Christ indeed will manage the Judicial Process according to Mens Works.³³ Yet I find that the future Reward of the Saints is expressed in Scripture by *Mercy*. The Apostle speaking of *Onesiphorus*, says, *The Lord grant to him that he may find Mercy of the Lord in that Day*.³⁴ And we are exhorted *to keep our selves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life*. Now if our Reward in Heaven is of God's Mercy, it totally excludes the Creature's Merit. 'Tis impossible that Men should merit either before or after they have received Grace; for what proportion is there betwixt the Services of the best Men upon Earth, and a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory in Heaven? In the Apostle's Judgment, the Sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory that shall be revealed in us. Accordingly we are told, that the *Robes of the Martyrs are wash'd white in the Blood of the Lamb*, not in their own Blood. *Not by Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy be saved us*.³⁵ A Crown of Righteousness is not *merited* by us, but *given* to us, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. The Time when the Apostle expected to receive this *Crown of Righteousness*; and that was at the Great Day of Judgment.

Which the Lord the Righteous Judg shall give me at That Day; at That Day he had been speaking of in the Context, the Day of Christ's Appearing and Kingdom, when he shall come to judg both the Quick and the Dead;³⁶ at That Day, at that Great and Solemn Day. The Apostle here speaks of the Happiness of the whole Man, and not of that Reward that is bestow'd on naked Spirits, in the Interval betwixt the Death of the Body, and its Revival at the End of the World. So that it is very evident, by that Day the Apostle intends that Aweful Day, when Christ shall come *in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*.³⁷ --At that Day, *when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admir'd in all them that believe*. At that Day, when he shall appear in his own Glory; *i.e.* in all the Glory of an Incarnate God. At that Day, when he shall appear in the Glory of his Father also; *i.e.* as some understand it, with the Authority of an Universal Judg. At that Day, when he shall appear in the Glory of his Holy Angels; *i.e.* with a shining Retinue of sinless Spirits, and with all the Ensigns of Pomp and Terror. At that Day, when the Sound of the Trump, and the Voice of the Arch-Angel shall awaken the Dead, and the Dust of the Saints shall be reviv'd Incorruptible and Immortal.

V. We are to consider the Ground and Certainty of the Apostle's Expectation: *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness*.

It remains for me, *ἀπίπον*,³⁸ for so the word signifies; *q.d.* I know, and am well assur'd, that there is a Reward prepar'd and secur'd for me: It was prepar'd from the Foundation of the World by the Father's Love: It was afterwards actually purchas'd by the Son's Blood; and 'tis not only secur'd to me by the excellent Promises of the Gospel, but by the Ascension of my Lord into Heaven, as a publick Person, as the Head and Representative of the whole Church. Christ is enter'd as our Forerunner, to take possession of what he himself had purchas'd for us. Christ is ascended into the Heaven of Heavens, and will draw all his People after him. Therefore a little before his Death, he

33 Rom. 2. 7.

34 2 Tim. 1. 18.

35 Tit. 3. 5.

36 2 Tim. 4. 1.

37 2 Thess. 1. 8, 10.

38 I believe it should be ἀπόκειμαι [Ed.]

addresses his Father in these words: *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may see my Glory.*

VI. The Apostle takes notice of the Interest that other Saints have in a *Crown of Righteousness: It shall be given* (says he) *not to me only, but to all them also that love his Appearing.*

Tho the Ministers of the Gospel, that turn many to Righteousness, shall shine like the Stars for ever and ever; tho they shall receive very bright and pondrous Crowns, yet they shall not monopolize all the Happiness of the future State among themselves. There will be Crowns for your Heads, and Palms for your Hands, that faithfully follow the Lamb, and successfully fight under his Banner. *In my Father's House* (says our Blessed Saviour) *are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.* There is room enough in Heaven to receive all the sincere Retainers to the Son of God. The Divine Presence is an unwasted Spring of Delight to the whole General Assembly above. The Sun in the Firmament warms and enlightens all; its Beams have refreshed this Earth for several thousand Years, yet that Globe of Fire is not lessen'd in its Lustre, nor weaken'd in its Influence. So that God, who is as Good as indivisible as infinite, shall render all happy that love his Son's Appearing. The Apostle speaks of Christ's *second Appearance*, which shall be in Power and great Glory, *without Sin to Salvation.* Now the Love of Christ's Appearance involves in it our Meditation of it, our Waiting for it, our Hastening to it; and such a Preparedness to meet our Heavenly Bridegroom, that we may constantly cry out, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Now all such shall receive a *Crown of Righteousness.* Not that we are to imagine, that every private Christian will have a Reward equal to the Apostle *Paul*, and others that have done and suffer'd extraordinary things for the Name of Christ. For to me it seems more than probable, that there are different Degrees of Glory, to which the Saints shall be advanc'd in the other World: For tho every Saint shall be content with his Reward; yet those that have excell'd in Fidelity and Zeal in God's Service, shall be rewarded with a more excellent Glory. We find in various Passages of Scripture, that Men of extraordinary Characters have special Rewards assign'd them: We are told of a Prophet's Reward, and of a Righteous Man's Reward.³⁹ Now far be it from me to think that Infinite Wisdom distinguisheth without a Difference; neither can I conceive why Christ should mention the Reward of a Prophet as a special Reward, if the same is bestow'd in common upon all the Faithful.

Again, we are told in Scripture, *That in the Resurrection we shall be as the Angels of God*, amongst whom there are different Orders; for they are distinguish'd by the Apostle into Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, Angels and Arch-Angels, Cherubims and Seraphims. And 'tis remarkable, that the Angel *Gabriel* says of himself, *I am Gabriel that stand in the Presence of God:* Upon which one observes, that he distinguished himself as much by his Station as by his Name.

But I hasten, and shall mention but one Scripture more on this occasion. *He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*⁴⁰

Upon the whole I conclude, that as one Man differs from another in Wisdom and Stature; and that as one Angel differs from another in Dignity and Honour above; and as one Star in the Firmament differs from another in Glory; so will one Saint differ from another in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It remains that I make a few Inferences from each part of my Text, and conclude.

³⁹ Mat. 10. 41.

⁴⁰ 2 Cor. 9. 6.

First, From the Relation the Apostle gives of his Conduct in this World, *I have fought, &c.* I infer the following things.

1. That it is not so easy to get to Heaven, as some People dream. We must watch and pray, strive and run, wrestle and fight; we must encounter great Oppositions, and struggle thro mighty Difficulties, if ever we ascend into the *Mount of God*. Our Saviour assures us, *That strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leads to Life, and few there be that find it*. What with the Corruption of our Natures, the Frowns and Flatteries of the World, and the Malignity of the fallen Angels, *the Righteous themselves are scarcely saved; where then shall the Ungodly and Sinner appear?*

2. Let neither Ministers nor private Christians be discouraged, because of their respective Difficulties in the Christian Warfare; for 'tis a Confederate War we are engaged in. God is on our side while we plead his Cause: *Fear not, O my Soul*, may every Saint say, *for they that are with us are more than they that are against us*: Or in the Words of the Apostle *John*, *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World*.⁴¹ And in a special manner let Ministers acquit themselves like good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, *contending earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; for they are set for the *Defence of the Gospel*, and therefore are bound to plead for the great Truths of it, against the Cavils of Scepticks and Infidels.

But *Secondly*, with regard to the Expectation which the Apostle had of consummate Happiness in the other World, we may infer:

(1.) How brightly has God display'd his Wisdom and Goodness, in proposing Rewards to animate us in our Work and Warfare. Some Men, who are wise above what's written, affirm, that to encourage our selves with the Prospect and Hopes of a Reward, is Mercenary. I allow that the Glory of God ought to be our ultimate governing End, in all the Actions of the Christian Life. Yet 'tis evident that the Holy Ghost proposes the Reward of Glory as a quickening Motive to Gospel-Obedience: And surely, if Jesus Christ as Man, made use of such rational Motives, it would be proud Enthusiasm for us to refuse 'em. The Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, that Jesus *for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, &c.*⁴² And if we would endure Hardship as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, and not be weary and faint in our Minds, we must keep *the Crown* in our View, as he did *the Joy that was set before him*.

(2.) How much does it concern us all to make sure of a Crown of Righteousness, and to clear up our Title to it? The former will lay the Foundation of our Happiness, and the latter of our Comfort; which cannot be, unless we are justified by the *Obedience of Christ*, and renewed by the *Spirit of Christ*. *Verily, verily*, says our Saviour, *except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*. Our Natural Alliance to God, which is a Relation that all Creatures stand in to their Creator, will not give us a Title to the Heavenly Inheritance: we must be Children of God by Regeneration, and adopted into the Family of Heaven, before the Scripture pronounces us *Co-heirs with Jesus Christ*; which to be persuaded of, on solid grounds, will make the pale Face of a dying Saint shine with the Lustre of an Angel, and fill his Soul with a Joy that is unspeakable and full of Glory.

(3.) How should those contemn *this World*, that live in the constant Expectation of consummate Happiness *in Heaven*? The Fashion of this World passeth away; why should we chase the flying Shadow? All the Pleasures and Delights of Sense are vanishing and deceitful also, like an imaginary

41 1 Joh. 4. 4.

42 Heb. 12. 2.

Entertainment in a Dream, which feeds the Fancy; but as soon as we awake, we find nothing but Emptiness and Disappointment. O that we could always view this vain World in a true and undeceiving Light, as those generally do that are sick and dying! then we should soon be able to say with the Apostle, *We are crucified to the World, and the World to us.*

(4.) How reasonable is it that such as are in expectation of consummate Happiness in Heaven hereafter, should have their Conversation there now? We profess to have Treasure in Heaven, there surely our Hearts should be. Why should our Souls be charmed and captivated with the little Gaieties of Life, when the great Concerns of Eternity are on our Hands, and Crowns of Glory are in our View?

(5) Let the Reward we expect in Heaven make us patient and content under all the Afflictions we meet with on Earth. *Brethren*, says the Apostle, *the time is short*: tho our Trials are sharp, they shall not be long; Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy shall come in the Morning. *These light Afflictions that are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

(6.) Let the Consideration of that Reward that the Saints hope to receive after Death, reconcile 'em to the Thoughts of Dying. Why should we be unwilling to leave a vain World, and that our Souls should dislodge from our vile and troublesom Bodies, when they are to pass into the blissful Presence of the King of Glory? If our Tempers were truly Christian, *we should groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from above; and be willing rather to be absent from the Body, that we might be present with the Lord.*

(7.) Let the Consideration of there being a Crown of Righteousness laid up for all that love Christ's Appearing, comfort us under the Loss of our Pious Relations. Indeed the more excellent our Friends are, the greater Loss we sustain by their Removal; and that which should alleviate our Sorrow, gives us a deeper Wound: for the fitter our Friends are for Heaven, the more desirable is their Society upon Earth. But yet, after all, 'tis some Relief to consider that those that were dear to us, have only made an advantageous Change; they have parted with this Earth for Heaven, with our Society below for better Company above; their Faith is turn'd into Vision, and their Hope into Enjoyment; they were lately languishing on a Bed of Sickness, but now are shining on an Illustrious Throne. Such Thoughts as these I may reasonably suggest to the surviving Relations of that Excellent Minister of the Gospel, Mr. *Thomas Harrison*, whose Decease has occasion'd this Discourse; for he could say in the View of Death, *I have fought a good Fight*, &c. And is He dead? O heavy Tidings! To mention it, chills my very Blood and Spirits. And is He dead? And shall you see his Face, and hear his Voice no more from this Pulpit? Well, but his Name lives, and will diffuse grateful Odours to a late Posterity: for tho he is dead, he yet speaketh; and in Justice and Gratitude to his Memory, I have several things to say, that are *lovely and of good Report.*

And tho I had such an Affection for the Person deceased, that I can say it with all the Seriousness that becomes my Character, that if it had been the Will of God, and I had been as ripe for Heaven as he was, I should rather have chosen to have filled his *Tomb*, than to have stood on this sad Occasion in his *Pulpit*: Yet I hope the Strength of my *Passion* will not biass my *Judgment*; and that I shall speak nothing but *the Words of Truth and Soberness*. There is no danger of flattering the Dead, and I am under no Temptation to do it to the Living. I proceed therefore to say something concerning our Deceased Friend, whose very early Years were devoted to Heaven, and his Soul betimes imbued with the Grace of God. He took upon him the solemn Profession of Religion, and became a Member of an Honourable Church of Christ, about the Age that our Saviour was, when he disputed with the *Jewish Doctors*: And like the Master he serv'd, *He grew in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man.*

In his blooming Youth he discover'd an extraordinary Relish of Divine things, and his Thirst after solid Knowledg was such, that he could not stoop to the Trifles of Trade (for which he was designed) but his Capacious Soul aspir'd after something higher. And so soon as he obtain'd full Liberty for Study, he made a considerable Proficiency in *Useful Learning*, being train'd up under a Learned *Tutor now alive; as he before had had the Advice, Conversation, and Advantage of sitting under the Ministry of † two Excellent and Judicious Divines, joint Pastors of that Church to which he stood related for above twenty Years.

When he had a due Call to preach in Publick (for he did not run before he was sent) he soon discover'd his excellent Qualifications for the Ministerial Work: For as he had entertained very clear and sound Notions concerning the Fundamental Articles of our Holy Religion; so the several Graces that adorn the Christian Life did shine with an admirable Lustre through his whole Conduct. His Life in every Instance was agreeable to his Profession. He was not a trifling, airy Professor, but a solid substantial Christian; one that was able to speak to Cases of Conscience from his own Experience, as well as from the Books of Casuists [definition?].

He had laid in so good a Fund of Useful Knowledg, and so read and studied Divinity, that upon the proposing of a Question he would immediately speak to it with great Penetration and Accuracy, yet not without a becoming Deference to those that exceeded him in Years; tho he would abide by the Notions he had espous'd, till the Evidence of Reason oblig'd him to quit them.

He was a Person of great Integrity of Soul, a *Nathanael* indeed, one that could be facetious in Conversation without being frothy and vain, and serious without being morose and sullen.

He kept himself (through the Grace of God) unspotted from the World: *He kept Innocence, and took heed to the thing that was right.* And so great a Concern had he for the Honour of his Holy Profession, that he would deny himself in things innocent in their own Nature, rather than scandalize the Weak, or lay a Stumbling-block before the openly Profane. He was a careful Observer of the Apostolick Injunction, *To abstain from all Appearance of Evil.* And one thing I have often remark'd concerning him (which I believe all that knew him will confess) he was a very Religious Observer of his Word, his Promises were as sure and Sacred as an Oath.

He was in every Relation Desirable and Praise-worthy, *a Dutiful Son, a tender Affectionate Husband, a Kind Father, a Prudent Master, A True and Lasting Friend, and a Faithful Laborious Minister.* But 'tis the last of these I am more eminently concern'd to speak of at this time; and indeed I can speak with the more Freedom, because he was one who lived so that his Sermons might be read in his Conversation: for he was an *Example to Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, and in Purity.* He exemplified the Power of his Principles in Religion, by his close Walk with God; and tho his Arguments for Christianity were always demonstrative, and his Persuasions strong, yet there was a greater force in the shining Vertues of his Life: for by these, Men were convinc'd that himself believ'd what he preach'd.

Preaching the Gospel was the very Pleasure of his Soul: *And the Zeal of God's House had eaten him up.* He was so entirely devoted to the Work of the Ministry, and his Heart so engag'd in it, that from the time of his first appearing in Publick to the last, his Life was one continued Scene of Labour and Toil. His close Study and constant Preaching (frequently three times a Day) did greatly exhaust his Animal Spirits, and enfeeble his Strength. Yet to the last he discovered a becoming Zeal against the

* Mr. *Thomas Rowe.*

† Dr. *Nehem. Cox,* and M. *William Collins.* [Nehemiah Coxe and William Collins were Pastors of the Petty France Church in London, Ed.]

prevailing Errors of the Day, for he knew no Face in the Pulpit; his Soul was too great to balk any Truth that he own'd, for the Frowns or Flatteries of the Greatest; and I may say of him as the Apostle does of himself, *That he had obtain'd Mercy to be faithful.*

With what Application of Mind, and unwearied Diligence did he discharge his Pastoral Office, not only preaching in season and out of season, but in visiting those under his Charge, encouraging the serious, gently reproving the froward, and instructing those that oppos'd themselves; defending the great Truths of the Gospel, and setting them in a clear Light?

As for the Matter of his Sermons, it was always solid and substantial. He dispensed the Bread of Life to nourish your Souls, and not Curiosities to indulge your Fancies. Christ Crucified was the Sum of his Preaching. He took care to deliver the great and important Truths of the Gospel, in *sound as well as acceptable Words.* He did not debase the Majesty of Divine Truths, by a sordid Negligence of Speech; but spoke in a Stile correct and strong, as became the Oracles of God. His Notions were not only weighty, but there was a conquering Force in his well-chosen Expressions; for as *Job* says, *How forcible are right Words!* In short, *He was a Workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth;* and giving to every Soul a Portion in due season. He preach'd so as to save himself and them that heard him. A fervent Love to Christ and the Souls of Men seem'd to reign in his Breast, as appear'd by his flaming but regular Zeal to exalt the Glory of the Redeemer, and promote the Salvation of Souls. He did not count his Life dear to himself, so that he might finish his Course with Joy, and the Ministry which he had receiv'd of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God. And alas! 'tis to be fear'd, that in Judgment to us who survive, God has remov'd this excellent Person from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant; where this Star shines with an unfading Lustre, tho it dispenses no Light and Influence to us below. And that which aggravates our Loss, is this, that this Useful Minister is remov'd in the * midst of his Days. His Removal is sudden to us, but 'twas not surprizing to him: for he liv'd in the constant expectation of his Death, as may be collected from an Expression he us'd more than once in Family-Prayer a little before his Decease: He beg'd of God, *That the tottering of his frail Tabernacle might always put him in mind of its falling down.* And at the beginning of his last Illness he told a near Relation, he should *study no more.*

A little after he said, *O how sweet will Rest be to me after my weary Labour!* At another time he express'd his Propriety in God: *God (says he) is my God, and I have his gracious Presence with me. O how precious is the Blood of Christ, and how excellent the Union betwixt Christ and Believers! for 'tis indissoluble.* And when refresh'd once with taking something that was agreeable, he cry'd out, *O how refreshing will be the Streams of the River of God!* But his Distemper affecting his Head, he soon grew delirious, and a few Days put an end to his Excellent and Valuable Life. His Body we have committed to the Dust, his Soul is fled to the Regions of Light and Love, where he rests from all his Labours, and is seated on so high a Throne, that neither the Malice of Devils, nor the Strife of Tongues can be able to reach him. Therefore stop your Tears; our Friend is not dead, but sleepeth; *and those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

I shall only address my self to the Church in particular, and then to you that were his Auditors in general, and so conclude.

1. To the Church in particular. It must be own'd that you have lost an Able Pastor, one that fed you according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided you according to the Skilfulness of his Hands; so that you have abundant cause of Mourning: But do not altogether weep for him, but weep for your selves and your Children, that you made no better Improvement under his excellent Ministry, who

* He was about five and thirty when he died.

upon his Death-bed express'd a great Concern for you, and died in the Faith that God would take care of his own Work. He was very desirous to have sat down with you at the Holy Table of the Lord once more; but before the Day came wherein that Ordinance was to have been celebrated, God took him to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. Let me intreat you to study your selves and this Providence, and may the Language of it be intelligible to everyone of you. *Remember him that had the Rule over you; whose Faith follow considering the end of his Conversation.* And let me exhort you to fly to that God by Prayer, who has the Residue of the Spirit, that he would anoint another for his Service, and send you a Pastor after his own Heart. God has made a Breach upon you, lay your Mouths in the Dust, and humble your Souls; and let all present put up those Petitions for this Church which *Moses did for Israel: Let the Lord, the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, set a Man over this Congregation, that may go out before you, and that may go in before you, that may lead you out and bring you in, that this Congregation of the Lord may not be as Sheep without a Shepherd.*⁴³

May God suddenly set up a burning and shining Light in this Golden Candlestick: May a Star arise here, whose Light may refresh, and whose Influences shall spread, and last long.

2. To you that were the constant Auditors of the deceas'd Minister. Consider how indulgent and favourable God has been to several of you, even in this dark Dispensation: He has remov'd one that was ripe for Heaven; but how dismal had been your State, if he had call'd you that are unprepar'd! If you drop into the Grave while you are unprovided for Eternity, you sink beyond the Reserves of Mercy. O adore the Patience and Long-suffering of God, that you are yet alive, and have one Call more from this Pulpit, and another very Awful one from the Grave of that Person who us'd to fill it. His Death calls upon you to repent, and turn to close with Christ, and make sure of Heaven. Surely you cannot but feel some Emotions in your Breasts, when you think you shall never see nor hear your painful Minister more. And methinks the Rocks within you should flow, when you think that he preached himself to Death, and you have not yet entertain'd that Jesus whom he preach'd. 'Tis true, God gave him several Seals of his Ministry, which was the Joy of his Heart, and will be his Crown in the Day of the Lord.

But if you who were only Hearers will continue so, he will be a swift Witness against you in the Day of God. For tho' one Place held you and him in this World, you'll have very different Habitations in the next. He shall eternally solace himself in boundless Rivers of Pleasure; but you shall be eternally plung'd into a bottomless Lake of Fire. But let me intreat you by all that is sacred, by the Joys of Heaven and the Torments of Hell, by the Interest of your never-dying Souls, by Christ's bloody Sweat in the Garden, and his Agony on the Cross, that you immediately close with Christ, and receive him as offer'd in the Gospel; submitting to his Scepter, as well as depending on his Sacrifice; that you may eternally be lodg'd in the Bosom of his Love.

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), 156-197 (<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

⁴³ Num. 22. 16, 17. [This should be Num. 27:16, 17. Ed.]

the transcriber and any inaccuracy in their positioning is his alone.

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