

TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN.

A
FUNERAL SERMON

On the DEATH of the
Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,
Chaplain to the Countess of HUNTINGTON,
Who died suddenly of a fit of the Asthma, at New-
bury Port, at Six of the Clock Lord's Day
Morning, Sept. 30th, 1770.

The Sermon preached the same Day, Afternoon.

By JONATHAN PARSONS, A. M.
And Minister of the Presbyterian Church there.

To which are added,
An Account of his INTERMENT;
The SPEECH over his GRAVE,
By the Rev. Mr. JEWET;

And some VERSES to his Memory,
By the Rev. THO. GIBBONS, D. D.

PORTSMOUTH, NEW-HAMPSHIRE, Printed,
L O N D O N Reprinted,
For JAMES BUCKLAND, at N^o 57, Paternoster Row,
and sold at the Chapel in Tottenham Court Road, and
at the Tabernacle near Moorfields. 1771.

[Price Six-pence.]

(RCPPG)

5959

.972

.29

T O
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
COUNTESS OF HUNTINGTON,
THE FOLLOWING
FUNERAL SERMON,
ON THE DEATH OF THE
Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,
IS INSCRIBED BY
HER LADYSHIP'S
AFFLICTED,
MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,
JONATHAN PARSONS;

4-13-66-154-2

A

FUNERAL SERMON

PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN.

THE apostle *Paul* was in a very happy frame of spirit when he wrote this epistle; confident that he should never be ashamed of Christ and his gospel, nor of his hope in him, under any sufferings; but that he should go forward through evil report and good report, triumphantly to glory; a frame that rendered him the more useful in life, and the more ready for death: he scarcely knew how to fix his choice, because he felt many workings of heart that seemed to draw him both ways; "I am in a strait betwixt two" things, that engage my serious attention, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you." As Christ was his *all*, and lived in him; and as his interest and kingdom, and the good of immortal souls were the delightful end he pursued in living and dying, he was ready and willing for either. Indeed he had an earnest desire to be delivered from the natural incumbrance of the corruptible body, and the moral imperfections that cleaved to him; that he might be in the immediate presence of Christ to behold his glory: but still he was willing to continue longer in the world, if, by his example and ministry, he might be serviceable to the souls of men.

In discoursing upon my text, I propose to your consideration, 1. "In what sense we may take the words, *for me to live is CHRIST.*" 2. "What the

2 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

“ faithful ministers of CHRIST, and all real Christians
“ gain by their death.” And, 3. “ That it is the
“ duty of all the ministers of CHRIST, and other
“ Christians, to *live* so devoted to CHRIST, and his
“ interest, as to maintain the clear evidence of their
“ gain by death.”

I. I propose to your consideration, in what sense we may take the words, *FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST?*”

There are many things that might be inferred from the phrase, which I pass over; and comprise my thoughts under the following heads, viz.

1. *For me to live is CHRIST*, i. e. “ CHRIST is the principle of my life.” If there were any dependence to be put upon, or any benefit to be found in merely external privileges, or in any thing that the *Judaizers* had done in their irregenerate state, I could boast as much as any of them: For I was no proselyte from among the *Gentiles*, but a native *Israelite* of the tribe of *Benjamin*; a royal tribe, from which the first king of *Israel* was taken—a tribe which never revolted, as all the rest did, except that of *Judah*. Yea, by education and profession, I was a Pharisee; a sect which for learning and knowledge, and reputation for holiness, was the most eminent of all the *Jewish* sects. Neither was I lukewarm in my religion, but my zeal was so flaming, that I breathed out slaughter and death against the disciples of the Lord Jesus, wherever I went, and verily thought I did God service.

This was my case while I was a devout Pharisee, vainly imagining that I was on good terms with God, upon the footing of my own righteousness. But when the divine command, in its pure and spiritual meaning, and high requirements, came home to my heart and conscience, and assured me of the aims and influences which governed me; when the law came, in the light and energy of the Holy Spirit, to my thorough conviction, I saw the sinfulness and guilt of sin;

I was fully convinced that the worst of punishment was my due; far beyond what I had apprehended before: Sin revived in its hideous forms, and with the terrible accusations of conscience. I felt the deadly wound; lay helpless; justly condemned to eternal misery; and, unless sovereign grace had prevented, should have been lost for ever. But in this critical moment, Christ clothed the doctrines of salvation with living power. When I was cast out in the open field, to the loathing of my person, he saw me polluted in mine own blood, and said unto me, LIVE: yea, he said unto me, LIVE. When I was doomed to destruction, he resolved to save me from death. He met me in the way to *Damascus*, and plucked me as a brand from the fire, and took possession of my soul for himself; shined into my heart, and enlivened all the faculties of my soul, by his efficacious, quickening grace. Thus *Paul* was the epistle of Christ, written in the sensible table of his soul, which, being renewed by grace, was susceptible of holy impressions, according to that new covenant promise, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.*

2. *For me to live is CHRIST*: i. e. "I am in subjection to him as my Lord; at his disposal, and for his service." Christ has a supreme right to rule over all his people, and over all things respecting them as he pleases. And where he has implanted a principle of spiritual life, and set up his kingdom in their hearts, they readily pay an obediential regard to the laws of his kingdom. When *Paul* was convinced of his guilt and danger, and astonished to think how vile he had been, especially in opposing himself to Christ; and also convinced that Christ was the anointed of God, he readily resigned himself up to his authority and command: "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" *Acts ix. 6.* Saving faith works out in holy desires to do the will of God; to honour the name of Christ, and to obtain forgiveness of sin,

4 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

and the mercy of God to eternal life. "Faith worketh by love" to the object, and makes use of the affections to carry us out in all acts of gratitude. He that believes is planted in Christ, and Christ lives in him by his Spirit, and he lives in Christ by faith, and is disposed to glorify God in such a day of visitation. "We are his workmanship," says the apostle, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," *Eph. ii. 10.* Obedience to the commands of God are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith—Vaunting hypocrites will make their profession of faith without giving any proof of its sincerity; but real Christians have evangelical works of love and obedience to bear witness that their faith has its proper influence upon them. He that has the faith of God's elect, shews it by a correspondent practice, and so he adorns the doctrines of God his Saviour. Though he has still the remainders of indwelling-sin, and many comings short of the spirituality and perfection of the law; yet he proposes to himself, in the governing views of his life, to be found in the constant practice of all Christian duties: what God commands he esteems it his honour to obey; and what he forbids, to refuse; and abhors himself for all his sinful defects and imperfections.

The apostle, in my text, implicitly says, "Now Christ has gained me over from my state of pharisaism to himself, shall he not do what he will with his own? Lo, here I am! let him dispose of me, and all my circumstances; but let him appoint how all my time and talents shall be employed. Surely, he that has opened my eyes, and called me by his efficacious grace, has a perfect right to me, to serve himself of me, in the highest and lowest offices of life. His interest in me, authorises him to effect his own ends by me, with all that I am and have, as he shall direct. Lord, here I am, to be disposed of by thy wisdom and good pleasure, in a more noble or ignoble service; not only
in

“ in some cases, but in all ; not only at some times,
“ but as long as I live in the world.”

3. *For me to live is CHRIST* : i. e. “ His glory is the grand design of my living.” Christ is the most admirable personage, in a complex view, that men or angels ever beheld ; and the rich blessings of his purchase, held up in the covenant of grace, flow, through him, to the glory of God, and the happiness of believers. He is the living fountain, from whence his servants, of every station and denomination, draw up the waters of life. Hence all the blessings that come down upon a guilty world are to be reduced to him, as their original ; and all we do is to be done for him as the end. The Redeemer’s glory and his Father’s glory in him, is to be proposed and pursued in every undertaking. If the name of Christ may be exalted by our poor services, we may be satisfied with being destitute of the praise of men. As Christ is superlatively excellent in the view of his servants, so they would gladly contribute what they can, to render him amiable unto all others, and are grieved when they treat his name, his word, or his image with contempt.

Yea, they ascribe all the praise of all their gifts and graces ; the praise of all the blessings and benefits to him, as the purchaser. If they feel themselves accepted of God, in their persons, they fall down before God, and confess it through his perfect and atoning sacrifice and righteousness. “ Yea, doubtless,
“ and I count all things but loss, for the excellency
“ of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ;” whom I humbly claim as my Lord and Saviour. I utterly renounce every duty that I have done, both before my conversion and since, in point of justification, that I may “ be found in him, not having mine own
“ righteousness, but that which is through the faith
“ of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by
“ faith ;” *Pbil. iii. 9.* Or, if they have done any thing that has produced a gracious effect, they ascribe
it

6 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

it all to God, that formed their souls into holy dispositions and propensions; directed and strengthened them in their work, and gave the blessing to their labours. The ardent desire of their souls is, to be the glory of Christ; not that they expect to make him more glorious in himself than he is, but that his glory may shine forth in a more illustrious manner, and in more instances, and that they might discover it to others in their Christian course; particularly, that the beauty of his character may, as in a mirror, shine brighter in their temper, labours and conduct.

4. *For me to live is CHRIST*: i. e. "The interest of his kingdom is the chief business of my life." Indeed, the doctrines of Christ and his interest are not calculated to gratify the pride and carnal reasonings of the polite world, in the present age. The instances of the great and noble that are called, are very rare. Blessed be God, those of high birth and parentage are not excluded; "two or three in the top of the uppermost boughs, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches;" a remnant, according to the purpose of God, are called. But whether the wise men of the world value the interest of Christ or not, it is certainly the most honourable and important of any interest that the greatest and most learned can pursue. And this is an interest that lies nearest the heart of every real Christian, even when it is despised and set at nought by others: those of high degree as well as low, are attached to his cause, and will not deny his name, for fear of the greatest sufferings. The apostle *Paul*, though warned of the terrible things that would befall him, could not be dissuaded from his journey. "What mean ye to weep, and break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at *Jerusalem* for the name of the Lord Jesus;" *Acts* xxi. 13. Every faithful minister of Christ, yea, every real Christian, has the spirit of martyrdom. We are not to let drop the interest of Christ, though its defence requires the greatest applica-

application of mind, the severest self-denial, and the most evident danger of parting with dear friends, or feeling the repentment of cruel enemies.

Such as Christ has redeemed by the price of his blood, and the power of his grace, owe him all they have and are: therefore, to neglect his interest, because of temptations thrown in their way, to stagger their courage, must be interpreted a defrauding him of his due. Instead of such base ingratitude, they will rather submit to the severest trials, and even put their life in their hands, for the honour of their Lord and Saviour; not in a vain-glorious way, but relying upon the strength of divine grace, to do and suffer any thing, and every thing, to be witnesses for Christ and his gospel. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord:" *Isai.* xliii. 10. But can any be faithful witnesses for Christ, and attest from their own experience the power of his grace, the kindness of his providence, and the truth of his promise, and yet desert his cause; surely no ministers or others can, in a proper sense, be witnesses for Christ and his gospel, if they could desert his cause, for the hope of the favour or fear of the displeasure of any man. The interest of Christ is too dear to his ministers, and all his faithful followers, to give up, through fear or flattery. How meanly soever many people of rank and figure in the world may think of his gospel and interest; and what reproach soever they may suffer, for espousing and publishing it, yet they are so sensible of the grand design carried on for the discovery of the glory of the divine character in the salvation of sinners, that they account it their highest honour to own and profess, preach and defend it.

5. *For me to live is CHRIST:* i. e. "I am satisfied that all my outward circumstances should be at the disposal of Christ." Our Lord Jesus Christ is invested with uncontrouled dominion over all things, and over every person, dignity and authority of what character soever. He disposes all, agreeable to his infinite

8 A FUNERAL SERMON on the DEATH

wisdom, in the best manner, and uses the best means to accomplish the best end. Now, not only the apostles, and all the faithful ministers of Christ, but all real Christians, refer themselves to him, to chuse their lot for them; and they have a Christian acquiescence in his all-wise, righteous and faithful determination. What condition, office, station, or work soever, he assigns them, that they submit to, without repining, and endeavour to answer the ends of their designation.—— They are for improving the advantages, watching against the temptations, performing the duties, and exercising the graces proper to the particular lot assigned them. Some men have such an opinion of their goodness and excellent endowments, as to despise others in higher stations, and to be dissatisfied that they are not promoted; wise in their own eyes, and yet nothing but hypocrites. This is far from the Christian temper: when God called for a prophet to deliver messages in his name, *Isaiab*, who was eminently qualified for this service, dare not undertake without a commission from Christ. “Here am I, send me.” *Isa.* vi. 8. Those that are real Christians will not rush into the ministry, but wait till Christ gives them a commission to go for him. They dare not attempt to change their station but under the divine conduct. They are more solicitous to approve themselves to God in their present station, than to have it changed for a higher.

6. *For me to live is CHRIST*: i. e. “I am determined to live in all Christian exercises of heart and life, so as to maintain the clear evidences of my title to life eternal.” ’Tis readily granted, that the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, is the only title to eternal life. All true Christians are vitally united to Christ, and all new covenant blessings are bestowed upon them in his right. But the evidence of their interest is, “Christ in them:” *Col.* i. 27. And he fills not only their heads with his doctrine, but their hearts and affections with his Spirit.

rit. They derive virtue from Christ to cure their spiritual diseases, to purify their hearts, and to bring forth fruit unto God; deeply sensible that "without Christ they can do nothing." The Spirit has indited a certain rule of trial: "he is the author of those gracious habits and acts, in which our conformity to the rule consists." He shines in upon his own work, and sometimes comments upon it, so as to make it understood with such satisfaction, that we can determine in our favour.

Our apostle lived the whole of his time, after his conversion (for ought appears) with the clear and satisfying evidences that "Christ lived in him." He was sensibly redeemed from the power of all sin, to bring the living fruits of righteousness to God, and therefore knew that Christ freely gave himself to make a complete atonement for his sins. And so considering an uninterrupted assurance of pardon and acceptance, is the greatest favour, next to a saving interest in Christ, we ought to "give all diligence to make "our calling and election sure:" 2 *Pet.* i. 10. How peaceful is the reflection on past engagements to Christ, if we can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep "that which I have committed to him against that "day:" 2 *Tim.* i. 12. And how transporting, when we view that day at hand, if we can adopt the graceful language of the apostle, who anticipated the triumphs of the day of judgment, saying, "I am "now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight; I have "finished my course; I have kept the faith:" 2 *Tim.* iv. 6, 7. The rich experiences that such have had of the grace of God, which has been with them, to the close of life, will raise their joyful expectation, that "henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of "righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge "will give them at that day." This is a glorious crown in reversion, not merely for faithful ministers,

10 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

but for all the faithful followers of Christ, who long and hope for his appearing. But,

II. Let us consider, "What the ministers of CHRIST, and other Christians, GAIN by their death." The apostle knew, that when he had served his generation with fidelity, and he fell asleep, he should be a gainer by it. And all others, high and low, ministers and people, who are made alive to God, and have surrendered themselves up to Christ, to serve him, seek his glory in all their services, endeavour to promote the interest of his kingdom in all they do, are willing that all their outward circumstances should be at his disposal; I say, all such as these, will be great gainers at their death. For,

1. "Death will put an end to all the weaknesses and miseries they have groaned under in this life." In these houses of clay, the best are not exempted from trials that cannot but be distressing to flesh and blood; and especially the remainders of indwelling corruption, which is their most grievous burden, as it is offensive and dishonourable to God, and a great hindrance to them in his service: This costs them many a groan, in their serious reflections upon it: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." *Rom. vii. 24.* Indwelling-sin excites a spirit of murmuring under outward troubles: It often hedges up the path of duty. Under a sense of the need of guidance, *David* prayed, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments;" *Psal. cxix. 35.* Tho' true Christians have grace in their hearts, and have the laws of Christ to direct them, yet they have so much remaining ignorance, and there are so many perplexities in their way, that they need divine guidance upon all occasions. It is for lack of divine teaching and help in this dark world that they wander from the divine rule, lose their evidences for heaven, disturb their peace, and their minds are caught away from true

and substantial pleasures. In such a condition was *Heman*, the wisest man next after *Solomon*, which made him cry, "Lord, why castest thou off my soul? Why "hidest thou thy face from me?" *Psal.* lxxxviii. 14. God often hides the sensible signs of his favour from his dearest friends, and leaves them in such inextricable windings, that they know not what course to steer.

But death puts an end to all these evils. There is nothing in the flesh or spirit to give the least uneasiness to saints in glory: no pain to indispose them for the holy services of God, and his Son Jesus Christ; no distress to unfit them for any of the delightful enjoyments with which heaven is furnished: "Blessed "are the dead which die in the Lord, from hence-
"forth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from
"their labours; and their works do follow them:" *Rev.* xiv. 13. There is nothing to break the thread of their peace and intense pleasure to endless ages: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes:" *Rev.* xxi. 4. Not only relieve their sorrows, but entirely remove them; absolutely and eternally banish all things uncomfortable, and sin, the cause of them, to the remotest distance.

2. "Death opens the door to the accomplishment of their hopes." Real Christians, whilst they are among fiery serpents, are waiting with desire and holy expectation for the good of the promise which is yet behind: and the more they live under a lively conviction of the sublime delights to be enjoyed in the presence of Christ in heaven, the more they are influenced to attain all possible purity of heart and life. Sometimes they have such evident impresses of the holy image of God upon their hearts, as it becomes a security, and earnest of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light, and gives them establishing satisfaction of their right and title to it: They have such a relish of those divine provisions, the complement of which are reserved for a state of future blessedness;

12 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

as to have no doubts but they shall soon be advanced to the full possession. But still they are in the body, exposed to many evils; sinful imperfections cleaving to their best services, and storms beating upon them, while the tempestuous winds below are blowing, yet hope in Christ, as trusted in by faith, is “as an anchor to their souls:” *Heb. vi. 19.* as it enters into the glorious world, which lies hid from the sight of the eyes of the body; there it fastens upon Christ, and the Father through him, as exhibited in the promises. Hence they wait patiently for the good in the promise, which is yet unaccomplished. And who can imagine the greatness of that gain, which consists in the possession and full enjoyment of all the promised good? Surely the eye has never seen any thing so grand, nor the ear ever heard any thing so delightful, neither has it entered into the thoughts of any man to conceive of any thing so entertaining, as the blessings of salvation, which are reserved in heaven for the servants of Christ. “There they shall be entertained with uninterrupted views of God in his several glories.” This I apprehend is agreeable to the promise made by him that is faithful and true: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God:” *Mattb. v. 8.* This intends, not only that God will manifest himself to them here so as he doth not to the world, but that they shall have the beatific vision of him for ever in glory. To the same purpose our apostle says, “Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* The grand sublime mysteries of the kingdom of God, and God in the glory of his true character, are conceived with great obscurity, through the medium of his word and holy ordinances, compared with what they will appear in open vision. Here we have but a scanty imperfect insight into the glory of God, and the profound truths of the gospel; but there we shall have a certain familiar

knowledge of them by a sort of immediate inspection. The open vision of glory, in eternal day, must needs support and increase holy wonder and pleasure, and bring apostles and prophets, all the saints and holy angels, prostrate before the throne, saying, with the profoundest reverence, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;" and engage them in solemn ascriptions of "glory and honour, and thanks to him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever." *Rev. iv. 8, 9.*

Let us only imagine the glory of the divine Character in "creation and providence:" If we can argue his existence and supreme divinity from the aspectable heavens and this earth; and also from the works of providence; how will these great and marvellous works display the glory of God, when we come to see him as he is. His self-existence and supreme excellency, which he has, eternally and unchangeably, of himself; his transcendent wisdom and goodness, and his other perfections, will more amazingly open, and bring more indelible characters of his glory, in heaven, than is possible to be seen through the same things, while here in the body. What magnificence and variety, beauty and order, will then open to the display of the infinite perfections of God, which we have but a faint idea of through glasses, in this imperfect state. There is so much of God to be seen in this world, by the works of his hands, that disobedience and opposition to him, are against such light as leaves the very heathen without excuse. How overwhelming then must the open views of these perfections be in the vision of glory! Saints in heaven have the clearest discoveries of the almighty power, and other perfections of God legible in his great and marvellous works; his divine all-sufficiency to supply every character with all it can need or desire; such clear and full discoveries as are not compatible with this mortal state. In heaven all intricate dispensations are cleared up, and the inhabitants are perfectly satisfied

14 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

fied with the various administrations of God, and feel themselves for ever under the blessings of his hand. They have a clear sight and sense of the perfect purity of his nature, attended with a sacred abhorrence of all sin, and an everlasting preservative against the admission of any one unholy thought : And divine love and grace shine in their brightest glories, to kindle a flame of everlasting joy.

Again ; let us imagine the glory of being “ entertained with the clearest and perfectly uninterrupted views of the *harmony* of the divine perfections in the works of providence and grace.” There are many dispensations of God towards his church in its militant state, that, to us, are inexplicable. Though there is perfect order and fitness, perfect agreement and proportion of one dispensation with another in the divine government, yet we are such poor, short-sighted creatures, that the beauty and harmony of the divine perfections seem, in a great measure, to be hid from us. The dispensations are so mysterious, that we are ready to say with *Nicodemus* in another case, “ How can these things be ? ” What do these dispensations mean ? Where is the harmony and correspondence of them ? How can we open the agreeableness of one dispensation with another ? Sometimes things are so variable or mixed in providence, that we are ready to say, “ Wherein does the holiness and glory of God appear in them ? Doth infinite wisdom and righteousness, truth and goodness, sit at the helm and steer the ship ? ” We may acknowledge that the judge of all the earth does right, in what he is now doing in his church, and in what he will do in time to come, and yet the divine harmony and connection of the whole be out of sight. But when believers come to “ walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” all darkness will be scattered before the meridian sun, and the beauty and harmony of the divine perfections will be seen in the clearest light. This is reserved for heaven, where they shall
see

see unclouded glory ; have dark scriptures made plain, and seeming contradictions cleared up and reconciled. The lowest saint in heaven has a clearer understanding of the mysteries of redemption and salvation, and of the wisdom and goodness of God in the kingdom of providence, than the greatest divine upon earth. The light of heaven leaves no place for darkness ; “ for the glory of God does lighten it, and the lamb “ is the light thereof.” *Rev.* xxi. 23. Hence there can be no more mistakes, no more stumbling-blocks, no more disquietude, no more unhallowed fire, no more implacable enemies to darken counsel by words without knowledge, and turn man aside from the right ways of the Lord Jesus.

Again ; let us imagine “ what it will be, everlastingly to be assured of God’s love to our souls.” Christians may, in this life, have “ the full assurance of hope,” which will never turn to their confusion or disappointment ; because it rests not upon any merit in themselves, but upon the free grace of God in Christ towards them ; which abundantly fills their souls with its lovely manifestations and distinguishing fruits. They may have some foretastes of heaven ; some glimpses of glory, which produce these holy transports, that are better felt than expressed. But, in heaven, they are surrounded with divine love, and rejoice in the everlasting assurance of it, with the most intense joy. They dwell in the immediate sensation of being beloved of God for ever and ever ; otherwise it could not, with any propriety, be said, “ in thy “ presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there “ are pleasures for evermore :” *Psal.* xvi. 11. For the fruition of God’s immediate presence could not yield unspeakable and everlasting joy, if they were not assured of his everlasting love. The highest uninterrupted assurance of this, is a spring of their blessedness, and an endless security of joy everlasting.

Again ;

16 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

Again; let us imagine "What transcendent love they have to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to God the judge of all." The first and comprehensive commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with" "all thy mind, and with all thy strength," *Mark* xii. 30. And "Where there is effectual faith given," "it worketh by love," *Gal.* v. 6. to its object. If a man pretends to faith, and it does not engage his supreme love to God in Christ, it is but a dead worthless name or form of faith. But the object is seen by saving faith, only through a glass darkly, whilst we are in the body; and our love bears an exact proportion to the excellency seen in the object. Besides, how often does some temptation catch our thoughts and hearts away from God and our Saviour; how sadly true is it, that when iniquity, corrupt principles and practices abound, "The love of many waxes cold?" they grow in a great measure indifferent in their affection towards Christ and his cause. The fervent love, which they had in the day of their espousals, is decayed. But when they die, their spirits ascend to the center of light, and are placed in such a situation to Christ, as to feel the everlasting beams of his love let out upon them. The sweet glories that are shed upon the spirits of just men made perfect, will constrain them, with one heart, to sing a new song in everlasting raptures, of love, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, honor, and glory, and blessing."

Again; let us imagine "what love they feel one to another?" Believers are never intirely destitute of love to Christ and the brethren. "He that loveth" "not his brother, abideth in death;" 1 *John* iii. 14. i. e. he continues under the power of spiritual death, and lies exposed to everlasting destruction. But real Christians have their hearts formed unto an affectionate

tionate love to all their brethren in the faith, hope and fellowship of the gospel. Some of them have had such love to their fellow christians, that they could readily part with any worldly good, if they might be so far conformed to the image of Christ, as many seem to be round about them. But, when death lets them out of these dark cottages of flesh, they have such clear views of the glories and graces of the Lord Jesus Christ, exemplified in the saints in light, and, at the same time, are so divested of self, as to be intirely united in one indissoluble bond of love, without any mixtures of envy, or shadows of ill-will. They have one heart and one soul, and are intirely as well pleased with the blessings conferred upon each other, as upon themselves.

III. It is the duty and privilege of believers, so to live, as to maintain a clear “evidence of their gain by death.” Thus the apostle *Paul* lived, under all his sufferings for Christ and the Gospel. The men of his rank and figure in the world, generally, thought meanly of the Gospel and its Author: The sublimity of the duties, and the artlessness of the dress, the contrariety of the whole to the pride of man, and the poverty of Christ’s followers, methinks, would have shocked and stumbled almost any man of the firmest mind and greatest abilities. But *Paul* was carried quite above all these things, because he knew that the gospel of Christ was “the power of God “unto Salvation,” *Rom. i. 16*. It was clothed with divine authority to him, and was the means which almighty Power wrought by, and rendered effectual for his salvation. He knew that it was an excellent scheme to illustrate the glory and harmony of the divine perfections, and to recover fallen man. He knew that the Spirit of truth had sealed him, and applied the promises with light and power to his soul, for the establishment of his faith and hope in Christ. Nothing more invigorated his mind and

D

heart

18 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

heart to resist unto blood, striving against sin: Nothing made him live, resisting principalities and powers, and vigorously serving God in the gospel of his Son, with sacred firmness, more than his consciousness of serving Christ in life, and the gain of death. Should we not therefore follow his worthy example? Is it not meet to be resigned to his will living and dying, under a readiness to live if we may serve Christ thereby, and a sense of our own gain by death. How can we speak for Christ with confidence, or leave a full testimony for him when we die, unless we can say with Christ himself, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit," *Luke* xxiii. 46.

Surely, christians ought to live, offering up themselves, and all they have to Christ. They ought to make his service, and the interest of his kingdom, the governing motive and end of all they do: They ought to employ their life, and time, and talents for him; and to value their powers, and all they have, only or chiefly, as they are serviceable to his interest. All this is evident, for supreme love to God inclines the heart to such a dedication, from the best motives. Besides, God has an absolute propriety in us, and all we have and are: And Christ Jesus has an additional right by purchase, and has appointed us to his service.

Now, if it is the duty and privilege of believers to live so devoted to God in Christ, then it is a duty and privilege, by consequence, so to live, as to maintain the clear and full evidence of their great gain by death; for living in the full exercises of strong faith, working by love, they have the living evidence of their gain by death before them. Self-dedication to God in Christ, is an evidence of our fitness to die; and a sense of this dedication, is a plain evidence of meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.

I might

I might have enlarged upon this divine subject, and have inferred many useful instructions: but instead of all other things, I shall turn my discourse to the very *melancholy* and *affecting occasion*, the *sudden* and *surprising death* of the Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD, who died by a Fit of the *Asthma*, at six o'clock this morning, in my chamber*. In him, I believe, we have the whole of the text exemplified: he could say with our apostle, "For me to live is Christ; and to die is gain."

Christ became a principle of spiritual life in his soul, whilst he was an under-graduate at the university in *Oxford*; and if I mistake not, when he was about sixteen years old. Before his conversion he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as strict as ever *Paul* was before God met him on his way to *Damascus*, according to his own declaration in his last sermon, which I heard him preach at *Exeter*, Yesterday.

He was, by means of reading, a very searching puritanical writer, convinced of the rottenness of all the duties he had done, and the danger of self-righteous foundation of hope. When he heard Christ speak to him in the gospel, he cried, "Lord, what will thou have me to do." And it seems as if, at that time, it had been made known to him that he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ Jesus through the *British* nation and her colonies; to stand before kings and nobles, and all sorts of people, to preach Christ, and him crucified. From that time the dawns of salvation had living power in his heart, and he had an ardent desire to furnish himself for the gospel-ministry. To this end, besides the usual studies at the college, he gave himself to reading the

* Let it be noted, that I said but little upon Mr. WHITEFIELD's character, when I preached this sermon, for want of time to recollect what might properly be said.

20 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

holy scriptures, to meditation and prayer; and particularly, he read Mr. *Henry's* annotations on the whole bible, upon his knees before God: a noble example for young students in divinity, to copy after!

Since my first acquaintance with him, which is about 30 years ago, I have highly esteemed him as an excellent christian, and an eminent minister of the gospel*: He lived and died a minister of the established church of England; but thought, as many others do, "that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink;" i. e. that it does not consist in circumstantial differences, or external distinctions; but rather supposed that such differences of mode, like the various parts in musick, were adapted to make the greater harmony, among real christians of various denominations.

An heart so bent for Christ, with such a sprightly active genius, could not admit of his stated, fixed residence in one place, as the pastor of a particular congregation; and therefore he chose to itinerate from place to place, and from one country to another; which indeed was much better suited to his talents, than a fixed abode would have been. I often considered him as "an angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel, to preach unto them that dwell on the earth;" for he preached the uncorrupted word of God, and gave solemn warnings against all corruptions of the gospel of Christ.

When he came the first time to *Boston*, the venerable Dr. *Coleman* (with whom I had a small acquaintance) condescended to write me, that "the wonderful man was come, and they had had a week of sabbaths... that his zeal for Christ was extraordinary; and yet he recommended himself

* My first acquaintance with Mr. WHITEFIELD, was at New-Haven, in October 1740, which was five years before I came and settled here, by his advice and influence.

“ to his many thousand hearers, by his engagedness “ for holiness and souls.” I soon had opportunity to observe that wherever he flew, like a flame of fire, his ministry gave a general alarm to all sorts of people, though before they had, for a long time, been amazingly sunk down into dead formality. It was then a time in *New-England*, that real christians generally had slackened their zeal for Christ, and fallen into a remiss and careless frame of spirit; and hypocritical professors were sunk into a deep sleep of carnal security: Ministers and their congregations seemed to be at ease. But his preaching appeared to be from the heart, though too many who spake the same things, preached as if it were indifferent whether they were received or rejected. We were convinced that he believed the message he brought us, to be of the last importance. Nevertheless, as soon as there was time for reflection, the enemies of Christ began to cavil, and hold up some of his sallies, as if they were unpardonable faults. By such means he met with a storm as tempestuous as the troubled sea, that casts up mire and dirt. Some of every station were too fond of their old way of formality, to part with it, for such a despised cause as living religion. But the spirit of Christ set home the message of the Lord upon the consciences of some, and shook them off from their false hopes: But many began to find fault, and some to write against his evangelizing through the country, while others threatened firebrands, arrows and death: Yet God gave room for his intense zeal to operate, and fit objects appeared, wherever he went, to engage him in preaching Christ and him crucified.

In his repeated visits to *America*, when his services had almost exhausted his animal spirits, and his friends were ready to cry, “ spare thyself,” his hope of serving Christ, and winning souls to him, animated and engaged him to run almost any risque. Neither did he ever cross the *Atlantic*, on an itine-

rating

22 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

rating visitation, without visiting his numerous brethren here, to see how religion prospered amongst them : And we know that his labours have been unwearied among us, and to the applause of all his hearers ; and through the infinite mercy of God, his labours have sometimes been crowned with great success, in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints. And though he often returned from the pulpit very feeble after public preaching, yet his engaging sweetness of conversation, changed the suspicions of many, into passionate love and friendship.

In many things his example is worthy of imitation, and, if in any thing he exceeded or came short, his integrity, zeal for God, and love to Christ and his gospel, rendered him, in extensive usefulness, more than equal to any of his brethren. In preaching here, and through most parts of *America*, he has been in “ labours more abundant, approving himself a minister of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. And God, that comforteth those that are cast down, has often comforted us by his coming : and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in us, so that we could rejoice the more.”

His popularity exceeded all that ever I knew, and, though the asthma was sometimes an obstruction to him, his delivery and entertaining method was so inviting to the last, that it would command the attention of the vast multitudes of his hearers. An apprehension of his concern to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and do good to the souls of men, drew many thousands after him, who never embraced the doctrines he taught. He had something so peculiar in his manner, expressive of sincerity in all he delivered, that it constrained the most abandoned to think

think he believed what he said was not only true, but of the last importance to souls; and by adapted texts adduced, and instances of the grace of God related agreeable thereto, he often surprised his most judicious hearers.

His labours extended not only to *New England* and many other colonies in *British America*, but were eminent and more abundant in *Great Britain*. Many thousands at his chapel and tabernacle in *London*, and in other places, were witnesses that he faithfully endeavoured to restore the interesting doctrines of the reformation, and the purity of the church to its primitive glory. Some among the learned, some of the mighty and noble have been called, by his ministry, to testify for the gospel of the grace of God. The force of his reasonings against corrupt principles, and the easy method he had in exposing the danger of them, have astonished the most that heard him, in all places where he preached. How did he lament and withstand the modern, unscriptural notions of religion and salvation, that were palmed upon the churches of every denomination! The affecting change from primitive purity to fatal heresy, together with the sad effects of it in mere formality and open wickedness, would often make him cry, as the prophet did in another case, “How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed! How hath the Lord covered the daughter of *Zion* with a cloud, in his anger, and cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of *Israel*!”

It is no wonder that this man of God should meet with enemies, and with great opposition to his ministry; for hell trembled before him. It is no more than may be always expected of the devil, that he should stir up his servants, to load the most eminent ministers of Christ with calumny, and most impudent lies; and represent them as “the filth, and off-scouring of all things.” All this may be, and often has been done, under a pretence of great concern

24 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

cern for the honour of Christ, and the preservation of gospel order. When Satan's kingdom totters and begins to fall, he can find men enough to cry, *the church is in danger*, and that, he knows, is sufficient with many, to hide his *cloven foot*, and make him appear as "an angel of light."

Through a variety of such labours and trials, our worthy friend, and extensively useful servant of Christ, Mr. WHITEFIELD passed, both in *England* and *America*: But the Lord was his sun to guide and animate him, and his shield to defend and help him unto the end: "Neither did he count his own life dear, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry that he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The last sermon that he preached, though under the disadvantage of a stage in the open air, was delivered with such clearness, pathos and eloquence, as to please and surprize the surrounding thousands. And as he had been confirmed, by the grace of God, many years before, and had been waiting and hoping for his last change, he then declared, that he hoped it was the last time he should ever preach. Doubtless he then had such clear views of the blessedness of open vision, and the complete fruition of God in Christ, that he felt the pleasures of Heaven in his raptured soul, which made his countenance shine like the unclouded sun.

But O—the grief!—"Heaven has recalled his envoy from our eyes,
 "Hence deluges of sorrow rise,
 "Nor hope the impossible relief." WATTS.

That reverend Man, whom thousands expected to hear this day, is no more!—The dispensation of divine providence is very affecting, and deserves our serious attention!—It is righteous, though it is strange!—It is a very *solemn sermon* to me, and to my family in particular; as he so suddenly expired in my chamber, where we had received him, with great
 I pleasure,

pleasure, the evening before!—"Clouds and darkness are round about our God and Saviour: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne!"—He is gone while our souls were flushed with expectation!—Snatched away suddenly, without any time allowed us to wean ourselves from him!—O severe, affecting stroke!—But what is it to me and my children; what is it to this vast assembly, when compared with the general loss to the church of God!—Where is the man that can describe divine things, with such a heavenly flame!—Who, O who, shall arise in *England*, or *America*, with an equal genius, the like spirit and equal address, to encourage religion, pure and undefiled, and to stem the torrent of opposition to the gospel!—With God is the residue of the spirit, and he can qualify and send down some young *Elias*, now *Elijah* has dropped his mantle. "Arise, O God, and plead thine own cause!"

All the changes of life, my dear hearers, have their proper duties; and in such duties we ought to exercise ourselves, for these changes are calls thereto. The tokens of sorrow are allowable upon such a mournful occasion, and even the innocent instinct of nature seems to render it unavoidable: But not to obey God's voice, in this sore and distressing judgment upon us, and upon the church in general, would be to despise the chastening of the Lord. Excessive sorrow would be offensive to our heavenly Father: Neither have we any reason to sorrow as without hope; for though his death was sudden, he was ready; daily expected it, and longed for it: He is taken away from the evil to come; the day of distress, (as he said to me) he expected would soon fall upon us, and now, I believe, he knows the gain of being with Christ, where he is, to behold his glory. But Christ, at his glorious appearance, will re-unite his active soul to the same body, which will then be fashioned like unto his most glorious

26 A FUNERAL SERMON *on the* DEATH

body.—'Tis a great relief under our heaviest losses, that Christ Jesus ever lives: He can make up the great and widely extended breach, and favour his church with ministers as eminent for religion, and as zealous for the redeemer's cause, as his departed servant ever was, or ever could be.

May the dispensation work kindly upon us, and, by the blessing of God, turn to such noble purposes and improvements of the divine life, with all christians of every denomination, station and condition, as to fit them the more for the superior degrees of light and glory, in the immediate presence of Christ.

And considering the specialty of this providence, may not we, of this congregation, look upon ourselves peculiarly called of God to learn the lessons which God teaches in the death of others, and particularly of the ministers of Christ that we highly esteem. Let us consider whether our sins have not a hand in the removal of this and other ministers of Jesus Christ? The repeated deaths, not only of people from among us, but of some shining lights in the church †, are usually for a punishment of the sins of the living. Wherein conscience points to the guilt, let us apply to the blood of Christ for pardon and cleansing. The present dark aspects of providence warn us, that it is of the greatest moment to devote ourselves and our *all* to Christ, without the least reserve. O let none of us treacherously desert Christ or his interest, in the greatest perils. Let us get our loins girt and our lamps trimmed, and so number our days as to finish the proper business of every day in its day.

Let all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity take heed, so to live in the clear exercises of faith and

† Dr. Sewall and Mr. Foxcroft of Boston, Mr. Emerson of Malden, and many others, who were great blessings in their day.

its corresponding graces, as to find the gain of it in the approaches of death and the eternal world. We cannot die comfortably, unless we have some foretastes of glory at the time of our departure. The way to a triumphant exit seems to be, abounding in love and all the fruits of divine faith, whilst we live. This is the way, if I mistake not, to maintain the sensible evidences of our special interest in new covenant blessings, and a vital sense of our title to eternal life. Let us make the utmost speed in the service of Christ, that when death overtakes us, though ever so suddenly, we might, as upon the wings of angels, fly into eternal day.

A M E N.

E 2

October 2, **A**T one o'clock all the bells in town were tolled for half an hour, and all the ships and other vessels in the harbour gave their proper signals of mourning. — At two o'clock the bells tolled a second time. — At three o'clock the bells called to attend the funeral of the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD. The Reverend Dr. Samuel Haven of Portsmouth, the Reverend Messrs. Daniel Rogers of Exeter, Jedediah Jewet and James Chandler of Rowley, Moses Parsons of Newbury, and Edward Bass of Newbury-Port, were pall-bearers.

The procession was from the Reverend Mr. Parsons's of Newbury-Port, where Mr. WHITEFIELD died. Mr. Parsons and his family, together with many other respectable persons, followed the corpse in mourning. The procession was only one mile, and then the corpse was carried into the Presbyterian church, and placed on the bier in the broad alley; when the Reverend Mr. Rogers made a very adapted prayer in the presence of about six thousand persons, within the walls of the church, while many thousands were on the outside, not being able to find admittance. Then the third hymn of the second book of Dr. Watts's spiritual songs was sung by the congregation. After this the corpse being put into a new tomb, before Mr. Parsons's pulpit, which the gentlemen of the congregation had prepared for that purpose, and before it was sealed, the Reverend Mr. Jewet gave the following EXHORTATION, viz.

MEN and Brethren, and all ye that fear God, and love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! We are met here, a large assembly of *Mourners*, to condole the loss, the almost irreparable loss, which *we*, our *Christian friends*, and *the church* of God, have sustained,

ed, in the *sudden death* of our most amiable and useful friend, and dear father, the Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD; to pay our last office of respect unto his earthly remains, that *temple of the Holy Ghost*, and to learn some useful lessons from a providence so instructive.

We may recollect, that Jesus Christ while he tabernacled in the flesh, and when he was going to the grave of his dear friend *Lazarus* with his sisters, and a train of other mourners, expressed the tender sentiments of his heart, by his *groans* and *tears*. The evangelist informs us, that he *groaned in the spirit, and was troubled*; or, according to the original, *he troubled, or afflicted himself*; i. e. “he gave the reins in some measure to his grief; *Jesus wept*.”

And well may we *weep and afflict* ourselves, now we are come near the *place where*, and the once beautiful *body on which* the *king of terrors* has lately and suddenly “erected a new trophy, and given a specimen of his universal reign and triumph.”

Had we been strangers to the person of Mr. WHITEFIELD, it might touch us to think of his *sudden death*, to see the melancholy ensigns of human frailty before our eyes, and to think this (they say) is the *grave* of the Reverend and renowned Mr. *Whitefield*.

He who was but a little while ago, making a bright and beautiful figure, and acting a vigorous and useful part among the living, is now the *prisoner of the grave*. *The residue of his days is cut off*. He who was so greatly beloved, and fondly carested by his numerous acquaintance, is so soon brought to say *unto corruption, Thou art my father*; and *to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*. Sad change! Doleful catastrophe! And *death is the end of all men*. *The grave is the house appointed for all living*.

“Here (as one observes) their magnificence and
“ power, their beauty and vigour, their learning and
“ wisdom,

“ wisdom, be they ever so remarkable, must ere
 “ long mingle with meanness and indigence, deformity
 “ and weakness, ignorance and folly. Here
 “ the human frame, that master-piece of the divine
 “ contrivance, which wears so much of the image
 “ of its Maker, must ere long be thrown aside, *as a*
 “ *broken vessel in which there is no pleasure.*” Such is
 the mark of God’s displeasure for that *first offence*, by
 which death *entered into the world*, and passes upon all,
 as having sinned in the first man.

But many of us have had an *intimate friendship*
 with, or an *affectionate regard* for the dear and pious
 Mr. *Whitefield*; and have, as opportunities have pre-
 sented, attended on his ministrations with profit and
 delight; have hung on his lips, heard his sweet
 voice, and seen and felt something of the *servour* of
 his spirit: Some of us have been hopefully saved
 from death; and others of us enlivened, refreshed and
 comforted, by his engaging ministry.

And now our hopes of further benefit and comfort
 by his fervent preaching, his winning oratory, and
 delightful conversation, are, on a sudden, *blasted*, and
cut off as a spider’s web. Well then may *we weep* and
afflict ourselves, give scope to the sorrowful affections
 of our hearts; because *our friend*, and the friend of
 Christ, *sleepeth*.

For “ how many purposes are broken!” What
 hopes and projections for advancing the interests of
 Christ’s kingdom among men are come to an end!
How is the mighty fallen, and *the weapons* of the spiri-
 tual warfare *perished*! What a wide breach is made
 upon us, upon *New England*, and upon all the *British*
colonies in America; for whom this now deceased *man*
of God has often and in good earnest interceded with
 God and man; what a gap is opened for judgments
 to come in upon us, now this righteous man, and
 powerful pleader is removed! *Help, Lord, now*
the godly man ceaseth. How much zeal for God, and
 gospel

gospel doctrine, compassion for the perishing souls of sinners, and true holiness, is taken from amongst us, by this stroke of God's hand.

If we call to remembrance Mr. *Whitefield's* peculiar and *eminent* gifts for the gospel-ministry, his fervour, diligence and success in the work of it: What a friend he has been to us, and our *interests*, religious and civil, to *New England*, and all the *British colonies* on the continent: How generously he has opened not only his mouth for us, but his heart also to us, and spent himself unto weariness, and even unto *death* amongst us, and for us; a *shower* of tears poured on his grave, together with all the decent funeral respect we can pay his clayey tabernacle, is but an equitable, yea, but a small inconsiderable tribute.

But then, *is there no balm in Gilead?* Is there nothing to relieve us, when our heart is almost overwhelmed within us, on occasion of the removal of this excellent servant of Christ, who was so dear to us in the bands of love and grace? Yes. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.* He stands by them; and is not, we may be sure, "an unconcerned spectator, when they are struggling away their breath, and fainting off the stage of mortality." He can easily assure them, that their sins are forgiven, and comfort them with his guiding *rod*, and supporting *staff*: when they *pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death*, be their passage ever so quick.

Besides, the bodies of our pious friends, that are fallen under the dishonours of the grave, shall be *raised up in glory*. And this consideration is enough to mingle praises with our tears. Christ our glorious Lord will recover them from the *power of the grave*; *destroy that last enemy*, and *rejoice over them, as one that divides the spoil*. Death is making fearful *havock* now among the people and ministers of Christ; but before long *he will lead captivity captive*. And they shall join in that song of triumph, *Ob death, where is thy sting? Ob grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be*

32 *An EXHORTATION at the GRAVE*

unto God, who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And with what marks of shining beauty and glory shall the bodies of all the saints, and especially those who have *turned many to righteousness*, be distinguished in that day.

It is "a known circumstance in the story of *Augustus Cæsar*, that when he was quitting empire and life, he expressed his great satisfaction in the improvements he had made in the buildings of *Rome*, so that whereas he *found it brick* he *left it marble*. But surely Christ may much more glory in it, when he descends in all the pomp of the *resurrection-day*, that he has made a *nobler change*, even in this corporal part of our nature; and that whereas he found it *mortal, corruptible clay*, he has raised it to a *strength and splendor*, superior to that of *marble or adamant*. This is the joy and triumph of the blessed Jesus: This is the glorious hope, that animates the *Christian* under the mournful prospect of the ravages of death. Glorious hope! reviving thought!" enough to balance and over-balance the "sorrows of this day."

And are there no useful lessons taught us by this voice of divine providence? yes, many. First, *that all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it, and "blasts all its glory:" surely the people is grass, and their ministers too.*

Secondly; that it is an instance of *egregious folly* to put our trust in the greatest of men, *princes*, or the best of Christ's *ministers, whose breath is in their nostrils*, and may easily and suddenly pass away.

Let us therefore learn to turn our eyes off from them, and to go to and drink waters out of the living rock, that can never fail. And then this will be our consolation, which no outward loss can take away, *the Lord liveth*, and we shall be able to say, *blessed be our rock*, and let the God of our salvation be exalted.

Possibly some have entertained in their minds too high an esteem of God's precious servant, and attributed that power and honour unto him that is due only to him that *worketh all in all*. Now God has removed *him*, and shewn *them*, that how much soever of God *he* had about him, yet he was but a man, and is *fallen like one of the princes*: may such learn to open their hearts more to the wisest and best of Beings, "now this dear guest has quitted its apartment in them."

Again, we are taught of what *importance* it is unto *all of us*, and unto *Christ's ministers* particularly, to be at work in good earnest, while it is day, because our time is certainly short, and uncertainly continued; our work great, and the night is coming; if we would be found amongst those blessed servants, that are doing the will of their Lord when he comes. If we are not wakeful and watchful, he will come in an hour, when we are not aware. May we *all* hear that voice of wisdom and love, which cries to us, *be ye also ready*. And may we in *particular* yield a just *attention* unto it, who are employed in the ministerial work.

Nextly, God teaches us, how little need he has of the services of his most active and fervent ministers.

Our dear departed friend and brother was a *vessel of honour*, eminently fitted for the master's use; but he is broken in pieces. The rich treasure laid up in him is dissipated; and we are ready to adopt the language of the afflicted church of old time: *The precious sons of Zion comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers!* "But herein our great Lord displays his royalty. He can form the most promising instruments of service; and can lay them aside, and carry on his cause without them." *Behold, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are we in the hand of the Lord our God.*

Furthermore, the *sudden death*, which has been so *striking* and *surprising* unto us, may be designed of God, to *try and exercise* our submission and resignation

34 *An EXHORTATION at the GRAVE*

to his wife and holy will. The death of a neighbour is a call to us to see and own God's *sovereignty* over life and death. *Behold, he taketh away, and who can bind him? Or who shall say unto him, what doest thou?* But when God takes away a valuable friend, an excellent minister of Christ, a spiritual father, *an interpreter one among a thousand*, how *touching*, how *trying* is the case? And how deep should our submission be? And the *greater biases* we feel in our passions towards rising and rebelling against the orders of Heaven, the more should we strive with our own hearts, to dispose them to say, *thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven*. And how difficult soever it is to us, in this imperfect and corrupt state, may all of us, who feel the loss of a wife and good friend, and minister of Christ, and the *fellow traveller* of the deceased in special, left solitary, at a distance from his native land, (whom God preserve, support and comfort, under the heavy bereavement of his hand) be enabled, through the gracious influences of the divine spirit, to submit to the wisdom and will of our Father in heaven, who knows what is best for us, better than we do ourselves.

And now, my *dear fellow-mourners*, while we are weeping over the grave of the Lord's servant, let us not forget that which calls for a greater lamentation still, viz. that *blindness* of mind and *hardness* of heart, which makes so many of our fellow-men *reject the counsel of God against themselves*, and despise that sovereign remedy for all their miseries, which the grace of God has provided, and exhibited to them in the blessed gospel; and refuse to hearken to the voice of any of his charmers, charm they ever so wisely. Oh! sirs, "*dying souls*, especially when they are *dying*," under the greatest plenty and variety of the means of grace, and under the offers of life, are a sight incomparably more sad and awful than the dead body of a saint. And how many among us are yet *blind, deaf and dead*? And can we see our neighbours,

and perhaps some of our nearest relations too on the borders of everlasting perdition, and not shed a tear for them? Where is our *faith* as Christians if we don't believe them to be in imminent danger of eternal death? And where is the tenderness of our hearts and our love, if we can see them, seem to be so near to that state, where there is sorrow without allay or end, and be unaffected? *Oh that our heads were waters, and our eyes were fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night*, for careless delaying-sinners, who, in *despite* of all the *thunders* of God's law, and the sweet *attractions* of the gospel, will run their own ruin.

And to add no more, let all of us, who believe the truths, and love the precepts of the gospel, and *have an hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead*, be exhorted not to mourn for our *pious deceased* friends, as *those that have no hope* of a resurrection; but support and solace ourselves, under the *sorrows* of their departure from us, with refreshing hope of rising with them *at the resurrection of the just*; and bearing a part with them in everlasting songs of praise, unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb of God. *Then shall mortality be swallowed up of life*, "and no traces of it left." Then we shall have not only a nearer, more perfect and joyous *fellowship*; with our dear and pious friends, gone before us; but, which is incomparably more, we shall behold the face of God, our God in righteousness, be satisfied with his likeness, filled with his love, and transported with his glory.

May this be the happy *portion* of each of our souls, through Christ our Lord and Saviour, to whom be *glory, dominion, and praise*, now and for ever, AMEN and AMEN.

In Reverendum Virum
GEORGIUM WHITEFIELD,

Laboribus sacris olim abundantem, nunc verò, ut benè speratur, cælestem et immortalem vitam cum Christo agentem.

E P I T A P H I U M.

(Auctore THOMA GIBBONS, S. T. P.)

Electum et divinum vas, *Whitefelde*, fuisti,
 Ingenuo pollens, divitiisque sacris:
His opibus populo longè latèque tributis,
 Tandem perfrueris lætitiâ superûm,
Inque hanc intrâsti Domino plaudente ministrum
 Expertum in multis assiduumque bonum:
“ Ecce mei portus, et clara palatia cœli
 “ Deliciis plenis omnia aperta tibi:”
Dum matutinam stellam, quàm dulce rubentem!
 Vivificosque rores ossa sepulta manent.

E N G L I S H E D.

A vessel chosen and divine, replete
With Nature's gifts, and Grace's richer stores,
Thou, *Whitefield*, wast: these, through the world
 dispens'd
In long laborious travels, thou at length
Hast reach'd the realms of rest, to which thy Lord
Has welcom'd thee with his immense applause.
“ All hail, my servant, in thy various trusts
“ Found vigilant and faithful: see the ports,
“ See the eternal kingdoms of the skies,
“ With all their boundless glory, boundless joy,
“ Open'd for thy reception, and thy bliss.”
Meantime the body, in its peaceful cell
Reposing from its toils, awaits the star,
Whose living lustres lead that promis'd morn,
Whose vivifying dews thy moulder'd corse
Shall visit, and immortal life inspire.

F I N I S.