

108 - 2

A FUNERAL
SERMON

Occasion'd by the
DEATH

Of the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN ROWLAND,

Who departed this LIFE,

APRIL the 12th, 1745.

Preach'd at Charles-Town, in Chester
County, April the 14th, 1745.

By GILBERT TENNENT, A.M. U.D.M.

*Prov. x. 7. The Memory of the just is blessed,
but the Name of the Wicked shall rot.*

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A
S E R M O N, &c.

The INTRODUCTION.

PHILIP. I. 21.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.

IN the preceeding Verses the Apostle expresseth his affectionate Regard to the Church at *Philippi*, and commends them for their Piety and Sympathy with him in his Sufferings for Christ: He also signifies his Confidence, that the blessed God who had begun a good Work in them, would perfect it and enable them to persevere to the End.

And

4 *The Parts of the Text.*

And in the midst of his Sufferings and Bonds, upon a religious Account, he comforts himself and those to whom he directly wrote with this Consideration, *viz.* That the sovereign Lord of all, had by his Power and Providence over-rull'd them to the Furtherance of the Gospel and the Good of others, and with the Perswasion that Almighty God would make those Troubles terminate in the promoting of his own Benefit and Salvation. Of this Hope respecting himself he gives a Reason in the Words of our Text; *For to me to live is Christ*: And indeed this is a very valid Reason. Such as make Christ Jesus the Object of their Esteem and Reverence, their Love and Obedience, may on a sure Foundation thro' him expect valuable Benefits by Afflictions in Life, and immense Gain at Death: *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.*

These Words set before us two important Particulars, which are to be the subject of our present Meditations; namely, the *Character* or Temper of a Believer in *Life*, and his *Comfort* or Benefit consequent thereupon

What preaching exalts Christ.

thereupon at Death: The former is *Christ*⁵ and the latter is *Gain*; *To me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.* Observe, my Brethren, that as these Words do undoubtedly respect Believers in general, so they have a Reference to faithful Ministers in particular, who have not only the pious Dispositions that are common to all Believers, but are under special Obligations, by *Office*, to exalt Christ in their Ministrations; and this is done by directing them all to him as so many Lines to their proper Center.

We do then truly exalt Jesus Christ, when we instruct Sinners of their Need of him, and of their Undoneness and Helplessness without him, as well as of their Unworthiness of Mercy thro' him.

And seeing that Mankind are by Nature in a deep Security, insensible both of Sin and Danger, in which Case they are not likely to seek Relief with due Earnestness, without which there is no Probability of obtaining it; *For the Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* And seeing that the Law of God

What preaching exalts Christ.

is a mean appointed by him of bringing Sinners to the Knowledge of Sin, it is therefore the Duty and Practice of faithful Ministers to endeavour to alarm a secure World, by opening the Meaning, and denouncing the Threats of the Law against the Impenitent, that so they may be storm'd out of their false Refuges, and compell'd to fly to Jesus for Protection. We do also exalt the Dear Redeemer by our Ministry, when we suitably direct the convinc'd to him as the only Sanctuary that can protect them from the Storms of divine Vengeance; when we open before them, thro' the Gospel, his Authority, Ability and Willingness to save all those that come to him in a way of Faith for Shelter; when we labour to unfold the Beauties of his Person, Offices and Relations; the Depths of his Sufferings, the Perfection of his Obedience, the Compleatness of his Satisfaction, the Riches of his Purchase, the Perpetuity and Prevalency of his Intercession, the Excellency of his Doctrines, and Equity of his Laws; as well as the unceasing
Necessity

What preaching Christ is not. 7

Necessity of our believing the former, and obeying the latter.

But on the other Hand, Christ is not exalted, but dishonour'd and the Interest of his Kingdom betray'd, while any that assume the Character of his Ambassadors neglect to inculcate the Moral Law, and daub their Hearers with untempered Mortar; such do *slay the Wicked by promising them Life.*

To preach Christ, my Brethren, is not to amuse the Ignorant, with a frequent and confus'd mentioning of his *Name, Blood and Wounds*; for this Method serves only to delude the Weak and Injudicious to their Destruction; their Passions are mov'd and they don't know for what; and yet for this they reckon themselves Religious, and so compass them selves about with Sparks of their own kindling. Movings of the Affections without the Judgment, are not worth a Rush: They are absurd and nonsensical, unworthy of a reasonable Creature!

And therefore the true and faithful Preachers of Christ, begin first with the Under-

8 *How Christ is the believers Life.*

Understandings of Men by Instruction, and afterwards with their Wills and Affections. Having offer'd a few Hints of the *Character* the Text contains, as it respects faithful Ministers in particular, I proceed to speak of it as it respects Believers in general, together with them.

For to me to live is Christ, i. e. Christ is the Principal, the End, the Support, and Comfort of my Life.

“ Christ is the *Principal* and Source of
“ my Life, (my spiritual Life) he purchas'd it by his Blood and communicat-
“ ed it by his Spirit, and maintains it by
“ his Influences. *I live yet not I*, I have
“ not purchas'd this good Principle by my
“ Merit, nor do I preserve it by my Power.
“ Jesus Christ is the Head and Fountain
“ of Influence, from him I derive my
“ Life, as the Branch does Sap from the
“ Tree.

“ Christ is the *End* and Scope of my
“ Life; I live not to my self but to him
“ that dyed for me. I direct all my Ac-
“ tions, Natural, Civil and Religious to
“ his Glory; the chief View I have in
“ all

How Christ is the Believers Life. 9

“ all of them, is that he may be honour'd
“ and his Praise proclaim'd. I make e-
“ very Thing that concerns me, stoop to
“ his Honour and Interest. I chiefly lay
“ out my self for him, *so that whether I*
“ *live, I live unto the Lord ; or whether I*
“ *die, I die unto the Lord ; whether there-*
“ *fore I live or die, I am the Lords.*
“ CHRIST is the *Support of my Life,*
“ I live by leaning on the dear Redeemer,
“ he is the *chief corner Stone, elect pre-*
“ *cious,* the Golden Foundation upon which
“ I build the Fabrick of my Hopes of
“ Happiness. He is the Rock of Ages on
“ which I rest my weary Soul, I am ena-
“ bled by leaning on this beloved and
“ Almighty Saviour, to come out of the
“ Wilderness of this World, and enter in-
“ to the celestial *Canaan.* By resting on
“ his prophetical Office, under a Sense of
“ my Ignorance I derive Light to guide me
“ in my Way to Glory: By resting on
“ his Kingly Office under a Sense of my
“ Weakness, I derive Strength that makes
“ me victorious at Times over mine
“ Enemies, *so that my Feet are as the Feet*
“ *of*

10 *How Christ is the Believers Life.*

“ of Hinds, and a Bow of Steel is broken
“ by mine Arms : By resting on his priest-
“ ly Office daily, under a Sense of my
“ Guilt, I derive Pardon and Peace ; be-
“ cause my redeemer lives I live also, my
“ Life is hid with him in God ; he it is
“ that Supports it by his Power, quickens
“ it by his Spirit, and strengthens it by his
“ Love, so that *the Life I live in the Flesh,*
“ *is by the Faith of the Son of God, who*
“ *loved me and gave himself for me.*

“ CHRIST is the Comfort of my Life,
“ we are the Circumcision who worship
“ God in the Spirit, and have no Confi-
“ dence in the Flesh, and rejoyce in
“ CHRIST JESUS ; His Offices are unvail-
“ ing Springs of Sweetness, and his Pro-
“ mises golden Conduits, thro’ which are
“ conveyed Streams that Water the Gar-
“ den of God.”

Whatever Cause of Sorrow the People
of God have on Account of their inward
Corruption and outward Mis-conduct, they
have always cause of Gladness in Christ ;
for they are compleat in him, he is to them
Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and
Redemption:

How Christ is the Believers Life. 11

Redemption: and therefore tho' *the Fig-tree do not Blossom, and there be no Fruit in the Vine,* they have Reason to Rejoyce in the God of their Salvation; amidst all the shifting Scenes of Time, here is an unshaken Foundation; amidst the failing Brooks of Creature Comforts, here is a living Spring whose Waters cannot be exhausted; amidst the Deaths of Friends and dear Relations, here is the Alpha and Omega the Resurrection and the Life.

To me to live is Christ: i. e. It is the *Delight* of my *Life* to *meditate* upon him in all the Extent of his Revelation; my Thoughts of his Person, Offices, Relations, Doctrines, Precepts, Promises, Obedience, Sufferings, Purchase, and Exaltation to the Highest Glory are Sweet.

O how transcendant, undeserv'd, unrival'd, invariable, and inexpressible are the Charms of his Person? *My beloved is the chiefest among Ten Thousand.* O the unsearchable Riches of his dying Love to his Enemies; which passes Knowledge, and swallows up all Expression!

O the

12 *How Christ is the Believers Life.*

“ O the Immenseness of the Purchase
“ of his Blood and Obedience! which is
“ no less than an Eternity of Blessedness.

“ It is also the *Delight* of my *Life* to
“ Love and enjoy Fellowship with the dear
“ Redeemer. O this is as Marrow and
“ Fatness to the Hungry, Rest to the
“ Weary, Light to the Blind, Legs to the
“ Lame, and Life to the Dead. *His lov-*
“ *ing Kindness is better than Life, and*
“ *therefore my Lips shall praise him.*

To me to live is Christ: “ It is the
“ chief Desire of my Life that Christ's
“ Crown should flourish; that his Honour
“ should be advanc'd; his Kingdom en-
“ larg'd and establish'd. O that it may
“ extend to the utmost Limits of the Globe;
“ may the Rod of God's Strength come
“ out of *Zion*, and the Number of sincere
“ Converts be as the Morning Dew; may
“ that Blessed and Almighty Jesus, who
“ has that honourable Name written on
“ his Vesture, the King of Kings and
“ Lord of Lords, ride in the Chariot of
“ his Gospel conquering and to conquer.

“ It is the chief *Sorrow* of my *Life*
“ that

How Christ is the Believers Life, 13

“ that Sinners violate the dear Redeemers
“ Laws, are deaf to the Thunders of his
“ Word and Charms of his Grace, and
“ will not lay down their rebellious Arms
“ and fly under the Wing of his Standard
“ for Protection ! For this *Rivers of Wa-*
“ *ters run down mine Eyes, and my Soul*
“ *Weeps in secret Places.*

“ It is the Chief *Contrivance* of my *Life,*
“ how to render illustrious the venera-
“ ble Honours of *Immanuel,* and promote
“ the dear and valuable Interests of his
“ Kingdom, *Come Lord Jesus come quickly*
“ and spread the Savour of thy Name
“ thro’ all the Earth.-----

“ It is the chief Business and Labour of
“ my Lite to promote the Interests of Je-
“ sus his Kingdom, *for Jerusalem's sake*
“ *I will not hold my Peace, and for Zions*
“ *sake I will not be silent, until the Righ-*
“ *teousness thereof go forth as Brightness,*
“ *and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp*
“ *that burneth.*

“ In a Word, Christ Jesus is the Life of
“ my Life, and my All in All.”

Having spoken of the first Particular
contain'd

14 *The Nature of Death.*

contain'd in our Text, namely the Character of a Believer in Life, I proceed now to the

2d. Which is his *Gain* at Death; and *to die is Gain*: In order to explain this, it will be necessary to premise some Considerations concerning Death, before I speak directly of the *Gain* that a Believer has at it.

To this End it may be observ'd, that Death is the Dissolution of the Union between the Soul and Body, upon which the Animal Life depends; tho' it does not destroy the Soul, yet it brings to deplorable Ruin all that is visible of the Compound Man! As we are not able to describe the Nature of that surprizing Union betwixt the Soul and Body, so by Consequence we cannot represent the Manner of its Dissolution; yet we are sure there is a Union between them while Life lasts, by their mutual Sympathy in each others Miseries: And this we may say of the Dissolution in General, that it brings with it a sad Retinue of distressing Diseases which offer

Violence

The Cause of Death, 15

Violence to Nature, and make it suffer Shipwreck!-----

It is likewise observable respecting Death, that it is the penal Fruit of Sin. Mortality was not the Original Constitution of the human Nature, otherwise it would not have been threatned as a Punishment for the Violation of the first Covenant; *by Sin came Death*, says the Apostle, had not Man sin'd he would never have tasted of Death: Altho' he was not made absolutely immortal, yet there was no direct Tendency in his Bodily Frame to a Dissolution, inasmuch as it possess'd an exact Temperature of the Humours: And as to any remote Tendency to Corruption, which may be said to be in the Human Body originally, because it was compos'd of material Particles; any hurtful Influence thereof, and of Accidents from without, would have been prevented by the Power of God, had not Man transgressed the Covenant which it pleased Almighty God to make with him: This was represented by that Sacramental Symbol of the Covenant of Works, viz. **THE TREE OF LIFE.**

It

16 *The Consequencies of Death.*

It puts an awful Solemnity upon Death, my Brethren, when we consider that it brings to a final Period all our wordly Projects and Businets. *Suetonius* remarks of *Julius Cæsar*, that after he assumed the imperial Dignity, he had great Designs in View about adorning *Rome*, the Chief Seat of the Empire, reducing the Compass of the Laws, and making an Abstract of the Works of the most learned *Greeks* and *Romans*: But sayeth he, “*While he was devising and attempting these Things, Death prevented him.*” * What is spoken by the *Psalmist* of Princes, is applicable to all others, yea to those of the meanest Order; that *when their Breath goeth out, in that very Day their Thoughts perish.* While Men are Big with Schemes and Projects to advance their Honours, and enlarge their Estates, or gratify their sensual Appetites, Death suddenly breaks all their Measures, and renders their labour'd Designs and Expectations abortive. And

* *Talia, agentem, et meditantem mors prevenit.*

The Consequences of Death. 17

And as Death puts a Period to our worldly Projects and Business, so it terminates our *worldly Condition*, whether prosperous or afflicted: It hurries Princes from the Pomp of a Throne, to the Obscurity of the Grave: It strips Men of all the Honours of State and Distinction, and levels the wise, the learned, the great, the rich, the honourable, with common and ignoble Dust: This on the one hand, terminates all worldly Gain and Pleasure, and on the other, it brings our painful Labours and Sufferings to an End. The Grave is a happy Discharge from the Hardships of our Christian Warfare; *There the weary are at rest; and the Wicked cease from troubling. There the Prisoners rest together, and hear not the Voice of the Oppressor.*

But that which especially deserves our most earnest Attention is this; that Death puts a Period to all the *Seasons and Means of Grace* we enjoy, as well as to our *Opportunities of Work and Service* in order to our comfortable Account. We have now thro' the Riches of divine Goodness and Forbearance, valuable religious Priviledges,
C
but

The Consequences of Death.

but Death will soon bereave us of them all; this will put our Instructors to perpetual Silence, and close our Eyes from beholding of them, and shut our Ears from hearing their Entreaties and Proposals. O therefore, while ye have the Light walk in it; *We beseech you Brethren, that ye wou'd not receive the Grace of God in vain. Behold now is the acceptable Time, behold now is the Day of Salvation.* O it is affecting to think, that Death concludes this State of Probation, and brings us to reap the Fruits of what we have sown! When this Night approaches we can work no more; Death brings us that awful Message, *Give an Account of thy Stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer Steward. There is no Work or Invention in the Grave whether we are hastning.*

By Death our dislodged Souls are brought to live in a State of Separation from our Bodies; *When the Dust returns to the Earth as it was, our Spirits return to God that gave them:* They become unembodied Spirits, and enter upon a new Scene of Life, in which they need not the gross
Organs

The Consequences of Death. 19

Organs of Sense and Motion, and being freed from the Incumbrance of Matter, they are doubtless quickned in their Powers to greater Vigour and Activity. By Death we pass the narrow current of Time, and launch the vast undiscover'd and untry'd Ocean of Eternity, from which there is no returning: We leave these clayie Cottages, and this comparatively little Globe of Earth on which we now sojourn, to take our final Flight into immense and immeasurable Regions, over which that great Lord presides who has the Keys of Hell and Death.

By Death we enter into a State of final Retribution; our Probation expires, and a State of Rewards and Punishments agreeable to the different Courses of Mens Actions commences. While some enjoy the sweetest Pleasure, others are rack'd with the accutest Pain! Death unalterably fixes our final State, for *as the Tree falls so it lies*; there is no Change to be expected in the Condition for ever. O how awful and affecting is the Thought!

As to the Certainty of Death, it's not
C 2 needful

The Certainty of Death.

needful that I should speak much, the feebleness of our present Frame, the Appointment of God, and the repeated Instances of Mortality which we behold, teach us this awful Truth. The Empire of Death over Mankind is universal, a few Instances excepted, which were ordered to confirm our Faith in a blessed Immortality. Tho' many flatter themselves with the Hopes of a long Life, yet none are so vain as to expect an Exemption from Death; *Our Fathers where are they? And the Prophets do they live for ever?* How soon must we be gathered to them, and enroll'd among the Dead? There is no Discharge in this War, no Shield that can screen us from the fatal Dart of this final and formidable Foe: "When this grim Pursuivant has receiv'd his Commission, the Persons of the greatest are no longer inviolable: Their pompous Titles and formidable Power, are no Protection from his Arrest; the Gods of the Earth must die like Men, and cannot secure themselves by their strongest Guards." A Heathen could say, that Death strikes with

The Uncertainty of the Time to us. 21
with an impartial Hand at the Cottages of
Peasants and Courts of Princes. *

But tho' the Time of Death be fix'd
by the Decree of Heaven, which Mankind
cannot pass one Moment, by all the As-
sistance of the most curious and costly Com-
positions that human Art can form; for
our Days are appointed by the great So-
vereign of the Universe, as the Days of a
Hireling; yet to us the Time of our Death
is unknown and uncertain, and therefore
this Messenger may arrest us while we
little dream of so awful an Event; *We*
know not what a Day may bring forth, and
therefore have need to be always prepar'd
for our grand Remove, and to go with our
Loins girt, and our Lamps burning, wait-
ing for the Coming of the blessed Bridegroom.

And indeed at the longest, Death comes
soon; for what is the common Standard of
Human Life, namely, threescore Years
and ten, when compar'd with Eternity,
or with the Age of the primitive Patriarchs?
But

* *Mors equo Puffat pede, pauperum Tabernaculum regumque*
turres. Hor.

But the most by far arrive not at this Standard, but are cut down by the Scythe of Death, in the early dawn or morning-Bloom of Life; *While their Breasts are full of Milk, and their Bones moistned with Marrow.* O Sirs! Our Life is like a Tale that hath been told, a Dream in the Night, *a Vapour that appears for a little Time, and then vanishes away.* It is a fleeting Shadow that has no abiding, *our Days are swifter than a Post, they fly away as the swift Ships, and as the Eagle that hastens to the Prey.*

Death lies in Ambush to destroy us, in innumerable Accidents round about us; and in every Vein, Nerve, and Fibre within us; yea in all the Parts of this curious but brittle Machine. The Seeds of manifold Diseases are sown in our present Frame, which may soon break out with a Violence that no Care can prevent, or Art resist: He that now enjoys the firmest Constitution, may be in a few Moments groaning and gasping in the Agonies of Death! But seeing Christ has satisfied divine Justice by his Obedience and Sufferings, some may
be

be thence induced to enquire how it comes to pass, that Believers who have an Interest in the Benefits of that Satisfaction die?

I answer that *Jehovah* by this Constitution magnifies his own Sovereignty and Wisdom, and promotes the Believers Benefit.

It is appointed for Man once to die, and after that the Judgment: Almighty God could have ordered the Matter otherwise if he had seen meet; but so it pleased his Sovereign Majesty, who has a Right to rule all Events, and is not accountable to his Creatures for any Instance of his Government. It seem'd good to his unsearchable Wisdom to bring Believers to Happiness by Degrees, that so they might better know the Value of it, and be the more incited to glorify the Author of it. As the Works of Creation were gradually brought to Perfection, so it is in Respect of the Believers Salvation.

Jehovah hath reserv'd the Manifestation of his Sons to another Day, here they have a common Lot with others, are *Strangers* and *Hidden-ones*, here they meet with
promiscuous

promiscuous Events, and it is but reasonable it should be so, seeing this Life is a State of Probation, in which we are Candidates for a future Tryal, and State of Recompense.

And indeed Sirs by this Appointment, the Believers Benefit is promoted many ways; hereby Sin is slain in them; as by Sin Death was introduc'd, so by Death Sin is destroy'd; and indeed the Thoughts of Death tend to humble Believers in Life, and deaden them to a vain World: And thus *out of the Eater comes forth Meat, and out of the Strong Sweetness.*

Hereby Believers are conform'd to their dearest Lord, their Head their Husband, who was humbled by Death before his Exaltation to the highest Glory. And is not Conformity to the purest Excellency, the noblest Honour.

Hereby Believers rest from the Labours of Life, and are freed from its manifold Miseries; and thus the Sting of Death, which is Sin both as to its Guilt and Power being remov'd, it becomes a valuable Friend to a Child of God, and promotes his best Interest;

The Believers gain at Death. 25

Interest ; which will more fully appear by considering the following Particulars viz. 1st. Believers at Death gain *Perfection in Holiness*; they are entirely freed from Sin, and every Inclination to it, the blessed JESUS presents to himself a glorious Church without Spot,---or Blemish.* And as they are freed from Sin, so they are Blessed with the highest Measures of Holiness that the Creature is capable of, they are brought to a perfect Man, to the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ; ‡ which cannot be attain'd whilst in the Body; for here we see darkly as thro' a Glass, but then Face to Face: † And whilst we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord. ¶ But at Death the Roots of Sin are pull'd out of our Nature, and we go to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*¶. And indeed it is necessary that the Soul be made perfect at Death, because of the Purity of the heavenly State; For there shall in no wise enter into the City of God, any Thing that defileth. **

D edly.

* Ephes. v. 27. ‡ Ephes. iv. 13. † 1 Cor. xiii. 12. ¶ 2 Cor. 5. 6. ** Revel. xxi. 27.

26 *They pass immediately to Glory.*

2dly. Another Instance of the Gain of Believers at Death, is that they pass immediately into Glory.

The Soul of Man is capable of performing its Operations in a separate State from the Body ; for it hath Faculties proper to it and inseparable from it, which are Powers of Operation : It hath an understanding, Will and Affections like the Angels, and can therefore contemplate upon Objects set before it, chuse, refuse, rejoyce. And truly the Body is but the Instrument of its Operation here, which it does not always use while in a State of Union, and therefore can act without it after its Separation from it.

Nor can the separate Soul, my Brethren, be out of Action, because it is an immaterial Substance, and so by its Nature incapable of Weariness or Sleep.

And in this Activity it must be either miserable or happy ; not to add, that the Believers Felicity is secur'd by the Covenant of Grace, to be enjoy'd at the End of his Race ; *Then they rest from their Labours and their Works follow them:*
They

They pass immediately to Glory. 27

They do not go before to Purchase a Right to Happiness, but the Reward of Mercy suited to them, follows immediately after.

For Heaven is prepar'd for them and they for it. At the general Judgment our Lord will pronounce this Sentence upon his People; *Come ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you, from before the Foundation of the World.** And the Believer is as much prepar'd for Heaven at Death, as ever he will be; for when the Night of Death cometh, no Man can work. And indeed if the People of God did not immediately pass into Glory, Death wou'd not be Gain but loss to them; for thus they wou'd be depriv'd of the Presence of Christ, which they here at Times enjoy. But the Apostle *Paul* assures us in our Text, that the Believers Death is gain; and elsewhere he informs us, that he expected to be with Christ, immediately upon his Dissolution. †

Nor can we reasonably Account for the

D 2

mutual

* Mat. xxv. 34. † Phil. i. 23.

28 *They pass immediately to Glory.*
 mutual strong Desires of Christ and his
 People to be together, immediately upon
 the Dissolution of the latter, without ac-
 knowledging this Truth. In what affec-
 tionate Strains does the dear Redeemer
 speak to his poor worthless Bride; *Come
 with me from Lebannon my Spouse, with
 me from Lebannon: look from the Top
 of Amana, from the Top of Shenir and Her-
 mon, from the Lyons Dens, and from the
 Mountains of Leopards.* * And was not this
 the Petition of our Lord in his humbled
 State to his Father; *that where he was they
 might be also?* And is not this the Church's
 chief Desire? therefore she says, *come Lord
 Jesus come quickly.* What Saint Paul says
 of himself, is applicable to all true Chri-
 stians; namely, *that he desired to depart
 and to be with Christ, which was far better.* †
 ; The Soul of the converted Thief, went
 immediately to Paradise; and there is
 the same Reason for others. But to proceed,
 3dly: Another Particular of Believers Gain
 at their Death is this; that in their Pass to
 Paradise

* Cant. iv. 8. † Eph. ii. 23.

The Believers Gain at Death. 29

Paradise they have a glorious Convoy, they are safely guarded by Angels in their Motion from hence to their blessed Abode. When the Beggar died, he was carried by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*. †

4^{thly} : They shall be gladly receiv'd into the Heavenly Paradise : The Saints shall shout them Welcome to the Church Triumphant ; and hence we are bid to make us *Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, that when we fail, *they may receive us into everlasting Habitations* : i. e. We should so improve worldly Enjoyments by Acts of Justice to all, and Charity more especially to the Poor Members of Christ, that when we die, those of them that go to Heaven before us, may be enduc'd by Gratitude to receive us with Gladness into those Everlasting Habitations. And surely the Angels who rejoyce at the Conversion of Sinners to God, will much more rejoyce when their Happiness is compleated. Heavens high Arch will ring with joyous Acclamations, when the blessed Jesus leads Believers

† Luke xvi. 22.

30 *The Believers Gain at Death*
Believers to their particular Mansions of Light, of Beauty and of Bliss!

But how shall I speak of the Happiness that is there enjoy'd, seeing *that Eye hath not seen, neither has Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive the Greatness and Glory of it*; surely it requires the Eloquence and Experience of an Angel to describe it.

There Believers will be perfectly and eternally freed from Sin and all Temptations to it, under which they groan and labour in this Vale of Tares.-----

There they will obtain an Exemption from all the afflictive Evils that Sin has procur'd, which affect us in respect of our *Names, Bodies, Estates, Souls, Relatives and Friends*: *Man that is born of a Woman is of few Days and full of trouble.*-----This World is a Labyrinth of Thorns, for in every State we are perplex'd with Difficulties; while here, we are as it were upon an unlettled Ocean which lies expos'd to every Tempest; so that as wise *Solon* observ'd, "No body can be call'd happy before Death." We are sometimes reproach'd

The Believers Gain at Death. 31

proach'd unjustly in our *Names*, which is somewhat difficult to bear; *For a good Name is as precious Ointment*, and of Service to promote our Usefulness in the World; and sometimes we are diseas'd in *Body* and wrong'd in our *Estates* by Fraud or Force, or our Projects and Labours are rendred abortive and our Expectations disappointed; and in respect of our *Souls*, we are sometimes troubled with spiritual *Desertion*, *Temptations*, *Deadness* in the Performance of Duty; and some are afflicted with Doubts about their gracious State, as well as with a sorrowful Sense of their Unprofitableness, and little Progress in Religion under many Advantages; we are likewise expos'd to many *sympathetick Sorrows* on the Account of the *Church* in general, and our *Friends* and *Relations* in particular.

But from all of them Believers are freed in the heavenly Paradise.

There their *Names* will no more be stain'd with *Scandal* and *Reproach*.

Nor will the Bodies of the glorify'd ever feel any Pain and Uneasiness; no Sicknes or Death has any access into the *New-Jerusalem*;

32 *The Believers Gain at Death.*

Jerusalem; there Sighing and Sorrow fly away, and all Tears are wip'd away from their Eyes.

There their Treasure is secure; *Neither Moth or Rust can corrupt it; nor Thieves break thro' and steal.* There Temptations shall come to a perpetual End, and the glorified shall enjoy the uninterupted Shines of their Father's Face; nor will weariness in Duty, or questioning the divine Love ever assail them any more.

Neither shall they behold any miserable Objects before them to distress their Minds.

But positively; the Happiness of Heaven may be said to consist chiefly in Knowledge, Love, Joy and Praise.

The Understandings of the Glorified will be perfected in Knowledge, which is indeed the proper Food of the Mind; and this Knowledge will be very extensive, easily attain'd, and transforming in its Effects; and hence we are told that they shall know as they are known, that *they shall see God as he is, and be like him: i. e.* In Holiness and Purity. There is most certainly a natural Thirst in the Mind of Man after
Know-

The Believers Gain at Death.

33

Knowledge; and hence we find that even natural Knowledge yields Delight. *Archimedes* when by intense Study, he had found out some mathematical Discovery, cry'd out in Transport * *I have found, I have found.* What Satisfaction then must result from Knowledge of the sublimest Kind, acquir'd without Pains and in the highest Perfection?

If the transient Views which we have of the Perfections of God's Nature, and the mediatorial Charms of *Immanuel* in this World, as well as of the Beauties of his Word and Works, produce unspeakable Delight, what Transports of Pleasure must possess our Souls when we come to behold them constantly without a Glass, shining in their united Glory!

Much of the Wisdom of the Works of Creation is now hidden from the most curious Observer, which will then be unfolded.

And we are now at loss respecting many dark Dispensations of Providence: God's
E Paths

* *Eureka, Eureka!*

34 *The Believers Gain at Death.*

Paths are in the great Deep, and his Footsteps are not known; sometimes *he makes Darkness his Pavilion, and hides the Face of his Throne.* But then the entire Frame of Providence, together with the Connection and Dependance of every Part, and its Conduciveness to promote the general Design of the whole, will be open'd at once to our View.

And here indeed our Apprehensions of redeeming Wisdom and Love are imperfect; but then we shall perfectly behold a glorious Harmony of divine Perfections appearing with inexpressible Lustre in the Work of Redemption! Now this Knowledge must needs perfectly conform our whole Souls to the divine Nature and Will, as well as Possess us with ineffable *Love* and *Joy*, and excite us to unceasing *Praises* to God and the Lamb that sits upon the Throne: And thus you may see my Brethren, that those who slight and oppose the Knowledge of divine Things, despise the Happiness of Heaven; and therefore whatever Happiness they vainly Boast of in their sordid Ignorance, it is not of the
Kind

The Improvement.

35

Kind that is there enjoy'd, but a Condition more fit for the Beasts that perish than for immortal Souls. And no doubt the Beauty of the Place, which the Fire of Carbuncles and Riches of Rubies are too faint Emblems of, as well as Converse with Saints and Angels, and the Knowledge of the eternal Duration of their happy State, will add to their Joy and Solace: But the Time will not allow me to insist, and therefore I proceed now to the *Improvement* of this Subject. And

Here, my Brethren, let me enquire of you, whether Christ be indeed your Life in the Respects before mentioned? If so ye may certainly conclude, that Death will be your Gain in all the Particulars that I have express'd, yea and in more than I can either conceive or express.

This Consideration should therefore reconcile you to Death, and render it amiable in your Esteem: This should excite humble and submissive Desires in you to be dissolv'd, and to be with Christ which is far better, for you will never be as you would be, till you get to Heaven.

This

This may support you under your present Sorrows and Sufferings, which are *Light*, and but for a Moment, and not worthy to be compar'd with the exceeding great and eternal Weight of Glory which shall be reveal'd.

This may also reconcile us to the Death of Friends and dear Relatives, concerning whom we have good Reason to hope that Christ is their Life, seeing that our *Loss* is their great *Gain*: Why should we be excessively distressed or mourn as those that have no hope? But to proceed,

Seeing that Death puts an End to all our secular Affairs, they are all inconsiderable: This Earth is but a busy *Theatre*, where every one is eagerly acting his Part, a *Scene* where the Men of this World make a great Noise and Bustle with their Projects and Designs: But surely as the Psalmist observes, *They walk in a vain Shew and vex themselves in vain, they are in chase of a Shadow, and raise a Tumult to no valuable Purpose; they are just like the busy Ants upon a Mole Hill, which the Foot soon crushes.*

O how

O how moderate therefore should we be in the Pursuit of those Things that are of so short Duration ; tho' Diligence be commendable, yet surely Anxiety is very unreasonable and hurtful ; *Martha, Martha, thou art careful about many Things, but one Thing is needful* above them all.

But Sirs, how low an Estimate should we have of such short liv'd Enjoyments ? Death strips the World of its varnish'd and deceitful Charms, and represents it in his native Dress of Emptiness and Vanity : Hereby we see with our Eyes what its Pomp, Pleasure and Wealth come to in a little Time ; we must go naked without them into the Arms of the Grave.

How doleful therefore is the Case of those whose Happiness is bound up in such Enjoyments, that must come to such a sudden Period ? Death will soon detect the vanishing Goard in which they have foolishly plac'd their Confidence, a Goard that leaves them when they have most need of Comfort from its Shadow. And seeing, my dear Brethren, that Death puts an End to all the Seasons of Grace we enjoy

joy

joy, as well as to our Opportunities of Work and Service for God, O then let us value them more and improve them better. O Sinners, call upon God while he is near, and seek him while he may be found. Let us work while the Day lasts, for the Night cometh in which no Man can Work. Whatever your Hands find to do, for GOD do it with all your Might, for there is no Work nor Invention in the Grave, whether we are hastning.

Will our Souls at Death live in a State of Separation from our Bodies, then how vastly preferable are they to them, seeing they can subsist without them, and the Body after Separation becomes a senseless loathsome Carcass? So that to prefer our Bodies before our Souls, is to prefer the Cask before the Jewel, the House before the Inhabitant, the Beast before the Man. How earnest and faithful then should we be, in endeavouring to mortify all immoderate Love to these Bodies from which our Souls must be so soon separated; for as this debases and depraves the Soul, so it makes parting the more Difficult.

And

And Sirs seeing at Death we enter into an unseen World, then how necessary is Faith to affect suitably our Hopes and Fears; those Springs of Action, that so we may be excited to diligent Endeavours to lay up Treasures in that unknown World to which we pass by Death, as well as prepar'd for a joyful Entrance into it, when our dear Lord shall call us, and this indeed the Redeemer requires of us; *Lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, nor Thieves break thro' and Steal,*

And Sirs how needful is it to get a Temper of Soul suited to the World to which we go, suited to the Enjoyments and Employments of Heaven, without which we could not be Happy there.

Again : Will Souls by Death enter into their State of final Retribution? then surely it is a Solemn Thing to die, for we must then enter into an alterable State of Bliss or Misery.-----

I shall now address my self to the present Occasion, which is to pay our last Respects to the Memory of the Rev'd Mr.

John

40 *The Character of the deceased.*

John Rowland, who was so justly esteem'd among you. Altho' unjust funeral Encomiums are to be abhor'd as disengenuous Flatteries of pernicious Consequence to Mankind; yet I see not why we may not mention with due Caution to the Glory of God, and to excite Men to, and encourage them in the Practice of Vertue & Religion, the Praise worthy Qualities which it has pleas'd the Giver of all Good to confer upon his Servants that are removed from us, and especially when they have shone with a distinguish'd Lustre.

I may safely say of the Defunct that he was competently qualified for the Ministerial Work in Respect of natural and acquir'd Endowments, and excell'd in those of a gracious Nature.-----

He preach'd Christ in the Manner before represented.-----

Like a wise Builder he first labour'd to lay the Foundation, and therefore dug deep that the Superstructure, might stand firm.

And indeed his Talent of convincing the Secure was uncommon, he represented the Dangers of their doleful Case in a
strong

The Character of the deceased. 41

strong Light, in a dreadful Dress; and on this Account he might be justly call'd a *Boanerges*, or a *Son of Thunder*.-----And when Sinners were convinc'd he compassionately directed them to Jesus, and labour'd to build them up in him.----

His Discourses upon Gospel Subjects, were full of Marrow and Pathos. He spoke like one that was acquainted with the Charms of the Gospel, as well as with the Terrors of the Law.

His Diligence in the Gospel Ministry was great, even beyond his Bodily Strength.

And his Success therein was considerable. The Blessed God gave many Seals to his faithful Labours in divers Places, which encouraged him to go on in his Masters Work, in the midst of much Opposition and unjust Reproach. And tho' for a Time his Character was clouded with injurious Invectives, yet it pleased the righteous God to vindicate his Innocency by his all-governing Providence long before his Dissolution, and to make his *Righteousness Shine as the Light, and his Judgment as the Noon Day.*

42 *The Character of the deceased*

But being young in Years, and of a warm Temper, he was thereby led into some *Indiscretions* in his honest and earnest Attempts to do Good, which it pleas'd God to convince him of and reclaim him from a considerable Time before his last remove.

I may with Justice and Truth apply to him what the Apostle says of himself in our Text, *to him to live was Christ*. Christ was the *Principle, End, Comfort and Support* of his *Life*; and therefore to him to *die* must needs be *Gain*.

Here I may observe, my Brethren, that the blessed Jesus own'd his Servant in his last Sickness, by enabling him to bear with Patience the Pains of his lingering Illness, and with humble Confidence to resign himself into his Fathers Hands: And tho' for a Time he was deserted and tempted by the Enemy to distrust, yet when he drew near Eternity, the blessed Jesus gave him the Shines of his Face, which excited an earnest desire after his Dissolution.---

When I came to him, which was the Day before his Death, I ask'd him how
he

he was? " Brother, (said he) I am just
" upon the Borders of Eternity : And I bless
" God I am so." And in the Night fol-
lowing he spoke affectingly of the Kindness
of God to him, and of his gracious Cove-
nant; and mention'd the Time to me,
" When God gave him to know that he
" lov'd him in a special Manner, as surely
" as the Heavens are above the Earth ;
" and desired me to pray for his speedy
" Dissolution."-----

And afterwards he spoke to others pre-
sent in the following Manner, namely,
" That God was going to honour him
" above his Brethren, by taking him to
" Heaven before them."-----

But the Time forbids me to insist. I
shall therefore conclude this Discourse with
a Word of Council to divers Sorts of Per-
sons. And

First : To the Widow of the deceas'd.
Mrs. I sympathize with you in this afflic-
tive Dispensation of Providence. It has
pleas'd the sovereign God to remove from
you the Desire of your Eyes at a Stroke,
but you know he has a Right to do with

his own what he pleases; we are his Creatures, and therefore our Lives and all the Comforts we enjoy in them are at his Disposal; and we are sinful Creatures, who by our Abuse of Comforts have forfeited our Right to them; let us not therefore murmur against God's righteous Providence, for he afflicts us less than our Iniquities deserve, but rather turn our Grief into a religious Channel, and bewail our Sins the Procurers of our Miseries.——

Altho' your Loss be great, yet the Consideration of his Gain should reconcile you to it, and prevent your Mourning, as those that have no Hope; And surely if you make a suitable Improvement of this Providence, it will in the Issue turn to your Gain also.

There is most certainly enough in Christ to make up the Want of Creature-Comforts and Enjoyments; *Call upon him therefore in the Day of Adversity, and he will deliver you*; and learn to die more and more to all but him.

Seeing Almighty God has at his appointed Time, taken away a Part of your
self

The Improvement.

45

self by Death, O hear his Voice speaking to you from the Grave, to prepare for the Dissolution of the other.

And to this End it will conduce to remember his wholesome Instructions, and imitate the pious Examples of his Life: In this way you may humbly Hope, that your Creator and Redeemer will be your immortal Husband, and your all.

And to the other *Relations* of the deceas'd, whether natural or legal, I would speak in the following Manner: My Friends, it is your Duty to humble yourselves before the Sovereign God on this afflictive Occasion. O hear Jehovah's Voice speaking by this Rod, and labour to read his Name wrote upon it.

Let the Loss of an earthly Relative excite you to secure and improve an Interest in a Friend that cannot die. O let Christ who is the Resurrection and the Life, be more and more your Life, that to you to die it may be Gain.

And you Sirs of this *Society*, among whom our deceas'd Brother laboured, are likewise under special Obligations to improve

prove this Dispensation of Providence. Examine therefore your Conduct, and try to find out the culpable Cause of it: A faithful Watchman is taken from your Walls, a Scribe instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven, who brought out of his Treasure Things new and old: You are Witnesses and God also, with what Plainness and Pungency, with what Fervour and Fidelity he labour'd to bring you to Christ and build you up in him: And are any of you yet Christless and Graceless after all his Pains? Alas for it! O that I could weep over you! Believe it Sirs, his Sermons that ye have misimprov'd, will be Evidences against you another Day except ye repent. O call to mind his faithful Warnings and passionate Entreaties, and turn to God before it be too late, before your Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains.---And you that have receiv'd special Benefit, bless the great God the Author of all good, and endeavour to improve this afflictive Providence to your Growth in Grace and Holiness. My Brethren, *despise not the chastising of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked*

rebuked of him. Humble yourselves before, confide in, and call upon that God with whom is the Residue of the Spirit, that he would be pleas'd in due Time to provide for you a Pastor after his own Heart, to feed you with Knowledge and Understanding.

And truly, Brethren, all of us in general are call'd upon by this Providence, to bow before the Sovereign God and bewail this Token of his righteous Displeasure; it is offensive to the Almighty when the *Righteous are taken away, and no Man layeth it to Heart.* When a faithful, laborious and successful Minister is removed by Death in the Prime of his Days, and in a Season when the Number of faithful Labourers, it is to be feared, is small, and the Harvest great, it seems to be a Sign of God's Displeasure against a Land, and therefore as such should be lamented.

In fine: This Instance of Mortality, should be improved by all of every Age and Order, as an Excitement to prepare for Death.

O let the Unconverted seek a Preparation of State by Reconciliation to God, thro' the Application of the Redeemer's Righteousness, by Faith in him, and by a
Renovation

Renovation of their Hearts thro' the Influence of the Holy Ghost, without which no Man shall see God.

And let the Converted be excited *to go with their Loins girt, and with their Lamps burning, waiting for the coming of the great Bridegroom,* that so ye may not only die safely, but comfortably, and have an abundant Entrance into the Kingdom of God, which is much for the Glory of God and Honour of Religion.

And let us, my Reverend Brethren, who are of *Levi's Tribe,* especially lament the Loss of one of our Order, who was so useful an Instrument in our Lord's Vineyard. O let his comfortable and honourable Exit out of this Wilderness, and joyous Entrance into the Rest of God, invite us to imitate his Zeal and Fidelity, that we in like manner, may not only adorn the Doctrine of Christ, by a holy and humble Life, but also by the Manner of our Death, and so be for ever with the Lord. Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons, and One glorious God, be ascrib'd eternal Praises. *Amen, Amen.*

A
NARRATIVE
OF THE
Revival and Progress
OF
RELIGION,
IN THE

Towns of *Hopewell, Amwell and Maiden-
Head, in New-Jersey, and New-Providence
in Pennsylvania.* In a LETTER to the
Rev. Mr. PRINCE, Author of the *Christian
History.*

By the Rev. Mr. JOHN ROWLAND:

Being the last Work of that faithful Servant
of JESUS CHRIST, which he compos'd a little
before his Decease; and is now publish'd for the
Benefit and Consolation of God's People.

By THOMAS BOURNE.

Matt. xxiv. 45, 46, 47. *Who then is a faithful and wise
Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household,
to give them Meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant
whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily
I say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over all his Goods.*

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed by WILLIAM BRADFORD at the
Bible in Second-Street, M, DCCXLV.

A

NARRATIVE, &c.

REVEREND SIR:

ONE of your printed Papers, containing the Request of many pious and judicious People, that particular Accounts of the Revival of Religion in every Town in this remarkable Day of Grace, may be taken and publish'd in the Christian History, &c. dated the 5th, ----- 1743, subscrib'd with your Name, and directed to me, came into my Hand *January* the 24th, 1745. Had it come as soon as it might have done into my Hand, what Accounts I have to send you, would have been with you long before now: And that I may set in a clear Light what small Accounts I have to give of the Work of God, it is needful for me to signify where I began my Ministry. I was sent forth to preach the

Gospel of CHRIST by the Presbytery of *New-Brunswick*, on *September 7th*, 1738, on which Day the Congregation of *Maiden-Head* and *Hopewell*, put in a Supplication for me to the Presbytery, and accordingly I complied therewith.

Here it is needful to observe, that the Congregation was divided into two Parts on some religious Accounts for some time before I went among them, and it was that Part of the People that supplicated for me, who were for the *Brunswick* Ministers, as we are commonly called; but the Meeting-Houses in both Towns were kept from us by the Opposites. It is true they were willing that my People should come into the Meeting-Houses, in case they would sit under the Ministry of their Pastor; but this they were not willing to do. But in some Process of Time we had the Privilege of *Maiden-Head* Meeting-House, and my People built a Meeting-House in *Hopewell*, so that before this we were constrain'd to keep our Meetings in Barns in both Towns; and tho' we thus appear'd as poor despis'd Creatures, yet the Congregation

gation that attended my Ministry was so numerous, that the largest Barns amongst us were chosen to worship God in. It was some Discouragement to me at first, that I and my People had no better Places for divine Worship, but at that Time I thought on these Things, which prov'd of some Support to me, *viz.* That our Lord and Saviour was born in a mean Place, and likewise preach'd in the Ship, and on the Mountain, as well as in the Synagogues, and that it had been the frequent Lot of his People, to betake themselves to Worship him in Places attended with many Inconveniencies.-----There is another Town lying contiguous to *Hopewell*, which is call'd *Amwell*; the People there were something Numerous likewise, and having none to labour among them in the Word, they petition'd for a Part of my Time, *viz.* one Sabbath in three, and it was granted unto them; so that my Labours among these three Towns, for the most Part of the Time that I liv'd in the *Jerseys*, were equally divided. There was a small Number in *Hopewell* and *Maiden-Head* truly acquainted

acquainted with vital Religion, as far as I could judge, before I came among them, and they seem'd so earnest in Prayer Night and Day to have the Gospel in Power among them, as if they wou'd take no Denial. But of them who became my Congregation in *Amwell*, there were but very few that knew the Lord Jesus when I came among them, yet in many Ways they were a very agreeable People, so that I was much encourag'd to labour among them.

The Subjects which I chiefly insisted on for about six Months, were Conviction and Conversion, and usually I made choice of the most rousing and awakening Texts to set forth the Nature of these Doctrines; and I have reason to hope that the Lord began to accompany his Word in a measure from the very first. Some began to be convinc'd that they were in the Way to Misery, and unacquainted with the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven. But then let it be observ'd, that but one or two were taken with Convictions at a Time, or under one Sermon. For many Months

Months * together their Convictions were still encreas'd, and the Number of the Convinc'd were still multiplied.

I commonly preach'd in the Night as well as in the Day, and frequently on Week Days also, so that they had hardly any Opportunity to cast their Convictions out of their Thoughts, the Lord continuing to co-operate with his Word.

The frequent Opportunities which I took to examine them, were made very beneficial, through the divine Blessing, to preserve their Convictions alive until the Time of Grace, of which I shall speak afterwards. The Attention of all in general was awaken'd; Fathers, Mothers and the Youth, some Negroes also seem'd very earnest after the Word, and were convinc'd thereby of their Sin and Misery, and that Christ they must have or perish for ever. The

* Let none suppose that because I speak of Convictions being still carried on, that I mean that Sinners must be convinc'd to some high Degree before they can be converted: I only mean that this was the Way which the Lord then observ'd in carrying on his Work, to keep Sinners for a long Time under Conviction before he manifested his Love to them.

The People of God were much enlivened to see poor Sinners convinc'd of the perishing Nature of their State, and their absolute Need of Christ : Their Supplications to God were mostly bent for the Conversion of Sinners, and their Conversation whenever they met together, (as far as I observ'd it, and frequent Opportunities I had to observe it) favour'd exceedingly of the Things of God ; so that I cannot say that ever I saw those pious People given to Worldliness in their Conversation, or to Lightness and Vanity in their Discourses. Great was the Love they bore to one another, and sweet was the Peace which subsisted among themselves ; so that I was not interrupted from my Work in making up Differences among them.

In the Month of *May* 1739, I began to think that the most inviting and encouraging Subjects would be the most agreeable to convinced Souls, and accordingly I began with these Words, *John xi. 28, 29. The Master is come and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly*

and came unto him. The Discourse upon this Subject was brought home, thro' the divine Influence, upon the Souls of many. Solemn Weeping and deep Concern appear'd thro' the whole Congregation. I had hopes that the Hearts of some had been knit close to Jesus our Lord, which afterwards appear'd to be so; of which more hereafter.

I was still encourag'd to go on in inviting convinc'd Sinners to come and embrace the Person and Purchase of the dear Lord Jesus. Then I made choice of that Word in *Mat. xxii. 4.* *And all Things are ready, come unto the Marriage.* This was also bless'd to poor convinc'd Souls; they were brought under a full Perswasion that Jesus the Son of God, was ready and willing to embrace them with his everlasting Favour, and to pardon their Sins and Transgressions; but then they found more of their own Hardness, and had a clearer View of their own Unwillingness to come unto the Lord Jesus Christ, which increas'd their Mourning and Sorrow, and made them press forwards with more living

H Earnestness

Earnestness in search after Jesus Christ.
 A variety of other engaging Subjects I made use of for a considerable Time, to press them to a full Closure with Jesus Christ. At length by frequent Converse among them, and enquiring strictly into the Nature of the Views they had of Christ, and the Out-goings of their Souls after him, and their Willingness to be ruled by Jesus Christ in their whole Hearts and Lives, I could not but be favourable in my Thoughts of such, as Persons favour'd of the Lord.

Furthermore I find by reading what Accounts I kept by me, of the blessed Work of Grace which hath been in these Towns, that there was much Good done by visiting, by which Means I found out many that had been touched, of whom I had not well heard how it was with them, which gave me an Opportunity to offer such Things unto them as might tend to fix these Beginnings on their Souls and increase them. So likewise many were convinced of their lost State by Nature. By particular Examinations I found likewise,

wise, that private Examination of Persons, as to their State and Condition, is an excellent Mean to lay them open to Conviction under the publick Word; and thus were some convinced in these Towns.

The divine Influence of the Spirit of God was very evidently afforded with his Word, though not in every Opportunity, yet in several until *May*, 1740, in which Time many more were added to the Lord's People. Some of these Opportunities for clearness sake, I shall mention. One was on *October 6th*, 1739, in a Night-Meeting, but the People not having been warned with sufficient Care, there met but about fifteen Persons, eleven of which were deeply convinced of their Misery, and some of them cry'd out so very awfully, that I was constrain'd to conclude. After Sermon I took an Opportunity to enquire of those Persons what was the real Cause of their crying out in such a Manner, some of which answered me, " That they saw Hell opening before them, " and themselves ready to fall into it. Others answered me, " That they were

H 2

" struck

“ struck with such a Sense of their Sinfulness, that they were afraid the Lord would never have Mercy on them.”

Another of these Opportunities was on *December 30th, 1739.* As to my self I felt exceeding poor in the Frame of my Soul, so that I thought I might well say, as in the Words of the Text I preach'd on that Day, *Isaiah xl. 6. What shall I cry?* But the Lord was pleased to manifest his Grace and Power exceedingly through the whole Service. The People of God were much enlarged in love, to see that whatever gracious Word was sent with Power into their Hearts, was sent from God; for the Man knoweth not what to cry, without being guided by the Word and Spirit. Some hardened Creatures who thought not much of Religion, as if there was no reality in it, were deeply convinced of the Truth, Reality and Beauty of Religion. Others who knew not well which way to walk or what to choose, Opposers I cannot call them, tho' they had not join'd with our Side; such, I say, as far as we could judge the Tree by the Fruit

were

were also convinc'd and converted, under that Discourse. Many Youths also were wrought upon, so that I cannot say truly that any remained untouch'd. Some of these Persons were pleas'd to tell me, " That they never would forget this Day, in which God had been so gracious unto them." As to the Backsliders from Conviction that were not converted, I shall afterwards speak of in its own Order; for I chuse to have the Relation as distinct as possible. The Night of the same Day being spent in publick Worship, viz. The first Part thereof was attended with the same divine Influence. Another of these Opportunities was on *April 6th*, 1740, in *Maiden-Head*. The Subject that was insisted on was the *Gospel-Net*, from *Mat. xiii.* Many who were not acquainted with the spiritual Nature of the Gospel in the least Degree, as far as I found were greatly bowed down; and brought to own that it was the Lord's Work which was carried on. The People in general thro' the whole Assembly, seem'd as if they were humbled before the Lord, which afterwards

wards prov'd it self to be so. Without controversy, many of these slipt out of the Net as fast as they could; yet many, blessed be God, were held in it by Almighty Power.

I come next to speak of the Times of most remarkable Power that I observed in these Towns. It began on this wise: There had been a Week-Day's Meeting in *Maiden-Head* on *July 24th, 1740*: Worship seem'd to be attended with much Warmth of Affection, which gave much Encouragement to their Minister again, for Lukewarmness at this Time had prevailed very much among some of the People, and the Affections of some were much removed from others of their Fellow-Members, neither did they seem to have such a Thirst for the Word of God as formerly. Things had come to this pass in about two Months, but how astonishing is it to consider what sweet Methods the Lord observ'd to remove them! For as the People were passing homewards through the Town after Worship, some inclined to stop at one of the Christian Houses, and the stopping of some

some occasion'd others to stop, 'till the
 Number was about Forty, and when they
 were all sat in the House, that the Time
 might be profitably spent, the first Part of
 the fiftieth *Psalms* was sung, which seem'd
 to be perform'd with unusual Quickning.
 When singing was over, the same Verses
 were explained at some length, and the
 Spirit of the Lord was pleased to Work
 by it upon all that were present, as far as
 we could discern by the outward Man,
 and much converse that was spent among
 them all in particular. In about an Hour
 afterwards, the Love of God's People that
 were present, was uncommonly inflamed
 to Jesus Christ; their Views of his Majesty
 and Glory were much enlarged, their
 Longings after him much stirred up, and
 their Fear of him graciously increased:
 Their Zeal for God's Glory was kindled
 anew, and their Concern for the Cause of
 God seem'd to receive much Growth.
 And as to the Unconverted that were pre-
 sent, we could not find otherwise but that
 they had receiv'd very clear Discoveries of
 their undone State by Nature. This was
 followed

followed with the mighty Power of God by a Sermon the next Evening, to a large Congregation in the same Town, and in *Amwell* July 27th, and in *Maiden-Head* again on *August* 3^d, God was pleased to magnify his Grace in visiting many poor Sinners: In these Opportunities he open'd their Eyes to see themselves without Christ and without Hope in the World; their Convictions were attended with great Horror and Trembling and loud Weeping, which I suppos'd could not be stopp'd so easily as some do imagine; for I observ'd that many did continue crying in the most doleful Manner along the Road in their Way home, and it was not in the Power of Man to prevail with them to refrain, for the Word of the Lord remain'd like a Fire upon their Hearts. Furthermore the Lord was pleased to add many more to my People, who used not to walk with them who still continue in Communion with them, of whom I hope it may be said, that they are growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Seed of the Word was drop'd into the Hearts of others who

who bore not much regard to the Doctrine of the New-Birth which was preach'd among us, and did not spring up visibly until it was near three Years after.

As to the Issue of these Convictions which I have last mention'd, I think it must be own'd that many of them were follow'd with a sound Conversion, or else we must give up speaking any thing as to any Knowledge of Grace in this Life. Many backslided and became stiff-necked again, tho' I must say that I have not seen such Backslidings in these Towns as I have seen in many others, the Instances are but few in them in comparison of what I have seen in most other Places that I have been acquainted with. One great Mean to prevent Backsliding from Convictions in *Amwell* was this: When the Husband was taken the Wife was also taken, or when the Wife was visited, the Husband was also, so that they were ever stirring up each other. Many such Instances are in the Town of *Amwell*, upon which Account that Congregation appears to me peculiarly Beautiful: And as to *Maiden-Head* and

I

Hope-

Hoperwell, I believe that one great Means that the Lord used there to prevent Back-sliding, was the Care and Diligence of some of the Christian People in conversing with the Convinced; for several of the Christians were so engaged in deep Concern for the Work of God, that they could not rest satisfied until they had Reason to hope that the Souls who were convinc'd from one time to another, were also come thro' to sound Conversion.

Respecting the Nature of this Work which I have been speaking of, it will appear yet more distinct by giving some Account of their Experiences.

And *First*: I would speak something more of their Convictions. They can give a very distinct Account of their Conviction of Sin, both original and actual; their Views of Heart Corruption, their Distance from God, and their having lived so long without him, were very clear and affecting; their Hardness and Unbelief, their Ignorance and Blindness pressed very close upon them: Their Need of Christ and his Spirit was such in their Apprehension, that there

there was no Rest nor Contentment to be taken in any thing here below, until they did obtain an Interest in Jesus Christ, and receive his Spirit to purify and sanctify their Hearts. There are a few among them whose Convictions were not attended with any considerable Degree of Horror ; they were very watchful over themselves least they should receive false Comfort, and so rest in ungrounded Hopes : Their Hunger and Thirst after Jesus Christ his Righteousness and all his Fulness, was very earnest, and their Experience of it is very clear, therefore they wanted the Word preach'd often, and they would sit under it with great Affection waiting on the Lord. Their Views of the Lord Jesus Christ in his Person, Nature and Offices were very clear, and their Acquaintance with the Actings of their Faith on him, together with the Out-going of their Souls in love and affection towards him. They can give a satisfying Account of these Things according to the Holy Scriptures. Their Experience of a saving

Closure with Jesus Christ, and the sweet Manifestations they had of him in that Time of spiritual Marriage, were very glorious, and their Affections have been often stirred afresh towards Jesus Christ, in meditating on, and speaking of the Day of their Espousals. They are careful to maintain a holy Communion with God in the general Course of their Lives. I have seen some of them in considerable Agonies when they have been under the Hidings of God's Face, so that they could take no rest by any Means, until the gracious Lord would be pleased to shine again upon them with the Light of his Countenance.

They are properly diligent in the Things of this Life, yet they are ready to attend on the Word of God on any Opportunity that offers to them on Week Days.

They still continue zealous for God and his Truth; their Walk is steady in the Ways of God, and not unconstant and uneven.

And that I may conclude with *Hopewell* and *Maiden-Head*, I would say that Jesus Christ has gathered for himself a blessed
Flock.

Flock there; and however they may be vilified and scorned by those who have their Portion in this Life, yet I hope no less, but that they are precious with God, and shall be satisfied with the Pleasures of his right Hand forevermore. *Amen.*

In the Year 174-- , I came and liv'd in *Charles-Town* in *Chester County*, in *Pennsylvania*, and have continued according to the Order of the Presbytery preaching among them and the People of *New-Providence*. But as my Ministry has been chiefly succeeded at *New-Providence* since I came into these Parts, I shall only speak of what I have observ'd of the Work of God in this Town.

The People of *New-Providence* before I came into these Parts to preach, were but an ignorant Sort of People, unacquainted with Religion both as to Principle and Practice; though they would pretend some to be of one Denomination and some of another, yet this vain Name was all, Loose-ness prevail'd much in the Place, and there was not one to speak to another in

a suitable Way and Manner, neither of the Vileness, Deformity and Unprofitableness of the Ways of Sin, nor of the Glory, and Excellency, and Profitableness of the Ways of God. The foolish Error of Free-Will generally prevailed among them all, neither could they hardily bear to hear any thing spoken against it at first. I know not if any of them observ'd Family Prayer, or asking a Blessing on their Food. This was the Case among them as they told me themselves at several Times; and I enquir'd of them again when I began to write this Account.

The Conviction and Conversion of the People of *New-Providence*, was within about two Months of one another: It was the Time of my travailing among them into these Places, that the Lord chose to bless for their Ingathering to Jesus Christ; and since I have laboured stately among them, it has been as much my Endeavour to build up those who were called into the Fellowship of God, as to convince Sinners of their Misery; and to this End my Labours

hours were blessed again among them throughout the Year 174--. As to their Conviction and Conversion unto God, I may say that they are capable to give a scriptural Account of them.

I forbear to speak of many extraordinary Appearances; such as some Scores crying out at one Instant, falling down and fainting.

These People are still encreasing, blessed be the Lord; they are labouring to walk in Communion with God and with one another; and for this End they meet by way of Society in the Meeting-House every *Saturday* in the Afternoon, where they spend two or three Hours at a Time, in Praise and Prayer; and they find this an excellent Mean to prepare them for the HOLY SABBATH. They are careful to maintain the Worship of God in their Families, and to use all agreeable Means to encrease their Knowledge in the Things of God.

I choose to speak no more, tho' I may truly say, that what I have spoke of the glorious Work of God, both in this Place and

In the Towns of *Amrwell, Hoperwell* and *Maiden-Head*, is but a very little to what I might have said.

May the Lord continue to bless them 'till his Work be finished within them.

Thus I have labour'd to give you a true Account of the Work of the Lord in these Places, though a short one.

S I R,

I am your humble Servant,

and Brother in the Gospel of CHRIST,

I. R.

F I N I S.