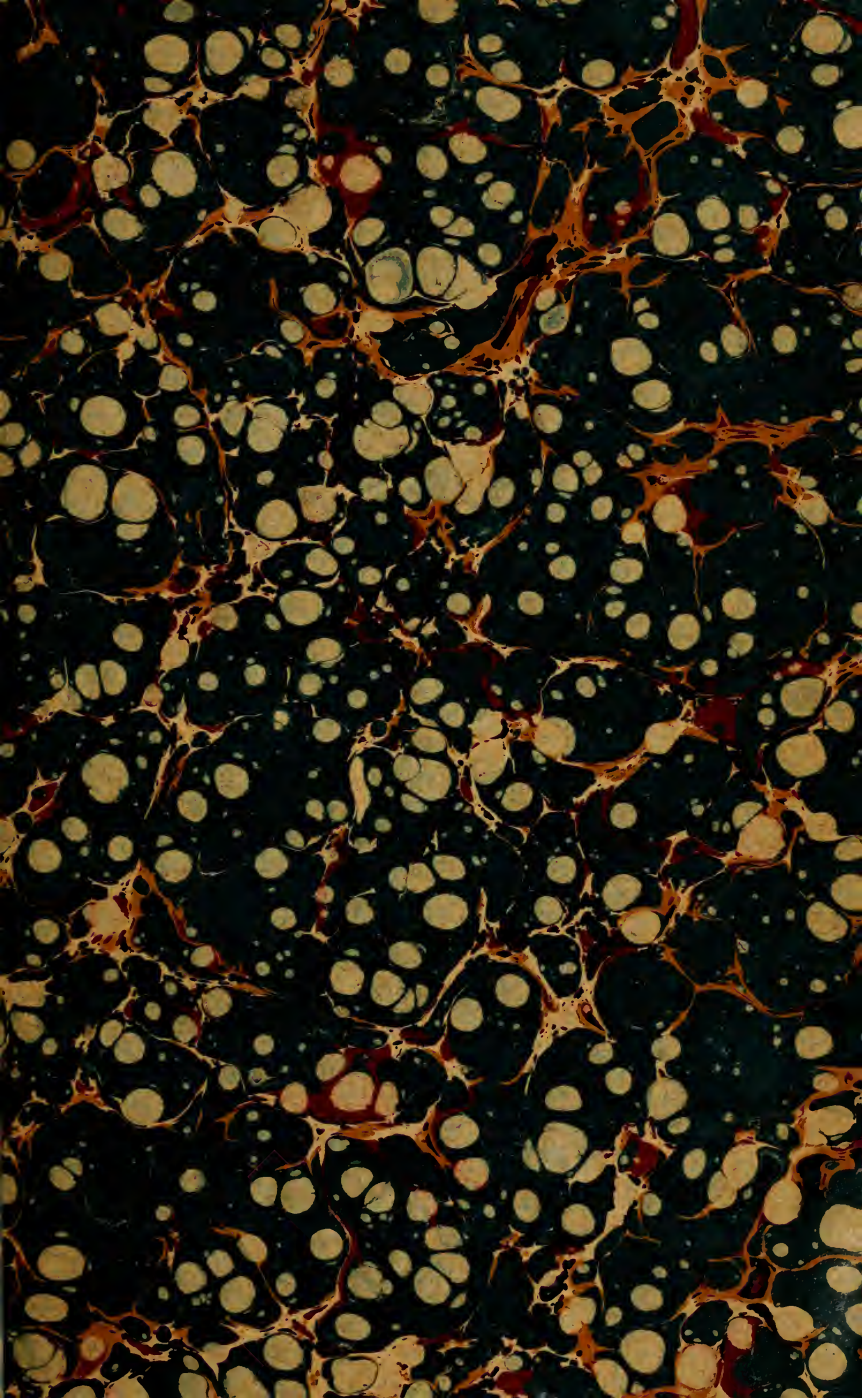

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SERMON

At the publick *Lecture*

Boston, September 4. 1746.

The *Vanity* of Man as *Mortal.*

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the *Lecture* in *Boston*, September 4. 1746.

IN THE

Audience of the *General Court*,

The Morning before the *Funeral*

Of the Honourable

Mrs. *Frances Shirley*

Consort to His *Excellency*

William Shirley Esq;

Captain General and Commander in Chief of His MAJESTY'S Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, &c.

By *Benjamin Colman*, D.D.

Pulvis et Umbra sumus.
Vivere si recte nescis, discede peritis.

BOSTON:

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The *Vanity* of Man as *Mortal.*

Pſalm Lxxxix. 47.

Remember how ſhort my Time is : Wherefore haſt Thou made all Men in vain !

TO expreſs my *fatherly* Tenderneſs to my dear *Colleague* on his *firſt* Turn in this public *Lecture*, I do at his earneſt *Requeſt* in Feebleneſs and Fear venture to appear *once more* in this your *Audience*, (my Honoured, Reverend and Beloved *Hearers*) to bewail and improve as I am able the *Breach* which the *Sovereign and Holy GOD* has been pleaſed to make this *Week*, not only on *His Excellency* our GOVERNOUR and his bereaved *Family*, but alſo on our *ſelves*, the *Town* and *Province*, in the *Death* of His Excellent *Lady* and Conſort ; who firſt in her more *private* Life among us, and ſince

ſince in her *exalted* State, has exhibited to us ſo much of the *virtuous* and gracious *Woman*, with whoſe Character the wiſe *Solomon*, under a Divine *Inſpiration*, cloſes his admirable Book of *Proverbs*; — "*Whom who can find?* ſaid the MAN of exalted Wiſdom and Knowledge:— "Her Price is "above *Rubies!* The Heart of her *Huſband* doth "*ſafely truſt* in her, ſo that He ſhall have no need "of *Spoil*: She will do him *good* and no evil "all the Days of her Life: —— She is like "the Merchants *Ships*, ſhe bringeth her Food "from afar: She riſeth while it is yet Night, "and giveth *Meat to her Houſhold*, and a "Portion to her *Maidens*: She conſidereth a *Field* "and buyeth it; with the Fruit of her Hands "ſhe planteth a Vineyard: She girdeth her "Loins with Strength, and ſtrengthneth her *Arms*: "She perceiveth that her Merchandize is *good*, "her *Candle* goeth not out by Night:—— She "ſtretcheth out her Hand to the *Poor*, ſhe reach-"eth forth her Hands to the *Needy*: She is not "afraid of the *Snow* for her Houſhold, for they "are all clothed with *Scarlet*: She maketh her "ſelf Coverings of *Tapeſtry*, her Clothing is *Silk* "*and Purple*: Her *Huſband* is known in the "*Gates*, when he ſitteth among the Elders of the "Land:— Strength and Honour are her Cloath-"ing, and ſhe ſhall *rejoice* in Time to come: "She openeth her Mouth with *Wiſdom*, and in "her Tongue is the *Law of Kindneſs*: She look-"eth *well* to the Ways of her *Houſhold*, and eat-"eth not the Bread of *Idleneſs*: Her *Children* riſe "up and call her *bleſſed*, her *Huſband* alſo and he "*praiſeth* her: Many Daughters have done ver-"tuouſly, but *Thou* excelleſt them all. *Favour* is "deceitful and *Beauty* is vain, but a Woman that

feareth

" *feareth the* LORD ſhe ſhall be *praiſed* : Give her
" of the *Fruit of her Hands*, and let *her own*
" *Works* praiſe Her in the *Gates*.

I know You are before me, *my Hearers*, in the Application of this *high* and *ſtrong Character* to the deceaſed *Madam Shirley* ; nor will I *preſume* to add a Word by Way of Character to this inſpir'd and exalted *Encomium*.— Take it, and divide it among *your ſelves*, Ye venerable *Matrons and Daughters of New-England !* And may the moſt *Amiable* and *Honoured Daughters* of the DECEASED ever eminently appear and ſhine in thoſe *Ornaments* of the Daughters of *Zion*.

—But alas ! my *Hearers*, that whenever it pleaſes the GOD of the Spirits of all Fleſh to form ſuch a Character in his Church below ; and lend ſuch a *Son* or *Daughter* for a few Days, to *ſerve in their Generation* by His holy Will ; that we muſt needs *return* ſo ſoon to the Words of my *Text*, and ſpread them before the LORD in the Preſence of all his *People* ;— " *Remember how ſhort*
" *my Time is ! Wherefore haſt Thou made all Men*
" *in vain ? What Man is He that liveth and ſhall*
" *not ſee Death ! Shall he deliver his Soul from the*
" *Hand of the Grave ?*

Who the *Writer* of this *Pſalm* was, or *when* it was written is uncertain. It may ſeem by the *melancholly Concluſion* of it, from the 38th *Verſe* ; to have been wrote by ſome holy *Man of GOD* about the Time of the *Babyloniſh Captivity* ; when the *Glory of the Houſe of David was made to ceaſe, and his Throne caſt down to the Ground*.— The *Promiſes* of GOD to *David*, and his *Covenant* reſpecting his

Houſe,

Houſe are inlarged on in the firſt 37 *Verſes* of the *Pſalm*; and the *Faithfulneſs* of GOD to his Promiſes are *ſung* of, with the utmoſt *Aſſurance*, thro' that long *Period*: Yet how to reconcile the preſent *Face* of Providence with thoſe Promiſes, was beyond the *Force* of the pious *Pſalmiſt*'s Penetration: He therefore *drops* it, leaving it to the *Moſt High and Holy and True* to fulfil his *Word* in his own *Way and Time*: He therefore betakes himſelf to *Prayer* for the *Royal Houſe*, and for the *Church of GOD* imbark'd in the Fate thereof; and for *Himſelf* alſo as One of GOD's *Iſrael* who would be his Remembrancer for *Sion*;— "*Remember how* "*ſhort my Time is? Wherefore haſt thou made all* "*Men in vain?*— Where are thy former *Loving-* "*kindneſſes* which thou *ſweareſt* unto *David* in thy "Truth?

Moſt obſervable in theſe Words is the humble *Freedom* us'd by the *Pſalmiſt* in putting GOD as it were in *Mind*, beſeeching Him to *remember*! as if it were a Thing poſſible for His infinitely knowing Mind ever to *forget!*— and he preſumes (as it were) to *bring* to GOD's Remembrance a very *known Thing* and common; *how ſhort his Time* was, and the Time of *all* Men is!

See what a *Liberty in Prayer* GOD indulges to his People, to ſpeak *to* Him and *of* Him after their own Manner; as a *Child to his Father*, or a Man to his Friend! So *He* overlooks the Infirmity and the Impropriety of their Words, and accepts graciouſly what Faith and Love mean well.

And yet the *Pſalmiſt's Freedom* before the *Throne of Grace* goes further, and he even dares to *expoſtulate*

tulate with the *High GOD* upon the outward *Face* of his Government ;— " *Wherefore haſt thou made all Men in vain ?*—— So he pour'd *out his Complaint* before the LORD, and ſhewed before him his *Trouble.*

But far, *far* be it from us to *cenſure* the pious and fervent Servant of the LORD, or to think his Words *amiſs !*— elſe in a holy Reſentment one might be ready to anſwer, " *Who art thou, O Man,* " *that repliest againſt GOD ?* Or *who ſhall ſay* " *to Him, what doeſt Thou !* Shall the Thing formed, ſay unto *Him* that formed it, *Why haſt thou made me thus ?* I will *anſwer thee*, GOD is *greater* than Man ! Why doſt thou *ſtrive* with him ? for He giveth no *Account* of his Matters.

But ſuch a Return as *this* to the *Pſalmiſt*'s Words, were to ſuppoſe them *chargeable with Irreverence* or Diſcontent before GOD ; which was *far* from him.— And yet the *Freedom* taken in *expoſtulating* in Prayer on ſo *Great* a Point as the *making Man* and all Men ! as if it might but *ſeem to be in vain*, though it may not be called any *contending with his Maker*, reſpecting his *Work*, as if he had *no Hands* ; *or a charging* GOD *fooliſhly* with that which really He had *no* Hand in ; but *Man* muſt take wholly to *himſelf*, having brought all the Vanity upon *Himſelf* by his Sin :— Yet it muſt be confeſſed to be a very great *Liberty* taken by Duſt and Aſhes, and a wonderful *Inſtance* of GOD's overlooking the Infirmity, *winking at the Ignorance* and accepting the Prayer ; for He conſiders that we are *Duſt* ; and we cannot *ſtrain* the Matter in the leaſt beyond the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s Meaning, in his xiith Chapter, 1ſt Verſe.

Righteous art thou, O LORD! yet let me reason with Thee of thy Judgments.

But passing the Manner of the *Psalmist*'s expressing himself, let us attend to the *Doctrinal Truths* suggested to us in his Words; which are of the last Importance to us to *remember* daily, keep in Mind, ponder and improve: 1. That our *Time* here in the Body is very *short*: 2. *So* short as may sometimes make us *ready* to think of our selves and others, that we are made *in vain*! And if it were not for the *Relation* which our present Life bears to a *future and everlasting State*, it might justly be thought so.

The *first* of these *Doctrines* is so *obvious* a Truth, that there needs very *little* to be *said* on it; how much soever we ought always to *remember* it our selves, and may *daily* carry before GOD the Remembrance of it; "*LORD, how short my Time is*!

The Holy Ghost admonishes us of it by the Pen of the *Apostle* that we may never forget it; "*Brethren, the Time is short, and the Fashion of this World passeth away.* 1 Cor. vii. 29. The blessed Spirit of Grace is also often telling us *how short*, in *such* Words as if the Thing could *not* well be told; "it is but as the *Shuttle passing thro' the Loom*; it is but as a *Hand breadth*, and our *Age as nothing* before GOD and in our *own* Eyes. Psal. xxxix. 5.

The Time of *some* of the Sons and Daughters of Men is so *short*, that they expire in the *Womb*, and never draw a *Breath*: How much *in vain* may

may theſe *untimely Births* ſeem! Who knows the *Way of the* SPIRIT or his *Mind*, in animating the curious Body which it frames in *ſecret*, never to *ſee* this Light of ours! Yet is it not done *in vain*! No, the *Spirit of the ſtill born Babe* returns to GOD that gave it, the *Father of Spirits*; and therefore is not made in *vain*.

Others die *from the Womb*; juſt ſee the Light, or fetch a Breath or two, gaſp and are gone! or live a Month or Year, and their *Angels take 'em*, which behold the Face of their *Father* in Heaven. Their few Minutes, Days, or Weeks are not in vain; for you know who has ſaid, Mat. xix. 14. *Suffer the little Ones to come to me, for of ſuch is my Kingdom.*

What Multitudes of the Human Offſpring die in *Childhood*, within the firſt *five*, *ſeven*, or *ten* Years of Life! They live to leave the *Breaſt*, *liſp* at a Word of *Love*, *run* to the Mother's Knee; begin to *know* a little, to read and ſay a Prayer, and *die* as they begin to be the *Hope* and Light and Joy of their Parents:— It is computed that a *third* die not *two* Years old, and one *half* that are born before *five*: Yet not in *vain* has the ſhort Life been, if we may *ſee* 'em one Day in Heaven; the Pains of *bearing* and Sorrows of *burying* will be well rewarded.

So if they die in blooming *Youth*, juſt beginning to bear and promiſing good *Fruit*, or having yielded *ſome*, they have not been in *vain*; but are in *Favour* taken, although it be from a *Crown* on Earth, like young *Abijah*, becauſe there was

ſome *good Thing* found in him toward the LORD GOD of *Iſrael.*

Or to give the *Reverſe*,— if they *die in Youth and their Life has been among the Unclean*; (as *Bildad* ſaid to *Job*) and GOD has *caſt them away* in their Tranſgreſſion; yet may we not *ſay* they were made *in vain*! no, though it be in Truth much *worſe* than in vain!— for what if GOD willing to *ſhew his Wrath* ſnatch away the Veſſel *fitted for Deſtruction* ſooner or later! *All Fleſh* muſt be *ſilent* before Him! but how much more will *Aaron* hold his Peace, and *Eli* anſwer, "It is the LORD, let Him do what ſeemeth Him good.

Or again, if an *Hezekiah* or a *Joſiah* be called to die in the midſt of *Life*, Honour and Uſefulneſs; we muſt not *chatter like the Crane*, or much worſe, and ſay, "Why were the *golden Veſſels form'd* and ſhown in vain? No, far otherwiſe: GOD will remember *how they have walked before Him*, while *they* and others may *mourn* in the *cutting off* their Days; yea while the *Church* it ſelf may *lament* as in our *Context*, "Thou haſt *caſt off thine* "*Anointed*, thou haſt *profaned his Crown*, thou haſt "*ſhortned his Days.*

To add no more,— At full and *Old Age* the Time is *ſhort*! at *three* and *fourſcore* Years it is *ſoon cut off*, and we *flee away*; as the *Pſalmiſt* truly ſings: Pſalm xc. : We have *gain'd* ſo little Knowledge and Grace, we have *done* ſo little Good in the World; we have been *guilty* of ſo much Evil, and have ſeen it may be ſo *many Sorrows*; that with the venerable *Patriarch* we muſt look

back

back and ſay, " *Few and evil have the Days of the Years of my Pilgrimage been.*

But if we live *graceleſs and wicked* to the Days of *Old Age*, O then how have they been *in vain, and paſſed away in GOD's Wrath!* For wherefore do the *Wicked* live, become *old* and grow *mighty* in Power!— An *untimely Birth is better than he*, and the Sinner a *hundred* Years old is but the more accurſed! His Days are ſpent as a *Tale* that is told, and according to his *Fear* ſo is GOD's Wrath! Mark him, and be *aſtonied* and lay thy Hand on thy Mouth!— Dare not even in this ſad Caſe to ſay, " This *Monument of Sin* has been made and ſpared in vain! No, there's a *Judgment* to come, and remember the *Days of Darkneſs*, for they ſhall be *many*.

You ſee, my *Hearers*, that there is a Neceſſity of judging by *Faith*, and not by *Sight*; all the while we *live*, and when we die: if there were no *other Life* after this, the ſhort or long ſinful *hurtful* Lives of one and another in every *Age* and Place, were *much worſe* than in vain! The Sinners have only *deſtroy'd much Good*, and it had been *better* both for themſelves and others that they had *never been born.*— But it will *not* be found ſo in the *End*; the *Glory* of GOD and the *Good* of the *Univerſe* will be found *well anſwer'd* in the Day of Judgment; as we are told Prov. xvi. 4. *The Lord has made all Things for Himſelf, even the Wicked for the Day of evil.*

But if we *bound* our Sight within the *preſent Scene* of Things, and look *not to the Things unſeen and eternal*; there might then ſeem Reaſon enough

enough for the ſad *Exclamation*, " O why are *all Men* thus made *in vain !*— If we conſider only the *worldly* Circumſtances, and *preſent goodly* Appearance of Perſons and Families ; if we call up a *Job* and his *lovely Train* of Sons and Daughters from the *Dead*, and view them on the Day of their Devotion and *feaſting* together, *buried* together in the *Ruins* of the fallen Houſe ! and he that Yeſterday *ſat in the Gate*, in all the outward State and inward *Adorning* of a ſuperior and righteous *Judge* ; " his *Glory freſh in Him*, and Men " giving *Ear* and waiting and keeping *Silence* at " his Counſel ; " *they waited for* Him as for the " *Rain*, and opened their Mouth *wide* as for the " latter Rain ; (" the *Oracle* and *Darling* of his " Country *) when the *Ear* heard him it *bleſſed* " him, and when the *Eye* ſaw him it gave Wit- " neſs to him ; He put on *Righteouſneſs* and it " clothed him, and his *Judgment* was to him for " a *Robe and* D*iadem !*—— But to *morrow* he is ſeen with Compaſſion and Surprize, a *Spectacle of Poverty*, D*iſtreſs and Woe* ; ſtript of *Eſtate* and Family, without a Child or almoſt a Servant to attend him ; *deform'd* alſo by a *gaſtly Diſeaſe* and cover'd with *putid Sores*, ſo as not to be *known* by his *Friends* ; ſo that they lift up their *Voice*, and *wail'd* him !— And had he *died* in this Extremity, had he been form'd and *rais'd* in *vain ?* No ! he had *ſerv'd his Generation* glorioufly by the Will of GOD, and knew that *his Redeemer* liv'd, whom he ſhould *ſee for Himſelf* one Day upon the Earth ; and *his Eyes ſhould behold him*, though now his *Reins were conſuming* within him : Job xix. 25, 26. He was a *Type* of his REDEEMER

* Mr. *Henry*.

in

in his *Sorrows*, and is with HIM in his *Joys*, and will come with *Him* in his Glory, in the Day of the *Restitution* of all Things; when this *Corruptible* shall put on *Incorruption*, and this *mortal* Immortality, and *Death will be swallow'd up in Victory*, 1 Cor. Chap. xv.

Let us recur in our Meditation to the *tragical Dying of righteous* Abel in his early Piety, or to the *placid Death-Bed of aged Jacob* with his *Sons about him*, and his *Joseph* closing his Eyes with Tears and *Kisses*: these very different Views of Death agree in this, that neither of them show the *Good Man* made in *vain*; but equally to the *best* that can be proposed by GOD or conceiv'd by us.

Let us view (I say) righteous *Abel* in all the Charms of florid *Youth and Grace* together, one Day with his *Sacrifice* at the *Altar* of GOD, and a *Light* from Heaven shining around him and *irradiating* his beauteous Face! And the next Day view him cover'd with *Gore*, deform'd with ghastly *Wounds*, besmear'd with Dirt and *Blood!* how had his *early Piety* and high Devotion seem'd in *vain*; but for the *Crown of Martyrdom* remaining to him in a future eternal Life! and at the *Head* of the *noble Army of Martyrs*, Confessors of the *Lamb slain* in the midst of the *Throne!* Rev. vii. 14. *These are they* that come out of *great Tribula-* " *tion*, and have *washed their Robes* and made 'em " white *in the Blood of the* LAMB: Therefore are " they before the *Throne* of GOD, and serve him " Day and Night in his *Temple!* they shall " *hunger* no more, nor *thirst* any more, &c.

But

But let us paſs from the *Blood of Abel*, *crying* from the *Earth* againſt his Brother; unto the *Death-Bed of aged Jacob*, the good old *Patriarch willing* to be gone, *waiting for the Salvation of GOD*, deſiring to *depart* (like bleſſed *Paul* 2300 Years after him) and to be *with Chriſt*, as *far* the better; calling his *Sons* to take his parting Prayer, to bleſs *them* all together, and every One apart and by *Name*; his *Joſeph* alſo in the midſt of them, and *Judah* even greater than he in the Benediction, but not in *Deſert*; for the Reward is of *Grace*. View (I ſay) this *Jacob wreſtling* for the Bleſſing even in his Mother's *Womb*, as well as with the *Angel* long after and prevailing, as a *Prince* that had Power with GOD! Conſider him in his continual *Advances* in Wiſdom and Communion with GOD unto *old Age*; his *hoary Head* and *wrinkled Brow* a *Crown of Glory*, in the Ways of Righteouſneſs and Devotion:— Add to him ſuch of *his Sons* as were moſt *like Him* in their Generations, in their advanced Years alſo and Improvements in Grace;— *Joſeph*, *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, *Samuel*, *David*; with *Elias* that never ſaw Death, and his Succeſſor *Eliſha* more *magnificent* on his *Death-Bed* than the *King and all his Court* gather'd about it, and owning Him as much the *Chariot of Iſrael* as his *Maſter Elijah* had been before him: Add to theſe the *New-Teſtament Elias*, with his *Head* in a *Charger* and *more than a Prophet*; and think how *Simeon* expir'd, with the *Holy Child* Jesus in his Arms, ſay ſome: and imagine alſo the *Tranſports* of a *Stephen* ſtoned under the *Viſions* of Jesus through the open'd Heavens, and ſtanding on the Right Hand of GOD! And add to all your Thoughts of the *Joys* of the Beloved of Jesus, St. *John* and *Paul*, as the Time of *their Departure* came on!

Contemplate

Contemplate all *these* in the *Shades of Death*, after their serving their *Generations* by the Will of GOD; and although their *Labour* and Suffering were not at all *in vain in the* LORD; nevertheless if it were not for their *Relation* to a *better Country*, that is an *heavenly*, and their *Inheritance with the Saints in Light*, at the Head of *whom* these shine; — What would they have thought of *their Life* here below? however eminently *happy and useful*, and honour'd of GOD they were in Comparison of others!—— So *Jacob* paus'd, and took Breath, in the midst of his *blessing* his Sons, in that happy *Parenthesis*, "*I have waited for thy Salvation, O* LORD.— And *such* had been the *Faith* and Hope and Joy of his dying *Fathers*, the *Patriarchs* before him; as the *Apostle* to the Hebrews tells us, Heb. xi. 13, 15. *These all died in Faith, desiring a better Country, that is a Heavenly; confessing themselves Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth.*

But though we may *thus* make some Allowance to the *best* of Men, or some Kind of *Excuse* for them, after the *best* Life of Services to GOD and *Communion* with Him, that has been attained in this *Earth* of ours; if upon their *Review* of all that they have *known* of GOD or *done* for his Name, they readily own the *Vanity* and *Emptiness* of it all; if it were not for their *sure and certain Hope* of a higher and better Life, reserved for them in *Heaven*, after the Dissolution of their Bodies; — yet we must *recollect* our selves, and *affirm* constantly, that *These* among the Sons and Daughters of Men, (the whole *Election* of Grace, the *Elect Lady and her Children* as well as *John* himself) have by no Means been *made in vain!* no, far otherwise; their *Labours* have not been in vain

in the LORD, but their *Works* follow them, and will be *openly* acknowledged and gloriouſly rewarded in the Day of CHRIST ; and their *Charities* to his *poor* Members in particular, while they will ſtill call themſelves *unprofitable Servants* : Matth. xxv. 34, &c. " Then ſhall the *King* ſay to them on his " *right Hand*, Come ye *bleſſed* of my FATHER, " inherit the *Kingdom* prepared for you from the " Foundation of the World ; for I was *hungry* " and ye gave me *Meat*, *thirſty* and ye gave me " *Drink* ; a *Stranger* and ye took me in, naked " and ye *clothed* me ; I was *ſick* and ye viſited " me ; I was in *Priſon* and ye came to me. " Then ſhall the *Righteous* anſwer, " Lord, when " did we ſo !—— And the *King* ſhall reply,—— " Verily I ſay unto you, in as much as ye have " done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my *Bre-* " *thren*, ye did it unto *Me*.

But we muſt *go on* yet much *further* in the Argument before me, and ſay,— GOD has made *nothing in vain*, and much leſs *Man* : no not ſo much as *one ſingle* Perſon, greater or *leſs*, better or *worſe*, in *vain* :— *Far* be it from *Him*, whoſe Work is *perfect* ; and nothing can hinder his everlaſting *Glory* from it ! no, not the *Sin and Miſery* of *any* of his Creatures, *Men or Devils*.

How *far* was *Man* in his *firſt Eſtate* from being made *a vain* Creature ! He was made a *living Soul*, in the *Image of* GOD ; an *immortal* Spirit, wiſe *holy* and *happy* ; and for an everlaſting *Increaſe* in Knowledge and Holineſs and *Bleſſedneſs*, in a Life of *Worſhip and Obedience* :— And altho' by *Sin* he ſoon ſubjected *himſelf*, and the *Creatures* under his Feet, to the Vanity and *Bondage of Death* and

and Corruption ;— and although the *most* of the Children of *Adam* are *wilfully perishing* in their spiritual *Corruption* ; yet there is an *Election of Grace* in whom GOD will *glorify his Holiness* and Mercy for ever and ever, by recovering them here to a State of *Communion* with Himself, preparatory for and an Earnest of the Translation of their *Souls at Death*, and after the *Resurrection* Soul and Body united to the Visions of his Glories in Heaven.

Then every Mark and Sign of Sin and *Vanity* shall be done *away* for ever ; and the *Redeemed* from our Earth shall shine forth in the Kingdom of their *Saviour*, in the *Paradise* above, in more than *transfigur'd* Bodies ; and in what *irradiated* Souls !— how much *fairer* and brighter than *Adam* and *Eve* at first in the *Garden* of God below ; in their *Innocence*, Integrity and earthly Happiness ! in what Knowledge, Purity and Joy ! like that of the *holy Angels* who stand and minister (with *covered Faces*) before the Throne : according to what we read *Psalm* xvi. ult. *Therefore my Heart is glad and my Glory rejoices ; my Flesh also shall rest in Hope ; thou wilt shew me the Path of Life ; in thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at thy right Hand are Pleasures for evermore. Rev.* xxii. 3, 4, 5. " And there shall " be *no more Curse*, but the *Throne of GOD and* " *of the Lamb* shall be in it, and his Servants " shall serve Him ! and they shall *see his Face*, " and his *Name* shall be in their *Foreheads !* " and there shall be *no Night* there ; for the " LORD GOD giveth them *Light*, and they shall " *reign* for ever and ever.

Here let our View of *Sin* and *Death* and *Vanity* end as to the *righteous* ; for here muſt be the *Abolition* of it for ever and ever, as to *them* ; " *Mortality being ſwallowed up of Life.* This is the *Reſtitution* of all Things, and of *Man* to his Poſſeſſion of the *heavenly Inheritance*, purchaſed by JESUS CHRIST for his *Elect* and *them* for it.

O how far then will the *leaſt of theſe* ſeem from having been made in *vain*, in this Day of the " Manifeſtation of the Sons and Daughters of GOD ? O to what a glorious Purpoſe will it then appear, that Man was created in the Likeneſs and Love of GOD ? ſince out of his fallen Loyns GOD has raiſed ſo many Children to eternal Glories ! of whom He has ſaid, and will ſay for ever, " Ye are my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the LORD Almighty. —— See their *Number* and *Glory*, and hear their *Songs* of Joy, and read their endleſs Bliſs : Revel. vii. 9, 10, 15, 16, 17. " After this I beheld, and lo a " great *Multitude*, which no Man can *number*, " of *all Nations*, and Kindreds and People and " Tongues, ſtood before the *Throne* and before " the *Lamb* ; clothed with *white Robes* and " with *Palms* in their Hands ; and cried with " a *loud Voice*, ſaying ; *Salvation* to our GOD " which ſitteth upon the *Throne* and to the " *Lamb !* Theſe are they that came out of " *great Tribulation*, and have *waſhed their Robes* " and made them *white* in the Blood of the " *Lamb :* —— therefore are they before the " *Throne* of GOD, and ſerve Him Day and " Night in his Temple ; and He that *ſitteth* " on the Throne ſhall dwell among them ! " they ſhall *hunger* no more, nor *thirſt* any " more ;

" more ; neither ſhall the *Sun* light on them,
" nor any *Heat* ; for the *Lamb* which is in
" the midſt of the *Throne* ſhall lead them to
" living *Fountains* of Waters ; and GOD ſhall
" wipe away all *Tears* from their Eyes.

USE. And ſo I come to make ſome practical *Reflections* on this *vain Life* of Man, in his corrupted *Fleſh*, which GOD had *no Hand* in ! this *Vanity* of Man as *mortal*, which is altogether of Himſelf.

And is it as we have been hearing, that our *Time* here on Earth is ſo very *ſhort*, and our *State* ſo *vain* becauſe ſo very *ſinful* ; ſo that we may be *ready* at times to *think and ſay* of it, in our moſt *ſerious Frames* and Hours, — " O *why* is *Man* made thus altogether, as it were, for Nought and *in vain ?* ſo abandoned to *Sin and Miſery*, and *void* of Goodneſs and Happineſs ? — Yet let us recover out of this *falſe Medium*, whereby the *Sight of* GOD and of our *Selves* is obſcured ; — that we may make a juſt and righteous *Improvement* of the *Infelicities* we have brought upon our Selves.

Firſt then, What a dreadful Thing is SIN ? and what a Puniſhment of it is *Mortality* and Death. Man little underſtood or weighed the *Warning* given him in his State of Innocence ; " *In the Day thou eateſt, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* The firſt *Sight* of Death on the *Beaſts* ſlain in Sacrifice, was without Doubt not a little affecting to our *firſt Parents*, but the *hideous* Face of it in their lovely *Abel* ſtruck them with a *Horror* not to be imagined.—— The

Sorrows

Sorrows of *burying her Sons* chang'd the *fair Naomi* into an *unknown Thing*; " *Is this Naomi ?* And yet these are but the *lighter* Part of the *Curse*, which the most *pious* are subject to, and *Faith* has many a Time born gloriously : *Luke* xii. 4. " I " say unto you *my Friends*, *Fear not them that* " *can kill the Body*, and after that have *no more* " that they can do ! but I will forewarn you " *Whom* you shall *fear* ! HIM *that can cast the* " *Soul into Hell* ! I say unto you *fear Him.*—— Yet alas, how is *Sin punish'd in us*, and before our *Eyes*, in the present *Life !* " Call for the *mourn-* " *ing Women*, said the gracious *Prophet*, for *Death* " is in the *Streets*, and at our *Windows !*— It tears the sucking *Child* from the *Mother's* Breast, and *the Desire of the Eyes* with a *Stroke* from the Arms of her *Husband.* The tender Soul of JESUS was moved exceedingly as he saw the *Widow* following *her Son* to the Grave, and he *wept* at the Grave of *Lazarus.* Alas, how is Sin punish'd in us, in the *Sicknesses and Pains* and Corruption which often preceed Death, as well as in the Putrefaction that always *follows* it. What *Months of Vanity* were appointed to *Job*, and *wearisome Nights ?* Job vii. 3. His *Flesh was clothed with Worms and Clods of Dust* ; his *Skin* broken and become *loathsome.* Chap. x. 9, 18. *Remember* I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the *Clay*, and *wilt* thou bring me into *Dust* again ? *Wherefore* then hast thou brought me out of the Womb ? O that I had given up the *Ghost*, and *no Eye* had seen me.

Secondly, The *vainer* our Life is, and the *shorter* our Time, the more let us be excited to a holy Care and Vigilance, that it may not *seem* to our selves

ſelves or others, to have been altogether *loſt and in vain* : But let us indeed think our ſelves *made in vain*, if the *End of Life* be not in ſome Meaſure *conſider'd* by us, anſwer'd and *attained* : Elſe (as the wiſe *Solomon* ſays) an *untimely Birth is better* ! better than *He*, the Days of whoſe Years are *many* and his Soul not filled *with Good* done in them ; for he cometh in with *Vanity*, and departeth in Darkneſs, and his *Name* ſhall be covered with *Darkneſs*, Eccleſ. vi. 4. To let a *ſhort* Life run *away* in Vanity and Sin, in doing *nothing*, or in doing *evil* ; in the Neglect of GOD and our Souls, and to the Diſhonour and Wrong of *both* ; — what an egregious Piece of Folly and Wickedneſs muſt it be ! as it is repreſented and *bewailed* in the xcth *Pſalm*, from the 5th Verſe : " For " we are *conſumed* by thine Anger, and by thy " *Wrath* we are troubled ! thou haſt ſet our " Iniquities before thee, our *ſecret Sins* in the " Light of thy Countenance ! for all our Days " are paſſed away in thy Wrath ; we ſpend our " Years as a *Tale* that is told ! — Who knoweth " the Power of thy *Anger*, even according to " thy *Fear* ſo is thy Wrath ! So teach us to " *number* our Days, that we may *apply* our Hearts " *unto Wiſdom.*

To *Man* GOD ſays, — " *This is Wiſdom* ! O that they were *wiſe*, that they underſtood *this*, and would *conſider their latter End* ! The wiſe Servants of GOD have ever done it and been *wiſe to Salvation :* More eſpecially *the Son of the Higheſt*, when he took our *mortal* Fleſh, was made *Sin* for us, and came into our World to *die* ; he *quickened* himſelf once and again, for *our* Sakes, and to give *us* an Example, from this

this *Motive*; " I muſt work *the Work* of Him " that ſent me, while it is *Day*; the *Night* " *cometh* wherein no Man can work! And again, —— " I have a *Baptiſm* to be baptiſed " with, and how am I *ſtraitned* till it be ac- " compliſhed. — The *Diſciples of JESUS* might well *learn this* of Him, and *teach it* to others; as we read in the Epiſtles of St. *Peter* and *Paul*: " I will not be *negligent* to put you *always in* " *Remembrance* of theſe Things; yea, I think " it meet as *long* as I am in this *Tabernacle* of " Clay, to ſtir you up; knowing that I *alſo* " muſt *ſhortly* put off this my Tabernacle as " the LORD hath ſhewed me! — This I ſay " therefore, Brethren, *the Time is ſhort!* it re- " maineth that both they that have *Wives* be " as though they had *none*; and they that *weep* " as though they wept *not*, and they that *rejoice* " as though they rejoiced not, and they that *buy* " as though they poſſeſſed not, and they that " *uſe* the World as not *abuſing* it, becauſe the " *Faſhion* of it paſſeth away.

Thirdly, Let us the rather take a *thankful Notice* to the *Glory* of GOD, that the Life of SOME *is not ſo much in vain* as that of many others. — They have much *ſooner* began to live to GOD, they have through Grace *done more* for Him the *few* Days they have lived, and it may be their uſeful Lives have been *prolong'd*.— So the *Face of Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Joſeph* ſhone before the *Princes* among whom they ſojourn'd! And ſo ſhone the Face of *Moſes* and *Aaron* before the Congregation of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, and *Caleb*'s alſo and *Joſhua* then and in the Land of *Canaan*: after them alſo *Samuel* and

and *David* ſerv'd *their Generation by the Will of God !* but above *all* in the Days of the *New Teſtament* bleſſed *Paul* " was in *Labours* more " abundant, and CHRIST was *magnified in his* " *Body*, in Life and Death. — The *Glory* muſt be " given to GOD, and was ſo: *Not I, but the Grace* " *of GOD in me*; but the *Comfort* belongs to the " *Believer in* JESUS, and it is great in Life or " Death; nor can it be *in vain* in the LORD. " 1 Cor. xv. *ult.* Wherefore my beloved *Brethren*, " be ye *ſtedfaſt*, *unmoveable* and *always abounding* " *in the Work* of the LORD.

Here therefore I might have *added* and muſt add, 1. The *leſs* Life has been *in vain*, the more *Comfort in our Death* and in the Death of our *dearest Friends*; when GOD takes *them* away from us, or calls *us* to take leave of them. — O in what *Serenity* and Peace are *ſuch* at Times enabled to bid *farewell* and breathe their laſt? as I am told the *Excellent Perſon* whoſe Remains we follow to the Grave this *Afternoon*, was *enabled* by Grace to do! to the *Admiration* of thoſe that miniſtred about her *Bed*, and to the great *Conſolation* of her HEAD and *Offspring!* and may it be for their and our ſpiritual Inſtruction, Admonition and Edification in Grace and Holineſs.

So *Hezekiah*, the pious King of *Judah*, turned his *Face* to the Wall and prayed, when he was bid *to put his Houſe in Order* for he muſt *die*; " LORD, *remember* (ſaid he) *how I have walked before thee with a perfect Heart !*—And ſo the *bleſſed St. Paul* look'd *Death* in the Face and *triumph'd*; " the Time of my *Departure* is at hand, " I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed " my Courſe, I have kept the Faith! Hence-

" forth is reſerved for me the *Crown of Righte-*
" *ouſneſs* ! And not for *me only* but for *all that*
" *love* his Appearing, — And ſo when *Dorcas* was dead, they *wept* over Her and told her *good Deeds*, the *Garments* ſhe had made for the *poor* ; and were going to *bury* her with *Praiſes*, in the midſt of *Lamentation.* — And ſo like *Jehoiada* the Prieſt, let the loweſt with the *Higheſt* in the *Congregation*, be named and buried as among the *Kings of Judah* ; if they have *done Good in Iſrael.*

But then, on the other Hand, 2. The *longer our Life* is, and the *greater our Advantages* and Opportunities are for *doing Good* in the World, and the more *ſpecial our Obligations* ; and *yet* the leſs is done by us ; ſo much the more *in vain* has our Life been ! and the more Matter of *Humiliation*, Mourning and *Shame* remains to us ! the more Sorrow and *Fear* in a dying Hour, and *looking for of Judgment*, in the *Day of* CHRIST ! As it is written, " *Caſt the unprofitable Servant into utter Darkneſs*; *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.*

Fourthly, The ſhorter and *vainer* the preſent ſinful Life of Man is, the more let us *realize*, and ſtrengthen our *Faith* in this great *Truth*, — that GOD *never made any Thing in vain* ; and that MAN in particular was made in *the Perfection of Life and Happineſs* ; *wiſe and holy*, for a *bleſſed Immortality.*

The *Glory* of GOD, and the Honour of his *Creature*, require us to ſtrengthen and *eſtabliſh our Faith* in this *firſt Record* that GOD has given to Man concerning Himſelf — GOD made Man for the beſt *Ends*, and to the moſt glorious *Purpoſes.* What could be ſaid more great and good and *auguſt*, than what's ſaid of Man in his *Creation* ; Gen. i. 27.

i. 27. So GOD created Man in his *own Image*, in the *Image of* GOD created he him, *Male and Female* created He them ; and GOD *bleſſed them.* — Such Man came out of his *Maker's* Hand, a *living Soul*, never to have known Sin or Death, or to have been ſubjected to *Vanity* ! A Matter this is worthy of *everlaſting Remembrance*, and a Subject of our *perpetual Praiſes !* And it will be *ſung* of for ever in Heaven : *Pſal.* viii. 5.— ult. *Revel.* iv. 11.

We may apply to *Man* in his *firſt* Eſtate, and give *Glory* to GOD in thoſe *choſen Words* of the xxiſt Pſalm : " Thou didſt *prevent* him with the " Bleſſings of Goodneſs ! thou didſt put a *Crown* " of pure Gold on his Head ! Thou gaveſt him " *Life* in Perfection, even Length of Days for " ever and ever : *Honour and Majeſty* thou didſt " put upon him, and madeſt him *moſt bleſſed* for " ever ; exceeding *glad* with the *Light* of thy Coun- " tenance ! — Be thou exalted *Lord*, in thy own " Strength ! ſo will we *ſing* and praiſe thy Power.

Fifthly, Let this therefore *ſtill and quiet us* in all that GOD *orders* concerning us, all the Days of our *vain Life*, which we paſs as a *Shadow.*

The Providence of GOD is *perfect* ! there is no Room for any *Suſpicion* or Complaint, *Expoſtulation* or Charge reſpecting any Thing that may here befall us. *Clouds* and Darkneſs may be round about the *Throne* of GOD, but Righteouſneſs and *Judgment* his Habitation. He dwelleth in that *Light*, which no *Eye* can ſee. His Righteouſneſs is as the *great Mountains*, while his Judgments are as the great *Deep.* Let the *One* be always before our *Eyes*, while we cannot *ſee* at all into the *other.*

He is a *jealous GOD*, and therefore will not bear that *we* ſhould have any *Jealouſy* of his Government. He is perfect in *Knowledge*, we comparatively perfect *Ignorance*. How *unſearchable* are his Counſels, and his *Ways* paſt finding out!

Every *Event* of Providence, the *dark* as well as the bright, are the Iſſue and Reſult of his infallible *Foreknowledge* and immutable Decrees.— The *Chariot* with the *black Horſes*, as well as the *white*, came forth alike from between the *Mountains of Braſs*, Zech. vi. 1. Theſe are *ſhining* Mountains and immoveable: they caſt a Light and Glory upon all that comes forth *from between* them. The *black* Horſes *ſhine* in the *ſame* Light of GOD, his Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, as do the *white*: And it is of the *black*, that it pleaſed the Holy One to ſay, in the Hearing of the *Prophet*; "*Behold* THESE *have quieted my Spirit*: Zech. vi. 8. And what *quiets* the Spirit of the Lord, ſhould quiet *ours*; and *will* do ſo, if we deſire to be *holy wiſe and good* as He is.

I can never forget, how as I was once reading *that Chapter* in my Family, thoſe Words ſtruck me with a marvellous *Light* and Force; repreſenting to me the perfect *infinite Complacency* which the Soul of GOD has in all the *Events* of his Providence; which are All and every One of them altogether *ſuch* as they ſhould be; the full Accompliſhment of the everlaſting *Purpoſes* of his own Wiſdom Holineſs and Grace; wherein therefore the *Holy Spirit* of the Lord muſt have everlaſting *Reſt and Quiet*, Pleaſure and Satisfaction. — Can there be a more *calming* quieting Conſideration than this to the Spirit which GOD has made and ſanctified! has made to *govern*, and to be in Subjection unto his

his own holy, perfect and bleſſed Will ?— So *Abraham*'s Spirit was *quieted* when the *Horror of great Darkneſs* came upon him, and the *Lamp of Fire* paſſed between his *divided Sacrifice* ; though it only ſhewed him the *long fiery Trial in Egypt*, which his *Seed* were to paſs through in their Way to *Canaan*.— And ſo the Spirit of *Job* was *quieted* in the Will of GOD, when he bereaved him of all his *Children*, *Family and Subſtance* in one dark Day ! And he ſaid, " *Naked* came I out of my Mother's *Womb*, and naked ſhall I return ! the LORD *gave* and *the* LORD *has taken*, *bleſſed* be the Name of the LORD. —But to name a *Greater* than theſe,—So the Soul of CHRIST was quieted, John xii. 28. " Now is my Soul *troubled*, and what ſhall I *ſay ? Father*, *ſave me* from this Hour, but therefore came I unto this Hour ! *Father glorify thy Name.*

Let there be then in us a Conformity to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the Will of our *Heavenly Father*, that his Soul may have *Pleaſure in us*, as it *has in Him*.—O Believer in JESUS ! may I *ſay* unto thee ? " *Quiet the* HOLY SPIRIT *of* GOD, by Quietneſs and *Submiſſion* to Him in all thy Afflictions ? This ſhall *pleaſe the* LORD better than the beſt *Sacrifice of Praiſe* thou canſt render to him. *Behold the Lamb of GOD*, be *meek and lowly* like Him, and find Reſt to thy Soul ! it pleaſed the LORD to *bruiſe him* and put him to *Grief* : He was *dumb* and opened not his Mouth ; and the *Pleaſure of the* LORD proſper'd in his Hand : Deſire to be found *one of his Seed*, and let Him ſee *the Travail of his Soul* in thy *Conformity* to Him.

What *if GOD wills*, after a Courſe of *ſhining* Circumſtances in this World, to break the beauteous *Body* or the lovely *Mind* to Pieces !, and to bring his

his *Cloud* over the *joyous House* and Family, in the Day even of their *worshiping and feasting* as in the Day of *Job?* what belongs to us is, to *fall down and worship*,— " *naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return, the* LORD *gave and the* LORD *hath taken; blessed be the Name of the* LORD. Psalm 88. 9, 18. " Mine *Eye mourneth* by Reason " of Affliction, I have *called* daily upon thee, I have " stretched out *my Hand* to thee! *Lover and Friend* " hast thou put far from me and mine *Acquaintance* " into Darkness. Psalm 62. 9. Surely Men of " *low* Degree are Vanity, and Men of *high* Degree " are a *Lie!* to be laid in the *Ballances* they are " *lighter than Vanity*! My Soul, *wait thou only upon* " *GOD*; for all my Expectation is from *Him.*

O that THOSE who are rising up among us in *superior* Circumstances, and with promising *Expectations* from a vain and empty World, would betimes receive Conviction, and learn of *them*, who have wisely gone before them, *without Elation or Pride of Life.*

Sixthly and lastly, The *shorter* Time is, and the *vainer* the present Life and World may *seem* to any of us on the Account thereof; the more let us fix our *Eyes* and set our *Hearts* on the *Word of GOD*, which liveth and *abideth for ever*, and is *not a vain Thing*, but is our Life: Let us set our Heart (I say) on that *unseen and eternal World* which the *Word of Life sets before us*, and requires us to be passing our present *short* Life in an earnest and diligent *Preparation* for.

Let us bless GOD for JESUS CHRIST, and the Words of *Eternal Life* by *Him*, who has *abolished Death* and *brought Life and Immortality to Light* in his Gospel.— My whole *Context* leads us to HIM;

to

to *ſing of the Mercies* of GOD through Him for ever and ever ; and of the *Covenant* of GOD *with* Him, and *in Him* with all that *believe in* and *ſubmit* to him on the Terms of the Goſpel.

This is the *only Support* of a pious Soul under the *Vanity* of Life, the Proſpect of his own *Death*, and in his *Sorrows* over the *Dead in Him.* If in *this* Life only we had *Hope* we were miſerable ; but now is CHRIST *riſen* from the Dead, and become the *Firſt-fruit* of them that *ſleep* : for if we belive that JESUS *died and roſe* again ; even ſo *them* that *ſleep in* JESUS GOD will bring with Him. We muſt *raiſe our Eyes* therefore unto the *Glories* of that *bleſſed Day*, and turn them *away from beholding Vanity*, which will never *never* be thought of more ; nor will ever ſuch a *Word* be heard again from a *Saint's* Lips ; but even *Devils* will confeſs reſpecting *them* that *they* were not made in *vain* :—No, *happy the Day* wherein they were *born*, and the *Night* wherein they were *conceived !* no *Darkneſs* or any *Shadow of* Death can ever *ſtain* it, nor any Cloud dwell on it : But GOD will *regard it from above*, and his Saints may keep the Day of their *Death*; as their bleſſed *Birth-Day* into Glory Honour and Immortality.

More eſpecially, how will the righteous *ſhine forth* in the Kingdom of their *Saviour* in the Day of their Reſurrection ? when CHRIST *will quicken their vile Bodies*, and faſhion them according to *his own* moſt glorious Body ! When the *Glory of the Celeſtial* ſhall ſucceed, after the *Diſhonour* of the *Terreſtial* is ceaſed for ever ! When what was ſown in Corruption ſhall be *raiſed* in Incorruption ! what was ſown in *Weakneſs* ſhall be raiſed in *Power* ! and the preſent *natural* Body ſhall be rais'd a *ſpiritual* !—*Such* is the Re-

ſurrection

ſurrection of the *Juſt*, and bleſſed and *holy for ever* are all *They* that have Part therein.

Let us therefore be greatly *quickned by the bleſſed Hope* to paſs our *ſhort* Time and *vain* Life here, in the moſt ſerious and earneſt *Endeavours* to attain *that World*, even the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*. Let not the *Vanity* and Shortneſs of the *preſent* Life be *complained* of, but *improved*. Our *Time* is a *Talent* of infinite *Price*, for our diligent *redeeming* and improving till our LORD ſhall come; and *bleſſed is that Servant whom the LORD when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing*.

We have liv'd to good *Purpoſe* if we get well to Heaven. We ſhall then find that our Life and Labour has *not been in vain in the* LORD. Nay the *ſhorter* our Life is, and the *ſooner* we have *begun* to live to GOD, the more *wonderful* is the Gain and Advantage made! How abundant is the Reward of a ſhort Life of Duty and Sufferings! how vaſt that and how *ſmall* theſe! How *light* and for *a Moment* the One, and what an *eternal Weight* the other! as the Apoſtle teaches us to *reckon* and eſtimate, *Rom.* viii. 18. That the *Sufferings* of the preſent Life are *not worthy to be compared*, with the *Glory* to be revealed:—for which Cauſe (ſays he) we *faint not*; 2 Cor. iv. ult. But though our outward Man *periſh* yet the inward is *renewed* Day by Day; for our *light Affliction*, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and *eternal Weight* of Glory! while we *look not* at the Things that are *ſeen*, but at the Things that are *unſeen*; for the Things which are ſeen are *temporal*, but the Things which are *not ſeen are eternal*.

FINIS.