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*Of READINESS for the Coming of  
the Lord.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

S U D D E N D E A T H

O F.

Mr. *THOMAS PICKARD*:

P R E A C H ' D A T

C H E S H U N T in H A R T F O R D S H I R E,

*February* 14. 1719-20.

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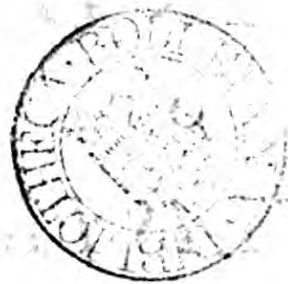
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T O  
*Mrs.* PICKARD.

M A D A M,



*Suppose the Suitableness of the following Discourse to the sad Occasion; and its Tendency to a serious Improvement of it, was the Reason of Your Desire to have it published; and of the concurring Opinion of*  
A 2 *the*

## EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

*the Worthy Gentleman, Your*  
\* Sir \* *Brother, who is so great an*  
*Strange* \* *Example and Ornament to*  
*Joceline.* *serious Religion.*

*As I had Reason to know  
the peculiar Circumstances of so  
extraordinary a Case; I was  
determined Nothing should be  
wanting on my Part, which  
could be thought Capable of  
yielding You any Assistance and  
Relief. 'Tis to the Honour of  
the Divine Grace, and the  
Christian Profession, to be  
enabled to submit to the Will  
of God, in trying Difficulties,  
with composed Passions, and  
a resigned Will. You have  
had very particular Experi-  
ence of Divine Supports in  
the greatest Affliction of Life;  
and*

## EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

*and should be encouraged in all Your future Difficulties and Cares. As You are called to a Double Service, and to fill up Another Relation of Life; so You stand in a New Relation to God, and are entitled to a Double Respect from Those about You.*

*May a Gracious God yield You constant Reliefs, and a Double Portion of His Spirit; and prosper Your Wife and Religious Care of a Numerous and Hopeful Offspring; That the Young and Tender Branches, may grow up in the Courts of the Lord, and become Plants of Renown: That They who are more advanced in Years may  
give*

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

*give You the Joy to see Them  
always walking in the Truth:  
That None of Them may e-  
ver prove a Grief of Heart  
to You: And You may be able  
to say at last, Behold, I and  
the Children which God  
hath given Me. I am, among  
Many Others,*

Your sincerely affected,

And sympathizing Friend,

And Servant,

WILL. HARRIS,

MATTH.



MATTH. XXIV. 44.

*Therefore be Ye also ready, for in such an Hour as You think not, the Son of Man cometh.*



THE Words were occasioned by our Lord's Answer to a two-fold *Question* of the Disciples, in the Beginning of the Chapter : *Tell us when shall these things be ; and what shall be the Signs of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* Now, tho' 'tis probable, They thought these *Two* would be together ; and that He would not appear to the *Destruction* of *Ferusalem*, till the *End* of the World ; yet our Lord, who knew otherwise, gave a distinct *Answer* to Each, and sufficiently marks out the Difference to Those who closely observe. He discourses concerning the *Destruction* of *Ferusalem*, in Answer to the first Part of their *Question*, from *ver. 4. to 28.* and of the *End* of



of the World, and His Appearance to Judgment, from thence to 31. And as the Former gave *Occasion* to the Discourse of the Latter, and was a remarkable *Type* and Representation of it; so 'tis plainly *distinguished* from it, by a distinct Manner of Expression. Thus He opposes *Those Things*, *i. e.* the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and which *Mark* explains by *Those great Buildings*; and His *Coming* or Appearing at the *End of the World*; which are Expressions appropriate to His final Appearance: The One, He expresses *Plurally* all along; *Those Days*; *The Tribulation of those Days*; and *the Days of Vengeance*: The Other always *Singularly*; *That Day*, and *That Hour*; denoting some *One* great Day, and which is frequently called in other Places, *The Day of the Lord*. The *Former*, He constantly speaks of in the *Second Person*, and directs His Discourse to Them who were *Present*; *Take Ye heed*, and *Ye shall hear of Wars*. Of the *Latter*, He speaks in the *Third Person*, without particular Application to any Age or People, and as a Thing of more *General* and *Extensive Concern*. He distinguishes between the *Signs* of the One, and the Other; 'Tis *after the Tribulation of those Days*, which relate to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, that the *Sun shall be darkned*, and the *Moon not give Her Light*, and the *Stars fall from Heaven*. Of the *Former*,

*the Death of Mr. PICKARD.* 3

mer, He says expressly, *This Generation shall not pass away till all these Things are fulfilled: Of the Latter, Of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man.* 34. 36.

After this Description, He proceeds to exhort Them to discern the *Signs* of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which would be so visible; and to *watch*, because They *knew not the Time when the Lord would come*; as a wise *Housholder* would *watch if he had known the Hour when the Thief would come.* 42. 43. And renews this Advice in a different *Form* in the Words of the Text: *Therefore be Ye also ready, &c. Q. D.* Since worldly Prudence is sufficient to direct you in the *lower* Affairs of Life to secure the Possessions of the World, and provide against a probable Danger; how much rather should you be prepared for the *Coming* of the Lord, which is a Matter of infinitely *greater* Concern, and the precise Time is not certainly known?

The Words consist of Two Parts:

I. The *Duty* exhorted to: *Be Ye also ready.*

II. The *Reason* to enforce it, *For in an Hour that Ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

I shall speak distinctly to Both;

I. The *Duty* to which We are exhorted. To be *ready*. And because this is a Mat-

ter of greatest Moment to every One, I shall endeavour to give You a distinct *Idea* of that *Readiness* for the Coming of Christ, which the Gospel requires and makes Necessary. It signifies in the General a *due Preparation*; so 'tis said in the Gospel Feast, to denote the Suitableness and Preparation of Divine Mercy, *All Things are ready*. It comprehends whatsoever is Necessary to the present Favour, or final Acceptance with our Judge. But more Particularly, This *Readiness* may be distinguished into *Habitual* and *Actual*; either as 'tis Necessary to a *safe* or a *comfortable* Departure and Appearance before Him.

Luk. xiv.  
17.

§. 1. *Habitual* Readiness. 'Tis primarily and *fundamentally* Necessary, that We should be upon *good Terms* with God; and because every *fallen* Creature labours under the double Misery of the *Condemnation* and *Displeasure* of a *righteous* God; and a *Depravation* of Nature, which renders Him contrary to an *holy* God; in order to His *Reconciliation* and *Acceptance*, Two Things are absolutely Necessary; The One *Relative*, and respects his *State*: The Other *Real*, and respects the *Temper* of his Mind.

1. As to the Relative Change of *State*: And That consists in the *Pardon* of Sin thro' the Blood of Christ. The Sufferings and Death of the Lord Jesus Christ was the great *Atonement* and *Propitiation* for Sin. We have *Redemption thro' his Blood*,  
even

Eph. i. 7.

*the Death of Mr. PICKARD.*

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*even the Forgiveness of Sin:* And He has made *Reconciliation for the Sins of the People.* He has made Satisfaction for the Breach of the Law, and procured the Divine Favour upon the most gracious Terms revealed and proposed in the Gospel. This is the Tenour of the Gospel Covenant, That sincere penitent Believers shall be forgiven and accepted: For *Him hath God set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood;* and *Repent, and be converted that Your Sins may be blotted out.* So that in order to our Acceptance and Favour with God, *God for Christ's sake must forgive our Sin.* Upon our sincere Believing in Jesus, and Repenting of Sin, the *Obligation* to Punishment is remitted, and We are *discharged* from Condemnation. Sin is no longer *imputed* to Us, or *laid to our Charge;* and there is *now no Condemnation,* or damning Guilt.

And there is always necessarily *Consequent* upon Pardon, and *connected* with it *Restored Rights;* a Right to all *purchased Benefits,* and a Title to the Heavenly *Inheritance.* We find Them Both joined together in that excellent Scripture: *To open their Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God; that they might receive the Forgiveness of Sin, and an Inheritance among them who are sanctified, by Faith that is in me.* And This, I take it, is the precise Meaning

Heb. ii.  
17.

Rom. iii.  
25.  
Act. iii.  
19.

Eph. iv.  
32.

Act. xxvi.  
18.

Meaning of what the Apostle so often represents under the Notion of *Justification*:

Tit. iii. 7. *We are justified by his Grace, and made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.*

In this Way only a guilty Sinner can hope to be *found of his Judge in Peace*; or *find Mercy of the Lord at the great Day.*

2 Cor. v. The Apostle's great Ambition was, *whether Present or Absent to be accepted of Him,*  
 Philip. iii. 9. *and to be found in Him.*

2. As to what is *Real*, or the Change of *Nature*; There must be the *Renovation* of the Spirit, or Restoration of the Divine *Image*. The *Frame* of depraved Nature must be rectified, and the prevailing *Bent* altered: We must be set to Rights in *all* the Powers of our Souls, and in a *prevailing* Degree. And this may be conceived distinctly to lie in an *Heartly Surrender* and *Entire Subjection* of Soul to Christ. With Respect to the Former, He is represented as the *Bridegroom*; One to Whom We are to stand in so near a *Relation*, and Whom We are to choose as the most suitable and desirable *Good*. So We are said to be *be-*

Hof. ii.

19.

2 Cor. xi

2.

Rom. vii.

4.

*trothed unto* the Lord; and to be *espoused unto Christ as a chaste Virgin*; and to be *married* to Him. We willingly take Him as our *Husband* and *Head*, and consent to Him as the blessed *Bridegroom* of our Souls. He is dear and *precious* to Them who *believe*: So near a *Relation* is esteemed the highest *Honour*, and our *Happiness*  
 lies

*the Death of Mr. PICKARD.*

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lies in *being with Him and beholding his Glory*. They reckon it better to be *Present with the Lord*, tho' *Absent from the Body*, and every earthly Good. Has there ever been such a solemn *Transaction* between God and your Souls, as a *Covenant Surrender* to Him, with all Your Heart, and without Reserve? Have You been brought to *give Your selves to the Lord*, upon a thorow Conviction of His real *Excellence* and unquestionable *Right*: And to look upon Your *selves*, and all that is *Yours*, as Things *Dedicated* and Devoted to Him, and which cannot without the grossest *Sacrilege*, be alienated from Him?

Besides, There must be an Entire *Subjection* of Soul to Him; For We take Him as our Lord, as well as choose Him for our *Portion*. The Apostle mentions Both together: *Whose I am, and Whom I* Act. xxvii: *serve*. He is represented here as the *Lord* <sup>23.</sup> *of the Household*, who appoints His Servants their proper *Work*, and gives *Them* <sup>45.</sup> *their Meat in due Season*. He is a *Lord* to be obeyed, as well as a *Portion* to be enjoyed; and We must *serve* Him faithfully, as well as expect our *Reward* from Him. We must have *Respect to all his Commands*, and *walk in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless*; without a single Exception, or any Dislike. We must *cast down imaginations, and* 2 Cor. x. *every high Thing which exalteth it self* <sup>5.</sup> *against*

against the Knowledge of God; and bring into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ. As We are devoted to Him, We must be imployed by Him; and be willing Instruments of his *Glory*; ready to serve his *Interests*, and to be at his *Dispose*: His *Will* must be a sufficient Reason of cheerful *Obedience* in the most difficult Instance of Duty, and his *Glory* the highest *End* of all We do. *To us to live must be Christ*; the proper Business of Life, and the End of every Action of it. It must be our earnest Desire, *That Christ may be magnified in our Body, whether by Life or by Death*; and *That God in all Things may be glorified by Us thro' Jesus Christ*. And thus every sincere Christian is Ready for the Coming of Christ, and can't be utterly surprized, or found Unready. But because They may not be always in a suitable *Frame*, or right Disposition of Soul, therefore

Philip. i.

21.

20.

1 Pet. iv.

11.

§. 2. There is an *Actual* Readiness; or a suitable *Frame* and Posture of Soul. And this may be considered as lying either in the *Performance* of certain special *Duties*; or in the *Exercise* of certain suitable *Graces*. And Both are Necessary wherever there is *Time* and *Opportunity* afforded; and according to the Measure of Our *Capacities* and *Helps*: I shall briefly represent Them Both.

1. There must be the *Performance* of some special *Duties*, which have a nearer Relation to the present Case: As now for Example: There must be a wise *Improvement* of our proper Talents. We are All *Stewards* of several Talents; the Lord of the Household has committed many Things to our Care, and dealt forth his Mercy with a kind and bountiful Hand: There are *Diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit*; and 1 Cor. xii. *He divideth to every Man severally as He will.* Thus We have *Natural* Faculties and Noble Powers, of Understanding and Memory, of Will and Affections, and executive Powers: The Gifts of *Common* Providence; as Life and Time; Liberty and Health; Convenience and Comfort of Life; Riches, Interest, Reputation in the World: Especially *Vouchsafements* of Divine Mercy; the Means of Grace, and Opportunities of spiritual Advantage, and efficacious Influences of the Divine Spirit. Now a *Steward must be faithful*, if he would give a good *Account* of his *Stewardship*. We must *trade* with our Talents *till He come, that He may receive his own with Usury*; and Luk. xix. 23. wisely improve every Blessing to its respective Purpose and End; to promote the *Glor*y of the great Lord, and serve his *Interest* in the World, in all the *Capacities* and *Relations* in which We stand. “ If any Thing  
“ I possess in this World, or any Thing I  
“ am Capable of Doing, may the least con-



“tribute to promote his Glory; I stand  
 “ready to obey his Call, and am willing  
 “to make the best Advantage of it.” And  
 They who hide their *Talents in a Napkin*,  
 as well as They who abuse and squander  
 them away, will be *stript naked*, and severely  
 censured at last.

Again, There must be faithful *Diligence* in  
 our particular *Callings*. The great Lord of all  
 has *determined the Bounds of our Habitation*;  
 and directed the Circumstances of our Lives;  
 1 Cor. vii. and *Every Man must abide in the same Cal-*  
 20. *ling wherein He was called*, till He is called  
 from it, by the plain Voice of Providence.  
 This seems intended in the Expression:  
 46. *Blessed is the Servant whom the Lord when*  
*He cometh shall find so Doing*; properly  
 employed, in the respective Duties of his  
 Place, as a wise and faithful Servant under  
 the special Direction and Appointment of  
 his Lord. We must be Diligent in the par-  
 ticular *Business* of Life, Each One in his  
 proper *Station*, and about his proper *Work*.  
 Colof. ii. The Apostle directs Servants; *Whatsoever*  
 24. *Ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not*  
*as to Men; knowing that of the Lord Ye*  
*shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance;*  
*for Ye serve the Lord Christ*: They serve  
 Christ in faithful Doing their Master's Ser-  
 vice. And the Apostle *Peter* excites Chris-  
 2 Pet. iii. tians to be *Diligent, that They may be*  
 14. *found of Him in Peace*. Idleness and Secu-  
 rity, a careless and indifferent Mind, is a  
 just

just Reproach at present, and will fall under a heavy Condemnation at last. The *Wicked and Slothful Servant* will be cast into *outward Darknes*. It was an excellent Saying to this Purpose of the *Renowned Calvin*, when his Friends dissuaded Him from immoderate Study in his declining Age; *That His Lord when He came, should not find Him Idle.*

Besides, There must be a Cautious *Watchfulness* against Sin. Here lyes our Danger in the present State: We are surrounded with *Snares* on every Hand, and almost every Object about Us is capable of drawing forth our Corruption, enflaming our Passions, and raising some irregular or immoderate Desire; or being an Instrument and Occasion of Sin. Now there is Need of continual Watch over Our Selves, and Guard against every Thing about Us; especially the Temptations of our own *Inclination* and Temper; and our respective *Places* and Circumstances of Life, That no agreeable Good entangle and defile our Souls; or any Propensity to Evil, be encouraged and indulged. Our Lord Himself cautions his Disciples, with reference to this Case, against *Violence, Sensuality, and Worldliness*. 'Tis said of the *Evil Servant who began to smite his Fellow-Servants, and eat and drink with the Drunken; the Lord of that Servant shall come in a Day when He looketh not for Him.* And more particularly in *Luke, Take heed* Luk. xxi. 34.

*heed to Your selves, lest at any Time Your Heart be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this World; and so that Day come upon You unawares.*

'Tis an ill Posture of Mind for the Coming of the Lord to be found in the midst of *angry* Contention, and *violent* Opposition to other good Men \*; or to be at Enmity with Others, when We should be *found of our Judge in Peace*. And sensual *Excess*, and earthly *Cares*, easily insinuate and possess the Mind, and strongly divert, and indispose it to any serious and spiritual Purpose.

34. *Finally*, There must be the solemn Exercise of *Devotion*. We must *Watch and Pray*, that We *enter not into Temptation*; and that We may be *accounted Worthy to escape all these Things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man*. Our Life must be a daily Converse with God in a Course of religious Duties, with Whom We hope to live and converse

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\* A good Man would not be very willing, when his Lord comes to be found so Doing, and, as it were, *beating his Fellow-Servant*; and all Controversy, as 'tis usually managed, is little better. A good Man would be loath to be taken out of the World, *reaking hot* from a sharp Contention with a perverse Adversary; and not a little *out of Countenance*, to find Himself in this Temper translated into the calm and peaceable Regions of Blessedness, where Nothing but perfect Charity and Good Will reign for ever. Archbishop Tillotson's Preface to the Sermons of *Steadfastness in Religion*.

for ever. There must be fervent *Prayer* enliven'd with the Thoughts of the Appearance of Christ, and its daily Approach: Constant *Attendance* on all the Parts of Divine Worship in Private and Publick, as We have Call and Opportunity: Particularly the solemn Exercise of *Meditation*; the Workings of holy Thoughts and Desires; and inward Reflections and Reviews of our State, and frequent Tryals and *Self-Examination*. By conversing much with God and our Selves, We come to be *transformed* into his Likeness, and fit for *Appearance* of our Lord.

2. There is the *Exercise* of certain suitable *Graces*; or due Dispositions of Mind peculiarly suitable to it. For Example: There must be a *weaned* Heart from the present World; and a *Willingness* to leave it at His Call. The World is a *sensible* Thing, and suitable to our sensible Nature: 'Tis always near Us, and always about Us, and under some or other Appearance of it, smiling and grateful. 'Tis apt to *strike* powerfully upon our Senses which lie outwardmost, and receive the first Impression; and to raise too high a Value in our Minds, and too strong Affections toward it. And Nothing is so dead a *Weight* upon the *aspiring* Soul, or so strong a *Diversion*; Nothing so apt to make Us, like *Lot's* Wife, linger and hancker after what We must leave behind Us; or ready to say with the Disciple

ple upon the Mount, *'Tis good for Us to be here.* This Earth has a *Central Force*, and naturally draws to it self whatsoever is *Congenial* within its *Sphere* of Motion. And the *Spirit of the World*, or an Earthly Mind, naturally tends towards its *Center*.

Now in order to our actual Readiness for the Coming of Christ, We must be *mortified* to Sensible Good; and *crucified to the World by the Cross of Christ*; and have the *Victory of Faith* which *overcometh the World*. We must be *dead* to the *Charms* and *Terrours* of a vain and flattering World; That is, so thorowly convinced of the *Vanity* of the Creature, as to renounce it as a *Portion*, and set loose to all the *lawful* Enjoyments of it. We must keep up an *Indifference* of Mind in the fullest Enjoyment, and be *as tho' We possess it not*; and let our *Moderation be known to all Men, because the Lord is at Hand*: Which respects moderate Cares and Enjoyments of *Worldly Good*; That We may not be too eagerly engaged in the Pursuit, or violently *rent* from it at last, and *torn* from its Embraces with a grieved and *reluctant* Heart. We must be *content* to leave the World at the Call of Christ, and for the Sake of being with Him, who is our *Hope*, and our *Life*; and which is *far better* than the dearest Enjoyment, and best Circumstance of Life.

Besides, A patient *Submission* under present

sent Tryals, is very proper to this Case; and that not only under the present *Delays* of His Coming, which is sometimes an Exercise to a prepared Soul: They are ready to say, *Why are his Chariots so long a coming? why tarry the Wheels of his Chariots?* But especially under the *Burdens* of Nature, and Sufferings of Life, in the meantime; and whatsoever he sees fit to make their Tryal in this World. If the latter End of their Way is rough and uneasy to Them; thick beset with Difficulties; encompassed with Darknes, with many Pains of Body, and Decays of Nature; with Perplexities of Affairs, and *Trouble in Their* Luke xxi. *Soul*; They must *possess their Souls in Their* 19. *Patience*; *i. e.* Not be turned out of the Possession of Themselves, or *lie at the Mercy* of any *Accident* which befalls Them. They have a quiet Composure under the Burden of a *dissolving* Nature, and the greatest *Affliction* of Life? They are *patient until the Coming of the Lord*, and in Jam. v. 7. the View and Consideration of it. 'Tis equally the Langague of *Impatience* and *Security* to say with the Evil Servant, *My Lord Delays his Coming.*

Again, *Humble Resignation* to the Divine Pleasure is peculiarly proper. We must not only be composed into *silent* Submission, but *cheerful* Resignation to his Sovereign Will: *Willing* to be at his Direction and Disposal as to the *Time* and *Place*, the  
*Manner*

*Manner and Circumstances* of our Departure and Removal: " Let Him do what He

" will with me, for He has a Right to dispose of His Own. I am more His than

" I am my Own, and His Right to me is greater than any Creatures can be. He

" is my gracious *Redeemer*, as well as my proper *Lord*: I have given up my Self

" to Him, and choose Him as my Portion: I *love* Him more than All, and can safely

2 Tim. i. 12. " *ly trust* Him with All: *I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that*

" *what I have committed to Him, He is able also to keep against that Day*; and I

" freely resign to His holy Pleasure in all His Disposals of me, and am ready to

" yield a *Willing* Soul to his powerful Care and faithful Mercy; to say with my latest

Luk. xxiii. 46. " *Breath; Father, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit. Now, Lord, lettest thou*

Luk. ii. 29. " *thy Servant depart in Peace: And Lord Jesus receive my Soul.*

Act. vii. 59. To conclude this Matter, There must be earnest *Expectation* and *Waiting* for Him.

Sincere Christians are often described by this Temper, They *love his Appearance*, and

*wait for the Son of God from Heaven*; and look for the *blessed Hope and glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour*

*Jesus Christ*: They look for, and hasten to the *Coming of the Day of the Lord*. This

is represented by a parallel *Evangelist* in figurative Expressions; *Let Your Loins be girt,*

*and*

*the Death of Mr PICKARD.* 17

*and Your Lights burning, and You Your Luk. xii.  
Selves like Men who wait for the Lord:* 35.

An Allusion to Men returning home from a Wedding, and waiting for the Bridegroom. They stand in a Posture of Expectation, welcome the distant Appearance of his Return, and are ready to fly into His Arms. They wait for the *glorious Manifestation of the Sons of God*, and their compleat *Redemption*; and are ready to embrace Him with *open Hearts* and *warm Affections* of Soul. This is the *next* and nearest Instance of Actual Readiness for the Coming of the Lord.

I shall only farther observe here, That this sometimes in eminent Christians rises up to holy *Confidence*, and earnest *Desire*: They are *confident*, and *willing rather to be ab-* 1 Cor. v.  
*sent from the Body and present with the* 8.  
*Lord*; are armed with *Christian Courage* against the Terrors of Death; and are *in a* Philip. i.  
*Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to de-* 23.  
*part, and be with Christ.* They are able to express in their Dying Moments, not only a *Satisfaction*, but *Assurance of Mind*; the *Triumphs*, and *Joy of Faith*: Tho' this is not the *necessary* Fruit of Faith, or *Essential* to our being Ready, but the rare *Privilege* of Those who are more confirmed and improved, who have reached to higher Attainments in the Christian Life, and been remarkably Faithful to God.

II. I am to consider the *Reason* here assigned: *For in an Hour You think not the*



*Son of Man cometh.* The *Coming* here spoken of is, His solemn *Appearance* in glorious Majesty at the final Judgment, surrounded with Hosts of Angels, encompassed with Flames of Fire; summoning all the World before Him in one general Assembly; entering into the Merits of every particular Case, and distributing Rewards and Punishments, according to Their respective State. This is every where mention'd under the Notion of his Coming or *Appearing*. But because our Life and *Time are in his Hands*, as well as our *future*, and eternal State; and the One of these is so closely connected with the Other; We may upon good Reason *extend* the Signification, and take into the Case the Consideration of our *Death*, or Removal out of the World. For Death to every *particular* Person is in many Respects the same Thing, with the general Judgment to the *Whole World*; Death ends all the World with every Man, and brings Him to His determined State; and 'tis, in a Manner, the same Thing with Him, as if the World were immediately dissolved. Our Lord concludes this Discourse in *Mark*, with these remarkable Words; *What I say to You, I say to All, watch.*

Mar. xiii.  
37.

But tho' the *Latter* may be comprehended in the *Meaning* of the Expression, at least in the *Reason* and Design of it; yet 'tis the *Former* only is expressed, as That which is more *Awful* in it Self, and more apt to impress

press our Minds. Besides that, 'Tis upon the Account of the following Judgment, that Death is at all so awful. *After Death,* Heb. ix. *the Judgment.* And *behold a pale Horse,* <sup>27.</sup> *and He who sat on Him was Death, and* Rev. vi. 8. *Hell followed.* If Death were alone, and without a *Companion*; If it were only *Anihilation*, or Dissolution of our Being; a State of eternal *Silence*, and *Oblivion*; it would not be so *terrible* a Thing: But as Death *consigns* Us to Judgment, and is the next *Step* to the *Bar* of Christ; it becomes very *Awful* and *Important*, and worthy our deep and serious Thoughts.

In considering this Branch of the Subject, I shall, 1. Enquire, *Why* God has so ordered the Matter, and *vindicate* the Divine Conduct, in hiding from Us the Time of His Coming, 2. Consider the *Force* of the Reason, or the *Justness* of this *Consequence*; from the *Coming* of Christ to our being always *ready*.

§. 1. I shall enquire, *Why* God has so ordered the Matter; That We should not *know the Hour when the Son of Man cometh*. Of this, some Account may be given in the following Particulars.

(1.) To display his *Sovereignty*. 'Tis a *Royalty* of the Divinity, and a *Reserve* of Knowledge to Himself: A Mark of sovereign *Authority*, and *Distinction* from the Creatures. He, who *knows all Things*, has seen fit to keep this Knowledge from us.

And as the Thing depends upon Divine *Pleasure*, and is an Act of sovereign Freedom, it cannot be known by any Creature without an exprefs *Revelation*. We find the great God *glories* in this Distinction, and triumphs over all the *Idols* of the Earth, in the Knowledge of *future Events*.

Isa. xliii. *Shew the Things which are to come here-*  
 23. *after ; that We may know that Ye are Gods.*  
 And 'tis made a grand *Peculiarity* of the  
 xlv. 10. Divine Being, That He *declares the End*  
*from the Beginning, and from ancient Times*  
*the Things which are not yet done.* And  
 if what depends upon the Actions of *free*  
 Agents, is a *Knowledge too wonderful for*  
*Us ;* how much more what entirely depends  
 upon His own *Pleasure ?*

Now He has not revealed His Will about  
 it, but exprefly assured Us, That no One  
 knows it. This Account our Lord here  
 v. 36. gives of it : *Of that Day and Hour know-*  
*eth no Man ; no not the Angels, but my Fa-*  
*ther.* Neither Man or Angel : 'Tis a Se-  
 cret in the Divine Counsel, and concealed  
 from the Knowledge of all the World. And  
 'tis highly *Congruous*, There should be a  
 Sovereignty of *Knowledge* as well as of  
*Goodness*, or any other Perfection of His  
 Nature. And our Lord tells his Disciples  
 after His Resurrection, *'Tis not for You to*  
 Act. i. 7. *know the Times and Seasons, which the Fa-*  
*ther hath put in his own Power.* It be-  
 comes Us to *reverence* and adore the sove-  
 reign

reign Majesty and unsearchable Perfection of God, and not to be either *busy* or *bold* in prying into Things not *revealed*; or determining Times declared, *Uncertain*. *Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God*; Deut. *but those Things which are revealed, belong* xx. x. 29. *unto Us, and to our Children for ever, that We may do all the Words of this Law.*

(2.) 'Tis an Exercise of *Wisdom* and *Mercy* in several Respects. As

1. It would be altogether *Useless* to Us. It could signifie Nothing to any valuable Purpose, to know the Time. It would only gratifie the *Curiosity* of our Minds, and be a piece of useless *Speculation*; but could add no *Weight* to the Argument, or contribute any Thing to our *real* Improvement. The precise *Time* when a Thing will happen is only *Accidental* to it, and an *extrin-sick* Circumstance, which does not affect the *Nature* of the Thing: And We have sufficient Evidence of the *Truth* of His Coming, tho' We know not the *Time* of it, to engage our *present* Readiness, and utmost Concern. All the *Reasons* of Readiness, and Motives of Persuasion, would *in Themselves* have the same Force, and stand just as They did, whenever He should appear. Besides

2. There is a manifest *Inconvenience* would necessarily attend the Knowledge of it. For suppose It should appear, That the Coming of Christ, either by Death or Judgment, were a *great* Way off, or at a  
con-

considerable *Distance* from Us : There would be Danger in that Case of *Security* and *Presumption*. Men are strangely prone to grow *Remiss*, and greedily catch at every *Occasion*, or *Excuse*. And it would be too strong a *Temptation* as They stand Disposed and Circumstanced, with all their Appetites, and Enjoyments about Them ; to run into *Security* and Neglect ; and They would Naturally, upon this *Presumption*, *delay* Their Preparation for His Coming, and think it Time enough, Hereafter ; perhaps a little before the Close of Life ; at least, That there could be no *Danger* in a longer Delay, while They have so much *Time* before Them. They would reckon Themselves *safe* in a free Enjoyment ; and farther Pursuits of Life ; in careless Neglects, or Indulgence to Sin ; and while They *put the Evil Day far off*, come to put it out of Their Mind. When the *Evil-Servant* began to say in his Heart, *My*

48, 49. *Lord delayeth his Coming* ; He then *smote his Fellow-Servants, and eat and drunk with the Drunken*. And the Rich Man in the Gospel very comfortably reckoned upon *Taking his Ease, and Eating and Drinking, and being Merry*, when He had said to His Soul, *Thou hast Goods laid up for many Years*. We see how common a *Snare* This is notwithstanding all the *Uncertainty* of His Coming ; and the General Carelessness which prevails in the World,

is

is a Matter of daily Observation and Complaint. And how much more, may We reasonably suppose, must it needs be so, upon *certain* Knowledge of a *greater* Distance from Them? And 'tis Wise and Merciful to most Men, to keep Them Ignorant of what is so liable to be *abused*, and in all likelihood would increase Their Guilt.

Or if We should suppose on the other Hand, That the Coming of the Lord were certainly *Near*, and within a little While; a few Days or Months Hence; There would be Danger in that Case, of an *overwhelming* Concern, and *discouraging* Dread. The Apprehension would be too *Strong* and Affecting: It would be like to engage Their Minds *too intently*, and indispose Them for every Thing else: As We see the Terrors of a *Criminal* at a Sentence of *Death*, or the Sight of the Place of their *Execution*. Men would think it Reasonable upon this Supposition, especially Good Men, to spend all the little Remainder of Life in *actual* Preparation, and to do Nothing but get ready. So near an Approach would astonish and surprize; be *overbearing* to the Mind, and look too much like *Force*; and make Their Endeavours the Effect of *Fear*, and not of *Reason* and Choice. And this must necessarily interrupt all the *Business* of Life, and prevent all Care of any farther Improvement; of acquiring useful *Knowledge*, or contributing to the *Publick Good*. No  
Man

Man would have the Heart to apply in good Earnest to any Business of the World, or attend to any of the Concerns of it; who had a certain Knowledge of a speedy *Removal*, and being cut off in the Midst of it: So it would be *Injurious* to the present Welfare of the World, and very much affect it in all its Interest: And 'tis certainly Right and Kind, to hide that Knowledge from Us, which would not only signify Nothing to Us, but be like to do Us so much *Hurt*, and hinder Us from Doing so much *Good*.

3. 'Tis best suited to the present *State*, as well as the Temper of our Minds. We are placed here in a *State of Tryal*, under the Exercise of Divine Patience, and Enjoyment of Means, and with many Encouragements to our Indeavours and Hope. We are Now to act our Part in order to the future State of the other World: And 'tis very Suitable to such a State, to make the best Use of the *Means* afforded, and be in a Posture of Preparation: We should be always found in the Way of our *Duty* while We are in a State of Probation, and kept under a constant Sense of our *Dependance* upon God: For the Whole State of the other World, depends upon our present *Improvement*, and Preparation. And Nothing is more Agrecable to the Nature of *Faith*, which is the *distinguishing* Principle of the Christian Life: For *We walk by Faith, and not*

*not by Sight*; and *Faith is to Us the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen.* Faith is instead of Sight and Presence, and gives a *Reality and Nearness* to Things Invisible and Distant? *We see Him who is Invisible, and have respect unto the Recompence of Reward.* We depend upon the Credit of the Word of God, and are fully *persuaded* of His Faithfulness and Power, and *act* in believing Views and Apprehensions of what is to come. In the Power of this Principle, *Noah, being warned of God, was moved with Fear, and Abraham obeyed the Call of God, and went out, not knowing whither He went.* And Christians *rejoice in Hope of a promised Glory.* 'Tis the Excellence and Glory of Faith to *trust* God with all our Concerns, and *wait* His Pleasure in the Disposal of Them. And 'tis a proper Posture and Temper of Mind, to be *waiting for the Son of God from Heaven, and looking for his second Appearance without Sin unto Salvation.* It would be Unsuitable to a *State of Tryal, and Principle of Faith,* to have sensible *Evidence,* or proper *Knowledge:* For then We should *walk by Sight* in this World, and Faith become *Useless.* It would destroy the *Distinction* between the two Worlds, and *anticipate* the future State; for it would commence *Knowledge,* and be no longer *Faith.*

4. 'Tis best calculated for our *Advantage:*

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For



For it naturally tends to *quicken* our Diligence, and make Us *constantly* Ready. We know not the Time when our Lord shall come, That both Good and Bad Men may have no *Pretence* or *Excuse* for Neglect and Delay; and That Both may be getting Ready. It has the Advantage of a powerful *Motive*, of continual *Efficacy* and Force; without the *Disadvantage* of either of the *former* Suppositions: For if We *know not the Hour when the Son of Man cometh*, there can be no Pretence for *Presumption*, or *Discouragement*; but all the Reason in the World for *timely* Care. It must be highly Unreasonable upon this Supposition to *delay* a Moment, and highly Reasonable to be always *Prepared*; and in the Midst of all the Cares and Enjoyments of Life, to attend chiefly to what is more Considerable and Important. 'Tis a wise Artifice of Providence to keep Us always *waiting*, and always *watching*; and to furnish a *quicken*ing Motive to *all Diligence*. How careful should We always be who continually expect the Coming of the Lord? *What manner of Persons*, says the Apostle, *ought Ye to be?* And *seeing Ye look for such Things, be diligent that Ye may be found of Him in Peace*. But this leads me to consider more particularly the

2 Pet. i i  
11, 14.

§. 2. The *Force* of the Reason, from the *Coming of the Lord*, to our being *ready*.

I shall

I shall argue only from the Circumstances of the Text :

I. From the *Nature* of His Coming, or the true *Design* and Importance of it. He will not appear in *empty* State, only to *shew* Himself to the World, and display the *Ensigns of Majesty* ; to be *gazed* at, and beheld with Wonder, and receive the *Homage* of the adoring World. 'Tis not a Matter of *Ceremony* and *State* : His Appearance is to great and weighty Purposes, and is every where spoken of as a most Momentous Thing. And very reasonably : For the Coming of Christ will put an *End* to the present *State* ; to all the *Means* of Grace, and *Mercies* of Life, and the whole State of *Trial* and Probation. Now God *wants to be gracious*, and *God is in Christ reconciling the World to Himself*. His *Spirit strives* in the Hearts of Men by powerful *Convictions*, and kindly *Motions*. The *Ministers of Christ beseech You in his Name*, and by powerful Arguments *persuade* Men. The Opportunities of Mercy are lengthened out, and there is *Now a Day of Salvation* and an *accepted Time*, and *Space to Repent*, and fair Encouragements and Hopes. We are not *far from the Kingdom of Heaven* under the outward Dispensation of the Gospel Grace : Nothing is wanting but hearty *Willingness*, and faithful *Improvement* to make You secure and safe. But the Coming of the Lord will put an End to all, and shut

1 Cor. xv. 24. up the present State: *When the End shall come He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father: i. e.* The Mediatorial Kingdom. The whole Dispensation of *Grace* will be abolished by the *Second* Coming of Christ, as That of the *Law* was by the *First*, and there will be no one Opportunity or Call of Mercy more to Them who are found Unready.

Besides, The Coming of the Lord will *determine* our *eternal* State, and put a final Issue to all our *depending* Concerns: It will leave Us to all *Eternity* in the State in which it finds Us. For He will appear in the Quality of a *Judge*, and call every Man to Account, and pass a *decisive* Sentence. The Apostle tells Us; *We must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ to receive the Things done in the Body, according to what We have done, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.* And He is introduced, saying; *Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give to every Man according as his Work shall be.* Unprepared Souls will be concluded under an *irreversible* Doom, without any *Reserves* of Mercy, or Hope of *Relief*. There will be no Opportunity of rectifying the Errors of our *past* Conduct, or executing the *future* Purposes of our Minds; of *retrieving* former Neglects, or *providing* better for our Souls; there will be no changing the *Bent* of the Heart, or altering the *State* for

2 Cor. v. 10.

Rev. xxii. 12.

for ever. *Time will be no more*, and the eternal World commence. And is it not of the *last* Consequence to our best Interests to be prepared for His Coming, which will conclude the *present* State of Mercy, and introduce an *Unchangeable* State?

2. From the *Certainty* of it. This is here *supposed*, and taken for granted, as 'tis often expressly asserted in other Places. Be Ye ready, for He will *certainly* come. The *Jews* had all along a *traditional* Belief of the Coming of the *Messiah* to judge the World, according to the ancient *Prophecy* recorded by *Jude*: *And Enoch also, the* v. 14.  
*Seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten Thousand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all.* And We read in *Daniel's* Vision, That *ten thousand Times ten Thou-* Dan. vii.  
*sand stood before Him: The Judgment was* 10.  
*set, and the Books were opened.* Our Lord Himself frequently assures Us of it, and directs the Consideration to the *Comfort* and *Support* of his faithful Followers under all the Sufferings and Tryals of Life: *They shall see the Son of Man coming in the* 30.  
*Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory:* And promises His *Disciples*; *I will* Joh. xiv.  
*come again, and receive You to my Self.* 3.  
And He, who *testifieth these Things, saith,* Rev. xxii.  
*surely I come.* The Apostles always made 20.  
the *Coming* of the Lord the great *Argument* of Persuasion to awaken secure *Sin-*  
*ners,*

- ners, and encourage Christians to *Moderation, Patience, and Joy*. He tells the *Athenians* of a *Day appointed to judge the World in Righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained*. And speaks to Christians,
- A<sup>ct.</sup> xvii. 31. *Knowing therefore the Terrors of the Lord We persuade Men. And the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh. And yet a little while, and He who shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels, in Flames of Fire. And behold He cometh with Clouds, and every Eye shall see Him, and They also who pierced Him, and all the Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. And the Apostle Peter represents it as the foolish Scoff of wicked Men in the last Days, to say, Where is the Promise of his Coming, for since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation?*
- 2 Cor. v. 11, Heb. x. 37. 2 Theff. i. 7. Rev. i. 7. 2 Pet. iii. 4.

There is an absolute *Necessity* of his Coming upon the highest Accounts, both with Respect to *Himself*, and to *Us*; to vindicate His injured Honour, and do *Himself* publick Right; and to fulfil His gracious *Promises*, and compleat His Undertaking. He will as certainly come in the Clouds of Heaven, as if We Now saw Him with our Eyes; and will as surely come by Death to every One, as if We were already *Dead*, wrapt in a *Winding Sheet*, and actually laid

laid

laid in the *Grave*. We pass on like busy *Travellers* on the *Road*, or *Passengers* in a *Ship*, however We are employed; and advance every *Step* to our *Journey's End*, whether We think of it or no. A few more *Years* and *Sabbaths*; a few more *Days* and *Nights*; a few more *Opportunities* and *Mercies*; and the *Trump* will sound in our *Ears*, the *Dead* will rise to *Judgment*; the *World* will be all on *Fire* round about *Us*; and the glorious *Redeemer* will appear.

He will certainly come whatsoever *State* We are in, and whether We are provided or not. There is no *preventing* His *Appearance*, or *escaping* our *Own*. It don't depend upon thy *Diligence* and *Readiness* whether He will come or *No*: He will not delay a *Moment*, because Thou art not prepared. And every *Day* hastens His *Approach*: It comes toward *Us* as fast as the *Moments* fly away; and He is nearer to *Us* Now than when We first came hither. And should We not be *ready* for what is so certain to come, and impossible to be avoided? Should We venture so great a *Concern* upon so *desperate* an *Issue*, That all our *Safety* should depend upon His *not* coming at all; and that, if He certainly come, We should utterly be *Undone*?

3. From the *Suddenness* of it; or *Uncertainty* of our *Knowledge*. This is particularly exprest here: *For in such an Hour*

*as You think not, the Son of Man cometh:*  
 When You have no Thought of it in your  
 Mind: And This is variously represented in  
 the Scripture by the liveliest *Images* of Sud-  
 27. *denness and Surprize. As the Light com-*  
*eth out of the East, and shineth even to the*  
*West; so shall also the Coming of the Son of*  
*Man be; and Nothing is more Instantani-*  
 39. *ous. 'Tis compared to the Times of Noah's*  
*Flood; They knew not until the Flood came,*  
*and took them all away: So shall also the*  
*Coming of the Son of Man be. And to a*  
 43. *Thief in the Night, who comes when no*  
*One looks for Him, in the Darknes of the*  
*Night, and the Depth of Sleep: If the*  
*good Man had known in what Watch the*  
*Thief would come, He would have watched.*  
 2 Pet. iii. And the Apostle says, *The Day of the Lord*  
 10. *cometh as a Thief in the Night. Mark*  
 Mar. xiii. speaks more particularly: *You know not*  
 37. *when the Master of the House cometh, at*  
*Evening, or Midnight, or Cock Crowing,*  
*or in the Morning; lest coming suddenly He*  
 Rev. xxii. *find You sleeping. And our Lord says; Be-*  
 12. *hold I come quickly. And by reason of this*  
*Uncertainty of the Time, it will be a great*  
*Surprize upon the careless World: And*  
 38. *so 'tis compared to the Days of Noah,*  
*when They were eating and drinking, and*  
*marrying, and giving in Marriage; and*  
 Luk. xxi. *Luke says; And so that Day come upon*  
 34. *You Unawares, for as a Snare shall it come*  
*upon all who dwell upon the Face of the*  
*Earth.*

*Earth.* The World at last will be generally *Secure*; Some *Quiet* and Indolent; Others *Active* and Busy, without any Fear or Apprehension of Mind. The Terror of His Appearance will strike the amazed World with Silence, create a *Universal Hush*, and put a *Stop*, and put an *End* to all the *Business* and Pursuits of Life, and all the *Thoughts* and Purposes of Their Hearts.

We know not the *Day of our Death*; Gen. xxiii. what *Day* or *Year*, whether *This* or the <sup>2.</sup>  
*Next*: What *Season* of Life, whether *Young* or *Old*: In what *Circumstance* and Condition, whether in the Hurry of Business, and Pursuit of Pleasure; or in a *secret* Retirement, or *solemn* Attendance upon God: In what *Place* of the World, whether in the House, or Field, at Home, or Abroad. You design it may be to think of Death and Judgment, hereafter, and only put it off to a *more convenient Season*; when You can find *Leisure* from other Things, or have lost the *Relish* of Them. You don't intend to live all Your Days in this Neglect, or to be *overtaken* Unprovided. But You think there is *Time* enough before You, and there is no Need of so great *Haste*; That a little more Delay can do no great Harm. *Yet a little Sleep, a little* Prov. vi.  
*Slumber, a little Folding of the Hands to* 10.  
*sleep.* But, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul may be required of Thee*; and *Thou knowest*



*est not what a Day may bring forth. At Midnight, the Cry may be made, behold the Bridegroom cometh, go Ye forth to meet Him.* 'Tis possible Thou may'st not have the least *Warning*, or Room to offer up a *single* Desire to God, or to say once, *Lord, have Mercy upon me.* Thou may'st be suddenly hurried out of the World, and dragged to the Tribunal Above; and snatch'd in a Moment from all the Mercies of Life, and all the Hopes of Mercy for ever. Death may strike Thee down Unseen, and ruin all thy Purposes for ever; and *in that very Day thy Thoughts perish.* Thou may'st be taken away under the greatest *Disadvantage*, and when Thou would'st least choose to be found; in the Midst of open *Wickedness*, or careless *Neglects*; or in profound

1 Theff. v. 3. *Security*, and a treacherous *Peace: When They shall say Peace and Safety, sudden Destruction cometh upon Them, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and They shall not escape.* He may appear in the Midst of thy golden Dreams, and the *Midnight Cry* awake Thee out of thy fatal Slumbers. And should We leave the Matter to *infinite* Uncertainty, and act so *unreasonable* a Part, and so Inconsistent with our Selves, to run an apparent Hazard in so grand an Affair; who are Careful in every *lower* Interest to provide against a *less* Uncertainty? Can We be Easy and Patient when our *Souls* are in Danger and our *Salvation* lies at Stake,  
 who

who find so great a Concern when our *Health* or *Estates* are nearly affected? And be only Unconcerned in our greatest Interest, who are all for Certainty, and being Secure in Every Other Thing?

4. I argue from the *Consequences* of His Coming, especially when 'tis sudden. And I shall represent it briefly *Both Ways*, and in a *different* Light.

1. Let Us consider the *dreadful* Surprize of an *Unprepared* Sinner. Suppose Now That *coming suddenly He find You sleeping*; in a secure and unpardoned State. Who can conceive the Horror and Woe of the miserable Soul, under the Power of such a Surprize? When *Belshazzar* saw the Fingers of a Man's Hand writing upon the Plaister of the Wall, in the Midst of all His Company and Mirth; *His Countenance* Dan. v. 6. *was changed, and His Thoughts troubled Him; so that the Joints of His Loins were loosed, and His Knees smote one against another.* The *Midnight Cry* rouzed the *slumbering Virgins*, and made them in great Confusion cry out to the Wise, *Give* Mat. xxv. *Us of Your Oil for our Lamps are gone out:* <sup>8.</sup>

A lively Image of Horror and Surprize.

How will They stand *Confounded* and *A-mazed*; What *Paleness* will appear in every Countenance; what *Anguish* fill every Heart? The first Sight of the glorious *Judge* will strike Them into *Silence*, and throw Them into *Agonies* of Soul. How sad will

be the Ruin of Their presumptuous *Hopes*; How cutting the Review of Their past *Neglects*; How hideous the Noise of Their fruitless Cries? Lost Opportunities, and despised Mercy will awaken the tormenting *Passions*, and every *Thought* will feed and aggravate the Pain.

Why, to be hurried out of the World in a Moment, and find Our Selves at the Bar of God; to be *surprized* into eternal Misery all at once, and *encompassed* round with Flames before We are aware; to fall under the dreadful Sentence of the *Slothful* Servant; *Cast Him into outward Dark-ness*; *Cut Him asunder, and appoint Him a Portion with the Hypocrites*; to have the *Worm which never dies*, added to the *Fire which never can be quenched*; to fall under the Weight of Divine *Wrath*, and the Torment of eternal *Despair* at the same Time, Lord, who can conceive the insupportable Distress! Careless and stupid Sinners will rouse and awake, and feel the quickest Sense; They will say, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my latter End be as His*; They will see it infinitely Reasonable, when They are most *Impartial*, and curse Their Folly when 'tis too late. Those Arguments and Means, which could not Now prevail, and were easily forgot; will then come fresh to Their Mind, and appear with piercing *Brightness*, and irresistible *Force*: They will wish ten thousand

Matt.  
xxiv. 5.

and Times, That They had been sooner Wife or had never been Born,

2. The *happy* Surprize of a *prepared* Soul. Let Us view the other Side of the Case, and look upon it in the more *agreeable* Light. We are Now then to suppose The Son of Man appearing in the *Clouds* of Heaven, and sitting upon a glorious *Throne*, attended with shining *Hosts*, and acting as the *Judge* of the World: And how *enlivening* will the glorious *Appearance* be, how *joyful* the Surprize to waiting Souls, when the *Times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord*, and Their compleat *Redemption draweth nigh*? When he shall *wipe away all Tears from Their Eyes*, and remove all Sorrow from Their Hearts; when He will *know* Them, and own Them at last, and pass a Sentence of Absolution and Life; When They shall have *Confidence at his Coming*, and *appear with Him in Glory*?

And happy Souls who are immediately *caught up into Paradise*, and *hear unutterable Things*; who leave this Vale of Tears, and are *surprized with Glory*; Who quit the Body, as it will be raised at last, *in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye*, and find Themselves among the Blessed before They are aware: Who never pass through tedious *Sickness*, or acute *Pains*, and are not exercised with the troublesome Passions of *Fear* or *Sorrow*; the Fear of Their own Mind, or the Sorrows of Those about Them:  
Who

Who have a *δδρασια* an easy Passage out of Life, and leave this dark and sinful World, for the *Inheritance of Saints in Light*; the *Tabernacle of Clay*, in which They often groan, for the *Mansions of their Father's House, and the House which is from Heaven*; the Labour and Conflict of Life, to enter into *Rest*, and into the *Joy of Their Lord*. Happy Souls indeed, who only awake and die, or *fall asleep on Earth, and wake in Heaven*; Who only *Sigh* and Groan, and then depart, or take *Wing* and fly away at once: Who leave the noisy and busy World to *gaze*, and Their Friends to *weep* and lament Alone: Who are raised above the *Dust* of this World, and the Reach of all *Disturbance* from it: Who have got the *Start* of Us, loitering behind and waiting our Discharge, exposed to farther Dangers, and exercised with many Tryals of Life: Who are carried, like *Elijah*, as in a *fiery Chariot up to Heaven*, and receive the *End of Their Faith* and *Rest* in the supreme Good; Who burn in *Flames* of Heavenly Love, and sing eternal *Songs* of Praise.

How glorious *Stars* are They in Heaven, who once *shone* so bright on Earth? They *rise* in the other World, as soon as They *set* in This. And how high is the *Orb* in which They move, how *bright* the Lustre with which They shine? How much better *Sabbaths* do They keep in Heaven, than Those  
They

They kept on Earth, or rather one continued Sabbath? With what unfainting Vigour, and nobler Delight? How Unwilling would They be to return again? How loath to leave the Presence of Their Lord? Blessed Souls who now *behold* Their Redeemer's Face, and are made perfectly *Like* Him, who are joined to the *General Assembly* above, and converse with the Spirits of the *perfect Just*. O sweet Society! O pleasant and delightful Work! O happy and joyful State!

And what do We do here, now our *Redeemer* is ascended, and our dearest *Friends* are leaving the World so fast; when what was most *attractive* of our Love, the most desirable Part of this lower World, is gone before Us? Let this dry our Tears, and raise our Hearts to Heaven, and comfort Us in Their Loss, whom we had reason to believe were well prepared, and habitually, and actually *Ready* for the Coming of the Lord, tho' He came suddenly, and in an *Hour which They thought not of*. And This, You will easily perceive, leads me to speak of our *Deceased Friend*, whose *Sudden Death* occasioned this Discourse, and of whom I shall give You this *short, but sincere* Account.

He was *descended* of Godly Parents, and had the Advantage of a religious *Education*, and tender Care: And by the Blessing of God upon Family and Publick Instructions,  
He

## A FUNERAL SERMON, on

He became early *Serious*, and entered into *Church Communion* upon His first Settlement in the World: He set out with God. He was many Years a *Worthy Member*, and Sometime an *Officer* in the Church to which he belonged: And how highly He was esteemed, and how greatly lamented there, I need not say. He was heartily *Devoted* to God, and His Interest; and Constant in his *Attendance* on all the Parts of Divine Worship in His *Family*, and in the *Publick*; and Sometimes greatly affected and delighted in it. He was exactly *Just* in all His Ways, and managed His Affairs with *Discretion*. As He had much Experience of the Goodness of God *Himself*, so He was *Ready to every good Work*, and many Ways Useful to the World. He bore a Part, without *Vanity* and *Ostentation*, in many Designs of a different Kind for the Good of the World. He was a great *Lover of Good Men*, and chose the Company and Conversation of the *Saints which are in the Earth, the Excellent in whom was all His Delight*. He was *Exemplary* in all the *Relations* of Life, as a *Husband*, a *Father*, a *Master* and *Friend*: In tender *Affection*, and faithful *Care*, and wise *Condescensions*, He far exceeded Most, was rarely exceeded by Any. He diligently attended in the Midst of other Business and Cares, the *Improvements* of His Mind; and by much *Reading* and *Observation*, had greatly increased

Increased His *Knowledge*, and formed His own *Judgment* of Things: He settled in a *Love* of real Goodness, and a noble *Largeness* of Soul; large enough to *receive* All whom He had Reason to believe *Christ would receive* at last. He was *Faithful* to His own Light, and *Charitable* in His Judgment of Other Men. After all, His *Integrity* was His Glory, as 'tis the highest *Excellence* of Any Man, whatever else He excels in; The *Simplicity and godly Sincerity* with which He had His *Conversation in the World*; that open *Frankness*, and hearty *Cheerfulness*, and *Sweetness* of Temper, with which He always conversed; rendered Him truly *Desirable*, and greatly *Beloved* by all who knew Him. He was removed by a sudden *Stroke*, and with astonishing *Surprize*, in the *Midst* of His Days, and in Perfect *Health*, in a single Moment: Perfectly *Well*, and Perfectly *Dead* in One Instant.

This is a loud and awaking Call to All who knew Him, and All who hear of it. When We see Others so often *drop* into the Grave on every Hand, and Death comes near Us, and round about Us; when They with Whom We conversed but the Other Day, perhaps the Same Day; as Healthy and like to live, as Useful and Significant in the World, as Any of Us; are suddenly snatch'd away: Should We not All *bethink* our Selves, and is not This a proper *Reflection*; If I had died in His Room, where  
had



had I Now been? And what would have become of Me? Perhaps Some have Reason to say, "I had gone directly to *Hell, Devils* " had seized my trembling Soul, and dragged me to my Judge, and the Infernal " *Prison.*" Or at least; "I had died sadly *Unprovided,* and in very Improper " *Circumstances;* with many *Worldly* " *Thoughts* in my Mind, and many good " *Designs, Unfinish'd.*" And should We not All be awakened to a *lively* Care, by so Awful an Instance; be Wise and Speedy in every Purpose of Good, and *do whatsoever Our Hands find Us to do with all our might;* and while We look so often into Other Mens Graves, read it written in Their *Dust,* as well as upon Their *Coffin;* *Prepare to follow: Be You also ready.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 38 line 23, after *Faith* put (,) for *Rest* read *rest.*