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The Faithfull Christians Gain by Death: Opened, confirmed, and improved, in a Sermon at the Funeral of the Right Honourable Essex, Countess of Manchester, Preached at Kimbolton, Octob. 12. 1658.

By Simeon Ashe the Minister of the Gospel at St. Augustine's in Watlingstreet, London.

The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, every one walking in his uprightness. Isa. 57. 1, 2.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, faith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them, Rev. 14. 13.

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TO THE
Right Honourable
EDWARD
Earl of Manchester Viscount Maneville, Baron of Kimbolton.

Right Honourable,

His Sermon was Preached, and is now Printed upon your Lordships Desires, which my great Respects to your Honour, do interpret to be commands. I profess, that I did not judge it worthy publick view; and therefore I laid my Notes aside, till by the Reiteration of your Request,
quest, I was necessitated to re-assume them, which
hath occasioned the enlarging of my Meditat-
ons. My Lord, since I promised to make this
Sermon publick, your Expectations have been long
frustrated, by reason of my many bodily distem-
pers, accompanied with other unlooked for diversi-
ons. Now hoping that your Lordship, will accept
this my Apologie, for my Delayes, I doe humbly
present, that Sermon in Print, which you have
often called for. My Lord, The Almighty hath
seen cause to exercise you, with mixtures of Pro-
vidences. As he hath set you high in the estima-
tions of many, who have experienced your worth,
and your conscientious steadiness, in Covenant-
keeping with God and man (notwithstanding the
manifold temptations, whereby you have been
solicited to change your course:) So his Majestie
hath been pleased, to give you a great share in the
discomforts of these troublesome times. Your
Name hath been blasted, as a man unfaithfull
to your Trust, when the Parliament had made you
Major-General of the Easterne Association. And
you have been a great Sufferer in your outward
Estate, having been cut short of sundry thousand
pounds due Debt, because you would not (for in
Conscience you could not) engage with some men,
in their Principles and Practices: But as your
Integrity cleared your Lordship, in the Conscien-
ces of your Accusers; So your inward peace doth
more than counterwail your outward losses. And
now (my Lord) it cannot but paine your heart,
(as it doth many thousands besides,) to see Reli-
gion it self wounded through the sides of your self
and
and others, who appeared for the Parliament in the Warre betwixt the late King and it, because such who seemed zealous in the same cause, have not only diserted, but have made, and still doe make opposition against the Essentials thereof. But (my Lord) the naked Narrative of that first undertaking, compared with your subsequent and present practice, may vindicate your Lordship, (with all others who continue firme to their primary principles) from the Aspersions of distempered Spirits. When the late King forsook his Parliament, being misguided by evil Councellours, the raising of an Army, was judged necessary to restore Peace, preserve Religion, establish Fundamental Lawes, and secure the ancient Priviledges of Parliament. This was the Good Old Cause, held forth by the Solemne League and Covenant, in the Defence whereof, so much Treasure and Bloud was exhausted. And this, this only was in the hearts of your Lordship and multitudes more, whose sincerity (expressed by their practices) doth now yeeld refreshing, when others crying up the Good Old Cause, doe pollute Religion, violate Lawes, tear Parliaments into pieces, and governe according to their own pleasure, which is matter of much lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation unto Posterity.

And now (my good Lord) God hath by a stroak (breaking your Conjugal Relation) removed an Helpter, whereby your heart was wont to be support-ed in the times of your heavinesse; but yet, you may, and doe encourage your self in the Lord your God:
The Epistle Dedicatory.

God: For, as you hope, that her Ladiships Death is her gain; so your care to advance Godlineffe in your self, and your Relations, will undoubtedly gain the sanctification of your afflictions, with ground of rejoicing to the days of Eternity, through Christ.

My Lord, the subject matter of this Sermon, viz. (Gain by Death) was seasonable at a Funeral, both for the comfort of real mourners, and to move the Auditors to lay in such provision for their later end, that the thought thereof might rather be joyous than grievous to their spirits: How cheering are expectations of a good shelter unto Travellers in stormy weather? At this time (notwithstanding our present peace) black clouds (as many fear) are gathering, which threaten us with a sharp tempest, and therefore this discourse may, upon that account, be judged the more serviceable unto your Lordship and others, which that it may be, is the Prayer of

My Lord,

May 2d.
1659.

Your Honours humble and
faithfull Servant

Simeon Ashe.
To die is gain.

O die is gain. This assertion is a paradox, not only unto the Hea-thenish Epicures, but also to all unbelieving Christians. Men without God in this world, do acknowledge no contentment, or delight to be enjoyed in another world. Such were their apprehensions, who said, Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die. And that Epicure was of the same mind, who having laid in provisions, for the comforts of this present life, spake these words, Soul, Soul, Take thy rest, for thou hast goods laid up for many years. But S. Paul being animated by an higher, and a more noble spirit, with confidence doth report, That to die is gain. This assertion of the holy Apostle is to be understood, 1. Either according to the interpretation of his love. 2. Or according to the expectation of his faith.

First, S. Paul's love to Jesus Christ, was so strong and operative, that, as he made his glory, the end of his life, [To me to live is Christ] So he would account it a great gain unto himself, if by dying as a Martyr for him, he might be to the honour of his Name. And doubtless this is the ingenuity of Go-
To die is gain.

Spel-love unto the Lord Jesus, in the heart, which knoweth his worth, and its personal propriety in him. This our Apostle was ready, not only to be bound, but also to die for Christ. Yea he himself, with others, being cruelly dealt with by persecutors, rejoiced, that they were indeed worthy to suffer for his sake. For as they see cause to prize Christ, in regard of his personal worth infinitely above themselves: So they for the present possest in him, and for the future look for much more from him, than their lives, their All, which they have to lose, can possibly countervail. They know, That it is given (as a privilege of grace) to suffer for Christ. And therefore St. Paul mentioneth this, as a matter of glorying, that for Christ, he had sustained the loss of all things. His reputation in the world, and hopes of preferment from the great ones of the times, together with his personal liberty (for now he was a prisoner in bonds) were lost already, and life itself, now lay at stake.

Whereas vain-glorious spirits amongst the children of men, are lavish of their own limbs and lives, for the honour of such, who have advanced them into high-places of favour and honour; yea they do boast of the hazards runne, and the hardships endured upon that account. This our blessed Apostle doth upon farre better grounds, in a way of holy triumph, reckon up the several troublesome exercises, which he had experienced in a Christian course for Christ: thus he boasteth with confidence, I have been in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often, &c.

And now, expecting to be made a Sacrifice for the Lord Jesus; this was his chief design, desire and expectation, that Christ should be magnified by him, whether by life or by death. This high pitch of love, which St. Paul had attained towards Jesus Christ, might be propounded (by way of im-
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(provement) as a pattern for Christian imitation. Gods Worthies of old, Christian Martyrs in all ages of the Church, have so burned in love towards the Lord their Saviour, that they have been fearles of death; yea they have been forward to expose themselves unto the flames, and other killing torments, for his cause and praise. How great a dishonour therefore is it unto Christians in these days, to shrink through cowardly fears, of suffering any thing for the Lord Jesus? Is Christ worse in himself, or less worthy to be suffered for now, than heretofore? Doth not Christ deserve as well at our hands, and are not his Truths, his Ordinances, equally precious, as in former times? And hath not the Lord obliged himself by promises (both as many, and as great) to Christians in this age, as in former generations? This is Christ's promise, back'd with an Affeveration, Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit life everlasting. Therefore this was not the language of blind love, when St. Paul said, To me to die is gain.

But I will not insist upon this Point: I shall rather pitch upon that truth, which the Text holdeth forth, speaking the expectation of the Apostle's faith: St. Paul was confident that his death would be his gain.

This Proposition is to be explained, that it may be the better improved: wherein enquiry must be made, 1. What is signified by Death. 2. In what sense the Apostle was perswaded, that Death would be his gain.

First, By Death we are not to understand the death of the soul, which is called the second death. For in that sense, to die is the greatest loss, not to be made up, by the vastest advantage in the world; because this death consisteth in an everlasting separation from the presence of God in glory, and in the enduring of extrem, unquenchable burnings. And in this sense
our Saviour giveth assurance, That he who keepeth his sayings, shall never see death; and that, Whosoever believeth in him, shall never die. But that death which our Apostle intendeth, is Natures dissolution, which is in his own language set in opposition unto the soul its abode in the flesh; If I abide in the flesh. To abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Therefore this is the meaning of St. Paul, that the departure of his soul out of his body, would tend to his advantage.

Secondly, If it be demanded, upon what account, and under what notions the Apostle believed, that his natural death, would be his gain? I answer, both 1. Negatively. And, 2. Affirmatively.

First, Negatively. His persuasion of gain to be received by his death, did not issue from mistake of his future condition, hoping for better, than he had cause to expect. Our Saviour indeed speaketh of some, pleading with hopes of Heaven, when their souls have left their bodies, who are beaten off with disappointments, Many shall say to me, Lord, Lord, &c. And then, I will profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. But St. Paul knew assuredly, by divine Revelation, that he was elected unto life. And upon the serious review of his holy conversation, he concluded, That there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which God would give him infallibly.

2. Nor did he through wearines, and despondency under his present pressures, and his imprisonment, thus express himself, To die is gain. As holy Job, when engulphed into discomforts, desired to die upon this account, and to be carried unto the dust, There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressour. For the Apostle, his bosome was so brim-full of love to Christ, and real Christians, that he did rather rejoice, than despond under
under his persecutions (as was formerly hinted) because he apprehended that Christ would be magnified, and his Church benefited thereby. Some preach, supposing to add affliction unto my bonds. Notwithstanding Christ is preached, and I do there n rejoicing, yea and will rejoice. Yea, and if I be offered upon the Sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

3. Much less did these words, To die is gain, discover discontentedness with his suffering condition. It is true, that some of God's Worthies have in this regard desired to die. As Elijah, who spake thus to God, It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life. And Jonah, who fainting under the scorching Sunne, wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die, than to live. But this our Apostle had learned, In every estate to be content. And doubtless that inward peace of conscience, which passeth all understanding; and those joys in Christ, with which his spirit was refreshed, did raise his heart above such discontentments, as might draw forth passionate desires to die.

Secondly, Affirmatively. He therefore without the least doubt affirmeth, That to die would be his gain, because he knew, that upon his departure by death, he should be with Christ, which is farre better. These words farre better, are not to be restrictively referred unto his many and great sufferings; but are to be extended unto all that outward respect which he had amongst God's people; yea, and unto all that inward comfort, which he enjoyed in his present faithfulness, and his future hopes. To be with Christ is farre better than all.

These things being premised, the Doctrine, which I shall undertake from the Text, is this, That natural death will be a gain unto sincere Christsians.
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If it should be enquired, With what warrant I do make an universal inference, from a particular, a personal instance?

I answer, Because the comforts of grace, and the crown of glory, do equally belong unto all believers, as to any one who believeth. For,

1. Christ in all ages is the same unto all who do enjoy him; Jesus, yesterday, and to day, is the same for ever.

2. There is but one faith. All believers have received like precious faith.

3. And Christ is the hope of glory, unto all who receive him into their hearts, whether Jews or Gentiles, without any difference at all. This our Apostle having suggested the fruit of David's faith, doth apply it unto himself, and to all the Saints in the Church of Corinth; we having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore speak.

The confirmation of this truth followeth, both in the 1 Cor. 3.21. and the 2 Cor. 4.13. Herein I shall discover, 1. That death is gain unto the godly. 2. And whence it is, that their death is gainfull.

As for the former, It is considerable, that the Apostle instanceth in death, amongst all other things, which are for the advantage of Christians: And the proof thereof is more full and pregnant, Rev. 14.13. I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, faith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. From this Quotation two things are considerable; 1. The aptness and openness of the testimony, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. If their death be blissfull, then gainfull. Now this is not only testified, but the reason thereof is rendered (viz.) They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

Hence-
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Henceforth (not to touch upon other senses) even from the time of Nature's dissolution, all their troubles shall be ended, and all their acts of obedience shall be recompenced.

2. How many ways is this testimony made the more credible? 1. It is given in from Heaven. 2. The Author thereof is the Spirit. 3. It is delivered by audible voice. 4. It is doubled with an Asseveration from the Holy Ghost, *yea, faith the Spirit*.

And there is an express charge, that these things should be kept on Record for future ages, I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, *Write*. Now because this Scripture is thus pertinent and convincing, to ratifie the Doctrine, I will enlarge this proof under the two heads here hinted, whence the gain of death unto the godly is concluded.

First, By death they are set free from all things, which might make their condition grievous. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

In the amplifying of this head, I will briefly in some particulars compare their condition before death, and after death.

First, By means of death, the souls of believers are set at liberty from that restraint, which they are kept under, during their abode in their bodies. This Simeon suggetheth in his Swan-like Song before his death, *Now lestest thou thy servant depart in peace. The prisoncr would account it a gain to be set at liberty, Bring my son out of prison (faith David) that I may praise thy Name.* The Bird in a cage, desireth to be let out, that it may take wing and flee abroad. This speech I often heard from Reverend Mr. Fer. Whi-taker in the time of his last sickness, *Oh that the Lord would open the prison door, that my son! may depart!* How are our spirits, while in our bodies (as it were) under shackles
frakles, which hold them down, that they cannot expatiate, and soar aloft in the contemplation and improvement of the things above: but by death God granteth a gainful release and enlargement.

Secondly, Those who die in the Lord, do rest from their labours. I grant that there is work in Heaven for the believing souls, which by death are translated thither: but it is not cutting, grievous (as the word signifies) it is joyous rather. Here those, who trust in the Lord, do labour, in reference to manifold services and sufferings, together with variety of exercises, in regard of their persons and relations. They do experience the consequence of man's first Apostasy from God, In the sweat of thy face, thou shalt eat bread, till thou return to the ground. But there remaineth a rest for the people of God; and upon Natures dissolution, they shall rest in their beds. And as rest is sweet to the labouring man, so will death be unto the laborious Christian.

Thirdly, Whereas here on earth they profess themselves to be pilgrims and strangers: And while their souls dwell in their bodies, They are absent from the Lord. In which regard, like Travellers in a strange Countrey, how well for ever accommodated with necessaries, do long for home. Home is home. So do the godly grow, being burdened, while in the Tabernacle of the body. Here they groan, as in a strange Countrey, do seek a better Countrey, which is heavenly; yea look for a City, whose builder and maker is God. And because by death, they shall be brought home to their heavenly countrey, their City, where their nearest relations are, therefore their death will be their gain. Upon this confidence they are rather willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Fourthly, During life, Christians are like them who run a race. This is intimated by sundry Scrip-
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pture-exhortations, Let us runne with patience, the race which is set before us. So runne, that ye may obtain. And though in other races runne, there is only of the runners which geteth the prize: Yet in the Christian race, all who hold on shall certainly receive it. St Paul assured himself of the Crown, upon the finishing of his course. In running the body is tired, and the natural spirits are spent, by sweating and by straining with the utmost of endeavours, to make speed unto the Goal: but the gain cometh in, by winning the prize. Thus at the end of our dayes on earth, we receive the fruit of our long continued, vigorous motions for Heaven; and therefore death will be gain.

Fifthly, Here, upon earth, we are like men upon a troublesome Sea, but by death we come unto shore. The condition of the Disciples, in that case doth represent ours, when the Ship, wherein they were, being in the midft of the Sea, was tossed with waves, by contrary winds, and they toyled and rowed, to get unto Land. The Psalmist doth very elegantly describe the estate of them, who sail upon a tempestuous Sea, both while they stay there, and when they come to shore, They mount up to the Heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted, because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivereth them out of their distresses. He maketh a storm, a calm; so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired Haven. Oh how welcome is the change unto feafaring men, when having been engulphed into many dangers, and perplexed with sundry uncertainties, they are brought unto settlednes. Now after death, there will be no more Sea unto the Saints; and therefore to die will be gain.

Sixthly,
Sixthly, Our lifetime is our seed time, but death brings in our Harvest, 

**Gal. 5.8.** He that soweth to the Spirit, shall reap life everlasting. The Husbandman is put upon great pains, cost and care in preparing the soil for seed, and in bestowing seed upon the ground, but his gain cometh in at Harvest. And thus it is with Christians, They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. After many weary days part in the pinching Winter and scorching Summer, the income of the crop, is the Husband-mans gain. More certainly shall all true believers be advantaged, when cut down by death, themselves with all their good works following them, shall be inned in the place of blessedness. Although nothing is merited, yet God recompenceth in mercy, Psal. 62.12. They who sow in righteousness, shall reap in mercy: And those who sow liberally, shall reap liberally.

Seventhly, Here upon earth, Christians are in a condition of warfare, and they must endure hardship, as good soldiers, who are necessitated to take up with hard lodging, course fare; who are toyled with tedious marches, and tormented with dangerous wounds: But at death they shall be more than conquered through Christ; And having fought the good fight, they shall receive the crown of life, as this our Apostle with confidence did expect. Therefore, as the time of conquest, is a time of gain to the soldiier, when he is enriched with the spoils, and cometh out of the field with honour; so is the day of death gainful to the true believer.

Eighthly, In this life, the godly are molested with bad company. David thus bemoaneth himself, upon this account, Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, and that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar. And again, I saw the transgressours, and was grieved, because they
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they kept not thy Word. A good man can scarcely look abroad amongst the children of men, but he shall both see and hear matter of sorrow, while he abideth in the Land of the living; for till he go out of the world, he shall be necessitated, to converse with wicked ones. But by death, the soul is translated to the fellowship of souls made perfect; into which society, no profane person can possibly be admitted. How sweet is that change accounted, when we remove from Jewish fogs, ugly sights, harsh sounds, and unfavourable smells, into the open healthful air, to curious Prospects, delightful Musick, and sweet Gardens? No less comfortable, is the translation of a real Christian, from the company of wicked ones (who are filthy and stinking) into communion with glorified Saints in Heaven.

Ninthly, While the soul abideth in the body, it is often shaken by the assaults of Satan. He goeth about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour. And though their soul-safety be secured by Christ, yet he will molest them, as he did Peter, desiring to winnow him like wheat. He will bruise the heel, though he cannot break the head; and a bruise in the heel, may reach the heart with pain. As St. Paul's buffettings by a Messenger of Satan, were like a thorn in the flesh. Yea, the Devil doth not only affright the faithful, but doth often toy with them, as is manifest by the example of David, who was by him moved through pride and carnal confidence, to number the people; whereby much anguish was wrought in his heart, and great judgement brought upon his Kingdom: But death doth remove them from the reach of the Devil's Gun-shot: For then he is trod under their feet. The fears with which Satan filleth their minds, last no longer than this life. And neither Devils, nor damned spirits can possibly approach Heaven, whither the souls of Saints, are

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translated upon Natures dissolution. In this respect therefore, the death of believers becomes their gain.

Tenthly, During the time of the soul its abode in the body, there is a body of death dwelling in the soul, which doth always dispole the soul unto sinne, and indisposeth it unto good. Oh how grievously did this our Apostle cry out of the body of this death! Oh wretched man that I am, when I would do good, evil is present with me! It worketh in me all manner of consciencence, and it carrieth me captive. And thus it is with all regenerate Christians. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that they cannot do the things that they would. And many wofull fruits, break forth from hence in their lives, as the Apostle suggesteth, and experience too often proveth, in the hearts and lives of believers. But death (which is the last enemy which shall be destroyed) bringeth a total conquest of all corruptions whatsoever. Nothing within, or without, shall be left, as an adversary to a believer after death. How many thousands of enemies did Samson kill at his death? And as Moses said to the Israelites, The Egyptians, whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever: So I may confidently affirm, to the comfort of all believing Christians. Your lufts which warre against your souls, and carry you captives, shall after death molest you no more. You shall never any more, be kept off from Christ, by unbelief, never swelled by pride, disguised by discontent, vexed with envy, stained with hypocristie, or prejudiced by distrustfull dispendency, any more. And doubtles upon all these consideratiions, the people of God will joyfully say, To die is gain.

Secondly, Their death is gainfull, not only in respect of the grievances from which it freeth them;
but also in regard of the advantages into which it eftateth them, both in reference unto their bodies and their souls.

1. Their *bodies fall asleep*, and upon the souls de-pature, they *rest in their graves, as in their beds*, where they shall continue, without any painfull dis-turbance, till the *day of the general Resurrection*. I Thes. 4.14. remember, that when Christ had suggested the death of Lazarus under this notion, that he was *fallen asleep*, the Disciples answered, *If he sleep, he shall do well*. Now the *sleep of Saints, who die in the Lord, is much better, both for quality and continuance, for they shall rest, and not be awakened, till the end of the world*; and therefore to die will be their gain.

2. Their *positive gain by death*, will especially appear, if we consider the condition of their souls, upon Natures dissolution, in the particulars following:

1. Now the soul *dwelleth in the body, as in a Tent, or (as the Prophet Daniel ex-reffleth it) like a Sword in its sheath*; but when this earthly *Tabernacle is taken down*, the soul shall have an *house not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens*. And great is the difference, both in flatelinets and durablencfs, betwixt our bodies of clay, and the highest Heavens. The Apostle calleth them, *Bodies of vilenefs*, (and Phil. 3.20. in how many regards, so to be accounted, it is worth our consideration) whereas Heaven is the *high and holy place*, the Palace for God’s special residence. And therefore the translation of the soul by death, will be gainfull.

2. Here Saints are *vilif Hed, scorned and reproach-ed, but there advanced and crowned*. This Apostle having spoken of his death, whereby he was offered as a *sacrifice, he addeth, Henceforth there is laid up for me, a Crowne of righteousnesse, which the Lord*,
the righteous judge shall give me. The righteousness here mentioned, whence they are said to receive this crown, doth not intimate any merit (as the Papists imagine) but doth rather express God's truth and fidelity. For as here it's asserted, that this crown is God's gift; so this is promised to the Church of Smyrna; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. As it was much to Mordecai his advantage, when taken from the Court-gate, in his mourning garment, the Royal apparel was put upon him, and the crown Royal set upon his head. Thus shall it be with all the godly, who during their abode upon earth, are accounted, as the off-scourings of all things, shall upon Natures dissolution, receive the crown of glory.

3. And (that they may be judged meet for this glorious advancement) their souls shall be compleatly furnished, with all rich, gracious, beautifying qualifications. For there the spirits of all just ones, shall be made perfect. As their souls shall be raised in their several faculties, unto the utmost, to which their capacities can be extended: so they shall be filled brim-full with all graces, whereof they be capable. When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part, shall be done away. Whereas the soul dwelling in the body, is not perfect (as our Apostle confesseth) and much flesh continueth, waging warre against the spirit: When it is admitted into Heaven, it shall be full of light, without any darknes, full of rectitude, without any exorbitancy, full of humility, without the least pride, of sincerity, without the least hypocrisy at all: And the like I might speak in regard of all the other graces of the Holy Ghost. I appeal therefore unto all gracious hearts, whether in this regard their death will not be their gain.

4. Their souls being thus compleated in respect of
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Of all gracious habits, shall be always in the unwearied exercise thereof, to the honour of the Almighty. As the four Beasts, so the four and twenty Elders, cease not day and night in singing Hallelujahs unto the most High. This suggeteth the constant practice, both of the glorious Angels, and glorified Saints, in honouring God in Heaven. The graces of God's Spirit in the bosoms of his people on earth, are frequently suspended in their exercise, their motions are interrupted. The time was, when it was thus with Christ's Disciples, in respect of their faith. Hence it was, that he spake thus chidingly unto them, Where is your faith? How is it, that you have no faith? Where was the patience of Jonah, when he told the Lord to his face, I doe well to be angry, even unto death. And alas, alas, which of Gods Worthies, do not know this frequently by sad experience? Oh, what a gain will they esteem it, when the soul compleatly furnished with all saving graces, shall be evermore on the wing, with holy enlargements, in the exercise thereof in Heaven.

5. In this vigorous exercise of all graces in their perfection, the soul shall enjoy the society of spotless Saints in glory, with the sweetest complacency. It's true, that the faithfull people of God have fellowship one with another, in this world; and this is marvellous delightfull. Barnabas being a good man, coming to Antioch, and seeing the grace of God which appeared, he was glad. But their communion in Heaven, is more immediate and full, their graces shall be more shining, and their society shall never be interrupted. Here our joy in the company of the best Christians, is checked both by their weaknesses and some miscarriages, together with our own inability to improve them: But then being come into the fellowship of the spirits of just men made perfect, with personal perfection, our gain will be very great, how comfortable forever.
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foever our society was, with the best people living upon earth.

6. And they shall be admitted into the beatifical presence of God, and Jesus Christ his Sonne, in transcendent glory. This Apostle telleth us, (as a Reason of our Doctrine) That to be with Jesus Christ in Heaven, is farre better, than any estate upon earth.

Matthew 17:2-4. When Peter, James and John, were with Christ, at his transfiguration, they were ravished with that sight, and said, Lord, it is good to be here. How much more taking upon the heart, will his glorious sight be in Heaven, where in his presence, there will be fulnesse of joy? The happiness of Heaven is thus described, for the comfort of such, who are heirs thereof. God himself will be with them, and he shall dwell with them. When Christ after his Resurrection, manifested himself unto his Apostles, they rejoiced and wondered, though he there was not to continue long with them. And when we have the clearest views of the Lord here, we doe onely (as the Spouse expresseth it) see him through the lattice; many things interposing between him and us, while our souls do dwell in tabernacles of clay: How much more ravishing will his presence be, when we shall see, as we are seen, God the Father, and Christ his holy Sonne, to abide with us for ever? This, this is the utmost, which the Lord Jesus could ask for them, to compleat their blessedness, Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.

7. Lastly, In all those enjoyments and employments, there shall be no nauseousness nor satiety. For in Gods presence, there is fulnesse of joy, and at his right hand, there are pleasures for evermore. The satisfactions of the soul enjoying God with suitable dispositions, shall be both transcendently and everlastingly
To die is gain.

Stingly delightsfull. Here the stomack in a short time, will nauseate the sweetest meats and drinks, The full soul doth loath the honey-comb. By long continuance, the most melodious Musick becomes an offensive sound, and the most lovely sights, are accounted dull displeasing objects. But Heavens joyes, services, and enjoyments, will abide as fully ravishing, as they were the first moment, when enjoyed. And therefore unto the heirs of Heaven, To die will be gain.

Having thus farre demonstrated this Truth (viz.) That natural death will be a spiritual gain unto the godly. I proceed to give an account of the grounds thereof. And here in general, know, that the root from whence all our real comfort ariseth, whether in life, at death, or after death, is Jesus Christ. When St Paul had spoken thus unto the believing Corinthians, All things are yours, whether life, or death, 1 Cor.3,21,22. things present, or things to come; he addeth as the reason of all, You are Christs. And the same Apostle faith, If God hath given us his Sonne, how shall he not with him also, freely give all things. For seeing Rom.8,32. God hath made him the Mediatour of the new Covenant, all Gospel-promises, whether they concern this life, or that which is to come, They are in him, Yea, and in him, Amen, to the praise of God. 2 Cor.1,20.

More particularly (wherein I will be the shorter, because I have been too large in the former) the gain which cometh in, by death, unto regenerate Christians, is procured by Christ.

First, By the prevalency of his prayer unto God his Father. This was his great request, in his most solemn application unto the Lord; Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, may be where I am, to behold my glory, which thou hast given me. John 17,24. And he did not, in the least doubt of Gods readiness, to gratifie him, in whatsoever he asked: Father (laid D he)
To die is gain.

John 11.41. I know that thou hearest me alwayes. For he well understood that promise made long before, which might be a sufficient ground of his strong confidence, Ask of me, and I will give thee, the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth, for thy possession. Now there is no question to be made, but that Christ praying for his heritage, shall have audience for their advancement.

Secondly, By the meritorious worth of his active and passive obedience. In this regard Heaven is called, Their purchased possession. For although in respect of our worthlesness, Eternal life is the gift of God's grace; yet in reference unto the Lord Jesus, eternal life is conferred in a way of righteousness, upon his account.

Thirdly, By his ascension into Heaven, he hath prepared and taken possession of an happy estate for them. This Christ reporteth, for the comfort of his Apostles, being subject to sinking troubles, in regard of death-threatening persecution, upon his departure from them. In my Fathers house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there you may be also.

Fourthly, By cooperating by his Spirit, with his Ordinances, that they might be fitted through Sanctification, for beatific fellowship and satisfaction in glory, Whereas all the vessels of mercy, are prepared for glory; and they are made meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of Saints in light. The Lord Christ hath instituted Ordinances and Officers to dispense them, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Sonne of God, unto a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And he himself doth in such sort accompany them by his Spirit, That he might sanctifie.
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sanctifie and cleanse his Church with the washing of
water by the Word. That he might present it unto him-
self a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or
any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without
blemish. Therefore our Saviour having provided
Heaven for his Elect, and having prepared them for
Heavens happiness, with himself, their souls shall
without doubt, enjoy the gain of glory, upon Na-
tures dissolution by death.

Fifthly, By undertaking their perseverance in this
estate of grace and sanctification. Although it must
be acknowledged, that true believers, are opposed by
manifold difficulties, with dangers also, in their pas-
tage to Heaven; and themselves are too weak to
overcome the oppositions made and maintained
against them, from Earth, Hell, and their own
corrupt hearts; yet they shall be kept by the power of
God, through faith unto salvation: Yea, as an inhe-
ritance incorruptible, that faileth not away, is reser-
ved in Heaven for them; so infallibly shall they be
preserved for it. And the Apostle Paul, reckoning
up many particulars, which may probably threaten
their perseverance, both persons and things, doth upon
the consideration of all, confidently conclude their
conquest and glory, Who shall lay any thing to the charge
of Gods elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that
condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is
risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,
who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate
us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distres,
or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or
sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than
Conquerors through him that loved us. For I am per-
swaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor
principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor
things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other
creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of
God,
God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus having briefly from pregnant Scriptures held forth the grounds, from whence the true Christians gain by death, ariseth through Christ, I now proceed to the Application of the Doctrine by way of life.

Use 1. There are two erroneous conceits crushed by this Doctrine, (viz.) 1. The Mortality of the soul: 2. The sleeping of the soul, upon its departure out of the body.

First error concerning the soul its mortality, is overthrown by the truth, which hath been sufficiently confirmed, by the fore-going discourse: For it is absurd to imagine, that the death and annihilation should be more for its gain, then to remain in a regenerate estate within the body. Although this gross opinion may by sober Christians, be judged unworthy confutation, yet because pleaded for by some in these corrupt times, I will suggest some Arguments against it; and the rather, because it layeth the foundation of much sinful, sensual looseness, amongst the children of men. *Paul endeavouring to stop their mouths, who in his dayes said, There was no resurrection of the body, (which falleth in, with this phancy of the soul its mortality ) telleth us, That these evil words, do corrupt good manners. And the Prophet Isaiah long before, bringeth in, men of this mind, encouraging themselves in courses of sensuality, upon this imagination, Let us eat, and drink, for tomorrow we shall die. Therefore here consider these things:

1. That our Apostle his expectation by faith, to be a gainer by death, doth strongly militate against this conceit concerning the mortality of the soul, because Solomon faith, That a living dog is better than a dead Lion.

2. That manifold passages in the Scriptures of truth
To die is gain.

truth, do openly and expressly contradict it. When the body goeth to the dust, then the soul returneth to Eccl.12.1. God who gave it. The souls both of the godly and ungodly, leaving the mortal body, do forthwith appear alive before the Lord, by him to be adjudged unto Heb.9.27. an everlasting estate, either of weal, or woe. And Christ, (who is called The true and faithful witness, Revel.3.14. In whose mouth, there was no guile, 1 Pet. 2.22.) doth once and again suggest the soul its immortality. In the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the one is spoken of, as in unquenchable flames, and the other in an unchangeable estate of comfort, suddenly upon their natural death. His promise also made to the petition of the penitent thief, [This day shall be with me in Paradise] doth assert, That his soul died not with his body. Yea once more, consider how clearly our Saviour doth confute this opinion, by citing God's own words (spoken unto Moses, long after the death of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, acknowledging himself, even then to be their God, whence he concludeth their immortal life, laying, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

3. The immortality of the soul may be strongly evidenced, by the Nature of it, being spiritual, and often called a Spirit, (viz.) That part of man, whereby he understandeth, his reasonable soul. There is (faith Elihu) a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. And S. Paul professing his inwardness, and heartiness in God's worship, he thus expresseth himself, Whom I serve in my spirit, knowing that God being a spirit, must be worshipped in spirit. Now Jesus Christ himself attesteth, That a spirit cannot die.

The second error being hence to be confuted, is that concerning the sleep of the soul from the time of its dissolution from the body, till the Day of the General.
To die is gain.

John 11. 1 Thess. 4:15.


1 Cor. 15:44.

Although I grant, that the Scripture calleth death a sleep, and speaketh of Christians dead, as of persons fallen asleep: yet it is manifest, that these expressions, do relate to the body alone, which is said to sleep in the dust, and there to rest as in a bed, till God shall awaken it by the sound of his Trumpet, and raise it by his power. And the Apostle discoursing of the Resurrection of them, who fall asleep by death, doth openly apply it to the body, It is sown (faith he) a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body. Whereas we know, that sleep is the binding up of the senses by vapours, the soul being incorporeal is not capable of humours, nor subject to have its operations ceased thereby. And my Text also, and my Doctrine from thence, do strongly beat down this carnal imagination. For Christians, while their souls dwell in their bodies, do judge their condition lesse comfortable in the night, when through corporeal sleep, their spiritual motions are suspended: Therefore doubtless their death would rather render their estate worse than better, if the soul should sleep upon its departure from the body. How ordinarily do gracious ones lament their sluggishness, when with God in holy duties; therefore their death could not be their gain, if thereby their souls, should be laid asleep, without any spiritual activity, to the end of the world.

Use 2. Examination, whether we have a good, and a well-grounded hope, that our death shall be found our gain. When Rahab heard that Jericho, the place of her present abode, would ere long be besieged and spoiled, she seeketh security, that her self and relations should be preserved: Thus she speaketh to the Spies, Give me a true token, that you will save me alive. Now the case stands thus with us all, we are besieged with bodily distempers, which threaten death, when our earthly Tabernacles will be thrown down,
Therefore should we enquire, what true tokens we have, to strengthen our hopes, that Nature's dissolution shall rather tend unto our advantage, then prejudice. This trial may be quickened by these considerations:

1. Because gain by death is not the common portion of all. Our Apostle in the text speaketh of it, as a peculiar privilege, To me (faith he) to die is gain: But all cannot be thus confident. In the Parable of the rich man's death and burial, this Luk. 16.22,23, followeth immediately, That he was in hell in torments.

2. Multitudes, in the bosome of the Church, are filled with vain hopes. Our Saviour bringeth in many, pleading boldly for admission into Heaven, having died, with hopefull perOWsions, bottomed upon a glorious profession, and a commendable conversation, who are cast off, with dolefull disappointment, Many will say to me at that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderfull works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. As Dogs are ready to snatch the childrens meat out of their hands, so are the worst of men very apt to appropriate to themselves, the privileges which do peculiarly appertain unto the people of God. Wicked Haman no sooner heareth of a man, whom the King delighted to honour, but he thought thus in his heart; To whom will the King delight to do honour, more than to my selfe? In this respect therefore, we should take heed of building our hopes of happiness after death, upon a sandy foundation.

3. Infallible assurance may be attained, that natural death, will make way for incomparable and everlasting gain; and therefore there is hope, that labour
in this search, shall not be in vain. My Text speaketh out St. Paul’s confidence, *To me to die is gain.* And elsewhere, being in expectation to suffer death, he faith, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness:* Yea, this our Apostle bringeth in other Christians with himself, without the least hesitancy, professing their undoubted hopes hereof, *We know,* that if our earthly house, of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house, not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens. And there is no good reason can be rendred, wherefore ordinary Christians in these dayes, may not arrive at the same certainty. *For, 1. We enjoy God’s Word,* *That we may know we have eternal life.* 2. *And we have the promise of his Spirit,* *That we may know the things, which are freely given us of God.*

4. And the consequences of this certainty, will be many wayes advantageous, as the experiences of Gods servants have witnessed in all ages. I will briefly point at some:

1. *Hereupon the Psalmist was wrought unto contentment in a low condition,* being confident, *That God would bring him to glory,* when he had passed through a wilderness, by the conduct of his counsel. The traveller contentedly will take up with little and course allowance, from hope of full provisions at home, when he cometh unto his journeys end.

2. *The thought and approach of death, hastening on by means of many weaknesses and sufferings,* will be the les tedious and terrible. *We faint not (faith the Apostle) though the outward man perish,* for our light affliction, worketh for us, *a farre more exceeding eternal weight of glory.*

3. *Thus courage will be increased, when the greatest difficulties and dangers shall be encountred in a Christian course.* St. Paul, as a valiant Soildier, did undaunt-
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disheartenedly bear up, when in expectation of a violent death from the Lion-like persecutors; I am ready to 2 Tim.3.
be offered.—Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown.

Ecclesiastical History giveth many such like instances amongst the worthy Martyrs of old.

4. And hereby we shall be much quickened in ways of serviceableness, both unto God and man. By this argument the Apostle urgeth double diligence and unweariedness in well-doing; Therefore be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch, as ye know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. The Mariner knowing that he is in a safe road towards his native Countrey, hoisteth up fail, and putteth on with the more vigour.

Now all these considerations being enlarged and applied by meditation, may be sufficient to perswade a serious tryal, whether we have a well-bottomed hope, that our death shall be our gain.

The Characters of them, to whom death will be gain, I will cast under two heads, making a double enquiry.

First, Whether in our inward disposition, and outward practice, we be really like St. Paul, who was sure (as my Text tells us) that unto himself, To die would be gain? Here I will hint some few particulars from this his Epistle, referring the improvement unto your own faithfulness:

1. His conversation was in Heaven, while he was on earth; and upon this account he was confident of communion with Christ in Heaven. The good Apostle did look upon himself, as a Citizen, a free Denizen of Heaven; and therefore studied and endeavoured, that his carriage might be answerable to this his condition. Query therefore upon what you do most bestow your heads and hearts, your thoughts and affections. Whether do you rather order your course according to the fashion of this world? Or do you
you labour to be like them who are with God in Heavens glory?

2. He was not down satisfied with that measure of grace and sanctification, which he had attained, but press'd hard towards perfection, that he might be compleat both in heart and life, in a way of conformity to the mind of Christ. I press towards the mark.

This therefore falleth foul upon such, who satisifie and flatter themselves in their present attainments and enjoyments, like the Laodiceans, saying, I am rich, and have need of nothing.

3. He did not center in himself, in his own comfort, but designed the honour of Christ, in all the graces with which he was enriched, and in all his serviceability, both in active and passive obedience.

According to my earnest expectation and hope (faith he) that Jesus Christ shall be magnified in me, whether by life, or death. This cuts the combs, and crusheth the hopes of such, who are meerly selfish in their ends and aims, in religious performances. And this is so ordinary, that our Apostle faith, All seeke their owne things, not the things, which are Jesus Christ's.

4. Notwithstanding all his graces received, services discharged, and perfection with sincerity design'd, he did not dare to depend upon self, in regard of parts railed, privileges possess'd, duties performed, but pitcheth his confidence upon Christ, and upon him alone. I rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, though I might, if any other, &c. This splits the hopes of proud Justiciaries, who pharisaically trust to their own goodness, unto whom St Paul speaketh smartly; Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law: ye are fallen from grace.

5. And he sought, both by his counsel and conversation, to winne and work others with himself, unto...
the like disposition and conversation. Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Be followers of me. And Phil. 3:15,17, though he longed for immediate fellowship with Christ, yet he was content to stay out of Heaven, for a time, that he might be instrumentally serviceable to the promoting of Sanctification in Saints on earth. To abide in the flesh (faith he) is more needful for Phil. 1:24,25.

you: Having this confidence, I shall continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith. Here I referre it to every mans conscience, to give in evidence, how careful, or careless he is of the soules welfare, of such with whom they do converse; for accordingly, either hope, or hopelesnes of gain by death, may be inferred.

Secondly, Whether Christ be our life. This is the Argument from whence our Apostle doth satisfyingly inferre his hope of gain by death. To me, to live is Christ; and therefore undoubtedly, To die will be gain.—This lieth fair in the face of the Text; and he argueth in like manner elsewhere, If Christ be our life, then death will produce our glory. Col. 3:4.

Now as Natural life, so also spiritual life may be manifested, by 1. Breathings. 2. Senses. 3. Motions:

First, Breath evidenceth life. The first discovery of life in the child enlivened by the Prophet, was this, He needeth seven times. And spiritual breathing, is 2 King. 4:35. expressed:

1. By groans and grievous complaints, because of sinfull Principles and out-breaches; felt within, and appearing outward. As this Apostle, I find a Law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind, &c. Oh wretched man that I am! &c.

2. By desires, galping after God, in ways of communion and holy obedience. There is none upon earth (faith the Psalmist) that I desire, beside thee. And, Oh that my ways were directed, to keep thy statutes. Psal. 119:5.
Secondly, Sense sheweth life, whether it be from that which toucheth with painfull trouble, or with tickling delight.

1. The soul enlivened by grace, doth feel the weight of sinne. *Mine iniquities (faith David) are an heavy burthen, too heavy for me to bear: I am troubled, and bowed down greatly.* Whereas a dead man would not be sensible, though a mountain should be cast upon him, or though sore wounded. And men *dead in sinne are past feeling.*

2. And the Christian who is made spiritually alive by Christ, doth sensibly rejoice in fellowship with him. *My Spirit hath rejoiced (faith the blessed Virgin) in God my Saviour.* Whereas an utter want of delight in the Ordinances of communion with God, doth argue the absence of this life.

Thirdly, Motion manifesteth life. So soon as *Lazarus was restored to life, he ariseth out of his grave, and goeth abroad.* As in all other motions, so in this which is spiritual, there are two terms, *a quo,* and *ad quem.* The Ephesians being quickened, they relinquish their old conversation in the lusts of the flesh, and walk in good works. And the regenerated Thessalonians, *Turn from Idols to serve the living and true God.* In like manner, all those in whom Christ liveth by his Spirit, they turn their backs upon sinne, with dislike, detestation, and endeavour to decline it: And they face about towards God, in approving, loving and prosecuting whatsoever is good in his sight.

Now all these particulars thus generally and briefly hinted, being conjoin'd, and without partiality applyed, may serve to discover, Whether we have a good Scripture-hope; *That our death will be our gain.*

**Use 3. Information, in four particulars:**

First, That a full judgement cannot be given of the blissful
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blisful full condition of godly persons, while they live on earth. For their death bringeth in their greatest gain. Eccl.9.1,2. No man knoweth either love, or hatred, by all that is before him. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, &c. And it doth not yet appear, what we shall be. As the profit, which cometh in by Husbandry, cannot be discerned till Harvest; if a man unacquainted with that course of life, should see his neighbour plough up his ground, tear it in pieces with the Harrow, and throw away his seed upon it, he would judge all lost. So while we behold God's people persecuted, racked and tormented in this world, we cannot make out their happiness. If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (faith the Apostle) and if after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me, if the dead rise not? Therefore conclude not, what the estate of true Christians is, till you have considered, the conclusion of their lives. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. During the time of life (as the Parable telleth us) the rich man being clothed in purple, and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, seemed to be in a farre better condition, than Lazarus, who was laid at his gate full of sores; but upon their death, and the sequell thereof, a right judgement might be pasled, whether of the two was the happier man. For the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abrahams bosome; the rich man died also, and went to Hell.

Secondly, That the condition of the Saints in Heaven, will be unexpressibly joyous and happy, because their death will be their gain. For all the delights, with which their hearts are cheared in the land of the living, are only the tastes, the first fruits of Heaven. That bunch of Grapes, which was
brought from Canaan, was nothing in comparison of all the fruits of that promised Land, which were assured upon Israel. Who knoweth how sweet, and how many cordials Gods servants are refreshed with, in their passage through the wilderness of this world? and yet it will be admirably to their advantage, when they shall upon Natures dissolution, take possession of their heavenly country. Doubtless this our Apostle had experience of that peace, which passeth all understanding, and of those joys of the Holy Ghost, which are most unspeakable, and full of glory; he reporteth to the Corinthians, his enjoyment of abounding consolations; and yet he was confident, That to die would be his gain. The Lord giveth his people everlasting comfort through grace, which in that regard is called, The oyl of gladness. All wisdome ways are pleasantness. And David rejoiced therein, more than in all riches; who took delight also in the society of Saints on earth. God maketh his servants glad in the house of prayer. The Spirit of the blessed Virgin did leap for joy, in God her Saviour, notwithstanding her smarting exercises. But this, all this possessed upon earth, in the habit of grace, in the acts of grace, in the use of holy Ordinances, in fellowship with the godly, and in communion with God, Father, Sonne and Holy Ghost, doth fall very short of that fulness of joy, those Rivers of delight, wherein they shall bathe in bliss upon their departure by death, from Earth to Heaven. For unto them, To die will be gain. Therefore from hence, we may with the admirations of faith, consider the provisions which Gods grace hath made in Heaven for believing souls. St Paul in reference unto the priviledges to be possessed on earth, speaketh thus, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: and yet he faith in my Text, To me to die is gain. Thirdly,
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Thirdly, That therefore the estate of glorified Saints will be transcendentally glorious at the Day of the General Resurrection; for then doubtless there shall be an addition made unto the gain, which death doth bring in unto them. The Scripture calleth it, The time when refreshing (superlative refreshing) shall come from the Lord. And the language of the Apostle is very notable, speaking of the rest with which believers shall be recompenced, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty Angels. When he shall come (faith he) to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day. Then, then, both the glorified Saints themselves; and the glorious Angels also, shall wonder with amazement, to behold the amazing comforts and glory, with which they shall be crowned. Here I will briefly point at a few particulars.

1. Then they shall behold all their fellow-members of that mystical Body, whereof Christ is the Head, brought together into one company. Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him, and then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air.

2. They shall arise first; both that the Lord may express his peculiar respect unto them, and that they may not want that honour and comfort which the subsequent providences of that great Day shall afford.

3. Forthwith upon their Resurrection, they shall ride (as it were) in joy and triumph, to attend the Judge of the world in his glory, which will be no small honour, when Christ shall come with ten thousands of his Saints, and all the holy Angels with him.

4. When the Lord Jesus shall sit down upon the Throne of Judgement, they shall be admitted to be Assessors, giving in their attestation unto all his ri
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righteous, judicial administrations. Know ye not (faith the Apostle) that the Saints shall judge the world? And know ye not, that we shall judge Angels?

5. When Christ who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory. As their bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body, shining like the Sunne in the firmament: So their souls shall be satisfied with God's Image, both in perfect knowledge, and all other divine graces, made like unto his Majesty, according to their utmost capacities.

6. And in this happy condition, they all shall have compleat communion with each other, without the mixture of any sorrow, and crowned with immediate fellowship with the Lord himself unto all eternity.

Fourthly, Hence it followeth by the rule of contraries, that the death of the wicked shall be greatly to their loss. For the consequences of contraries, are as contrary, as the contraries themselves. And such like inferences, are made ordinarily in holy Scripture, Eccl.8.12. Isa.3.10, 11.

As the inference is natural, and not enforced; so the misery of the ungodly upon their death, may many ways be manifested, both in respect of loss and sense.

Their punishment of loss consistseth:

1. In the want of all inferior creature-comforts here enjoyed, For they have their portion in this life only. And therefore it was thus spoken to the covetous worldling when ready to die, This night shall thy soul be taken from thee, and whose then shall all these things be? Thy enlarged Barns, and thy fruits with which filled, shall be thine no more.

2. In their separation from the society of all Gods faithfull servants. The Sheep must be severed from the Goats, the tares from the good corn, the chaff from the wheat.

3. In
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Thirdly, In their everlasting banishment from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. And Christ will say, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.

Now what loss can be so great? But this is not all the misery, which shall befall the ungodly in the world to come; for the punishment of sense will be exceeding grievous also.

1. Their departure from God shall be attended with his heavy displeasure. Go ye cursed, will the Lord say (q.d.). Be gone with a vengeance under my heavy displeasure.

2. They shall be turned into hell, the torment whereof is metaphorically expressed by fire, which is kindled by the breath of God, as a stream of brimstone.

3. This pain shall not only be extream, but everlasting also. The worm (of an accusing ever-gnawing conscience) shall never die, and the fire (of their torment) never goeth out.

4. In this dolefull condition, there shall be no means of mitigation to their pain. Not one drop of water, or the tip of a cold finger to cool an inflamed tongue, and no better company than Devils, whose fellowship will rather augment, then abate their grief.

5. And whereas persons in misery would be pitied (the want whereof causeth sad complaints, Have you no pity, all ye who passe by?) these wretched creatures shall arise out of the dust to shame and everlasting contempt: Yea, They shall be an abhorring to all flesh. The righteous shall rejoice, when he seeth the vengeance.

These particulars do in some measure manifest, What shall be the end of them, who obey not the Gospel. And if the Question of the Apostle should be pronounced
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pounded to us, Where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? We may return answer from this, which hath been hinted (viz.) They shall appear at a great distance from all creature-comforts, separated from God, and all godly ones, in the place of unexpressible torment with Devils, without any relief, under the curse of God, and the contempt of all godly ones for evermore.

Thus from these inferences, by way of Information, I proceed to the Uses of Exhortation, which I shall cast under three heads, according to the number of those persons unto whom they are to be directed, in all which I shall be short.

First, All such who have cause to suspect their interest in this priviledge (viz.) that their death will be their gain, they are to be perswaded, to seek their propriety therein, by looking out, after those qualifications formerly mentioned, unto which this rich prerogative doth appertain. There remaineth a rest to the people of God, let us labour therefore to enter into that rest. This endeavour may be quickened by considering the miserable estate of all others (which was cleared in the last branch of the former life) who in that condition are in bondage all their life time, through the fear of death. And as that consideration may affright, to the thought of the happiness of such, who have good assurance, That death will be their gain, may allure to this practice. Balaam himself faith, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. Think thus with your selves:

1. It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment.

2. Death is the King of terrors.

3. Christ is both in life and death advantage, unto all such who are united unto him by faith, and the knowledge hereof will be admirably advantagious
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(as hath been discovered) unto all such, who manifest this their union, by an holy life; therefore we will without delay, with double diligence, endeavour to eflate our selves in this precious privilege.

Secondly, All the heirs of this precious privilege, should be moved to these ensuing duties.

First, Be very thankfull to the Lord. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart (faith David) and I will glorifie thy Name for evermore, for great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Hell. Now the gain by death, is a greater blessing, and a fruit of sweeter mercy, then to be secured from death; and therefore this his thankfulness should quicken our gratitude.

2. Moreover, consider that this priviledge was dearly purchased by Jesus Christ. Upon this account S Paul breaketh forth into his Doxology, O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be given to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Remember that the benefits of death shall extend unto all eternity (as hath been manifested) both in reference unto body and soul. The speech of David is here applicable, who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, but thou hast spoken also of thy servant for a great while to come. Now the advantages by death are greater, and many more, which shall be reaped, not only upon natures dissolution, but thousand thousands of years, after the general Resurrection.

The work of thanksgiving thus persuaded, should be expressed,

1. By our constant and abundant fruitfulness in all the practices of holinesse. Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in
the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

2. And by seeking to make others partakers with our selves in this rich prerogative. The speech and practice of the Lepers is imitable, They said one to another, we do not well; this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace, &c. As love, so all grace is communicative; therefore let us acquaint our friends with the gain which is to be reaped by death, adding counsel and encouragement, that they may severally share therein, through God's rich grace in Christ.

Secondly, Be not discouraged in a course of godliness, though for the present you meet with much trouble, and little comfort; for at death (if not sooner) you shall receive that which will pay for all. Be not weary of well-doing, for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not. Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sinne for a season, &c. for he had respect to the recompence of reward. And Christ himself, who was a man of sorrows, yet for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame. Hope of gain heart-neth both Merchant and Mariner, notwithstanding high winds, and boisterous waves upon the trouble-some Seas, though the voyage be long, and the profit of it very uncertain: but the promise of gain by godliness at the end, will speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Thirdly, Be not immoderately afraid of death. Although Nature seeking its own preservation, doth shrink from approaching death in God's own peculiar people. The terrors of death (faith David) are fallen upon me. And though the unregenerate under the
the awakenings of their guilty consciences, are through the fear of death in bondage; yet when faith is on exercise in believing breasts, they are bravely elevated above these fears, whether bodily diseases, or bloody perlectours, do threaten Natures downfall. Holy Job knowing, that his Redeemer liveth, doth upon this ground, glory over death: Though after Job 19.25,26, my skinne wormes destroy this body, yet in my flesh, I shall see God: Whom I shall see for my self, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me. And S. Paul speaketh thus of himself, and fellow-sufferers, For this cause we faint not, though our outward man perish, &c. For we know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of God; an house eternal in the Heavens. And many such like examples, might easily be produced from Ecclesiastical Histories of worthy Martyrs, who with undaunted magnanimity expected death, and with joy clapped their hands in the flames, being confident, that their death would be their gain. But I forbear.

Fourthly, Be willing to welcome death when it cometh, as a Messenger from God to call the soul out of the body. Hear what this our Apostle faith upon this ground, I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is farre better. And dying Simeon in his Swan-like Song useth the like language, Now let thy servant depart in peace. For the truth in my Text, which hath occasioned this long discourse, rendreth the request reasonable, which the Spoufe of Christ makes to him, Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the Mountaines of Spices.

Here these Cautions are needfull, to be cast into your consideration, that this life may not be abused.

1. Dare not to desire death from proud passion or discontent; as Elijah and Jonah did,
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2. Neglect not the use of means of life, either food, Physick, &c. by yeelding to melancholy fancies, or diabolical delusions.

3. Do not through pride or fool-hardines hazard your lives by Duels, or any other desperate adventures.

4. Especially take heed of shortening your own lives by self-murther upon the bloody assaults, and insinuations of Satan. But these things I shall not enlarg.

2 Pet. 3. 14. Fifthly, Lastly, Wherefore, Beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that you may be found without spot and blameless. Men are wont to furnish themselves with such apparel, and to be every way in such sort qualified, as may answer the places, relations, employments, unto which they expect advancements: and holy wisdom will work us to the like endeavour from our hope of the gain of death. The Apostle St. John having touched upon this glorious Metamorphosis, we shall be like Christ, addeth, And every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. St. Paul also, from this expectation of faith, When Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory, doth persuade both to mortifie all sinful lusts, and to set our affections more upon the things above, than the things on the earth. And he himself doth intimate this happy change looked for, through Jesus Christ, to be a strong argument to promote his heavenly conversation in this world. A Spirit of gracious ingenuity, love and gratitude, will undoubtedly inferre the same conclusion from these premisles.

Thirdly, The Friends of godly persons deceased, are hence to be advised, to moderate their sorrow, because the death of such Friends tends to their gain. The Apostle St. Paul, by this very argument, which he much enlargeth, warneth the Thessalonians not to

mourn
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mourn in such cases, as men without hope; but rather to comfort one another.

Although I am very farre from condemning all sorrow upon such occasions,

1. For we have approved examples of the mourning for Jacob, and for Dorcas, and of Christ himself weeping for Lazarus being dead.

2. And not mourning at all in such cases, would argue people to be without natural affection, which is a sinfull frame of heart; and God threateneth this, as a great judgement against people, who die, not lamented.

Yet sorrow upon the death of real Saints, should be moderate and mixed with comfort, Because their death is their gain. Here the words of Christ unto his desponding Disciples, are considerable, Let not your heart be troubled. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away: If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. Those parents, who were excessive in their grief, because their children were carried into captivity, were check'd, because God promised their return. Now the gain to godly persons by death, is much more than their return from the dust, by the general Resurrection (as hath been largely discovered) therefore our sorrow should be kept within its due bounds. As David cheered his spirit, when his child was dead, because he was persuaded, that his soule was gone to Heaven, where himself hoped to be ere long, I shall go to him. Therefore upon the death of the godly, though we should lament our own loss, and the expression of Gods displeasure against them who survive, together with the sinnes whereby their lives have been forfeited, yet in love to them we should not mourn unto dejectedness; for as Christ was in life their advantage, so in death their gain. To die is gain.

FINIS.
Know it is expected, that I should speak something, in reference to the Life and Death of the Honourable Lady, whose Funeral hath occasioned this Assembly and Sermon; and because I hope it may be useful to the living, and do right to the memory of her that is dead, I shall mention the heads of what myself have observed, and have received from the credible testimony of others. I judge it needless to suggest her Noble Extraction, her Religious Education, together with her Personal Beauty; great Ingenuity, sweet natural Disposition, and courteous commendable Deportment towards all with whom she conversed.

My first acquaintance with her Ladyship was brought on, by my relation unto my much honoured Lord, the Earl of Manchester, upon whom I waited, when their Marriage was transacted and concluded. Then she told me, That by means of the Small-Pox, whereby her life was threatened, God was pleased to awaken her heart, to seek him, and to mind her soul more exactly than formerly. At the same time, she did earnestly intreat me, not for the present only, to bestow such counsel, as I judged most expedient, but for the future also, to deal plainly with her in soul-concernments. Then she professed with seriousness, that the chiefest Loadstone, which drew forth her heart in Conjugal love towards my Lord of Manchester, was, his Ingenuity and Piety, hoping that in so near a Relation, he might prove an happy instrument of good unto her immortal Soul. This also I took to be an evidence of a gracious frame, that as she did often request me, to tell her of what my self might esp'y, or others judge blame-worthy, so she did always with meekness and thankfulness, accept my faithfulness therein. In her first Marriage (when she was very young) she acted not, without the advice and consent
consent of her Parents: And upon the Death of her Husband, she returned to her Fathers Family, with resolutions to be guided by Paternal counsel, in her future course. Herein her practice proved the sincerity of her purpose; and this was very commendable in her, that she would not take the liberty allowed by her Widdowhood, as to cast off duty and observance to her Parents, in her second Marriage. Her love to her Husband was faithful and constant; God was pleased to give her eight Children by my Lord of Manchester, to whom she was an affectionate tender Mother, a careful and diligent Nurse, giving suck to seven of them; which commendable practice is very rare in this Age, amongst women of her Rank and Quality. She was careful of their Religious Education, that they might be instructed in the Principles of the Oracles of God, and be kept in awe by his fear, that they might be secured from sin. She was charitable to the poor, friendly in visiting her Neighbours, especially when sick and weak: yea, she would upon necessary occasions, draw forth her own breasts, to give suck unto the Children of such, who were of low condition in the world. Although her estimations and loves unto her precious Husband, were high, and his company delightfull; yet she was willing he should be much absent from home, when appointed by both Houses of Parliament (as Major General of the Eastern Association) to attend their Army for the recovering of England’s peace, the settling of Laws, the Preservation of Parliament Privileges, and the Establishment of Protestant Religion, without mixture of Popish Innovations. (For these were the true ends of that Warre, which the Parliament held forth by their manifold Declarations, and his Lordship, with others who engaged therein did verily believe, now heartily bewailing their dolefull disappointments therin.) I have been assured, that she kept a constant course.
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courte daily, in her secret Devotions, besides her attendance upon Family duties, setting apart also every day some time, wherein her Lord and she did by prayers and praises to God, commend themselves, their Relations, conditions and concernsments to his Majesty before the Throne of Grace.

As she waited upon holy Ordinances in publick on the Lords-day, so she frequented Sermons upon Lecture days, both in London, and elsewhere, as opportunities were afforded. And her great Knowledge in matters of Religion, did discover her good improvement of the means enjoyed. That bodily distemper, which shortened her life, did mind her in such manner of her latter end, that she spake often affectionately of it, with care to make ready for the Lord. Although I was not with her Ladyship in the time of her last sickness, yet I have heard of her patient and pious submission to Gods will therein. And however she expressed desires to live, in tender respect to her dear Husband, and that she might further take care of the Education of her beloved Children: yet with contentment and comfort, she commended her self by prayer to the good pleasure of the Almighty, with hope of everlasting rest in glory, through Jesus Christ, pressing this, as a Request to her Lord, that he would think that best, which God should please to determine.

Thus in her Life she was many ways an honour to her Sex and Family, and her Death is matter of lamentation to all who knew and loved her, whose sorrow may be abated, and their comfort promoted, by their hopes, that Christ was unto her, both in life and death advantage.

FINIS.