

A
Summons
TO THE
GRAVE
OR,
The Necessity of a Timely Preparation for DEATH.
Demonstrated in a
SERMON
Preached at
The FUNERAL of that most Eminent and Faithful
Servant of Jesus Christ Mr. JOHN NORCOT.
Who Departed this Life March 24. 1676.

By BENJAMIN KEACH, a Cordial and an unfeigned
Lover of the Deceased.
MIC. 7. 2. The good man is Perished out of the Earth.

LONDON,
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HISTORICAL NOTE ON THIS SERMON.

A Summons to the Grave was a funeral sermon preached by *Benjamin Keach* in 1676 for his fellow *Baptist* minister, Mr. *John Norcott*. The sermon's history is tied to *Norcott's* death and *Keach's* role as a prominent figure in 17th-century *English Baptist* life, with the published sermon serving as a call for personal preparation for death, drawing lessons from *Norcott's* life and the certainty of mortality.

The occasion: The sermon was delivered at the funeral of *John Norcott*, an esteemed *Baptist* minister who passed away on March 24, 1676. *Keach* considered himself unworthy to deliver the elegy for *Norcott*, especially in the presence of so many other able ministers.

Keach's role: The sermon was significant as it is believed to be one of *Keach's* earliest published sermons. It established him as a writer, presenting his views on mortality and Christian living to a wider audience.

The message: The sermon's purpose was to provide a timely warning about death, based on the conviction “*thou canst never hear too often of death,*” as noted in the sermon's introduction. It aimed to encourage listeners to prepare for their own mortality, regardless of their spiritual state.

Historical context: *Keach*, a leading figure in the *Particular Baptist* movement, was known for his practical theology. *A Summons to the Grave* reflects the era's preoccupation with death and eternity, a common theme in sermons and literature of the time.

The sermon's impact: By publishing the sermon, *Keach* aimed to reach those who were not present at the funeral and provide a lasting message for both believers and non-believers. He used metaphors and stories, such as the story of King *Philip* of *Macedon* being reminded that he was a man, to illustrate the importance of thinking about death.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

It was not uncommon for seventeenth century authors to capitalize words which they deemed important. However, in this edition of this work, capital letters were only used for proper nouns.

Also words such as: 'Tis, labour, bin, perswaded, who'e, has't, thou, thee, etc., were changed to: it is, labor, been, persuaded, whose, have, your, you, etc. and footnotes were placed on particular words in order to provide a modern definition of these words. Words have also been added and placed into brackets for easier reading of the text. The only words I left in the original formats were the Elegy and Epitaph.

Some points, such as *first*, *second*, *third*, etc.; were changed to points: 1. 2. 3. Also words were added either to follow Keach's arguments or to aid one in reading a sentence. These words were placed in brackets, [].

One final note is that sentences were broken down into smaller sentences, in order for easier reading of this sermon.

I pray that you are blessed by reading this sermon.

Your servant in Christ,

Hershel L Harvell Jr.

To *all Sincere Christians that were the Hearers of this Sermon*, but more especially to that poor, afflicted, and sorrowful Congregation, which is in God the Father, and in our Lord Jesus Christ, meeting in Old Gravel-Lane, near Wapping, London.

WHEN I think of that *separation death* has made between you and your beloved Pastor (my dear Brother) it causes sadness to seize my spirit. Sure, such strokes of the Almighty should bring us upon our knees. I wish you are not hereafter made more sensible of the *nature* of these sore *rebukes*, then at present you can be; however let us learn this *lesson* by it, not to over-prize or value anything or *person* short of Jesus Christ; it is good in all things to labor against inordinateness^[1] of affection. We can't, it is true, love God too much; nor Christ too much, but we may love ministers too much, nay, idolize them, esteem them above what is meet, as many in former times have done, or we may esteem them not enough. Whether any of you have been guilty herein or no, will now I am persuaded be discovered; if duty to God, our solemn *vow* and *covenant* with God and the *church*, and our *love* to Jesus Christ, will not make us to know and keep our *places*, what may we judge of ourselves, or others judge of us: I am not without fears I speak of some in respect of temptations of this kind. I pray God deliver them from it, lest they bring up a reproach upon the good ways of God! You had or would be looked upon all of you, to have a real and cordial love for him that is now taken from you, O then do nothing after his death that would have grieved his soul were he alive. Labor to live in love, and strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the *bond* of *peace*; I having this opportunity, thought it not amiss to give a hint or two of this *nature*.

And now beloved, as concerning this *sermon*, had it not been *preached* in part to fulfill the desire of the deceased, I should not have presumed to have taken so weighty a work upon me, especially in the *presence* of so many able and worthy ministers, as I am not so, (the Lord knows, I look upon myself no ways meet, or fitly qualified and capacitated^[2] for such a weighty work I am called to). And truly, brethren, it is not any excellency and worth that is in this broken *sermon* that is the cause of its *publication*, it is the desire and importunity of several among you, and some others, that has brought it forth; I do think, nevertheless, for the sake of him at whose *desire* and at whose

funeral it was *preached*, you will entertain it though never so poor and mean a work.

I told you what sorrow had seized my spirit, I *preached* with a heavy heart, and with a mournful spirit, I know your fate^[3] under the hearing of it; alas, I cannot blame you for your mourning, he was a most sweet and choice *preacher*, most excellent skill had he to dive into *gospel-mysteries*; he saw, if I may say without offense, as far into a *text* of Scripture, as most men now surviving, and as careful in dividing of the word that every one might have a portion in season. O how sweetly has this *trumpet* sounded in your ears, what spiritual joy has it raised in your hearts! O how powerful in *prayer* has he been! Has not his prayers and *tears* over sinking sinners, tended to melt their *adamant* hearts! O the thronging there has been about him, no marvel he had precious bread always to break unto the children! He knew how to feed with milk, and how and when to feed with strong meat! It was his delight, I am satisfied, to do his Master's work, and in doing of it, I may say, he loved not his life unto the death.

He is gone to eat the fruit of his labor, and I wish, that all those *choice sermons* you have heard from his lips may not be buried with him, I hope the fruit of them will be seen in your lives; and could some of them be made public, they might be very serviceable unto the *people* of God and others in general. I shall at present say no more, but earnestly desiring the Lord to continue the laborer you have, and send some other in due time among you, to the making up that great loss which at present you do sustain, so that sinners may be in the midst of you converted, and true believers strengthened, encouraged and comforted, and all built up together in love, to the end that you may be found without blemish in the day of Jesus Christ, and that it may be so, is the desire, and shall be the *prayer* of him.

Who is willing to serve you to his *power*,
for Christ and his truths sake,

BENJAMIN KEACH.

To the READER.

Impartial Reader,

Supposing you to be *one* that was not at this late *funeral*; or if you were there, could not have the opportunity to hear the *sermon* (by reason of the straightness of the place, and the multitude of *people*) and perceiving it is partly for your sake, the *printing* of it has been so much desired, I thought it might not be unnecessary to offer a word or two briefly unto you, whether it deserves such a *publication* or not, it will come now under your *censure*. However, if you know the *person* that taught it, I am satisfied, you will not lose your expectation, nothing excellent you do expect, considering the weakness and shallowness of the *preacher*, how should you; yet if you have nothing of *prejudice* in your heart against him, from that contemptible^[4] apprehensions you and others have of that he is not wholly without hopes, but that some small profit you may gain hereby. Let the consideration of the subject prevail upon you, however to give it the reading; it is, you hear, a *Summons to the Grave*: you can never hear too often of death; and sure this *sermon* will not offend you, if you are one that do live, I mean, live indeed, in the sight and steadfast belief of a future life, an eternity of happiness or misery. I have read, that *Philip* King of *Macedon*, commanded one of his *pages* to awake him every *morning* and call aloud to him, Sir, remember you are a man: This great *monarch* did not disdain to be rouzed every day from sleep with the *news* of death, though it was but by the *mouth* of his poor sorry *page*, and shall any of us slight the *message*, through want of affection to the *messenger*; but perhaps, you may be one that likes neither, may be you do not care to hear of the tidings of dying, and are ready to judge them melancholy fools that break their sleep about it. These who are indeed prepared for it, have no cause to be disquieted in thoughts of it; but what will you do when death comes, that hast a guilty conscience; have you not heard of that poor soul, who cried out in horror and distress of spirit upon his death-bed, O what shall I do, I am so sick that I cannot live, and yet so unprepared that I dare not die: Remember, that the thoughts of death, when it comes, will abate your courage, it will make the proudest heart to stoop. It is a pretty *passage* that I remember of a certain King of *Hungary*, who being on a time very sad, his

brother (a *jolly courtier*) would need know what ailed him, O Brother (said he) I have been a great sinner against God and I know not how to die, nor appear before God in *judgment*. These are (said his *brother*) melancholy thoughts, and withal made a *jest* at them; the king replied nothing for the present. But the custom of the *country* was, that if the *executioner* came and sounded his *trumpet* before any man's door, he was presently to be led out to the *place* of *execution*; the king in the dead time of the *night*, sends the *headsman* to sound his *trumpet* before his *brothers* door, who hearing it, and seeing the *messenger* of death, springs in pale and trembling into the kings *presence*, beseeching him to tell him wherein he had offended. O Brother (replied the king) you have never offended me, and is this *executioner* so dreadful, and shall not I that have greatly and grievously offended God, fear to be brought before the *judgment seat* of Christ! Death amazes none more when it comes, as it does them who think not of it! The *Egyptians* used to carry about the *table* a *deaths head* at their *feasts*. It is good in the midst of all our delights and enjoyments, to be put in mind of the *grave*. And if this *sermon* spoke no more power fully to you then a *deaths-head* to awaken you, it may be worth your *pains* to read it, [since] God may bless weak endeavors to great advantage. Jesus Christ could make five barley leaves and two *fishes* to feed five thousand men, and yet the fragments that were left might satisfy many a poor hungry soul: what though you are afterly served. God can heat it by his Spirit [and] God can make it wholesome food for your soul: if you have but an appetite I do not much fear your relishing of it, for though the full stomach loathes the *honey-comb*, yet to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

But because I would not weary you, I shall only now give you a summary *account* of the particular things insisted upon, and then commit you to God.

1. You have the certainty of *death* amplified, or briefly enlarged upon.
2. Some awaking *considerations* and *motives* to a speedy and effectual *preparation* for it.
3. Several *directions* and *cautions* in order to it.
4. You have dying *ministers* lamented, or several sad grounds of *lamentation* upon that account.
5. Then *fifthly* and *lastly*, you have comfort against *death*, or how true

Christians may stay and support themselves in the hour of death, or in parting with godly relations: and because nothing is more effectual in order to this, then that comfortable assurance of present enjoyment, or being with Christ at that very instant, when the breath leaves us; something was offered to confirm the souls immortality, it was but a little which was said, had it been more it would not have been too much. It was not delivered as it is matter of controversy, to grieve any who are differently persuaded: but as it is matter of comfort, suiting with the occasion, that so sorrowful spirits might be consoled, having for several years found the usefulness and sweetness of the doctrine under the like dispensation myself. What is more plainly laid down in holy Scripture than this? And those *arguments* that so much establish me in the belief hereof are many, one is taken from our Saviour's own words, Because man cannot kill the soul Matt. 10:28. If men cannot kill it then it is not mortal: As also the consideration of its nature being spirit, might I not reason thus, If the noble part of man sometimes called soul be spirit, then it is immortal: but it is called spirit in several places: and again, does not the name of spirit declare its nature: a spirit in its nature is invisible, and its very essence is life, if it should cease to live, it would be spirit no more. *Thirdly*, the Scripture shows, that at death the body goes one way, and the spirit goes another, namely, to God that gave it: we may judge also of the nature of the spirit or soul of man, if we consider how nothing but God himself can satisfy it, lives upon divine and immortal food, and therefore sure must be of like nature: what does show more clearly that our bodies are earthly, or made of earth, as the consideration of their being fed, and sustained from the earth, so say I on the contrary hand in respect of the soul; it is fed with spiritual and immortal food, ergo such is its nature; but not to trouble you with things of this kind further, Reader, let it be your *chief* care to prepare for your eternal state, for be sure it will be but a little while, and you will find either to your everlasting joy and comfort, or else to your everlasting woe and sorrow: the truth of this doctrine of the *souls immortality*, and the effects thereof. And that this broken *sermon* may prove, through God's blessing, someways for your *souls* advantage and profit, is the sincere desire of

Your *affectionate* and *cordial*
friend and *servant* in the Lord Jesus,
B. K.

AN ELEGY,

On the Death of that most Laborious and Painful Minister of
the Gospel Mr. JOHN NORCOT, who fell asleep in the Lord the
24th of this instant March 1675-76.

HOW doth my troubled Soul amused stand,
On thoughts of God's most sore Chastising hand
Let Heaven assist my Pen, and help indite
This Mournful Elegy I'm mov'd to write.

My grieved heart knows not what way to take,
Its love to shew and lamentation make.
David for *Jonathan* was sore distrest,
And in like sort has sorrow seiz'd my Breast.

Beloved *John* is gone, dear *Norcot's* dead;
That *Man of God*, who hath so often fed
Our precious Souls with Manna from above:
Whose powerful preaching did ingage our love

To *Jesus Christ*. O! he had care and skill
To feed poor souls and do his Master's will.
But is he from us also took away,
What, breach still upon breach! Lord *Jesus* stay

Thy hand such stroaks are hardly born,
Here's cause for hundreds to lament and mourn.
The loss is great the Churches do sustain,
Poor sinners too like cause have to complain.

There's few like him surviving to arouse
Their sluggish souls cut of their sinful drowse.
They now may sleep secure and not awake,
Until they fall into the *Stygian* Lake.

This Golden Trumpet's stopt, 'twill sound no more,
To warn them of what danger's at their door.
To win sinners to Christ he did not spare

His strength nor time, thought nothing was too dear.

To part withall, if any wayes he might,
Their Souls turn from false ways unto the right,
Like as a Candle which much light doth give,
Doth wast itself, whilst from it we receive

Much benefit; so did he clearly burn,
To the wasting of himself unto the urn.

This godly Preacher in a little space.
Much work did do, he swistly run his race;

With's might perform'd what e'r he found to do.

God graciously did bless his work also,
Yea few (I think) have had the like success,
In turning sinners unto righteousness.

O were the worth of this good man but known,
It might produce an universal groan.

Let Brethren dear of different minds lament,
For he for you in prayers much time has spent;

He lov'd you all, though I have cause to fear,
The like affection some did scarcely bear.
'T would pierce ones heart to think in such a time,
Obedience unto Christ should be a crime:

Or that offence should in the least be took,
'Cause from God's word he durst not turn nor look.
He would own nought but what *thus saith the Lord*,
Add would not he nor minish from God's Word.

Come let us live in love, we shall agree,
When at his Port we all arrived be.
Let sinners mourn, who shall their loss repair,
Who for their Souls so naturally did care.

Well may ye fear God will proclaim new wars,
When he calls home his choice Embassadors.

What may a *Sodome* look for from above,
When such who stood i'th' gap, God doth remove,

O tremble City, what is God about
Look for new flames, thy *Lots* are calling out.
And now chastized flock a word or two,
I've double sorrow when I think of you.

When that the Harvest doth for Reapers call.
To lose your Labourer, this wound's not small.
O who shall bear the burthen of the day,
If God doth take the Labourers thus away.

When Pylots dye, how shall the Seamen stear,
'Mong'st Rocks and Sands, when storms also appear.
Have we not cause to think the crafty Fox,
We'l out abroad and play upon the flocks.

And Ravening Wolves also will grow more bold,
And scare some silly Lambs out of the fold;
If God proceed to call the Shepherds home,
O what will of so many flocks become.

Ith midst of all, in this doth comfort lie,
The chieftest Shepherds lives when others dye.
And he be sure who for the Sheep did bleed,
Will stick to them in times of greatest need.

Come cease your grief, don't you know very well,
Then care God has on his own *Israell*.
And its no more which now is come to pass,
The what by you some time expected was.

And what is done is but our Fathers will,
Therefore be silent every one be still:
For should we yield to passion I have fears,
We should grieve Christ and wound our Souls with tears.

The narrow Sluces too of dribling eyes,
Would be too streight for those great Springs that rise.
But since our Vessels fills up to the top.
Lets empty them, for every sin a drop.

For it lets wish we were compos'd of Snow,
Instead of flesh yea made of Ice, that so
We might in sense of sin and its loathing,
Melt with hot love to Christ, yea, thaw to nothing.

And should our sins deprive our Souls of him,
Let tears run from our Eyes till Couches swim.
Yet let's not grudge him that most happy bliss,
Who now in glory with Christ Jesus is.

He did his work apace, his Race is run,
He as touch'd the Gole, yea, and the Prize hath won.

AN EPITAPH.

A Sweet and Godly Preacher doth lie here,
Who did his Master Jesus love so dear;
And Sinners Souls, that he his strength did spend.
And did thereby (tis thought) hasten his end,
He brought himself by Preaching to the Grave,
The Precious souls of Sinners for to save.
He lies but here asleep, he is not dead:
To God he lives, to Christ his Soul is fled,
And o're a while must he awake again,
And evermore with Christ in Glory reign.

By B. K.

Another Elegiack POEM

by

a Young Man that dearly loved him.

WAVes upon WAVes, Methinks, begins to roule,
Some strange Alarm afflicts my troubled soul,
VVhich grieves my heart, by sounding in mine Ears
And makes my Eyes to flow in Brinish tears.

VVhat Tragedy is this: Death hold thy hand,
VVhy, must the good man perish from the Land.
Is NORCOT dead, suffer me then to mourn,
For now he's gone, but never well return.

Oh father father, whither dost thou fly,
And leave, my soul, in this perplexity.
And if that I dear Lord must stay behind,
A portion of his Spirit let me find.

Oh send thy Spirit now into my heart
That it may Gospell grace, to me Impart
And that it may, likewise anoynt mine Eyes,
For to Conceave those glorious misteries.

Of thy most sacred Kingdom, heaven above,
VVhere NORCOT s swallowed, in Eternal Love,
Faith Love and Zeal, did his brave Soul adorn,
And this did manifest, he was new born.

NORCOT (a Boanerges) was Indeed
Could make the heart, of sturdy sinners Bleed.
And yet and Evangelicas, did prove
VVith Sovereign Balm of sweet Gospell Love.

Great reverence dear soul, he used to Bear
To things that sacred, and Coelestial were.
Oh with what gravity and Zeal did he
Declare to sinners their sad misery.

In Praying Preaching, Christ alone he Fyed,
And when he had done, the will of God he dyed.

A Panegyrick, I do not intend
Neither with *Parasites*, for to Contend.

Yet much as to his Vertues, I might say
Did I not know, the humors of the day.
Doubtless on whom. God honour doth confer,
In our affections we highly should prefer.

Dear NORCOT's gone, that worthy man of God,
Lord this aloud; bespeaks our Ichabod.
My Soul Cease for to mourn, he is not dead,
He into Everlasting Bliss is fled.

VVhole troops of Angels, did his soul attend,
VVhen he to *Jesus Christ*, did it commend.
He now is swallowed up, in Glory above,
Embrac'd in Arms of Everlasting love:

And now dear soul he's gone, his race is run,
And faithfully his Fathers work he hath done.
The veil of Enmity hath been removed,
He could not love more then he is Beloved.

The veil of Blindness that is ta'en away,
And now with his dear soul 'tis perfect day,
The veil's Removed he seeth, as he is seen,
And praiseth him that did his soul Redeem.

He now sings Hallehujahs heavenly hymnes,
Amongst Coelesticall glorious Seraphims.
He hath fought the Fight, the Crown hath gain'd,
Yea, and to perfect Visions hath attain'd;

And you his Mourners here, the Word doth say.
The Righteous from bad times are snatch'd away;
A Prince and a great man you all can tell
This day is fallen in our *Israel*.

Oh *Israel* mourn, thy Chariots flee away,
Thy Horsemen leave thee in an evil day.
The Godly fail, and ceaseth for to be,
Lord, is not this for our iniquity?

Let's tremble then, black Clouds hang o're our heads,
Whilst we securely lie upon our Beds:
Rouse, rouse my soul for shame, what sleepy still,
Hast thou not of luke-warmness had thy fill?

Heark, dost not hear the Bridegroom very nigh,
Oh then, by faith, thy self to him apply:
Get oyl, more oyl, thy heart to purifie,
For now, methinks, I hear a louder cry,

Thousands there are which to the forme attain'd
Of Godliness, yet without grace remain'd:
They cry and howl, Lord, *Open Heavens Gate*,
But he saith, *No, you now are come too late*.

Oh *Norcot, Norcot*, if it were but free
To envy any, I would envy thee,
Because thou now invested art with glory,
Whilst I behind do write this mournful story.

But stay my soul, pray why so passionate grown,
Wilt thou not suffer him to reap his own?
He sowed in tears, but now he reaps in joy,
Don't then by murmuring thy self annoy;

Must he all day be labouring in the Field,
And now 'tis night, dost grudge him Rest to yield:
Rather lament and mourn for thy own sin,
And that's the way for thee to follow him;

Dost hear him call, *Mourn for thy self, not me*,
I from Death, Sin, and Sickness now am free.
Farewel, blest Saint, farewell; thou art fled away,
And left us in a black and stormy day;

And yet we hope to see thy face again,
That so with thee in glory we may reign.

ACROSTICK.

I s *Norcot* dead? (No) he is fallen asleep,
O h then my soul, cease to lament and weep;
H e now in Glory clearly doth behold
N ough else but Joys that never can be told:
N ever more grieve for him: what is thy loss,
O 'tis his gain, for he hath left but dross.
R epent, oh *England*, I filled am with fears,
C ompel me not to mix my thoughts with tears.
O Gospel-Grace will haster, if you scoff;
T o a Nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.

E. P.

AN EPITAPH on his Tomb-stone.

HEre underneath this Stone lieth the Dust
of NORCOT; whilst the Rising of the Just.
His Soul to Heaven is fled, and there doth stand
With Christ and all the Saints at his Right Hand.

And when on Earth he was, he did not spare
His Life for Christ, it was his daily care,
To Pray and Preach, and unto God to crave,
That Sinners might repent their souls to save;

His Work was done, his Glass is run, and we
May all conclude he's Blest t'Eternitie.

B. H.

A
SERMON

Preached at the Funeral of
Mr. JOHN NORCOT,
March the 28th, 1676.

I need not tell you the ground and occasion of this *present meeting*; Certain I am this is a sorrowful assembly: Whether I am fit to preach or no I cannot tell, but sure I am ripe to mourn. May I not on this occasion use the words of *David* upon *Abner's* death, 2 Sam. 3:38, *Know ye not that there is a Prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?* Who more worthy of honor than those God confers honor upon (and to be employed as Christ's ambassadors) to treat in his stead with poor sinners about their eternal estate and condition, is no small dignity; and to be deprived of such a one, what greater ground for grief and mourning? But not to take up your time in a way of *introduction*, I shall commend to you that portion of holy Scripture, which shall be the ground of my present discourse;

*Psal. 89:48, What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?
Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.*

The Psalmist in the verses that do precede is pleading with God under great afflictions and the hidings of God's face, upon consideration of the shortness of his days: *How long wilt thou hide thy self? for ever shall thy wrath burn like fire?* and ver. 47, *Remember how short my time is*; as if he should say, Lord I have but a little while to live, my time on earth is short; let me therefore enjoy your favor: let the remainder of my days (the days of my pilgrimage) be good days: Let me see your face, have the light of your countenance; let them not be days of sorrow and darkness. From hence note this, That a gracious soul, while on earth, desires nothing more than the enjoyment of God's favor. Communion with God is the only thing his soul longs and breaths after. They having a sense of the shortness of their days, resolve to live well and to make good improvement of their time: They would not only have the full enjoyment of God hereafter, but a sight of his presence

and favor while here. And indeed those who would live with God in heaven, must first live to God on earth. Now it is not thus with the unregenerate, if wicked men have a sight of the shortness of their lives, it has not this effect upon their hearts; they many times the more pursue their lusts: they endeavor to get as much pleasure as they can, and to gratify their covetous, ambitious, and carnal appetites, and suck out what sweetness they can out of this perishing world; they resolve to have it as sweet as outward enjoyments can make it; they know no higher or better good than what is earthly and sensual. Oh miserable deceived creatures, how is their understandings darkened, having never attained a saving knowledge of God, nor spiritual relish of his grace and love, nor a sight of his favor and kindness towards them. They are dreadfully involved in *Egyptian* darkness, they are ignorant of the satisfaction, joy and sweetness that is in him; hence they cry not after God, nor seek after him here, that they might be made happy with him hereafter.

But that I may come to the words that I have read to you, in the *text* you have a twofold *interrogation* or *negative questions*.

1. What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?
2. Can he deliver his soul from the power of the grave? Selah.

The meaning is no man can avoid it, none can escape the grave, whatever he be. Many such kind of questions are put forth and thus answered in holy Scripture. Here are two terms, before I proceed to any observation, that I judge needful to speak to by way of explication:^[5]

First, What is meant by the word *soul* in this place? Does the soul go to the grave? I answer, *soul* in holy Scripture bears divers acceptations; sometimes by it is intended one thing, sometimes another; and from hence I judge it is, that so many persons miss in their understandings about the noble and superior part of the *creature*.

1. By it is intended the whole man, Gen. 46:27, *And the sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt, were two souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten souls; the like you have in Acts 7:14, And Joseph called his father Jacob to him and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls; that is so many persons: in Acts 27:37 all that were with Paul in the ship, are said to be two hundred and threescore and sixteen souls.*

2. It is taken for the life of the body, Psal. 7:5, *Let the wicked persecute my soul and take it, yea let him tread down my life upon the earth.*

3. It is taken for the affections, desire, or heart of the creature, 1 Sam. 1:15, *And Hannah answered and said, no my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord.* And in chap. 18 it is said, *the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David*; that is, his affections were set and fastened upon him. In many other places, by soul we find some one or more faculty of the soul is intended.

4. It is taken for the stomach, Prov. 27:7, *The full soul loatheth an honey-comb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.*

5. By it is meant oftentimes the noble and superior part of man, distinct from the body; for this see Psal. 19:7, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*; Matt. 10:28, *Fear not them which can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.* But probably some may say, if the word soul has so many various acceptations, how may we know when the spirit or principal part is in Scripture meant hereby.

Ans. I shall briefly lay down three or four *rules*, whereby you may know:

(1.) When you read of soul, as that wherein conversion is wrought, it can intend nothing else save the noble or immortal part; for *conversion* is a change only of the evil qualities of man's better or superior part; Psal. 19:7, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* Conversion to God changes not the defects and qualities of the outward man. If a man be attended with such and such a disease, or distemper before conversion, he may be truly converted, and yet retain the same diseases; the same lameness, blindness, deafness, crookedness, or what ever other blemish he may have of the like nature.

(2.) When you read of soul as that which rejoices in God, delights in God, longs and thirsts after God, lives and feeds upon God and Christ, and united to and has communion with God, clothed and adorned with the Holy Spirit; it always holds forth the glorious spirit or soul of man: let me only direct you to one or two Scriptures upon this account, Luke 1:46, *My soul doth magnify the Lord and my*

spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, Psal. 94:19, In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul. Psal. 42:1, 2, As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before him. Psal. 73:26, My heart and my flesh faileth me, but God is the strength of my soul, and my portion for ever.

(3.) When you read of soul, as that which men cannot kill or destroy, is always intended this excellent part; see Matt. 10:28, *Fear not them that kill the body but cannot kill the soul.*

(4.) *Lastly*, When you read of soul, as that which lives when the body dies, or is commended into the hands of God at death; you must always take it in those Scriptures for the same.

6. By soul sometimes is meant only the body distinct from the spirit or immortal part; see Josh. 10:28, 37, *And the king thereof he utterly destroyed, and all the souls that were therein; and they smote the king thereof and all the souls that were therein;* and in this sense soul is to be taken in this place. But that I may proceed, a word to explain the other term, to wit, the hand of the grave. By hand, beloved, often in Scripture is meant power, Isa. 50:2, *Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem?* that is, Have I lost my power to redeem? so Acts 4:3. My text thus briefly opened, I shall proceed as most suiting with our present occasion, to take notice of one *doctrinal truth* from the words which take as follows.

Doctrine. That all men must die.

Or thus, That no man whatsoever, can escape the power of the grave.

I shall, God assisting, endeavor to demonstrate and confirm the truth of this *proposition*. The Holy Spirit does not slightly pass it by, but puts a *remora* to it; viz. that emphatical signal word *Selah*, which shows us that this word calls for meditation and our diligent attention; it does lay a kind of an arrest upon our spirits, not passing from it till we have seriously weighed the matter. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* Death will be too hard for him, and too powerful to resist; there is no withstanding the strength of this king, he will bring all into subjection: he is said in Rom. 5:12, 14 to reign over all, and so he is called the terror of kings as well as king of terrors, he is

so to the wicked; and what king has as many subjects as death has? And that I may demonstrate it, consider *age* cannot rescue any man from the hand of *death*; the oldest man must die. All those that lived before the flood are dead. *Methuselah* lived nine hundred sixty nine years, Gen. 5:27 but alas at last the words tell you, and *he died*; he lived near a thousand years, but at last was forced to subject to the grave.

2. As the oldest man must die, so must the strongest. *Sampson* was a mighty man, yet *Sampson* must die. Death will make the stoutest hearts to faint, and the strongest legs to tremble. One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet; his breasts are full of milk and his bones are moistened with marrow, Job 21:23, 24. If any were likely to encounter or grapple with death, we may suppose that this is the man; he who is in his perfect strength, free from distempers; signified by that word, *wholly at ease and quiet*: yet alas all will not do, this man was forced to yield, he is made *death's captive*.

3. The wisdom and policy of man cannot deliver from the power of the grave. The wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne was forced to stoop to the sovereign hand of death. *Wise men die*, saith the Psalmist, *likewise the fool*, Psal. 49:10. *In death there is no remembrance of the wise more than the fool*, Eccl. 2:16. The most grave and politic in all ages of the world, after all their famous and deep contrivances, have been overcome by death.

4. Riches cannot deliver from death, if it could we should have few rich men die; doubtless they would give their all to save themselves from the grave: they would leave but little to friends or executors, could they but bribe death with their silver and gold. I have read of one who would make a trial, and so called for a bag of gold, when on a sick-bed, and laid it to his trembling heart; but presently cried out, *Away, away with it; it will not do*. Oh my *beloved*, riches will not avail you in the day of wrath, Prov. 11:4 and as it will not in the Day of Judgment, so it will not in the hour of death. The brutish person dies and leaves his wealth behind him, Psal. 49:10. The Cardinal of *Winchester*, who procured the death of the good Duke of *Glocester* in the reign of King *Henry* the Sixth, was shortly after taken with a grievous disease; who understanding by his physicians that he could not live, murmuring and repining thereat, he cried out, *(Fie) will not death be hired? Will money do nothing, must I die, that have so great riches? If the whole, realm would save my life, either by policy I can get it, or by riches I can buy*

it. But yet all would not do, the proud Cardinal must submit to death.

5. As riches will not deliver from the power of the grave, so likewise earthly power and worldly sovereignty and greatness, cannot do it; all the mighty potentates and monarchs, the holy Scripture and ancient histories acquaint us of, where are they? has not death subdued them all? After all their grandeur and pomp they were all cut down by death's all-conquering hand, and now their glory lies in the dust. *Augustus Caesar* one day triumphs in the greatness of his strength, the next day is stabbed to death with bodkins *Herod* King of the *Jews*, one hour is admired as a God, the next hour is made a feast for worms, Acts. 12:22, 23. The great conqueror *Alexander*, who subdued the greatest part of the world, is at last overcome by death. Death makes no difference between the king in his royalty on the throne, and the beggar in rags upon the Dunghill *Alexander* having received 2 wounds at the siege of [a] great city in *India*, finding himself to be sore wounded, was in some measure made sensible of his own fragility; and cried out to his flattering followers, You call me the *son of Jupiter*, but I perceive *I am subject to wounds and death as well as other men*. Death bringeth down the loftiest looks of man. I have read that in the library of *Dublin* there is a globe at the one end and at the other end the picture of death, to show that though man was Lord of the whole universe, *i.e* must submit to death. Thus you see that all the pomp and glory of the world has been cut down by the power of the grave. But again,

6. As worldly dignities cannot deliver from the power of the grave, so glorious titles will not do it.

Those worthies that God conferred glorious titles upon, yea so far as to give his own name unto them; to be called gods. One would think that this, if any were the most likeliest to exempt a man from the grave, and yet it will not do, Psal. 82:6, 7. *I have said ye are gods*, but with the same breath adds, *ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes*. But,

7. Eminency in grace and spiritual endowments, or divine qualifications, will not be able to rescue a soul from the power of the grave. All the Patriarchs of old they are gone; where are all those choice and renowned in grace that we read of, who shined in their day like the stars in the firmament? Oh! where are those troops of Israelites that excelled in patience, chastity, temperance, holiness and humility? these could not deliver themselves from death. *The*

righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away: none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come, Isa. 57:1.

8. *Lastly*, No spiritual dignity, office, or place, can deliver from the hand of the grave; though a person be never so much in the favor of God, and honored by Christ Jesus; though never so laborious for the good of souls, as to be an ambassador of peace and minister of the gospel, yet these will not exempt from death: your fathers where are they and the prophets, do they live for ever? Zech. 1:5.

Thus you have heard the doctrine made good and confirmed, *That there is no man living that shall not see death, or be able to deliver himself from the power of the grave.* I shall only give you two or three reasons of the point, and so proceed to the application. If you question why all must die, take two or three things for an answer.

1. Reas. Because all have sinned. Sin and death came into the world together. Death came by the fall in the garden, it is part of the punishment due to us for that transgression; Rom. 5:12, *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned; the wages of sin is death,* Rom. 6:23. We may cry out in the words of a holy man, *O sin, sin, it is thou, which by thy just deserts hast caused all the funerals that ever have been.* Thus you see all must die, because all have sinned.

2. Reas. Because God has decreed that all men must die, Heb. 9:27, *And as it is appointed for men once to die, and after that to judgment.* Though death be natural and the punishment of our sins, yet we die by God's appointment. We let in death by our sin, and God causes death to proceed upon us, to make good the justice and severity of his own threatening. *I know, saith Job, thou wilt bring me to death, to the house appointed for all living, Job 30:23. On the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return; Gen. 2:17, 3:19.*

3. Reas. *Lastly*, Why God will bring all men to the grave; and I shall add no more,

(1.) Because he would thereby magnify his glorious attributes; as first out of infinite grace, commiseration and goodness, he brings his own children to the

grave, knowing the miseries, sad afflictions and troubles that does attend them in this life. Here most times poor saints, with *Lazarus*, have their evil things; many are their afflictions, and this way God takes to deliver them out of them all. Death opens a door to glory to every gracious soul; and secondly God by death prepares the bodies of his saints for eternal bliss and happiness. He brings the body to the grave, that it may be purified and made a glorious and most amiable body; it is sown, that it might be raised more glorious, 1 Cor. 15:42, 43, 44. God does with the bodies of his saints, with reverence be it spoken, as they do with their earthen vessels in *China*, they bury them in the earth for many years, and when they take them out, the nature and worth of them is far transcendent.

(2.) The ungodly must die, that God may magnify on them his own infinite justice. Death having seized their body, their souls must go to its place, to suffer the intolerable pains and incensed wrath of the Almighty; and that their bodies also, with their souls, when they shall hereafter meet together again, might be made fit fuel for eternal flames to kindle upon: for now as they are in this mortal state they cannot endure the terrible wrath of God, but would soon be freed of all bodily pain and extremity, were they cast into that lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Thus much for the reasons of the point; more might be said, but I must hasten to the application.

I have only four uses to make of it, as:

First an Use of Exhortation,

Secondly an Use of Direction,

Thirdly an Use of Lamentation,

Fourthly an Use of Consolation.

First, *By way of Exhortation*, Is it so beloved, must all men die? Can none deliver his own soul from the power of the grave? Must every mother's child of us take up our lodging there? Is the dark grave the appointed house for all living? Shall the proudest and loftiest be brought down to the dust? Must that little cool house under ground hold us all? Then poor sinners shall I prevail

with you to prepare for death? Let me exhort you to look about you and get ready. I remember, when the Prophet came to good King *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38:1 with that doleful^[6] tidings (as upon some consideration and circumstances it might then appear to that holy man) he bids him set his house in order, make provision for eternity: and this is the message that is brought to you this day: You must die and not live.

And that I might enforce this word upon you, let me lay before you a few Motives and awakening Considerations.

1. Consider what a great favor and mercy it is that God has let you and I live so long. Others are long ago cut down and sent to the grave; he has not it may be given many half of those days which you have had: Look upon this as a mercy indeed, considering your life was forfeited before you were born. Sirs we came into the world with the sentence of death upon us; and if *Jehovah* had cut us down in our sins many years ago, it would have been but a piece of justice. And what is the end of God in sparing of us, but that we might be fitted for the place where we are going. Oh how unwilling is God to strike the fatal blow, to cut men down before they are prepared for death. He is not willing they should perish, and that is the reason of his patience, long-suffering, and forbearance, sinners lay it to heart.

2. Consider what dreadful provocations you and I have given him to take us away, and command death in his name to arrest us. Have we not grieved, burdened, yea even wearied him with our iniquities? Nay, have we not pierced him? May he not cry out, as being pressed as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves, Amos 2:13. Is it not a sad and most lamentable thing, thus to deal with a loving and gracious God?

3. How often has the Lord called you, and yet you have rebelled? Has not he stretched out his hand all the day long, and yet you have not hearkened; but have rejected his counsel and cast his word and reproofs behind you; yea, and often resisted his Holy Spirit in the common motions and workings thereof? Have you not many of you refused his grace, Son, and divers sweet and precious calls and offers of love. And certain I am, you have had many of these in this place, Nay, how many warnings have you had of the near approach of death? Nay, awakening summons to prepare for the grave, as you would answer it before the dreadful Judge of heaven and earth; by my dear brother that is fallen asleep; whom we shall hear no more? Oh what pains did

he take with some of you, that so you might be ready? Have not you and I notwithstanding all this hearkened to a base deceitful heart, and enticing and tempting Devil? Have you stouted it out against all pains and endeavors used for spiritual awakenings, and are you yet alive? Then consider how much this calls upon you to be ready to die? Will any dare, that are sensible of the worth of their immortal souls, neglect this concern any longer?

4. Consider, That the abuse of mercy and goodness will greatly aggravate your misery in the day of wrath: Oh remember what it is to sin against light, love, and patience. Shall the goodness of God, that should lead to repentance, encourage and harden you in your iniquity? How do you think to escape the judgment of God? Or *despisest thou*, as saith the Apostle, *the rich's of his goodness, forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds*, Rom. 2:4, 5, 6. *Sentence is past against a sinner, but because it is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of men are fully set within them to do wickedly*, Eccl. 8:11. Christ knocks at the door and yet sinners will not hear. Christ may speak of sinners as God speaks of *Israel* of old, *My people will have none of me*, Psal. 81:11. Oh what have you to answer for abused mercy and favor! What, what will you do hereafter, when Christ, who waits upon you now to save you, will then turn his face from you in the day of your calamity, and plead against you to condemn you? see Prov. 1:28.

5. Consider for Christ's sake of those advantages you have had and still have: If some had the like, we may conclude they would have made better use and improvement of them then some of you have done. Has not God afforded you the gospel beyond what he has to divers parts of the world? Nay, what a gracious and powerful ministration of it has there been continued for some time in this place? You have had helps above thousands, God has taken much pains with you that have attended upon the word here. Where God gives many talents, he requires the improvement of them; what will become of *Jerusalem* and *Capernaum* in the day of judgment? And has not God's spirit striven with you also? Nay, and has not conscience endeavored to awaken you? Have you not had summons and calls from thence? Has not that often reproved you for neglect of seasons, flighting of sermons, and indulging

yourselves in iniquity and secret lusts and omissions of duty? Oh! how many sharp checks and rebukes have you had from within? Nay, and besides all this, what awakening judgments to prepare for the grave, have you and I had; dreadful plague, fire and sword: and what further means could God make use of in an ordinary way for alarming and stirring of us up to prepare for our change, and turning of our souls to himself, and fitting of us for eternity? And shall none of these work upon you? Shall all means fail? Shall the gospel be preached in vain? Shall ministers spend their study, their breath, nay their strength, to no purpose: what will you do then in the end?

6. Do you know that you shall have all these helps continued to you? Will God still suffer his Holy Spirit to strive with you? Alas, death may soon have commission to seize you and carry you into the other world; but should you live, are you sure God will still wait upon you: upon such rebels, who have slighted and undervalued his grace, Son, and gospel? Sirs, I must tell you, alluding to that in Genesis 6 which has often been upon my heart; that the blessed Spirit shall not always strive with man: Means and advantages are like to be taken away. God ere long may say to conscience, Be still, reprove that man, that woman no more: You may be left to commit wickedness without remorse or trouble. God may give you up to a hardened and sordid heart, to a seared and filthy conscience, yea, and refuse in mercy to afflict you anymore; see Hosea 4:14. May not he that has taken away a minister, an able one, a sweet and precious laborer, take away ere long a sweet and precious gospel; and what will become of your souls then?

7. Do you know for certain the gospel shall be continued to this land? Be you sure you shall hear the joyful sound? Let me tell you my thoughts freely, though I pretend not to a spirit of prophecy; yet mark what follows: I tremble to think what is coming upon us as a punishment of our sins. I fear, beloved, the gospel is a going.

[**First,**] *Ephraim* has gray hairs here and there, though he know it not; and gray hairs are a sign that our morning or best days are gone;

Secondly, they commonly bring a wrinkled face, or a decay of beauty; our goodness, like *Ephraim's*, are even like the morning dew:

Thirdly, they bring feebleness, or a decay of strength:

Fourthly, they shew that death and mortality draws near.

We have heard, some of us, that he was gray a great while ago; I doubt he is white, by this time. There are sad symptoms upon us, I know not how soon we may have cause to cry *Ichabod*, because the glory is departed. Are we not in danger to be over-spread with popery, confusion, and darkness; for if the gospel should continue, and God's people resolve to do their best, by their prayers and prizing of it, to hold it fast; yet are you sure you shall have ministers to preach unto you? Many have been taken of late away, and one at this time before your eyes is gone, a faithful and able one; whom now you shall hear no more. But should there be ministers and opportunities, yet you may be left to yourselves, to ripen for hell and ruin? Nay, Is not Christ already crying over you, as he did over *Jerusalem*; *Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belongeth to thy peace; but now they are hid from eyes*; Luke 19:42. Oh that these things might take hold and touch your consciences.

8. Consider of the shortness and uncertainty of your days? Alas, what is your life, you know not how soon death may come and knock at your doors, or look in at your windows? It may be some of you have had many years, but this consider of, you know not how few the rest may be behind; you have no promise from God, no lease or assurance that you have one year more; where has God told you that you shall? nay one half year? You cannot assure your self you shall have one month, no not one week, no not one day. You may be stricken by death before you return home. *Boast not thy self of too morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*, Pro. 27:1. Many that are young, hope that they may have many years; the child thinks to be a youth, and the youth to be a man, and a man till he is full of days: But alas, they consider not how brittle they are; they do not lay to heart the uncertainty of their lives. *David* desired to know his end and the measure of his days, *that he might know how frail he was*, Psal. 39:4, 5. Many do not take a right measure of their days, they measure not by a lawful rule. What say some, my father and grandfather lived to a good old age, and I hope to attain to their years. Others measure by their present health; they are not diseased nor sickly; but of a good healthful constitution: but alas, this is no sure rule, you may notwithstanding all this be quickly in the grave; such sometimes death makes to stoop on a sudden, they go many times before sickly persons.

Others measure their days by their present strength, they fear not death upon that account; yet they die as you have heard; though wholly at ease: these do not go by the Kings standard neither. Let me tell you what is a right and true measure for your days, account them then by the morning dew and flower of the field. *Man that is born of a woman, saith holy Job, is but of few days; he cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: and flieth away like a shadow and continueth not.* Job 14:12. Naturalists tells us of a plant that lasts but for a day, this plant you or I may be. The heathen has observed that the rose grows old in its very budding. Mankind is like *Jonah's* gourd, that came up in a night and perished in a night. Nothing fades sooner than a flower, oh measure your days by that and by the vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away; the spiders web, the swift post, the weavers shuttle, or a ship under sail. Persons never so rich or great, never so beautiful, never so weak or strong, wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious, as you have heard must die. May not the thoughts of this move you to a preparedness for the grave?

9. Consider how you have loitered hitherto and lost much of your precious time which God has lent you to prepare for the grave. Upon the improvement of your present time does your eternal happiness depend, and if it be squandered away, what will become of your immortal and never dying souls? If a man has much work to do, work of the weightiest concern that must be done, or the man undone: business that would take up all his day, and it should so fall out that he had lost the morning, nay above half his day; would it not concern him to set about the work with all his might, so as if possible to do two hours works in one; lest the sun go down before the work is finished. *Redeem the time, because the days are evil,* Eph. 5:16. Alas sirs, are not the shadows of the evening upon some of you? the Lord help you to lay it to heart. Do not think the whole work of your lives can be done upon a dying bed. Oh consider old age is unfit for labor, and it is folly with a witness to think it is time enough to sow when you should reap. Delays proves the ruin of many thousands; *The night cometh,* saith Christ, *when no man can work.*

10. And *lastly*, Consider what will become of your precious souls, if death takes you before you are ready; for it will not stay for you: Will he be bribed or persuaded to come another time? I remember a young maid in the country that was sick, and as she grew near her end, she cried out to be spared one quarter of a year, one month; but when that would not be granted; rather than

fail, one week: but die she did, greedy death will have no denial. Oh what a sad sight is it to see a Christless soul a dying! When death sits upon your trembling lips, and you not prepared, what would you give for peace and pardon then? When pale death comes upon you like a sturdy sergeant, and does arrest you in the name of the great King of heaven and earth, he will hale you along; to prison you must go. Death comes upon a wicked man like a hungry lion, tearing their souls from their bodies; to such he is indeed the King of Terrors: He comes on them like a fiery serpent, with his venomous sting; with which he wounds them and lays them a bleeding to all eternity. Oh to have the soul dragged out of the body and cast into Hell, is of a dreadful and amazing consideration. With this I shall conclude the Use of Exhortation.

[**Secondly**], The next is an *Use of Direction* to poor sinners and all others that would be prepared for the grave, if this be so.

1. Does not some poor soul hear say, Oh what shall I do that I may be prepared for the grave? Have you a heart, a mind, a desire indeed to be fitted for that hour? Then in the first place labor to get a full sight and sense of your sins, and of your lost and undone condition by nature. Oh what a miserable creature has sin made man, or rather man by sin made himself? That must needs be the greatest evil, that deprives man of the greatest good. God is man's chief good, sin deprives man of this good; sin makes man hated of God, and causes man to resemble Satan; who is the opposite of God. The carnal mind is enmity against God, this enmity must be removed, *Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*, John 3:3.

2. Labor to get brokenness of heart, oh strive to melt in the sight and sense of your iniquity. Sinner what have you done, will you sin away your mercies, sin away your ministers? God's hand is lifted up, we are under sore rebukes of the Almighty, though I fear few are sensible that it is the fruit of their transgressions. May we not say with the prophet, *No man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?* Jer. 8:6. God expects and looks for tears of repentance, *A broken and a contrite heart is a sacrifice that he will not despise*. If you are not broken in the sense of the odious and abominable nature of sin, broken into pieces now, you are like to be broken with horror under the weight of the punishment hereafter. Oh! Is it not better to be smitten and broken in a way of mercy, in order to healing; then to be

broken in a way of wrath and judgment, when there will be no help nor cure for you.

3. Labor so get an interest in Jesus Christ. Oh that this opportunity might have some tendency this way! *Unless ye believe that I am he*, saith *Jesus Christ, you shall die in your sins*. Soul never rest and be satisfied, till you can say with *Thomas, My Lord and my God*, John 20:28. Can you still stand it out against such precious patience and offers of grace? Will you not yet open to Christ? Shall he call and cry to you and will you give him no entertainment? Can you close in with a better friend? How long has he stood knocking at the doors of your hearts? Was he not graciously calling upon you the last Lord's Day? and now in mercy he is giving you another knock. Oh fear lest he depart! Is he not ready to take his farewell of you? Have you not let him stand till his *head was wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night*? Sinner, sinner, hasten to him, and open the door, do you not hear that lovely voice that was spoken to the blind man, *Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee*, Mark 10:49. It may be you will ask where? I'll tell you, if you are a weary and burdened soul, that feels the weight of your sin, there is a precious word spoken for your sake, take hold of it; Matt. 11:28, *Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls*. Oh the sweetness of that word, take it and receive it down.

4. Labor in the strength of Christ to oppose every sin. See that there be no sweet morsel hid, no Delilah, no pleasant nor profitable lust spared. O cry with *David, Search me, O Lord, and try my heart; prove me, and know my thoughts*; Psal. 139:23.

5. Take heed you do not sin against light. Neglect no conviction either of sin or duty, if you would be prepared for the grave: *Then shall I not*, saith *David, be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments*; Psal. 119:6.

6. Never be satisfied until you have all your sins subdued. Sin must be crucified, or the soul must die, Rom. 8:13. To this I might add (for I cannot enlarge) make it your business also to get your sins pardoned; so that you may have the feeling sense of the forgiveness of them in your own hearts.

7. Labor after a pure conscience. What will stand your souls in greater stead,

when you come to die than this? *Paul's* great care and endeavor was, to keep a *conscience void of offense towards God and toward men*, Acts 24:16. I must tell you, an accusing conscience will be a bad death-bed companion. I remember what our dear friend spoke to me in the time of his sickness. *Oh brother*, said he, *a good conscience is the best refuge*. That was his rejoicing, alluding to that text, 2 Cor. 1:12 *the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God he had his conversation in the world*. It matters not who reproach us, if conscience does not? Conscience, as I told some of you lately, will be your best friend; if a friend, a friend indeed, a friend in adversity; a friend at death, and a friend in the day of judgment. Oh what would some men give for such a friend? But if conscience be an enemy, he is the worst of enemies. Conscience is a secret enemy, an enemy that is privy to all we have done; he knows all our thoughts, yea those secret lusts and evils, that lie in our hearts; and he will not be flattered. He will tell the truth and all the truth. Conscience will lay all open in the dreadful day of account before angels and men, Rom. 2:15. Holy *Job* resolved to hold his integrity fast and not to let it go; his heart should not reproach him as long as he lived, Job 27:5, 6. Sincerity of heart and a good conscience will be a good sanctuary at the hour of death. The Lord help you to lay these things to heart. I might give you more directions which I am forced to omit, because of time. Only this, if you would be prepared for the grave, take this one, which was not then delivered; which I am sorry I did omit.

8. Beware of resting in the form of godliness without the power. It is an easy thing to conform to the outward part of religion; to take up ordinances and come into churches: but oh what will become of the foolish virgins. Sinners in *Zion* ere long will be afraid, and fearfulness will surprise the hypocrites. Many of you heard those excellent soul-searching sermons of your dear pastor now deceased on 2 Tim. 3:5.

Oh that you would labor to call them to mind! and those upon a well-ordered conversation; from Psal. 50 and the last verse. What pains did he take with you, that you might not deceive yourselves and miss at last of eternal life? I think there was never more formality among Christians and carnality among professors in the churches, than in these days: No marvel if God bring a day of dreadful trials and afflictions upon us, that those that are approved, may be

made manifest. Tremble sinners, for God is a coming forth to refine his people; *he will search Jerusalem with candles*; Zeph. 1:12. And woe to them that are at ease in *Zion*; however you appear now to men, your sins ere long will find you out.

[*Thirdly*], I now must come to the third *Use*, which must be an *Use of Lamentation*; and indeed I know not well how to enter upon it, my heart is full. Is it so? Must all die? Can none deliver their own souls from the power of the grave? Must husbands die, dear husbands? Must fathers die, yea tender fathers? Must friends, our dearest friends die? Ministers, nay, our choice and godly pastors, must they die too? Oh greedy death! oh cruel tyrant! Oh that ever we sinned! This may well be for a lamentation. *Samuel* died, and *Israel* made great lamentations for him. Your *Samuel* is gone, but no asking for him again, he cannot come. In Acts 8:2 it is said *devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him*.

O spare me a little, you have lost one who labored to do the work of his generations in faithfulness. Let me lay down some grounds that we have for a Lamentation.

1. Oh it's grievous to loose a godly preacher, a pastor, a faithful laborer. It is a day of mourning, my soul as well as yours is full. Alas there is but few of them! We have need of more, and Lord do you take away these we have?

2. But if any should say we have many yet left behind, I must say not many such, who make it their main work and business to bring souls to Jesus Christ. There are but few who naturally care for the flock: Few preach Christ for Christ's sake, that are willing to spend and be spent for his name sake; like our dear brother, now with the Lord. May I not say with *Paul*, some preach Christ out of envy, and some of strife; only with this variation, Are there not many who preach Jesus Christ not sincerely, but have self and sinister ends at the bottom. But to leave that, however, if God proceed and go on after this rate to take our preachers away, there will be few enough ere long.

3. You have not only lost a pastor, a shepherd, a tender one, but you have lost a father. Many of you must follow your father this day to the grave. You have many instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. He has been an instrument through the word and the operation of the Spirit in his ministry, to beget

many of you to Jesus Christ. May you not cry out with *Elisha* when *Elijah* was taken up from him, *My father, my father, the horsemen of Israel and the chariots thereof; and he saw him no more*, 2 Kings 2:12. He is now gone, you will hear him no more, see him no more. This golden trumpet is now stopped, you will hear it sound no more.

4. Consider the time in which God has taken him away, when the harvest is white, or when the fields are ripe to harvest; when many sinners are ready to be brought in to Jesus Christ. The loss is great, oh how shall it be repaired? How shall the harvest be gathered in, when the chief laborer in this field is gone?

5. Ministers are and fitly may be compared to pilots; the church to a ship passing through a troublesome ocean, among many rocks and sands; and when such die, how shall the poor mariners steer, especially, considering the dangerous and grievous storms that do now appear: is not this a ground of lamentation.

6. Ministers are compared to shepherds, that are to keep the flock and watch over them to take care of the tender lambs; and let me tell you, ravenous wolves are abroad, yea and the cunning fox, nay as crafty foxes as ever were in the world; and the shepherd being gone, may we not fear that which will follow; is not the flock in danger to be scattered.

7. Ministers of the gospel may be compared to captains, to encourage us in our spiritual warfare, and now alas your leader is gone, he is taken from you, and are we not surrounded with enemies? May we not say with *Leah* in another case, Gen. 30:11, *a troop cometh*; a troop of troubles, a troop of afflictions, a troop of temptations, a troop of miseries and persecutions; I wish it prove not a troop of division to the scattering of us: the Lord I hope will prevent it.

8. Ministers of the gospel are compared to trees, *the trees of the Lord are full of sap*, Psal. 104:16 *the lip of the righteous feed many* (saith *Solomon*; and this was a fruitful tree. Oh the sweet fruit it did bear, most precious fruit it yielded us for many years. Oh what good have many gathered out of the branches thereof. But now alas it is (*cut down*) it will bear fruit for you no more; you shall hear him pray no more, preach no more, and is not this a ground of lamentation.

9. Saints and ministers of the gospel are the interest of the nation, city, or place where they live. Was not *Lot* the interest of *Sodom*? *I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither*, Gen. 19:22. Till *Lot* was gone, fire and brimstone could not come upon that miserable city. Oh what love has God to the poor preachers of righteousness. But again, Was not *Jacob* the interest of *Laban's* family? How did God bless him for *Jacob's* sake? The like might be minded of *Joseph* to the Egyptians. *Ye*, saith our blessed Saviour, *are the light of the world and the salt of the earth*. To whom did he speak but to his disciples, his holy apostles, that he sent forth to preach glad tidings of great joy unto the nations.

I might shew you wherein they are the interest of the place where they are, but I must hasten: Take only two or three brief hints.

(1.) They stand in the gap or in the breach. Ours is a great one, the Lord look upon us. They plead with God: When *Moses* hands are up *Israel* prevails, and when he lets down his hands *Amalek* prevails, Exod. 17:11. Oh how does he cry out for a provoking generation. When *Jehovah* cries, *Let me alone, that I may destroy them*, Exod. 32:10. Oh, saith *Joshua*, *what wilt thou do for thy great name? If thou wilt not forgive their sin, saith Moses, blot me out of thy Book*. Nay, though God promised to make of him a great nation, yet he still lifts up a cry for them, Exod. 32:10, 11, 32.

(2.) They are the interest of the nation where they are, by counseling, warning, and admonishing.

(3.) By their holy and exemplary conversations. *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and should have been like unto Gomorrah*, Isa. 1:9.

10. Ground of lamentation, is because sin usually is the cause why God removes his faithful ambassadors. He sends to treat with sinners about the concerns of their souls. I wish this stroke be not in judgment to some of your souls. The message they bring is often slighted, and thereby sinners slight and reject the King himself. They cry and lift up their voice like a trumpet, forewarning of danger; but none lays it to heart. They spend their strength and weaken their bodies for the good of sinners souls; but sinners slight it: Nay, if they should sweat drops of blood it would not do, it would not work in them remorse of conscience and repentance unto life. Well, saith God, now I'll wait

upon you no more, him that you despised and contemned, or neglected to hear, or whose counsel you did not regard, you shall hear no more. The taking away of faithful preachers is one of the greatest judgment that can come upon sinners. But alas, it may not only be for the sins of the ungodly world upon unconverted sinners, but a punishment upon professors and church members for their iniquity; they may not prize the mercy nor walk worthy of the blessing. They may not carry it as they ought to do to the laborer that is among them: They may grieve and wound his heart by their disorderly walking; and God may from hence be provoked to take him a way. Nay they may on the other hand overvalue him, they may idolize their teachers and look upon them above what is meet; though sinful, yet it is possible to eye man more than God by man. God may remove them. Upon this account the apostle speaks of some that had men's persons in admiration. I am satisfied there is too great extremes in the world. We should have a care we do not receive the truth for the sake of a man, or to please men, because such and such says it; but out of love to Jesus Christ, and because God has commanded it. Beloved, it may not be amiss to lay these things to heart, it is good to hear the Rod and to know who it is, and for what it is appointed. I do not charge any in particular.

11. And *lastly*, Here is cause of lamentation, because evil and dark days many times follows the removal of God's worthies. When God take away so many faithful ones, what may we expect to look for. I might give divers instances of the sad effects, or what has followed the taking godly persons & sincere laborers away.^[2] But I am afraid I have been too tedious already, remember what the prophet saith, *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; Merciful men are taken away; and none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come*, Isa. 57:1.

Thus much by way of Lamentation and Consolation.

[**Fourthly**], I have only one *Use* more, which shall be in the fourth place by way of *Comfort and Consolation*.

1. Must all die, the godly as well as the wicked? Is the grave the place prepared for all living? Must fathers, husbands, wives, children, ministers, and the dearest friends we have die? How shall we then comfort ourselves against death? If you are a believer, I have a word of comfort for you; there is none I am sure for Christless souls.

2. Consider death cannot hurt you; it cannot hurt those that are believers, because it has lost his sting. Death may hiss but cannot hurt: Nothing makes death terrible to an ungodly man but it's sting. The sting of death is sin, but this is taken away from believers by Jesus Christ. *Oh death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* 1. Cor. 15:55, 56.

(2.) Death cannot hurt a believer, because it cannot bring an annihilation of the body, though it bring an alteration upon the state and condition of the body, yea and though the body be dissolved to dust, yet it shall not be lost, it shall rise to life again.

3. Death cannot dissolve or break that blessed union there is between Jesus Christ and believers. Though it may separate soul and body, yet it cannot separate either from Jesus Christ, and the soul immediately will be in a more glorious enjoyment of Christ; and though the body for a while must lie in the grave, yet that dust is precious dust in Christ's sight.

4. Consider death cannot keep the body long under its power, nor keep soul and body apart; it is but a little while and they will meet again. Death and the grave are conquered enemies. Saints by faith can now, through Jesus Christ triumph over them, and shall have a complete, a full conquest, over a short space.

5. Death has not power to cast into Hell, if conscience condemns you not, if the word convicts you not, if God passes not the sentence upon you, death has no power to do it. Death can but bring to the grave, it is sin that casts the soul into Hell.

6. Consider death is yours, that is, it will be for your profit and advantage every way. Remember that sweet word of *Paul* to the Corinthians, 1. Cor. 3:22, *Whether Paul or Apollo, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours*; it will be every way for your good.

Consider what freedom you will gain thereby:

(1.) It will free you from a body of sin and death, that often makes you go with a sorrowful heart. Oh! has it not often made you to cry out with St. *Paul*, *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?* Oh what is a greater trouble to a child of God than indwelling sin? He cannot do the things he would do. But now comes death and frees you of all

these soul perplexities and disquietments.^[8] Sin makes a saint to groan, being burdened; but now you shall grieve Christ and his spirit, nor your own soul no more. Is not this that a poor saint longs for?

(2.) It will free you from a poor crazy, diseased, or distempered^[9] body. There will then be no crying out of back or bone, nor head nor heart any more; it will be with you as with the church in the glorious day to come, Rev. 21:4, *There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.*

(3.) It will free you from an evil and wicked world. Oh what a defiling, ensnaring, and bewitching world is this? What hinders us of our joy and peace in Christ more than it? What greater vexation to us? Oh how many precious saints are clogged and imprisoned by the cares of the world, which many times is ready to choke the seed of holy desires after Christ: But by death you shall be delivered.

(4.) It will free you out of the hands of persecutors. You will, (with our dear brother) be out of their reach then: they shall not disquiet you, imprison you, nor torment you any more. *There*, saith *Job* (speaking of the grave) *the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest; there the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor*, Job 3:17, 18.

(5.) Death will free you from an envious raging and tempting Devil. He will have not more power to disturb you, accuse you, nor by his cursed suggestions, to vex and perplex your soul; no, nor any other ways to hurt or annoy you. O will not this be to your great advantage? Who would be unwilling to die, that has an interest in Jesus Christ?

(6.) You will hereby also be freed from all the discords and troubles that rise among brethren. The unworthy and disorderly lives of professors shall sadden your heart then no more. This was that which worried and grieved the blessed apostle, Phil. 3:18. Our dear brother is set at liberty from all these things, disorders in the Church, no loose walking of members thereof, will burden nor trouble him again.

(7.) Nay and death will free you of all that trouble that rises from those inward becloudings and hidings of God's face. It will never be night with the soul any more; you will then be with Christ and behold his face with joy for ever.

(8.) And *lastly*, You will also be freed of all your toilsome pains and labor, of what nature soever it be. O how good is rest to a weary soul? *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*, Rev. 14:13.

But then once again, consider what a blessed state your soul will be in at death. If you are a true believer, you shall not only have hereby a negative good, it will not simply [be] a freedom from all those sorrows and troubles you have heard, but your soul shall immediately receive transcendent joy with Jesus Christ. *For me to live, saith Paul, is Christ, and to die is gain*. The advantage the soul receives upon this account, made *Paul* so much desire to depart and be with Christ; which he says is far better, Phil. 1:21. Pray observe his words, he does not say it will be gain to him when he rises again, no, but *to die is gain*.^[10] I shall receive more joy, more consolation, more of the fullness of God and Christ (as if he should say) when I die, then I can while I am in this body.

Mind that passage in 2 Cor. 5:1, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. Compare this with ver. 6, *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*. The apostle does not say we know when this earthly house is broken down and raised up again, we have a building with God, eternal in the heavens. (Pray consider it) but plainly when it is dissolved, when it is turned to its dusty crumbs: (*We have*) that is our souls, he can intend nothing else. By (*we*) he means their better part, which he compares to an inhabiter, and the body to the house or tabernacle in which it dwells. Oh what an excellent thing is the soul of man over the body.

And now beloved, That the soul or better part is capable of being separated from the body, and in its separate state from the body, capable of glorious enjoyments of God and high raptures of joy with Jesus Christ, does appear most evident from that passage of the apostle in 2 Cor. 12:1, 2, 3, *It is not expedient for me doubtless, to glory, I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth: such a one caught up to the third heaven*. ver. 4. *says, he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter*. The soul or spirit then it appears may

be separate from the body. I from this place thus argue,

1. If the soul or spirit of man be not capable of being separated from the house of clay or earthly tabernacle, then *Paul* might have boldly and safely have said the whole man was taken up, a soul and body together, and not one without the other, because it is impossible to separate them: but since *Paul* says he knows not whether in the body or out of the body, he plainly shows what opinion he was of.

And then secondly, I may from what he says, reason after this manner, *viz.* If the soul in its separated state from the body, be not able or capable to enjoy or take in heavenly comforts or consolations of Jesus Christ, *Paul* might boldly and positively have said he was taken up in the body, because however he was caught up, whether within or without the body, he heard and saw inexpressible things; he had high and soul-filling raptures of joy. The Lord Jesus promised the penitent thief that he should (that is his chief or better part) be that day with him in paradise. *Lord Jesus* (saith *Stephen*) *receive my spirit*. O what a blessed thing it is to die in Christ? O what a happy estate is our friend in, the gain is exceeding great. Some may say what does a godly man gain by death?

I *answer*,

First, They gain a glorious place, heaven, the glorious paradise of God, the mansions of glory that are in our Father's house! Who is able to conceive what a glorious place heaven is? But then,

Secondly, They shall enjoy glorious company too. They shall be with Jesus Christ, have his company, *in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there be pleasures for evermore*; be with Christ, holy angels, and glorious spirits of just men made perfect. O what a blessed state and condition of soul have they gained that are gone thither!

Thirdly, we shall gain sweet peace. It is not only peace in Christ (that God's people have as their portion here) but it shall be peace with Christ. A woman that has a dear husband who is gone to sea, he is it may be in another country, yet she hears from him, receives tokens of love, she has much satisfaction of the steadfastness of his love, cordialness of his affection; in this she has peace and comfort, but alas what is this peace to that when he comes home, when she has him, enjoys his company? O we shall see Christ, enjoy him, yea lie in

his arms to all eternity. *Enter thou, saith Christ, into the joy of thy Lord.* That joy is too much to enter into us, therefore we must enter into that. *Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* He has peace in death, peace beyond death, yea and peace to all eternity.

And now one word more particularly to you that have lost your Pastor: Your loss I must confess is great (though he has gained hereby) and it may be some of you are crying out, What shall we do? Beloved, you must labor for a quiet frame, strive for contentedness of heart; it is the Lord's hand upon you, it is what he has done; remember *David, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*, Psal. 39:9.

2. Consider also your loss is not so great, but God is able to repair it and make it up to you, though you may not see which way it can be done, let it be your care to wait upon God; cry to him, look up to the Lord of the harvest, and patiently wait to see what he will do for you.

3. To support you under this sore affliction, consider the great Shepherd of the sheep never dies, he lives for ever; and sure he that died for the sheep whose own sheep they are, will take care of them; he will feed them and preserve them from danger, Isa. 23:1, 2, 3,^[11] *The Lord is my Shepherd*, saith *David, I shall not want: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters: he restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.* And from hence he takes courage, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.* Oh what a blessed thing it is to have confidence in God, and to have such a Shepherd; the keeper of *Israel* never slumbers nor sleepeth.

**And now to conclude one word to dear relations, and
to comfort us all under the present dispensation.**^[12]

1. Consider death shall not separate us long, we shall see one another again over a short time, he is gone but a little before; let us think upon that glorious meeting we shall have ere long in the air, read 1 Thess. 4:13, &c. *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again; even so them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with*

him: for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord: wherefore comfort one another with these words. What can I speak that may be more seasonable for comfort, then that which the Holy Spirit has left upon record, upon that very account it will be but a little while and we shall see him again, we shall have a joyful meeting and never part more.

O therefore be quieted, consider what you have heard what death is to a believer.

Shall not our friend go to rest? Alas he has labored hard, and O how sweet is this rest to him. When a man has worked hard all day and wearied himself, how willing is he to go to bed at night? Alas he is but gone to sleep, to take sweet and quiet rest until the morning.

2. Shall not we be willing he should have enlargement to be freed out of prison. Alas our souls are as it were but in prison while we dwell here below in these houses of clay; death as a porter opens a door into that glorious palace above, he is but gone home to his Father's house, and how earnest was he to depart, that he might be present with the Lord.

3. Shall not he eat the fruit of his labor, he that sows in tears shall reap in joy, those that go forth weeping bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing and bring their sheaves with them.

4. He having overcome, shall not he receive the crown? *Paul* having fought the good fight of faith, knew there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness: *To him that overcometh*, saith our Saviour, *will I grant to sit with me in my throne. even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne*, Rev. 3:21.

5. And now in the last place and to shut up all, consider, uncertain is your life, and mind; you know not but that in a very few days you may go after, it will not be long be sure, and there we all must go: *For, what man is he, that lives and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the*

grave? Selah.

FINIS.

ERATA.

PAg. 4. *l.* 9. blot forth *cut*, p. 4. *l.* 10. also blot forth *out*, p 9. *l.* 25 for is read *it*, p. 11. *l.* 14. blot out *word*, p. 15. for *Augustus Caesar* r. *Julius Caesar*, p 17. *l.* 2. for *if* r. *of*, p. 18. for *question* r. *query*, p. 32. *l.* 8. blot out *And*, p. 32. *l.* 9. for *And* r. *For*, p. 58. *l.* 8. blot out *and Consolation*, which escaped in some copies.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] The word *inordinate* means “excessive”, “immoderate”, or “extreme”. — Ed.

[2] The word *capacitated* means “to make someone legally qualified or competent to perform a particular action or hold a specific status.” — Ed.

[3] Keach uses the word *fate* here. The word in modern usage means “be destined to happen, turn out, or act in a particular way”. This definition does not fit the context. He says, “*I preached with a heavy heart, and with a mournful spirit, I know you fate under the hearing of it . . .*” Does he mean, he knows they *sat* under the hearing of it, seeing that a *f* was usually used in the place of an *s* during this time? or Does he mean they *faint* under the hearing of it? More than likely the true reading of *fate* should be *sat*. I know you *sat* under the hearing of it. — Ed.

[4] *Contemnable*, the root means to treat or regard with contempt, “contemptible”. — Ed.

[5] *Explication*, “the process of analyzing and developing an idea or principle in detail”. — Ed.

[6] *Doleful*, “causing grief or sorrow”. — Ed.

[7] Mr. *Clark* gives us several instances how the death of the righteous has been the fore-runner of sad and lamentable judgments: Begins with *Methuselah* before the flood, whose very name was very significant upon this account. Also I lately met with a sermon of a godly minister in *New England* that was preached sometimes before their late calamities and miseries broke forth there, and among their other signs of approaching judgment, that he seemed to be very apprehensive of, he minds that of the dropping away of many holy and godly persons. Oh how many able and godly preachers and others have we lost in a short space? We may look upon it as one sad sign or symptom of approaching evil. — Keach.

[8] *Disquietments*, disquieting: “inducing feelings of anxiety and worry”. — Ed.

[9] *Distempered*, Historically and in a broader sense “distempered body” simply means a disordered or unhealthy bodily state, or a “malady”. — Ed.

[10] Some probably may object the dead are not sensible of time, it is but as a sleep to them; they die and their resurrection to them immediately follows; no distance of time between death and judgment to the dead, and so *Paul's* gain he speaks of, might not be till the resurrection?

Answ. Though it be granted death to the body is but as a sleep, yet it is not so to the soul. But that this is not the intent or meaning of the apostle, is plain; which I make out thus: *Paul* plainly shows that if he did presently depart or die, it would be gain to him; now if that which you say were true, he would have lost by death, it is easy to see how. Suppose he might live twenty or thirty year longer on earth, would not thirty years sweet enjoyment of Jesus Christ be worth nothing? Is not one day with God, beholding his lovely face, better than a thousand? All know, that if he died presently, he should never the sooner obtain the resurrection of this body, than if he had lived a hundred years longer; this being well weighed, to die presently would have been his great loss, were not the soul in a present enjoyment of Christ at death. — Keach.

[11] Evidently Keach did not cite the right text for these Scriptures. This should have been Psalm 23:1, 2, 3. — Ed.

[12] This is not a subtitle which I have inserted in this document, but is actually a sentence by Keach. Keach had made the sentence bold typeset and so I did the same. He also had it centered in his sermon. — Ed.