



HEB. 9. v. 27. the latter end of the Verse.

But after this the judgement.

April 29.
1641.

THe scope of the Holy Ghost in this Epistle, is to prove the excellency of Christ : that he is the Messiah that was to come into the world ; and that all the types and shadowes of the law pointed at him : And a special part of the Epistle is to shew the excellency of the Priesthood of Christ, by preferring it above the Priesthood of Aaron : and amongst other regards, in this, that those Priests did offer up sacrifices often, but Christ offered himself but once ; and this once offering of himself was available for ever, and needed no further offering. And this the Holy Ghost doth illustrate, by comparing the efficacy of Christs sufferings, with the efficacy of what a man doth here in this world : that as the actions of men here in this world, whatever they are, whether good or evil, are available for ever ; what a man doth in this life, accordingly, when he dyes he comes to be stated eternally : so the death of Christ it is available for ever. *It is appointed for men once to dye, and then comes judgement.*

By judgement here I doe not think the Holy Ghost intends especially the judgement of the great day, (though it be true, that after death the judgement of the great day will follow, and all men must come to judgement ; but I shall not speak one word of the judgement of that day.) But there is another judgement that I conceive is the intent of the Holy Ghost here, and that is the particular judgement that passeth upon every soul immediately after death ; which is the stating of the

soul in the eternal condition of it, either of happineſſe or miſery.

While men live here, their condition is not ſtated by any act of God (though in regard of his eternal purpoſe it is the ſame for ever) even the Saints themſelves would be here in much hazzard and danger about their everlaſting eſtate (in regard of themſelves, and what they have actually beſtowed upon them) were it not that the grace of God is above them; the people of God in this life, are not without many feares and doubts about their everlaſting condition; and what would many poor children of God give to be delivered from their feares, and doubts which are a grievous burthen to them, that they might never have feare or doubt more about their eternal eſtates? Well, if thou beeſt godly, in a little time it will be ſo with thee: this is the good, that death will bring unto thee, that after death judgement will come to thee; that is, thou ſhalt be ſo actually ſtated in thy everlaſting condition, as to be beyond all hazard about it; thou ſhalt be beyond all feares, and doubts and temptations; thou ſhalt never feare more, never doubt more, never be tempted more, never more loſe any of the good that thou art poſſeſſed of: this is the judgement that comes to the Saints after death.

And on the other ſide, wicked men here in this world are not without their hopes and confidences that all ſhall be well with them: but after death comes judgement to them: that is (as we have it *Proverbs 11, 7.*) when a wicked man dieth, his hope periſteth, he is ſtated in ſuch a condition as he is never like to have hope of good more; he is paſt all hope and poſſibility of ever receiving further mercy from God: and this is the meaning of the Text on both hands, that *after death comes Judgement*. Whatſoever mens conditions are here in this world, though the Saints have many fears & doubts about their eſtates, yet I ſay immediately after death, they ſhall be ſo ſtated and actually poſſeſſed of happineſſe, that they ſhall never doubt more. And howſoever wicked men in this world have many hopes and confidences, and bleſſe themſelves in their way, yet immediately after death all ſhall vaniſh, for then
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judgement shall come. *Job* hath this expression *Job*. 8. 14. *The hope of the hypocrite is as the spiders web; he spins out of his own spirit a cunning web, but the besome of death at once dasheth it all away, for immediately after death he comes to judgement.*

This then is the doctrinal conclusion we are to handle out of these words thus opened unto you,

That the onely time that men have to provide for their eternall condition, is the time of this life: if it be not done here, there is no help afterward, for after death comes judgement.

I shall desire to handle this point so farre as it may be a ground to work upon your hearts, and to stirre you up in the time of your lives to make all sure between God and your souls; *for after death comes judgement.*

This point that I am now to treat about, it is one of the most serious points that concerns the children of men: and usually one of the first things that the Lord settles upon the hearts and consciences of those whom he converts to himself. For a man going on in wayes of sin and death, to bethink himself, Lord where am I? what am I doing? what is like to become of me? wherefore was I borne? wherefore came I into the world? what have I to doe here? Then God answers, that which thou hast to doe here, and art sent into the world for; is, to make provision for eternitie: tis about this great businesse; to make up all between God and thy soul, and look thou beest careful in it: for though thy life be short and uncertaine, yet this great businesse doth depend upon this short and uncertaine time of thy life; and if it be neglected in this little space of time I give unto thee, thou art lost and undone for ever: for presently after death comes judgement; and you shall be then stated so as there can be no alteration. It is the observation of the School-men, that what did befall to the Angels that sinned, that in death befalls unto wicked men; that is, as the Angels upon the first act of sin, were presently stated in an irrecoverable condition; so wicked men when they dye are stated in an irrecoverable condition. It is true while we live in this world, though we are sinful, yet our condition is to be

lookt upon as better then the condition of the fallen Angels ; there is not here such an actual stating of us : but when once death comes, a wicked man is then in the same condition with the devils themselves : that is , his condition is then so stated and made as certaine and sure, and as irrecoverable as any of the Angels that sinned. While we preach to men, though never so wicked, and ungodly , because an actual judgement (such as the Text speaks of) is not past upon them , we are to offer grace and mercy to them in Christ ; but if this offer be neglected for a while; if the twine thread , the single thread of thy life be once cut, then thou art gone for ever, *For after death comes judgement.*

In the meditation of this point, me thinks I cannot but look upon God, as beholding all the children of men, in their fallen lost sinful and miserable estate with pity and compassion, saying, poor creatures they have sinned against me , and have made themselves liable to eternal wrath , which they understand not , which they are not able to beare; well ; a little time I will grant unto them, to sue out their pardon , and to come in and make up their peace with me : and I will give them meanes for that end : but let them look to themselves; for according to the improvement of the time that I now give them, so shall it be with them to all eternity : if they neglect it, they are gone for ever; mercy then shall doe them no good : so that the tenour upon which we all hold our lives , it is no other then as a malefactor condemned to dye , who hath granted to him through the favour of the Prince, a little time of reprieval , and some intimation withal given of a possibility in that time to sue out his pardon ; and according as he spends that time , so it shall be with him for life or death. Thus I say we all hold our lives , we are all condemned before the Lord : onely God hath out of his infinite grace provided a way and meanes of salvation for the children of men, and gives us a little time (we know not how long, whether two or three dayes, but as long as we live) to look about us , to provide for the making of our peace with him; and if that be neglected, all is gone , and we are undone for ever :
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great things then doe depend upon this uncertaine small time of our lives. It is reported of *Alexander*, that when he went against any City, he did use to set up a lampe burning, and would make proclamation, that whosoever came in while this lampe was burning, should finde favour and have his life; but whosoever staid till this lampe was out, he was but a dead man, and must expect no mercy; brethren know that God hath set up a lampe, and our life is this lampe; and God proclames, Whosoever comes in while this lampe is burning, shall finde mercy; but if you stay till the lampe be out, there is nothing but eternal misery to be expected. Now this lampe of your lives may not onely goe out upon the consumption of the oyle, but it may be put out by accidental meanes; and if this lampe be once out, and your work not done, you are lost for ever. We read *1 Kings 6. 7.* that when *Solomon* was preparing the Temple, he made all things so ready before hand, that there was no noise of axe or hammer heard there: Whosoever God intendeth for a living stone in the glorious Temple of Heaven, he squares and fits them here; there is no noyse of repentance and sorrow for sin after this life; what is to be done, must be done here; nothing will doe it hereafter. *Whatsoever thou hast to doe, doe it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest. Eccles. 9. 10.* and Chapter *11. vers. 3.* *In the place where the tree falleth there it lyeth.* Which way thou fallest when thou dyest, that way thou shalt lie eternally: if Godward, then God is thine for ever: if sinward, then misery and destruction is thine for ever. *Eccles. 12. 7.* *Then shall the dust returne to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall returne unto God who gave it.* The souls of wicked men doe returne to God that gave them, as well as the souls of the godly; that is, they doe presently returne to God to receive the sentence of their eternal doome from him, and to be staid in their everlasting condition; there is a mighty change in the soul, immediately after it is departed from the body, and is brought to stand before the glorious God, to be staid in its eternal condition. *There are twelve boures in the*

the day (sayes Christ) wherein a man may worke, but the night comes when no man can worke; John 9.4. The time of this life is thy working time: I, but the night is coming, and then no man can work. *Revel. 6.8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed him.* Hell immediately followes death, where death surprizeth any in their natural condition, that have not finished the work of making their peace with God. *2 Cor. 5. 10. We must all appeare before the judgement seat of Christ, to receive according to what we have done in the flesh, whether it be good or bad.* It is not according to what we doe afterwards, but according to what we have done here in the flesh, so it must be with us forever. There can be no repenting, no believing after this life; body and soul being parted, the whole man is not capable of a work of God upon it.

And besides, immediately after death, God takes all meanes away: you shall never heare Sermon more, never have admonition more, never have good counsell more, never have any working of Gods spirit more, to draw your soules to Christ.

And not onely so, but God then withdrawes himself so fully, in regard of all the common workes of his spirit, that there is a kinde of statring the soul in sin (which yet cannot so properly in regard of God be said to be sin as evil,) so that it shall be impossible for thee to doe any thing but sin; as the Saints though while they live here, they have many lusts and corruptions in them, yet immediately after death their soules are so fully possessed of the spirit, that then they cannot sin: so on the contrary, though wicked men while they live here have divers common gifts of Gods spirit, and many restraints upon them; yet immediately after death, they are so fully separated from God, and God so fully withdraws himself from them, that it is impossible for them to doe any thing else but sin and rebell against God, and blaspheme him to his face. There was in *Adam* in innocency a possibility not to have sinned; there is in us, while we live in this world, an impossibility but that we should sin; but in the world to come there is in the Saints an impossibility that ever they should sin: and

look how the impossibility is on the one hand with the Saints, so is the impossibility directly contrary on the other hand with the wicked : therefore the wicked must needs be stated in an everlasting evil condition. There is no more possibility for the damned souls in hell ever to doe any thing but to blaspheme God, then there is a possibility for the Saints in heaven ever to sin against God.

And yet further, at the great day Christ gives up the kingdom to the Father, and then there will be another manner of administration then before; Christ will not then be exercised in the work of his mediatorship, to mediate any further for those for whom he did not mediate in this life. And presently after the separation of the soul from the body, the spirit of God wholly departs from the soul, and the wrath of God is let out so fully into it, that it breaks the soul, and fills up every faculty of it: so that it is impossible in regard of the strong current of divine wrath that carries the soul along with it, that ever it should be exercised to all eternity any one moment in any thing but onely in bearing of torment, and divine wrath. As the Saints shall be filled up with the presence of God, and carried on with such a strong current of divine mercy, that it shall be impossible that their souls should ever to all eternity be exercised in any other thing but in the enjoyment of God, and living to his praise: so on the quite contrary is it with the wicked: therefore after death there is a stating of both. I will enlarge my self no further in the opening of this point, but come presently to apply it, for this point is applicatory rather then doctrinal, and I shall content my self with three or foure branches of application and so conclude.

In the first place, hence we may see what cause we have to blesse God for the continuance of our lives, especially any that are here this day, that have not thoroughly made their peace with God, that are not upon certaine and infallible termes in this great businesse of providing for their eternal estates. If there remaines but any doubt in thy heart concerning thy eternal condition, and if the feares of eternity have

been upon thy spirit, thou wilt from this point, that hath been thus briefly spoken to, see cause to blesse God with thy face up on the ground, adoring the riches of his grace that thou art alive this day? why, because thy life it is the time of making up thy peace with God; it is the time of providing for thy eternal condition: if thy life be at an end, and this work not done, then all is gone, then judgement comes, and thou wilt be infallibly and unalterably stated in a lost and undone condition. O therefore its well that thou art alive this day; if a man have a great businesse to doe that concernes his whole estate, or life, and it must be done in a very little time, O what a favour would he count it, to have his time lengthned out, though but a little, because his businesse is of great weight, and he thinkes with himself, if I miscarry in it, I am lost and undone for ever: so all those that have ever had serious apprehensions of the infinite consequence of what depends upon their lives here, they cannot but sit downe and blesse God for lengthening out their lives; for the time of this life is a happy time, it is a day of grace, a day of salvation. O how happy would those poor creatures, upon whom this judgement is past, that are stated in their eternal condition, think themselves if they might have but one day wherein it might be said, there is a possibility for them to make provision for themselves concerning their eternal estate! As they were not long since, so art thou now: and therefore know how to prize thy life. O the lives of men and women (especially such as have not yet done that great work) are worth a thousand thousand worlds. I remember I have heard of a speech of a great Gentleman, who being very sick, and Physicians telling him that there was no way for him but death: O, sayes he, that I might live, though it were but as a Toad! and indeed what man or woman is there that hath not got a thorough and Scripture-assurance of this great work that their peace is made up with God, but may upon very good ground (if sickness be upon them) desire to live though but as a Toad, because such great things depend upon their lives here in this world? Brethren, doe but say this to your own hearts upon

serious meditation of this that I am now speaking of. What if God should come now to this Congregation, and say to every one of you, Well, now the time that I have given you to provide for your eternal estate, is at an end; if you have done your work, well and good, you shall be saved and possess eternal glory; but you must be cast according to that which is now done. I feare if such a message should come from heaven to many of us, it would make our hearts to ake within us, and we should cry out, O Lord, give me a little space before I goe hence and be no more seen: O that I might yet have a little more time. Suppose God had taken you away when he took away such a kinsman or kinswoman of yours, such a neighbour or friend, and death had come then, and judgement had then been past upon you; which way doe you thinke you must have been cast? cannot some of you remember, that if God had taken you away at such a time, or when such a one dyed, you were then in such a case, that you have cause to think you had been certainly stated in a condition of eternal misery? therefore blesse God that you are alive at this day, to heare of such a doctrine as this is; that so long as you live, God gives you time to provide for your eternal estate. *Psalm. 78.38.* the Text sayes, *God did not stirre up all his anger, but called back his wrath*; when sicknesse comes upon men and women, some part of Gods anger is let out; I, but if God had let out his anger but a little more, what would have become of you? you had been gone: one stroake more had cast you for ever. I, but God was pleased to call back his anger, and did not stirre up all his wrath. O blesse God for sparing you at such a time; for certainly had you died then, your condition had been as irrecoverable as the Devells themselves; now tis a day of grace, now you have the voyce of the Gospel, and the glad tidings of salvation founding in your eares: but then you had been past the time of grace, past praying, and past repenting: now that you are not past this day, you are to prize your lives. And brethren know wherein consists the worth of your lives, and the continuance of them; there is a hor-

rible impudence in some men, they would faine have their lives lengthened, to have their lusts more satisfied; did God give thee thy life for this end? no, the end why thou shouldst desire to live is, that thou mayest have further time to make provision for that which is of such infinite consequence, which if it be not done, it had been better for thee to have been a Toad or Serpent, or the vilest creature that ever lived. O that we had hearts to give God the glory of our lives, and to prize our lives aright; excellent effects would proceed from it, were our hearts wrought to these things.

But Secondly, If the onely time that we have to provide for eternity be the time of this life, how then are those to be reproved that mispend and squander away this precious time of their lives about vanities, and neglect the great businesse that they were sent into the world for? If such great things depend upon our lives, then the losse of the time of our lives is a most dreadful losse; we all say time is precious, and it is so, and the through-understanding and applying of this point would make us see time precious indeed: If there could be an extract of the quintessence of all the pearles in the world put into one, it would not be such a precious pearle as this time of our lives, because there is that depends upon it that is infinitely more worth then ten thousand worlds; however men and women make little of their time, and play and sport it away, yet there is no moment of thy time that thou dost mispend, but for ought thou knowest it might be the very moment upon which thy eternal condition doth depend: thou goest abroad, and art merry, and jocund, and mispendest thy time, and abusest thy self; I say for ought thou knowest that instant of thy sinning might be the very moment upon which the very hinge of all thy eternall condition depends; and did we understand this doctrine aright, we should see it to be an exceeding great evil and folly, to mispend our precious time: men ordinarily live in the world as if they had nothing to doe here, but onely to make provision for the flesh. If a man should come to the City about a businesse that concernes his life, and the time he hath to doe it in

were very short, how industriously (doe you think) would he spend that time ! every time the clock strikes, would strike to his heart ; or suppose God should send a damned soul that is now in hell into the world againe, and should say thus to him, Soul, you shall goe and live againe in the world ; and I will give you a little space, you shall live a quarter or half a yeare ; (or if it were but a moneth or week) and I will put you in such an estate that there shall be a possibility for you to make your peace with me, and to deliver your self from this misery that you are under : I appeal to you, how doe you think such a one would spend his time ? now as you are perswaded and convinced in your consciences, how such a one would spend his time, so doe you labour to spend your time ; many would have rules to guide them in their way ; why take this rule, if such a thing could be, that a damned soul could be sent into the world again, and be in a possibility of another estate, I say, What you think such a one would doe, that doe you : If one should come and say to him, what shall I give for your time that is granted to you ? how would he contemne him ? if you offer him Crownes and Kingdomes, yea all the world for his time, (be it but a week, or a day) he would scorne such an offer, and prize one day more then a thousand worlds. Now you have had dayes and weekes, one after another, and yet for ought you know you are liable to eternal ruine ; and you know not whether you have a week or a day more before your eternal condition be stated upon you ; O what need then have you to improve your time !

How few think of the passing away of their time, or that any great matter depends upon the time of their lives here in this world ! you would count it a great folly and madnesse if a man had a precious oyle that were worth a thousand pound a pinte, and he should set up a light with this oyle to talke or play, or doe trifling things by ; what ! a lampe that is fed by such oyle, that is worth thousands ! surely this lampe should be for some weighty businesse, and not for trifles : Know brethren, that the time of your lives is this lampe, lighted

up, and fed with such precious oyle: O do not squander it away then about trifles and vanities; for there are things of infinite concernment that you have to doe in this time of your lives; tis the great charge of Christ against Jezebel. *Revel. 2. 21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not.* I remember an expression of a woman that was in great distresse of conscience; some came to her, and endeavouring what they could to perswade her that there was hopes of mercy for her, she lookt with a gaskly countenance upon them, and said, *Call time again, call time again:* as if she had said, if you can call time again, there may be hope for me. Certainly we doe not consider what depends upon time; it is a good signe of an enlightned conscience, to make conscience of time: there is nothing puts a more serious frame into a mans spirit, then to know the worth of his time; sayes one (in discovering the losse of the opportunity of time) suppose there were a company of men sailing to sea, and they come at last to a little Island that lies in the middest of the sea many thousand miles from any other Land, and they goe and refresh themselves upon the Island, but sayes the Mariner, look to your selves, be not farre off, be within call, for I will not stay for any of you: the old men it may be are afraid to be too farre; but the young men trust to their legs, and think they can make haste; but the Mariner is gone, and they are left behinde and perishe: tis true, while we are here in this world, we are refreshing our selves; but be sure, sayes God, you be ready when I call; and Gods call is the time of death: now God he calls, and poor creatures are not ready; and so they perish eternally. O the losse of the time of your lives will be a dreadful losse one day, and it will pierce your souls to think that once you had a day of grace, but now you have no time; judgement is now past upon you, and there is no remedy. It is reported of a woman who had her house on fire, that she was very busie and spent her time about saving of trifles, and in the meane time had a childe in the cradle, and forgot that; and when she lookt upon what she had saved, she saw a few trifling things, but then it came into

into her minde, O what is become of my childe !, and imagining that her childe had been burnt (though it was saved) she ran mad, to consider that she should be so foolish, as to minde things of no concernment, and to forget her childe. Take heed it be not your case; you heare that time is precious, and that there are great things that concerne your souls and eternal condition, which you have to doe; and you spend your time to get estates, to get a little pleasure, or honour in the world; but now, when the conclusion of all shall come, and you shall look back to see what you have done, and God shall come and call you to an account, and say, Well, now there is an end of your time, what have you done in this world? It may be you can say, Lord, I have got an estate, and I have led a merry and jovial life; but all this while, what hast thou done for thy soul? what hast thou done for eternity? what hast thou done for the making up of thy peace? what hast thou done about those things that are of such infinite weight and consequence? thy heart now will be overwhelmed with this thought, O Lord, I did forget my soul, I had no thoughts about my eternal estate, I have spent a great deal more time in playing, then in praying; at least more time in playing then I have done in praying to God in private, to make my peace with him: however it may be you can passe away your time merrily here, yet it will be a dreadful thing to you hereafter, when you shall know what was the businesse of your time, and what you were borne for. I remember Bernard hath a notable expression, speaking of some calling one to another, Come let us be merry till an houre be past; sayes he (speaking with indignation against such folly) *What wilt thou doe thus and thus till an houre be past, till time be past what passe away that which the mercy of thy Creator hath so farre indulged to thee as to give it thee for repentance, and to get grace and to obtaine pardon.* What to passe away time in which thou oughtest to be breathing after that life and blessednesse which thou hast lost! It becomes men that have not made up their peace with God, so spend their dayes in bewailing of their sinful and miserable condition, and

and not in merriness and jollity, in chambering and wantonness; how wilt thou with one day that thy time had been spent rather in mourning and lamenting? sayes *Abraham to Dives*, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy pleasures; this life is not the life of thy sensual pleasures, but to make all even between God and thy soul; when God is so gracious as to give us space for such great ends as he doth in this world, he expects that all the children of men should spend their dayes in seeking his face, and in making up their peace with him; in prizing his mercy, in admiring and adoring the riches of his grace and goodness in his Son: but where doe we finde this? what a different course of life is there in most men from what God expects? they are guilty of desperate folly that squander away their precious time, seeing all depends upon it.

Thirdly, If after death comes judgement, certainly then, when death findes any man unprepared in an estate of unregeneracy, that hath not made his peace with God, it must needs be exceeding dreadful because it brings judgement, and states such a one in his eternal condition. *Job. 18. 14.* Death is called there the King of terrors; and well may it be so; for indeed it is the most dreadful thing in the world, to those that understand the meaning of their own sinful state and condition: there is enough in this to daunt the heart of the proudest stubbornest wretch that lives upon the earth, to consider that now I am launching into the ocean of eternity; but God knows I have made little provision for it; it may be it is the ocean of the wrath of this infinite God that I am now launching into, and must be in for ever; certainly (except thou hast good assurance of the work done between God and thy soul) the sight of the infinite ocean thou art launching into immediately after death, cannot but make thee give a dreadful shriek when thou seest thou art now like to miscarry eternally; death taking an ungodly man, it is no other but the cutting asunder of the thred upon which he hung over the pit of eternal misery. It is the pulling up of the flood gates of Gods eternall wrath. Here when afflictions are

upon

upon men and women, Gods wrath is but onely like the little droppings of water through the flood-gates; as you see in flood-gates, there will be some leakings forth of some drops of water onely; but there is a vast difference between those drops, and when the flood-gates are pulled up, then the streames gush out abundantly: just so is it with Gods dealings here in the world with ungodly men; it may be Gods hand is upon them in many afflictions, but these are but as some few drops of his wrath; but when death comes and findes them unprepared, then God pulls up the flood-gates, and then the streames of the wrath of the almighty overflow them; death to them will be no other then the Sergeant of the Lord of hosts to hale them to prison: It will be a taking up of the draw-bridge; It will be to them a dismal and dreadful Sun-set, that brings with it a night of eternal darknesse, and that will be a most dreadful Sun-set that shall never have day more; why, know that at death the day of grace and salvation sets to thee, and an eternal night of dismal blacknesse and darknesse will be upon thee; so that when thou art going out of this world, and thy peace not made with God, thou must then bid farewell to all comforts and to whatever thou didst enjoy. Now farewell those excellent truths of God, that I have had revealed to me: I shall never heare such gracious truths out of the mouthes of Gods ministers more. Now farewell all my loving friends, that I rejoyced so much in, and all the merry meetings that ever I have had; I shall never have them more. Farewel now wife, husband, children, I shall never see your faces more. Yea farewell house and lands, and all delights; farewell Sun and Moon and Stars, and all the world; I shall never see you againe till I see you all of a light fire, at the great and dreadful day of Christ. And now I am leaving the world and all the comforts here, and all the meanes of grace here; and O Lord, whither am I going? It was a speech of Pope *Adrian*, when he was to dye, sayes he, *O my soul, my soul, whither art thou going? thou shalt never be merry more, as thou was wont to be.* It is a doleful thing for a poor creature, whose time is at an end, not to know whither

ther he is going ; to think of former pleasures and delights, and never to have them more. Me thinkes when I consider the death of any ungodly man, that place in *Isaiah* 10.3. comes to my minde, *And what will you doe in the day of visitation?* It is true, thou doest now ruffle it out in the world, and takest thy fill of pleasure, and bearest all before thee, and wilt have thy minde, and art stout, and stubborn in thy way, and scornest the truthes of God by his Ministers: but what wilt thou doe in the day of visitation, when the time shall come that puts an end unto thy dayes here? O the change that wil then be in thy spirit! God will then look upon thee with indignation, and say, O wretched creature, that hast spent thy dayes in vanity, thou shalt continue no longer in this world; and now the wrath of the Almighty is let out upon thee; Thou art upon thy sick bed in distresse, and conscience now is awakened, and tortures that soul of thine, and tells thee, that such and such wickednesse at such a time, in such a company, in such a chamber, thou didst commit; and thou beginst now to curse thy selfe for thy folly, and for neglecting the day of grace and salvation; and now thy time is almost gone; well, thy sicknesse encreaseth, thy paines continue, thy friends are all sent for, and they come about thee bewailing of thee, and thou beginnest to look gaspily, and drawest thy breath short, and the devil waits for his prey; thy mouth falls, thy soul departs, and there is an end of thee; an end of all thy pride, and an end of all thy stoutnesse, and an end of all thy vanity, and wickednesse: and this is the man that hath not made God his portion: mercy hath had her time, but thou hast neglected it, and now thou art gone for ever. We speak much of the mercy of God, and is it not rich mercy for God to give to thee, a wretched sinful creature, such a blessed time of repentance as thou hast in this world? for God to call, and cry to thee, and to tender thee grace and pardon, and peace; he did not doe so to the Angels that sinned; when they committed but one sin against God, he cast them away, and would not so much as treat with them about any termes of peace: and therefore seeing thou

thou hast had thy time already, let all the Angels in Heaven, and Saints and creatures, yea and devils themselves, acknowledge that God was merciful to this man, to this wretched man and woman, that had such a faire time, though now judgement be upon them. O my brethren, the thoughts of death under this notion, hath a great deal in it to work upon your hearts. I remember I have heard of one that used to pray six times a day, and being asked why he spent so much time in praying, he gave no other answer but this, I must dye, I must dye; that which was to come after, would put a period to the time of his life, upon which so much did depend. O that we had hearts to consider it; and that we knew, even now in this our day, the things that belong to our everlasting peace, before it be too late. Brethren, these things are of infinite concernment to your immortal souls; the Lord grant they may be prevalent upon every one of us.

We may apply this dreadfulness of death (that followes upon the meditation of this point I have been upon) unto divers sorts of people: as first, me thinks it should be of great force and efficacy to work upon the hearts of old people; your time is neer, you had need be sure that your work is done; for certainly you have no long time for the accomplishing of that great work, of making your peace with God; it is three or foure a clock (as it were) in your day of grace, the Sun is setting with you. Now if a man be to goe a journey upon his life, and hath neglected the fore-noon, and much of the after-noon also, and sees the Sun draw low, he thinks with himself, I had need make haste now, for if the Sun be once set, and I not at my journeyes end, I am a lost man, my life is gone. They that goe over where the Sea is dry at one time, and flowes at another, but so that if they misse but half an houre, they are dead men, if by their watch they finde the time is almost come for the waters to returne, then their hearts are daunted, and they say one to another, we had need make haste, for the time is almost at an end. O consider this you old men, that have neglected the time of your

youth, and now your time is almost at an end, know in this your day the things of your peace, double now your diligence. It is a most dreadful thing to see an old wicked man, an old sinner, an old scorner, an old carnal wretch, that never understood the great business that he came into the world for.

Secondly, this concernes all prophane wretches, who instead of doing the work of their time, and preparing for their everlasting estate, goe directly backwards, and make the breach between God and their souls wider. If a man have a journey to goe for his life, and he must goe it before the Sun be set, and he goes a quite contrary way; when he begins to reflect upon himself, he then sayes, where am I? If the Sun goe downe before I am at my journeyes end, I am a dead man: so is it with you that goe on in wayes of prophaneesse, God hath sent you here to live; to the praise of his name, and to work out your salvation with feare and trembling, and you have gone directly backward, and the time of your lives hath been spent in nothing else, but in making your selves seaven-fold more the children of wrath then before: you had need now look to your selves; for if you dye in your course of prophaneesse you are undone for ever.

Thirdly, for those that have been heretofore in a good forwardnesse in the way of life and salvation, that have had some stirrings of conscience in them, but yet through the violence of their lusts have been turned back againe, and have fallen off from their former state; certainly this point might strike thee to the heart. As a man that is to goe over the Sea for his life by such a time, and he hath a good gale for the present, but when he is come neer the haven, a great gust drives him back againe; O what a sad condition is this man in? so is it with thee; the time was when thou hadst a good gale; God came graciously to thee, by the work of his spirit, and thou seemedst to be in a good forwardnesse in the work thou wast borne for; but the gust of sin, and the violence of lust, hath carried thee quite back againe, and now thou art

further off then before : how should this awaken thee to improve all thy time and opportunities to the uttermost for the good of thy soul.

Againe, this concernes those that upon every discontent with themselves dead ; as some froward people, if any thing crosses them ; they presently wish themselves in the grave. O vaine man and woman , dost thou know what thou doest , to wish the time of thy life at an end ? thou mayest meet with another manner of discontent then ever thou metst withall here ; for after death comes judgement. *Amos 5.18. Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord , to what end is it for you ? the day of the Lord is darknesse and not light.* So I say, woe to them that in a froward mood desire the day of the Lord, which is not a day of light , but like to be a day of darknesse unto them, for ought they can tell. Instead of giving God the praise of thy life , upon every fullen mood doest thou wish thy self dead ? this is a great dishonour to the grace and mercy of God extended towards thee.

Again , this concernes those that upon every drunken occasion , for a word or two , will venture their lives : tis true, fooles will venture their lives for trifles , because they know not the worth of them ; but those who know the worth of their lives will not doe so. I remember a story of a Philosopher, being at Sea and in danger of his life , he was mightily afraid , and the Marriners were not at all afraid : what (say they) are you a *Philosopher* afraid , when we rude Marriners doe not feare ? I (says he) there is reason for it ; for if I dye, a Philosopher is gone ; but for you, your lives are not worth much : so they that are ready to venture their lives in a drunken quarrel ; and will venture nothing for God , and a good cause , know not what their lives are worth , and that is the reason they are so willing to throw them away.

Again, it concernes those that in trouble and anguish of conscience are ready to lay violent hands upon themselves to take away their lives ; one would think this point thus opened and applied might for ever keep back such a temptation for time to come. What an infinite desperate folly is this, that

that I that am made sensible of Gods wrath, and am afraid of it, shall yet doe that which may put me irrecoverably into it, and state me eternally in it, as they doe who lay violent hands upon themselves. If any people in the world should desire the continuance of their lives, and prize them at a high rate, those that are troubled in conscience should doe it; they should pray *Dauids prayer*, *Psalm. 39. 13. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I goe hence and be no more.* And use Gods own argument *Psalm. 103. 13, 14.* where it is said, God is merciful to his people, because he remembers they are but dust. So doe thou plead with God, and say, O Lord, spare me, I am but dust, and as a winde that passeth away and shall never returne againe; now is the time wherein thou hast said thou wilt be intreated: O let my life be continued, for if this time be out, I am gone for ever.

Lastly, this concernes those that have been (as they thought) upon their death beds, that have apprehended themselves as dying, and have had this truth somewhat settled upon them, that have seen eternity before them, and have been in danger (as they conceived) of everlasting ruine, and in their own hearts have received judgement, but God hath magnified his mercy towards them, and restored them againe: perhaps in this condition when thou sawest and hadst the judgement in thine own heart, that thy time was gone, thou then madest promises, and saydest, O if God would spare my life, what a new man would I be! I would be sure to make use of my time in another manner then ever heretofore: Well, God hath raised thee up againe, and what then? why now thou wilt venture upon Gods patience, and his wrath too; O woe so thee, when thy dayes are ended, and this judgement comes, it will fall dreadfully upon thee.

Wherefore my brethren, let me speak to you all (for I am not come this day onely to spend an houre with you, but to doe your souls some good) be it known to you, this is your day, the day of grace and salvation: And yet once againe, in the name of God, I declare unto you, this truth (supposing you have heard it many times before) that there is not the

the worst, the vilest in the congregation, that is come through the providence of God before God this day, but for ought we know it is possible for thy sinnes to be pardoned; it is possible yet for thy soul to be saved, for God to be reconciled to thee, and this day it is once more declared to thee, that thou art not yet stated in eternal misery, which might have been thy condition before now: O that when you are gone home, you would get into your closets, and fall down before God, and blesse him for this message, once more preached to you. Beloved, if I, or any of the servants of the Lord, should be sent by God to the gates of hell, with this message, O you damned spirits, know from the Lord, that there is a possibility for you to be saved, certainly they would with joyfullnesse hearken to such tidings. Now this cannot be preached to them, but this may be, this is preached to the vilest and wickedest wretch, and enemy to God and goodnesse that is in the congregation; and God declares this now to you, but how long it will be before judgement comes to state thee in another condition, thou canst not tell, therefore know in this thy day the things of thy eternal peace: and who knows what may depend upon one day? yet prayers and teares may doe thee good; but stay a while, and though streames of bloud should flow from thee, and thou shouldest cry and howle to God to all eternity, it would never doe it; therefore know your time; it is a happy thing for a man to doe a businesse in such a time wherein he may have the benefit of it; amongst men, though a thing be done, yet if not in the season of it, it loses of its worth and efficacy: so now prayers, and teares, and mourning, and crying to God for mercy, the efficacy of these things are gone, except they be done in time; and for ought thou knowest unlessse they be done this day, or to morrow, or very shortly, they may doe thee no good at all: therefore now take your time; God proclaimes and sayes to every one of you this day, Poor creatures, as ever you expect to receive mercy in the day of Christ, look to it now; for now the golden scepter is stretched forth, now is the acceptable time, and the day of grace and

salvation, come in and accept of the offers and tenders of grace and mercy now, or else you are gone for ever.

Wherefore then let this take off all lightnesse of heart, and those roving dispositions of your spirits, that run so after vanities. If a man that were wilde in his thoughts, and that had his eyes roving up and down, should have one say to him, Sir, consider what you doe, for it concernes your life, if you miscarry you are a dead man, it would make him call in his thoughts, and compose his spirit: so, if thou hast a flight and wandring heart, this is said to thee this day, friend, poor soul, know what thou art doing; even this dayes work concernes thy life, thy eternal estate, and take your selves off from all creatures, til you have done so great a work; so saies the Apostle 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31, 32. *Brethren, the time is short, it remaineth that both they that have Wives be as if they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; the time is short.* The word is, the time is wrapt up, it is folded up; it is a Metaphor taken from cloth that is folded even to the very fag end: the time is all folded up (sayes the Apostle) therefore let your hearts be taken off from the creature. Truly brethren, whatever you think of this point, yet those that understand themselves aright, would not venture to be in an unconverted estate one half houre for ten thousand worlds; for they know that when death comes, then judgement also comes.

And you that are poor people, who live hardly, and in great extremity in this world, yet so long as you live here, your condition is comfortable; for you have time to doe that worke that is of such mighty consequence for the good of your souls: And indeed upon the consideration of this point, peoples hearts should be taken off from the creature; for a man had better live here in order to that great work, though as a stock or log in the fire, then to be taken away before he hath done that work he was sent into the world for. When men are in paine, they would faine dye; I, but did they know what will be the state and condition of a wicked

man immediately after his death, they would rather live, though as the miserablest creatures in the world.

And consider all you young ones, now while God gives you time, of this great work of making your peace with him. If a man were to goe over Sea about a businesse of great weight, after he comes upon the shore, what should his first thought be? let him first make sure of his great work, and then be merry afterwards. If thou hast made sure of this great work, that thy peace is made up with God, and that thy everlasting estate is secure, then thou mayest be merry amongst thy friends, and mayest live joyfully, and comfortably all thy dayes. It was the complaint of one, that Art is long, and life short; but surely the art of providing for eternity is a long and difficult art, and thy life is short and uncertaine: O therefore doe not put off this great work, as *Seneca* speakes of some, they are alwayes about to doe, they will, and they will, and are about to live, but never live. O that you that are young ones would begin betimes; and this point settled upon the hearts of young ones, would cause them to apply themselves with all their might to the great work of their souls, And that which you do, be sure you do it with all your might; which is the Argument of the Holy Ghost, *Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to doe, doe it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* If ever thou hadst a work to put forth thy strength about, O doe it here, doe not onely have some faint wishes and desires; and some sudden good moods, as perhaps at the hearing of such a truth as this is, you have some sudden wishes and inclinations; no, but work out your salvation with feare and trembling, and be sure to take hold of all opportunities, seeing so much depends upon the short time of your lives. If a man were to goe over Sea for his life, and had a faire day and winde, it were desperate madnesse for him to say, Well, I have two or three dayes more to goe over in; and therefore I will not go now, and so neglects his gale; and when those dayes are past, and the last day comes, he thinks to go over, but cannot have a wind, for

a world: so, many think they will repent when they come to dye. O but take heed when thou hast a gale that thou doest not neglect it, for feare it never come again; and know that if the Lord stirres any of your hearts this day, or any other day, by his word, and you neglect it, and goe to your businesse, and shops, and to your sensual pleasures and delights, you may hereafter desire to have such a time of the working of Gods spirit againe, and if you would give a thousand worlds for it (were it in your power) you cannot have it, therefore take heed you doe not neglect this great work. And upon this ground labour to make sure work; for if a man had a work to doe, and having done it amisse, he might mend it afterwards, he need not be so exact about it: but if a man be set about a work, and he knowes when it is gone out of his hands, he can never mend it, he will not be carelesse in it, but will lay his work to the rule, and labour to make all sure. Know, it is so with you about your eternal condition: that which you doe in this world, must be available for ever, you cannot mend it afterwards. If after you see your selves cast, you should say, O Lord give me farther time, and let me come into the world againe, and then I will mend this and the other fault that I was rebuked for; God will say, no; you cannot returne into the world again; therefore it neerly concerns you to make all sure while you have time. And doe not rest upon blinde hopes, and desperate adventures, I hope it will be thus and thus with me; but entertaine this thought, What if it should prove otherwise? what if I should miscarry? this will mightily daunt the heart of a man, especially if he knows that upon his miscarriage, he is undone for ever.

Yet further, (which is another branch of the exhortation) my brethren never baulk any way of God for feare of suffering; be willing to suffer any hardship for Gods way. How doth this follow? thus: If the time of thy life be that upon which the turning of thy eternal condition depends, then it concerns thee to goe through steech whatever comes in thy way; as for instance, suppose a man were going to such a place

place, and he must be there at such a time for his life, and riding apace through the streets the dogs bark at him (as usually the dogs bark most at those who ride fastest) how little doth he regard the barking of the dogs: but did a man ride onely for his recreation, then it would be a little troublesome to him: And when a man rides for his life, though the clouds gather, and the raine falls, yet he will not returne; and if he meet with foule and dirty way, he will through it, or with a slough he will over it, because it is for his life: but if a man rides for recreation onely, and meets with windes, and clouds, and stormes, he turnes back again. And truly brethren, the wayes of most Christians in religion are (me thinks) such as if they took them up for recreation, and nothing else; therefore if there be but a cloud arise, a little trouble and affliction appear, they repent their way, and presently return back again. O but did God reveal to thee what eternety is, and what depends upon the course of thy life here? then though there be clouds, and stormes, and tempests, and rugged wayes, yet thou wilt be ready to goe through all. The conclusion therefore is this, whenever thou art tempted to sin, labour by what thou hast heard this day to repell temptations; and say, God hath shewed me this day the great errand and businesse I came into the world for; of what infinite concernment those things are, that depend upon the time of my life: shall I then satisfie the lusts and corruptions of my own heart, and gratifie the devil, and the world, and in the meane time neglect that which is of so great importance for the good of my soul? Then once again, O that you all knew in this your day the things that concerne your eternal peace! Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding hearts to make use of it.

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F I N I S.