

THE GODS ARE MEN.

BY

GEORGE SWINNOCK

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Worshipful JOHN BERESFORD, Esq., High Sheriff of the County of Hertford.

HONOURED SIR,—It is reported of Queen Elizabeth,¹ that Deborah of our nation, that in a letter to the king of France she should use this expression, That if there were any unpardonable sin, it must be ingratitude. And Plutarch relateth,² concerning Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, that he took the death of Æropus very impatiently, because he was thereby cut off from all opportunities of requiting the courtesies which he had received from him. I think, sir, there are few that have any relation to me, but know something of my obligations to you. And though I cannot strictly comply with the former, yet I bless God I have not the same cause to complain with the latter. Notwithstanding, the only requital I am able to make you, is by these lines to give you a bill under my hand that I am your debtor. I shall ever hold myself engaged to remember the frequent and real kindness which your liberal self and loving consort have freely bestowed on me and mine;³ for which I may say to you, as Furnius to Augustus, *Hanc unam Cæsar habeo injuriam tuam, effecisti ut viverem et morerer ingratus*,⁴ This is the only injury you have done me by your courtesies, to force me to live and die ungrateful.

Your voluntary closing with them in the parish that seek to advance the power of godliness, your honouring them that fear the Lord, your disesteeming vicious persons, your charitable contributions to the poor upon all occasions, are certainly recorded in heaven; and therefore, for the honour of God and encouragement of others, deserve respectfully to be mentioned on earth. In testimony of my

¹ Camb. Eliz.

² Plut. in Vitæ Pyrr.

³ Ingratus est qui beneficium accepisse se negat, quod accepit; ingratus qui dissimulat; ingratus qui non reddit; ingratiissimus omnium qui oblitus est.—*Sen. de Benef.*, lib. iii. cap. 1.

⁴ *Idem*, lib. ii. cap. 25.

gratitude I now present to your eyes, what was lately preached in your ears, with the addition of some things then omitted, either through the defect of my memory, or want of time. Acknowledging both the weight of the matter delivered, and my weakness in the manner of its delivery, it is very visible that this child is like its parent, I mean my book, if these sheets may be called by that name, too too much resembleth my body in infirmities. And indeed the consciousness of my own inabilities hath been the chief reason why I have not yet satisfied the desires of some persons of quality in publishing two former sermons composed on the like occasion. Only my respect to you hath caused this sermon, like Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 36, to supplant its elder brother¹ by getting away the birthright, and like Pharez, Gen. xxxviii. 29, to make a breach upon his brother Zarah, and get into the world before him. But the Almighty God, who is a free agent, often worketh great things by small means. He can, by the blowing of rams' horns, cause the strong walls of Jericho to fall down, Joshua vi. 16; with common clay he can make a precious salve to open the eyes of the blind, John ix. 6. It pleaseth his wisdom, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, 1 Cor. i. 21. Herein the sovereignty of the gospel is most excellently set forth, in that it leadeth the soul by the hand of a child, Isa. xi. 6, and is as truly, though not as abundantly, powerful, from young Timothy as from Paul the aged, 1 Tim. iv. 17.²

The favourable and extraordinary acceptance which this sermon obtained when it was heard, moveth me to hope that, through the blessing of heaven, it will be profitable when it shall be read.

Sir, in it you may discern that there will be an end of, and that there is an emptiness in, all earthly perfections, Ps. exix. 96. That death is the great leveller, making all equal, seizing as boldly on, and dealing as hardly with, the greatest emperor as the poorest beggar.

‘Divesne, prisco natus ab Inacho,
Nil interest, an pauper, et infima
De gente, sub dio moreris,
Victima nil miserantis orci,
Omnes eodem cogimur, omnium
Versatur urna : serius, ocyus
Sors exitura, nos in æternum
Exilium impositura cymbæ.
—Hor., lib. ii. *Ad Del.*

¹ A sermon preached at a former assize on the former part of the text, not yet printed.

² Dr Reynold's epistle before Meditat. on Lord's Supper.

That the rich man's wealth, which is his strong city, Prov. x. 15, and a high tower in his conceit, cannot secure him against the assault and battery of this grand adversary ; that the grave maketh no difference between the dust of princes and peasants ;¹ that they which cannot be contented with much earth while they live, will be contained in a little when they die. As the Macedonian king, Philip, having got a fall in the sand, as he was wrestling at the Olympic games, when he rose again, seeing the print of his body in the sand, cried out, Oh how little a parcel of earth will hold us when we are dead, who ambitiously seek after the whole world whilst we are living ! That image in Daniel, chap. ii. 32, doth notably set out the frailty of worldly greatness ; the head of it was of fine gold—that spake the Chaldean empire ; the breast and arms of silver—this that empire of the Medes and Persians ; the belly and thighs of brass—by these the Grecian empire is understood ; but the feet were part of clay. The feet of this image were the strength and foundation of the image, and speak thus much to us, that all worldly pomp and majesty will fail, all earthly power and dignity will fall, for the image stands upon clay. Cyrus, therefore, did fitly cause this epitaph to be engraven on his tomb, O man, whosoever thou art, that shalt come hither, know that I am great Cyrus, that first erected the Persian monarchy, therefore envy me not this little earth that now covereth my body.²

From it you may learn that your greatest care should be to fit yourself for your last hour ; your main work is to do your last act well. The Roman gladiators appointed to death were very solicitous how they should contrive their bodies so as that they might fall handsomely, and die modestly. Your business is so to furnish your soul that you may die piously, to get such riches as will swim out with you in a shipwreck ;³ to be rich towards God, Luke xxii. 21 ; to be rich in faith, James ii. 5 ; to be rich in good works, 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. Alas ! how poor is that man who hath no other riches than what are at the courtesy of the thief, moth, and death ! Hereby you will lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life.

It will shew you how absolutely necessary an experimental knowledge of a crucified Christ is to a dying Christian, that no weapon

¹ Their bones and skeletons have no inscriptions or titles of honour remaining on them.—*Vines Ess. Fun.*

² Q. Cur., Nudus pascit aves, jacet en qui possidet orbem, Exiguæ telluris inops.—*Claudian of Pomp. Mag.*

³ Hujusmodi comparandæ sunt opes quæ simul cum naufragio enatent.

is more requisite for us to have and use, when we enter the lists, and encounter with our last enemy, than the shield of faith; oh how cheering and comforting to a dying body will the warm blood of the Lord Jesus be, being applied by a true lively faith to the soul! He, and he only, may look on the king of terrors without fear, that hath first looked on the King of saints with the eye of faith.

It will acquaint you that a saving work of grace must be wrought upon the heart before death can be a passage to the weight of glory.¹ That all the godliness of an unregenerate man will die with him. That the lamp of profession which shineth gloriously whilst a man liveth, if it be not fed from oil in the vessel, true grace in the heart, a renewed nature, the image of God stamped on the soul, it will go out in a stink when he dieth, and not advantage him at all. And therefore Christians should not, like some tradesmen, live altogether upon their credit with others, but labour to find some testimony within them, that there is a real change wrought upon them.

It will tell you, that it highly concerneth you to be laborious for your soul; for your Saviour now you live, because you must rest when you die. That you should be much in thinking highly of God, in speaking humbly to God, in acting vigorously for God. That you should abound more and more in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Saints must not, like Joshua's moon, stand still, Joshua x. 12, 13; much less, like crabs, go backward; no, not like the snail, creep forward; but, like the sun, rejoice to run his race. The path of the just must be like the shining light, that shineth brighter and brighter to perfect day, Prov. iv. 18.²

Truth of grace is ever followed with growth in grace; though perfection be the honour and reward only of the saints in heaven, yet it is the desire and endeavour of the saints on earth. That you should persevere and increase, both by your pattern and precept, in discouraging the bad, and encouraging the good. That you should improve all opportunities, employ every talent, your honour, riches, power, life, health, strength, relations, interests, all you have, are, or can be, to the utmost in his service, and for his glory, who, I hope, hath loved you, and washed you in his blood. Pharaoh would have active men to be his servants, Gen. xlvii. 6; the great King of

¹ A painter may paint fire, but he cannot paint heat. A person civilised may attain to the outward actions, but cannot to the inward affections, of a sanctified Christian.

² Falsi illi sunt, qui diversissimas res expectant, ignaviæ voluptatem, et præmia virtutis.—*Salust.* Non incepisse sed perfecisse virtutis est.—*Aug. ad frat. in erem.*

heaven is a pure act, and he loveth most and liketh best those servants that are most active for him. Hereby you will please the most high God, though hereby you will displease profane men. The world, indeed, whom the Spirit of God compareth to dogs, 2 Pet. ii. 22, if a man go softly will be quiet; but if he ride apace in the way to heaven, they will bark exceedingly, yea, and bite if they can;¹ do but hinder their progress in sin, and, like waters stopped at a bridge, they will roar and make a noise to purpose. But surely the favour of God will build up the heart against all the anger of men. Those persons which the wicked besmear with calumny, and those actions which ungodly men speak of with scorn and contempt, God will entertain with an *Euge*, and reward with glory: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many cities, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,’ Mat. xxv. 21.

Sir, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Rickmersworth is, that it might be saved. And I hope the divine providence will ere long put a greater price into your hands than ever yet you had, wherein you may manifest your fear of his majesty, your zeal for his glory, your hatred of iniquity, and your real love to the place of your nativity; which, that you may faithfully discharge at this day, and comfortably account for at the last day, and that you and yours, when these earthly houses of your tabernacles shall be dissolved, may have a building of God, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1, shall be the prayer of him whose desire is to be,

Your faithful servant in the work of your faith,

GEORGE SWINNOCK.

RICKMERSWORTH, *June 1, 1657.*

¹ His speech savoured more of wit than grace, who counselled his friend not to come too nigh unto truth, lest his teeth should be beaten out with its heels.

THE GODS DIE LIKE MEN;

OR,

MAGISTRATES ARE MORTAL.

I have said, Ye are gods : and all of you are children of the Most High : but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.

ONE of the fathers¹ resembleth the whole Bible to the visible heavens, wherein, saith he, the Psalms are like the sun, whose beams shine brightly, and rays warm comfortably. An English divine compareth all the Scriptures to the body of man, and the Psalms to the heart, the most pathetic part, the seat and centre of sweet affections.² Nay, as one observeth, the very Turks that disclaim both Old and New Testament in general, yet will swear as solemnly by the Psalms of David, as by the Alchoran of Mohammed. But what need have we of the testimony of men, when God is pleased to give such large witness in the Gospel to this book of Psalms, in which the Psalms are quoted above sixty times.³ The apostle calleth them spiritual songs, Col. iii. 16, both because they were inspired by the holy Spirit of God, and because they are instrumental to spiritualise men's affections ; and also because they do suit with men's spirits. They are so penned, that every man may think they speak *de se, in re sua*, of himself and to his own condition.

¹ Ambr. Offic. lib. i. cap. 32.

² Luther calleth them *parva biblia, et summarium utriusque testamenti*.

³ Leigh's Hist. p. 35.

This eighty-second Psalm containeth a severe reprehension of superiors for their ungodly oppression of inferiors.¹

The text presenteth you with their majesty and with their mortality. In ver. 6, 'They are gods: and children of the Most High: there is their majesty. In ver. 7, 'They die like men, and fall like princes: there is their mortality.

Plantus telleth us concerning Hercules, that he was the son of Jupiter, and so immortal; and the son of Amphitryon, and so mortal. The former verse speaketh that ye are the sons of God, thereby ye seem to be immortal; but the latter pronounceth plainly that ye shall die like men, and therefore it is apparent ye are mortal.

In ver. 6, ye are exalted as high as heaven; I have said, 'Ye are gods.' In the seventh verse, ye are debased as low as earth: 'But ye shall die.'

In ver. 6, How beautiful are your features! How angelical are your faces! Nay, how God-like are your looks! I have said, 'Ye are gods.' In the seventh, when the other side of the picture is turned, what hoary heads! what heavy hearts! what quivering lips! what trembling loins! what dying flesh! what decaying spirits have ye!

And it is not without cause that the Spirit of God subjoineth your humanity to your deity, your mortality to your majesty, as a means to prevent sin, and as a curb to restrain you from making your lust your law, or your will the rule of all your actions.²

In the words, we have the mortality of the magistrate, namely, from the seventh verse, first affirmed, 'Ye shall die like men.' Secondly amplified, 'and fall like the princes.' Thirdly confirmed, surely and certainly; as surely as ye live like gods, so surely ye shall die like men, *Certe sicut homo*. Calvin, Moller., Trem., *legunt*.

I have formerly in this place, upon the like occasion, from the sixth verse, discovered the dignity of magistracy.³ I shall now proceed to the frailty of the magistrate. My work now will be like

¹ Quia reges et quicunque potestate præditi sunt, immensam sibi licentiam, fastu excoëcati, ut plurimum indulgent: denunciat Propheta, reddendam esse rationem summo judici, qui omnem mundi eelsitudinem supereminet.—*Calvin. argu.* Ps. lxxxii.

² Ut cæteri omnes natura sunt obnoxii morti, et quidem æternæ damnationi, si in delictis adversus conscientiam ad extremum usque perseverent: ita scitote vos quoque iisdem legibus subjectos esse.—*Moller. in loc.* Ea cogitatio de fragilitate vestra et de poenis secuturis commonefacere et excitare vos debebat, ut in procuratione muneris vestri majore diligentia et studio versarenini.—*Idem ibid.*

³ At an assize holden at Hertford, for that county, upon the 2d day of August 1653.

Philip's youth, to mind you that ye are but men. And I hope there is none here of the Persian monarch's humour, into whose presence none might come clothed with sackcloth, Esther iv. 2; nor like Lewis XI. of France, who would not permit the word death to be named in his court; for all the dish I have to entertain you with at this time is a death's head. Neither shall I garnish that with the flowers of human eloquence, as knowing there is no need of it. The deformed harlot wanteth colouring, but the virgin truth of God is most beautiful in her native dress; and there is little good by it. A painted window keepeth out the light; a painted fire will not burn; a painted sword will not cut; and if ever the fire of Scripture, Jer. xxiii. 29, warm the heart, Luke xxiv. 32; or this sword of the Spirit wound the conscience, Eph. vi. 17, to conviction and conversion, it must be drawn out of the gaudy scabbard of man's wisdom.

I shall first speak to the explication of the words, and then draw the observation from the words.

But, i.e., for all the glorious titles wherewith ye are invested as gods amongst men, and the administration of justice wherewith ye are intrusted as my lieutenants on earth; yet for all this, ye shall die;¹ though your names are divine, your natures are but human.

Surely, i.e., though ye should flatter yourselves because ye are gods, ye shall ever live; yet know certainly that ye are but men, and must die. All God's words are true and sure, but on some there is affixed a special note of certainty, because of man's, especially great persons', extraordinary infidelity. Though ye should neither regard it, nor provide for it, as if it were a thing of small consequence, or little concernment: 'Yet ye may say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my brother and sister,' Job xvii. 14.

Ye shall die like men. Your souls and bodies that have been joined together like husband and wife, shall be parted asunder. Death will loose all bands, untie all knots, even this conjugal one, betwixt soul and body, which is the strongest of all.

Like men, i.e., like ordinary men;² like Adam, saith Ainsworth, Though in your lives ye are like Saul, higher by the head and shoulders than the people; yet in your deaths they and you meet, are equal.

Two things ye do as men:

¹ Ac si diceret, quum instructi sunt potestate ad regendum mundum, non exuisse tamen naturam ut mortales esse desinerent.—*Calv. in loc.*

² Sicut plebeius homo.—*Tremel.*

1. Ye sin as ye are men; 1 Cor. iii. 3,¹ to walk as a man is to walk carnally, to walk sinfully.

2. *Ye die as men*; Ps. ix. 20,² to know yourselves to be men is know yourselves to be mortal.

And fall like one of the princes. These words have a double lection, and fourfold construction.

We read them, 'And fall like one of the princes.'³ Others read them, 'And ye princes shall fall like one.'

For their fourfold construction:

1. Some understand them of a fall into hell. So several of the ancients take them, like the prince of the devils. This is true of evil magistrates, death to them is but the trap-door to hell; the higher their exaltation is, the greater and lower their damnation will be. The words of the prophet are emphatical: 'Tophet is prepared of old; yea, for the king it is prepared,' Isa. xxx. 33.⁴ The greater men's preferment is, the greater their defilement, and the greater their punishment.

2. Others understand them of a fall by a violent death; so many princes fall. In that bloody way, Saul, Abner, Ahab, and many other princes mentioned in Scripture, went to their long homes.⁵ The Roman historian observeth, that the Cæsars got little by their places, *nisi ut citius interficerentur*. Some men's honour hath been the knife to cut their throats.

Sæpius ventis agitur ingens
Piuus: et celsæ graviore easu
Decidunt turres, feriuntque summos
Fulmina montes.—*Horat. ad Licin.*

3. A third sort expound the words of falling as the princes of other nations.⁶ Though ye are the princes of God's people, yet ye are not thereby privileged from the arrest of death. For as the sun of prosperity shineth as well on the briars in the wilderness as on the roses in the garden; so the frost of adversity falleth as well on the fruitful corn as on the hurtful weeds. The most notorious sinner liveth as well as the most gracious saint; and the most gracious saint dieth as well as the most notorious sinner. Grace

¹ Errare humanum est.

² Quod sint homines, *i. e.*, quod sint miseri, infirmi, mortales.—*Moller. in loc.*

³ Et sicut quilibet principes cadetis.—*Calv.* Qui exquisitissimis tormentis cruciantur. Potentes potenter torquebuntur.

⁴ Ingentia beneficia, ingentia flagitia, et ingentia supplicia.

⁵ Kings, saith one, are fair marks for traitors to shoot at.—*Trapp on Esther ii.*

⁶ Deodati *in loc.*

is an antidote against the poison of death, but not a preservative from undergoing death.

4. The words are construed thus: Like the princes that have been before you. Ye know that your ancestors, who were as high in honour, and as great in power, as yourselves, yet submitted to death; so must ye do as they have done. *Etiam muta clamant cadavera*; their graves amongst you do read a lecture of mortality to you.

The term whereby the Spirit of God describeth death is considerable. It is called a fall: 'And fall like one of the princes.'

Sin is called a fall, and so is death, Rom. xiv. 13. Death is the first-born of sin, and therefore no wonder if the child be called after the name of its parent.

Death is to every man a fall, from everything but God and godliness. Ye that are magistrates fall more stairs, yea, more storeys, than others. The higher your standing while ye live, the lower your falling when ye die.

Death to some is a fall from earth to hell; to all, from the society of men to the company of worms. To you that are great men, it will be a fall from your richest treasures, from your delightful pleasures, from your stateliest possessions, from your loveliest relations, from whatsoever is called the good of this world: 'Your eyes shall no more see good,' Job vii. 7.

'Linguenda tellus, et domus, et placens
Uxor: neque harum, quas colis, arborum
Te præter invisas cupressos
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.'—*Hor. ad Posth.*

Death is called an unclathing, 2 Cor. v. 4, because it will strip you of all your places of honour, of all the ornaments of nature. As ye came naked into the world, so ye must go naked out of the world, Job. i. 21. Nothing will follow you when ye die but your works, Rev. xiv. 13. When the good magistrate dieth, that hath been zealous for the Lord's honour, and studious of his soul's welfare, his works follow him, through free grace, into an eternal weight of glory. When the evil magistrate dieth, who hath been careless of his conscience, and unfaithful in his calling, his works follow him, through divine severity, into a boundless ocean of endless misery.

After this brief explication of the words, I proceed to the doctrinal observation:

That magistrates are mortal, or they who live like gods must die

like men. The most potent emperor must take his leave of this life, as well as the poorest beggar.

Death is called 'the way of all the earth,' Joshua xxiii. 14, because all flesh on earth go this way. It is the greatest road in the world; never without many travellers of all sorts, ranks, and degrees. The grave is the inn or resting-place whither this way tendeth; and Job telleth us, chap. iii. 19, that 'the small and the great are there.'

The mortal scythe of death is master of the royal sceptre, and moweth down as well the lilies of the crown as the grass of the field: Isa. xl. 6, 7, 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth.'¹

As Athanasius speaketh of Julian, so I may say of the greatest king in the world, *Nubecula est, quæ cito transibit*.

Do we not find by experience that the greater candles consume and burn out as well as the lesser; and that the boisterous wind of sickness bloweth down and rooteth up as well the tall cedars of Lebanon, and the strong oaks of Bashan, as the lower shrubs and weaker trees of the valleys.

We ministers that preach the word of life, must ere long submit to death; ye have the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels, 2 Cor. iv. 7. And you magistrates, that are the bulwarks of the country, under God, to preserve us from the shot of a violent death, must necessarily yourselves undergo a natural death. Ye are called the shields of the earth, Ps. xlvii. 9; yet ye are but earthen shields.² Ye are called the shepherds of the people, Isa. xlv. 28; but this wolf of death will seize as well on the shepherd as on the sheep.³

I shall not stand to prove it any further at this present; there is not one of you, either judge or justices, that hear me this day, but within a few days shall be the proof of the text.

I shall only give you the causes of the doctrine, and then make some use of it.

But why do the gods die like men?

There are three causes of it, as they are men.

First, The moral or meritorious cause of death is sin. Sin and

¹ At one end of the library in Dublin was a globe, at the other end a skeleton, to shew that though man were lord of all the world, yet he must die.

² *Scuta terræ sunt terrea scuta.*

³ As at a game at chess, when done, not only pawns, but kings, queens, and knights are tumbled into the bag, so, when the race of life is finished, noble as well as ignoble are tumbled into their graves.

death, like Jacob and Esau, were brought forth at one birth; they were twins, and came into the world together. As the thread followeth the needle, so death followeth sin: 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,' Rom. v. 12, and vi. 23.

A worthy divine of our own doth solidly though briefly state that question, viz., Whether man had not died, if he had not sinned;¹ or whether death be natural or accidental: and doth evidently prove that man's life should have lasted as long as his obedience; that man had never fallen into his grave if he had never fallen into transgression. He died, not because his nature was subject to corruption, but because sin had corrupted his nature. If he had not turned from God, he had not returned to dust. Man was wholly a stranger to death till acquainted with sin. If he had continued in a state of innocency, he had continued in a state of immortality.

Though Adam died not actually as soon as he fell, yet he presently became mortal, and liable to death; for immediately upon his fall, sentence was passed upon him: Gen. iii. 19, 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return;' according to that law, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' Gen. ii. 17.² As the malefactor is a dead man in law when the sentence is pronounced upon him, though there be some time between his condemnation and execution, so was man dead both in the decree and threatening of God when the sentence of death was denounced against him, though there was some respite between it and his actual dissolution.

Now magistrates sin, therefore must die.³ If you perform but that duty, of much difficulty, yet of absolute necessity, of communing with your own hearts, and looking sometimes back upon your lives, without question you will find, beside your original depravation, a numberless number of actual provocations. I be-

¹ *Stipendium peccati mors.*

² Some say the Pope hath a book called '*Taxa Cameræ Apostolicæ*,' shewing the rate of every sin; at what rate one may be drunk, or swear, or keep a whore.

³ This word death, alone implieth at what rate man may sin. Death temporal, which is the separation of body and soul; death spiritual, which is the separation of God and the soul in part, and for a time; eternal, which is everlasting and total perdition from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, are the rate of sin, and the sad fruits that grow on this root of bitterness. Sin is the father of death; but death, like Sennacherib's issue, will at last destroy its parent. Sin in the body is like the leprosy in the house, which will not out till it be pulled down; but when the body of the saint shall be dissolved, that body of death shall be wholly destroyed.

lieve the best of you are too like the Egyptian temple, without fair and beautiful, but within full of serpents and crocodiles. Your lives possibly may be unblamable as to the eye of man, but are there not seven abominations in your hearts?

The second cause of death is the corruptibility of magistrates' bodies. This is the natural cause; your bodies are corruptible. It is now common to all creatures mixed of elements, to be resolved into that out of which they were made. Contrary qualities will for a time contend, and at last destroy each other.¹ In the third of Genesis, ver. 19, we read man's exodus, viz., that he was dust in regard of his original production, and shall be dust in regard of his ultimate resolution.

As the finest garment breedeth a moth, and that moth eateth up the garment; as the strongest tree breedeth a worm, and that worm devoureth the tree; so the fairest and strongest bodies breed such diseases as will at last consume them.²

Eliphaz, speaking of the highest men, assureth us that their foundation is in the dust, Job iv. 19. Now the stability of a building dependeth on the strength of its foundation. The church is therefore immoveable, because Christ, her foundation, is invincible, Mat. xvi. 18; but our natural foundation being in the dust, we cannot hold out long. The house of man's body is walled and roofed with earth, and founded upon no better than dust. The bodies of magistrates have the same foundation. The psalmist, speaking of a prince, saith that he returneth to his earth, Ps. cxlvi. 4; as if his body could challenge no alliance to, or propriety in, anything but earth. It is his earth. Alexander the Great being wounded at the siege of an Indian city, said, I have been told I am the son of God; but I see now I am liable to wounds and death as well as others.³

3. The supernatural cause of death is the appointment of heaven: 'It is appointed for all men once to die,' Heb. ix. 27.

Some men, yea, most in the world, die twice; the second death hath power over them; but all must die once. The exception of one or two that were translated, and of them that shall be found alive at the coming of Christ, will not make void this general rule.⁴

Magistrates that execute the statute law of men, die by a standing

¹ Contraria inter se pugnant, et mutuo se destruunt.

² Physicians have a rule, *Ultimus sanitatis gradus, est morbo proximus.*

³ Q. Cur. and Plut. in Vit.

⁴ The greatest landlords are but tenants at God's will in these houses of clay.

law of God. When God is pleased to give sickness a warrant under the great seal of heaven, it quickly executeth its office, and turneth men into earth. It is thus ordered in God's high court, that judges and justices who now sit on the bench, shall die and appear at his bar. The Turkish historian observeth, that when the great Bashas are feasting, oftentimes there cometh a messenger by order from the great sultan, and casteth a black mantle over them, and they are presently forced to submit to strangling. So the proudest potentates, in the midst of their mirth, are often surprised by a sudden distemper, commissioned by God, and sent to their long homes.

I shall now draw some inferences from the doctrine.

First, If magistrates are mortal, observe hence death's prevalence and power above all the privileges and prerogatives of nature. It is a memorable speech of Sir Walter Raleigh,¹ Though God, who loveth men, is not regarded, yet death, which hateth men, is quickly obeyed. O mighty death! O eloquent death! whom no man could advise or persuade, thou canst prevail with. Take notice from hence, that nothing in this world can privilege a man against the arrest of death.

First, Strength cannot. All the strength and power which the gods have cannot free them from death. Magistrates have civil strength as they are magistrates; the command of whole counties, kingdoms, yea, empires. In this respect it is that magistrates are called principalities and powers, Titus iii. 1; yet death hath power over them that have power over others. Alexander and Cæsar, that conquered countries and kingdoms, were conquered by death. Magistrates have natural strength as they are men, but death trippeth up the heels and layeth on their backs the most strong and valiant. 'One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet: his breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow,' Job xxi. 23, 24.²

Put the case that a man be in the zenith and height of his estate, when his health is most pure, and his strength is most perfect; when he hath the choicest complexion in his face, and fondest constitution in his body; when there is most agility in his joints, and most appetite in his stomach; yet even then sickness arresteth him at the suit of death, haleth his body to the prison of the grave, and sendeth his soul to his own place. Man at his best estate, yea,

¹ Lib. v. in conclusion of cap. ult.

² Plato saith that marrow is not only the source of generation, but the seat of life.

‘Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity,’ Ps. xxxix. 5.

Secondly, As the strength, so the wealth of magistrates is insufficient. The Holy Ghost telleth us, that the rich man also died, Luke xvi. 22. Men may put riches into the grave with them, but they will not keep them one moment out of the grave. Death, like jealousy, will not regard any ransom, nor be content though men would give many gifts.¹ Job speaketh, supposing that he had died, ‘Then I had been at rest with princes that had gold, and filled their houses with silver.’ It is reported of Cardinal Beaufort, that when on his death-bed, he should say, Fie, will not death be hired? will money do nothing? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able, either by wealth to buy it, or by wit to procure it. But it could not help him; die he did. Money is the monarch of this world, but not of the next; it can neither stave off sickness, nor buy out death.

Thirdly, As neither strength nor wealth, so neither can the honours of men help them against this last enemy. How have the highest men on earth been laid as low as the earth by it? ‘Man in honour doth not abide,’ Ps. xlix. 12. His duration is sometimes the less, because his reputation is so great.

Job speaketh excellently, ‘Where is the dwelling-place of princes? who shall declare his way to his face?’ Job xxi. 28, 31. This person is so high that none dareth tell him of his wicked practices. Kings, saith one, have clouds in their brows as well as crowns on their heads; they would be adored like gods, and not reprovèd like men.² Yet these men, which are so high that none must speak to them, death will be sure to speak with them: ‘Yet he shall be brought to the grave, and remain among the tombs,’ ver. 32. There is much weight in that word; yet, *i.e.*, though he be a prince, so proud that he scorneth to hear men’s reproofs, yet he shall be forced to listen to death’s language; though his dwelling-place was stately amongst men, yet he shall be brought to a homely one amongst worms: ‘Yet he shall be brought to his grave, and remain amongst the tombs.’ It was a notable speech of the king of Persia, who, visiting Constantine at Rome, was shown the rare edifices, rich coffers, and great honours of the emperor, *Mira quidem hæc, sed video, ut in Persia, sic Romæ, homines moriuntur.*³

¹ The Irish have a proverb, What aileth a rich man to die?

² Luther complaineth that in his time magistrates *Elati superbia volebant esse ipso verbo superiores.*

³ When Michael Paleologus, emperor of Constantinople, sent for a present to

If magistrates are mortal, how much folly is in him that laboureth most for his body? The truth is, there is a secret conceit in the hearts of great persons who have the world at will, that they shall not die; it is not *vox oris*, but it is *vox cordis*; they still think of a longer life, though they have lived never so long. They can see death in other men's brows, but not in their own bosoms: 'Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations,' Ps. xlix. 11.¹ Hence it cometh to pass that they work altogether for this world; so they have earth in their hands, they care not though they have nothing of heaven in their hearts. Their endeavour is to live in the favour of great men, and not to die in the fear of the great God.

How many great persons spend their time, as Seneca speaketh, *inter pectinem et speculum occupati*, between the comb and the glass, and not between Scripture and prayer. Their labour is to go finely, to fare deliciously, to live honourably, to prosper outwardly; but not to honour God fruitfully, to discharge that trust which is committed to them faithfully, or to work out their own salvation diligently.

There is a story of a fat man riding through Rome on a lean horse. It was demanded how it came to pass that he, being so exceeding fat, his horse was so lean? He answereth, *Ego meipsum, stabularius equum curat*, I mind myself, but my groom looketh after my horse. Too many, God knoweth, have fat bodies and lean souls—their outward man is flourishing, their inward man is perishing; and the reason is, they themselves regard their bodies, but they say they trust God, or more truly the devil, with their souls.

Prince Absalom is a fit resemblance of such persons; whilst he lived he provided somewhat against the time he must die; but what doth he provide? only a place for his body to rest in. The Spirit of God takes special notice how provident this ambitious youngster was for his body: 'Now Absalom in his lifetime had reared up for himself a pillar,' 2 Sam. xviii. 18. But he never thinketh of his precious soul, where that might rest when it left his body. How foolish and faulty are many magistrates in this particular; whilst they live they take special care that when they die their bodies be

Nugas, the Scythian prince, certain royal robes, and rich ornaments, he set light by them, saying, *Nunquid calamitates morbos aut mortem depellere possent?*

¹ How many be too like that Duke d'Alva, who, being asked whether he had observed a late eclipse of the sun, answered, 'That he had so much business to do on earth, that he had no time to look up to heaven; so they spend so much time on their dying bodies, that they can spare none for their never-dying souls.'

in such a vault interred, with such a company of mourners attended, that such a monument be erected, but take no care that when their bodies go to the house appointed for all the living, their souls might go to that house which is not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. They little consider, that when their friends are weeping over their bodies, the devils may be laughing over their souls.

Oh unspeakable folly ! to make much of the cabinet, and disesteem of the jewel ; to trim the scabbard, and let the sword rust. Like Shimei, to seek their servants, and lose themselves. Man, in regard of his body, claimeth kindred with the beasts of the field ; in regard of his soul, with the angels of heaven ; and yet this bestial part is pampered, whilst the angelical is starved.

It is storied of Archimedes, that when Syracuse was taken by the Romans, he was secure in his closet, drawing circles with his compass in the dust, and was then and there slain.¹ So these men ordinarily leave the earth when they are most busy about it.

How did the fool in the Gospel promise himself a long and a comfortable life : ‘ Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years,’ Luke xii. 20. If he had said, Soul, take thine ease, thou hast a treasure in heaven, or thou hast Christ, who will do thee good to eternity, it had been somewhat like ; but thou hast goods, saith he. Alas ! how irrational is this ! You may as soon satiate or content *corpus auro*, as *animam auro*, the body with wind, as the soul with wealth. But I beseech you consider, he that thought then to begin to take his ease, is forced that night to make his end. He was but a little before flourishing exceedingly, his mind full of mirth, his heart full of hope, and his soul full of expected satisfaction ; but on a sudden he is departed, and all his high hopes frustrated. If you ask me whither he is gone ; his estate to men, his body to the grave, his soul to hell. Poor wretch ! little did he dream when he was asleep in sin, of going from a bed of feathers to a bed of fire. But too too many, like him, go from carnal pleasures to eternal pains.² Take notice how secure this rich fool was ; and yet his security was but the forerunner of his future calamity. When the wind lieth, then the great rain falleth. When the air is most quiet, then cometh the great earthquake. When Sisera was asleep, then his head was nailed to the ground. Pharaoh in his chariot, Belshazzar in his bowls, Haman at his banquet, Herod in his robes, are secure, but not safe ; when they least

¹ Plut. in Vit. Marcell.

² How many die like those that are stung of the tarantula, a viper in Italy, that even die laughing, though they are going to the place where is nothing but weeping.

looked for it, death surprised them : ' When they cried Peace, peace, then sudden destruction seized on them, as travail on a woman with child, which they could not escape,' 1 Thes. v. 3.

Ambitious, like the jay, they are pruning and priding themselves on the top of some high tree, when suddenly a shot from a fowler tumbleth it down dead to the earth.

Covetous, like ants ; how busy are they. Like a company of ants about white and yellow earth, when death, like the feet of the next passenger, crusheth them to pieces. Voluptuous, like the little fish that swims merrily down the silver streams of Jordan, till they empty themselves into the Dead Sea, and there perish.

The world's greatest darlings are in no better condition than the bull that goeth to be sacrificed with a garland on his head, and music before him, when suddenly he feeleth the stroke of the murdering axe, and is knocked down dead.

I shall conclude this use with Job's character of this rich sinner, who flourisheth for a time, and perisheth to eternity : ' The wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to hell,' Job. xxi. 7-13.

Exam. Are magistrates mortal? Let me then, in the fear of the Lord, beseech you that are magistrates, now presently to make preparation for the hour of your dissolutions. My counsel shall be, with a little alteration, in the words of the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah : ' Now set your house in order, for you must die,' Isa. xxxviii. 6. I must tell you, all the time ye have is little enough for a work of this weight. If Seneca can say, *All a man's life is little enough for philosophy, etiamsi a pueritia, usque ad longissimos humani ævi terminos vita protendatur*, though the silver wire of life should be drawn out to the longest thread, I am sure, then, that all your time is little enough for Christianity. Ye have a great work to do, a great journey to go, and a little time will not be sufficient. Make much of time, saith Aquinas, especially in the weighty matters of salvation. Oh how much would he that now lieth frying in hell rejoice, if he might have the least moment to get God's favour in ! The sun of your lives, blessed be God, is not yet set, the gate of mercy is not yet shut. I request you, before the bridge of divine grace be drawn, in this day of God's patience, mind the things that concern your eternal peace. Augustine professeth, he would not be an atheist one quarter of an hour for a world, because he did not know but in that time God might cut asunder his thread of life, and so let him drop into hell.

Let me persuade you, and the good Lord prevail with your hearts, to set yourselves speedily about this necessary work. Delays are dangerous, especially in a business of infinite concernment. How earnestly doth our blessed Saviour exhort you, to be always ready, because ye know not at what hour your Master will call you, Mat. xxiv. 44.¹ Caesar would never acquaint his soldiers with the time of removing his camp, that they might be always prepared to march.

Consider that on this moment dependeth eternity. God hangeth heavy weights on weak wires. And how dolefully have many complained, and mournfully lamented their loss of time, when it hath been too late.² That story of a great lady of our land, which several speak of, may awaken secure ones, when on her death-bed she dreadfully screeched out, A world of wealth for an inch of time! a world of wealth for an inch of time! And I have read of Chrysorius, a man as full of wickedness as of wealth, when he cometh to die, crieth out, *Inducias usque ad mane, Domine*, Truce, Lord, but till morning; truce, Lord, but till morning; and with these words he breathed out his last. *Alterius perditio, tua sit cautio*, Let that which was a murdering piece to others, be a warning piece to thee.

Do but think, should God permit a damned sinner, that is now in hell, to come and sit but one hour amongst you, under the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, how highly would he prize this present opportunity; how greedily would he embrace every tender of mercy; how eagerly would he catch at every word of comfort; how heartily would he close with Christ upon the hardest terms. I am persuaded you should behold him with such streams of tears watering his cheeks, as if he were dissolved into a fountain. And will ye trifle away such golden seasons, and waste such precious advantages, which others would purchase with worlds, if they had them to give; nay, which ye yourselves would redeem hereafter with your heart blood, but shall not be able; oh, therefore, now prize time, before you come to enter upon eternity.³

And yet a little further to press this needful duty upon your

¹ Ideo latet unus dies, ut observentur omnes.

² Petrarch relateth an answer of one, who, being invited to dinner a day after, said, *A multis annis crastinum non habui. Quam scrum est tunc vivere incipere, cum desinendum est!*—*Sen. ad Paulin.*, cap. 4.

³ Quare, O miser, non omni hora ad mortem te disponis? Cogita te jam mortuum quem seis necessitate moriturum; mors enim inopiæ non miseretur, divitias non reveretur; non sapientiæ, non moribus, non ætati pareit, nisi quod senibus mors est in januis, juvenibus vero in insidiis.—*Bern.*

spirits. Oh that, if it were the will of God, I had the tongue, the understanding, the affections of an angel! how willingly would I improve them to the utmost, and screw them up to the highest pitch in exhorting you to this weighty and absolutely necessary work!

This, this is the one thing necessary; this, this is the whole duty of man; this is the great end for which ye were born, and the great errand for which ye were sent into the world.¹ It is a work of infinite weight, and a business of everlasting concernment. I speak to you that are great men, and I assure you from the great God that ye must die, and that ye must come ere long to do that which ye never did before, nor never shall do again; even this, to throw your last cast for eternity. Your everlasting weal or woe, joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, dependeth on your well dying. As Scipio said, *In bello non licet bis peccare*; so may I of death, as he of war, In death there is no erring twice; he that erreth once, errs for ever. As soon as ever your souls launch out of your bodies they sail to the ocean of eternity.² That we transgress the laws of living so often is the aggravation of iniquity on all men; but that we can transgress the laws of dying but once is the seal of misery on most men.

How pathetically doth God wish that man would mind this real wisdom: 'O that my people were wise, then would they consider their latter end: or that they would consider their latter end,' Deut. xxxii. 29; *vide* 1 Tim. vi. 17-19; Prov. xix. 20.

It seemeth to me one of the dolefullest sayings in the book of God, and, by the way, let men guilty of bribery or oppression think of it, 'He that getteth goods and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and in his latter end shall be a fool,' Jer. xvii. 11. To be a fool, in the judgment or account of Scripture, while a man liveth, speaketh his condition very dangerous; but to be a fool when he dieth, speaketh his estate altogether desperate. For a vessel to leak much in the harbour is sad, but oh how sad is it for the vessel to leak in the main, in the ocean! It was Augustine's prayer, *Hic ure, seca, ibi parce*, Lord, lance me, burn me here, but spare me hereafter.

And the desire of Fulgentius, *Domine, hic da patientiam, postea indulgentiam*.

But it is very emphatical and observable in the fore-quoted place, that the Holy Ghost speaketh: 'In his latter end he shall be a fool.' He was a fool before in the estimation of God, and in the opinion

¹ Mors est æternitatis ostium.

² Caryl on Job.

of godly men, but now in his latter end he is a fool in the conviction and acknowledgment of his own conscience; and now he will think, Oh what a fool was I, who was ever dying, never to live to my Saviour, to my soul! What a fool was I, to respect so exceedingly my vile transitory body, and to neglect so unworthily my precious, immortal soul! What a fool was I, to make so much provision for a little time, and so little preparation for eternity! What a fool was I, to be so diligent about earth, and so negligent about heaven; so careful about perishing, decaying vanities, and so slothful about real enduring felicities!

Pliny observeth of the mole, that though it be blind all its time of living, yet when it cometh to die, *oculos incipit aperire, moriendo*, then it seeth. Men that, whilst they live, are blind in the worth of their souls, insensible of the weight of their sins, ignorant in the severity of divine justice, incredulous about the necessity of the new birth, when they come to die, their eyes are opened, and they see all these things clearly; and oh then, what a doleful screech will that soul give, that stands quivering upon the pale lips of a dying man, ready to fly to its eternal home, Lam. i. 9, and seeth nothing before it but a bottomless, boundless, ocean of the wrath of God, in which it must swim naked for ever, ever, ever, Num. xxiv. 20.

My lords and gentlemen, I beseech you attend diligently, that this sermon, which is a funeral sermon in regard of its subject, may be a resurrection sermon in regard of its effect. Who knoweth what a day, yea, what a great bellied hour, may bring forth? I can assure you, this sermon is a child of some prayers, yea, and of some tears; therefore I hope it shall not perish. If I speak not the word of God, the mind of Christ, and the meaning of the Spirit, cast back my words as dung in my face; but if I do, hear attentively, and practise conscientiously, lest my counsel rise up in judgment against you at the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

In reference to this great duty of preparing for your dying day, I shall commend six particulars to your most serious thoughts; my prayer shall be that they may all, especially the two latter, be written in your hearts.

1. Discharge your trust faithfully. The way to have great confidence when ye die, is to keep a good conscience whilst ye live. Were judges and justices always to live upon earth, there were no such reason for the impartial execution of justice; but God acquainteth you this day that ye must die, and after death cometh judgment, Heb. ix. 27.

‘Judex nuper eram; jam judicis ante tribunal
Subsistens paveo, judicor ipse modo.’

Ye are but stewards, and within a short time ye must give an account of your stewardship. It behoveth you, when you sit on the bench of men, to act faithfully, that when ye shall appear at the bar of God ye may answer comfortably. Remember when ye are passing sentence of life or death on others, that Christ ere long will pass a sentence far more weighty, even of eternal life or death, on you.

It is reported concerning the emperors of Constantinople,¹ that on their coronation day, a mason is appointed to present unto them certain marble stones, saying these verses,

‘Elige ab his saxis ex quo (invictissime Caesar)
Ipse tibi tamulum me fabricare velis.’

If ye that now are in robes would consider, death will level you with them that are in rags; if ye would, with the eye of your meditation, behold your coffins standing before you on the table in the place of judicature, it might be an excellent curb to iniquity, and spur to fidelity.

Now there are four things requisite in a magistrate that he would discharge his trust faithfully.

First, Courage and magnanimity. Every magistrate should be a man of metal, not daunted with dangers, nor frightened with frowns. He should so carry himself that others should fear him, as a terror to evil-doers, but he should fear nothing but sin. Like Chrysostom, who, when a threatening message was sent him from the Empress Eudoxia, Go tell her, said he to the messenger, *Nil timeo nisi peccatum*. Ye are called the shields of the people, Ps. xlvii. 9; and shields ye know are venturous weapons—they are made to bear many blows. ‘Be thou strong and very courageous,’ Joshua i. 7, saith God to the chief magistrate of Israel. The throne of Solomon was underpropped with lions, 2 Chron. ix. 18; and a lion is part of the royal arms, both speaking that a lion-like spirit is becoming him that is in a public place, Deut. i. 17.²

Secondly, Uprightness and integrity. A magistrate, as he should not be frightened with fear, so not swayed by favour: ye should be like a bowl without a bias, running on fairly and evenly, not leaning on this side or on that side; like the sun, which affordeth

¹ Isid.

² *Durescito durescito O infelix Landgravi*, said the poor smith to the Landgrave of Thuringia, who was more mild than stood with his people's profit. The sword of justice, saith one, ought to be furnished with the oil of mercy; but there are cases wherein severity should cast the scale.

as gracious influences to the low violets as to the tall cedar, to the poorest beggar as to the most potent emperor; like a public conduit in a city, whence justice should run down like water, as freely and as fully to the meanest as to the greatest.¹ Laws were never made to be nets, only to catch the little fish, and to let the great ones break through.² The great Judge of heaven is no respecter of persons, neither should justices on earth, Deut. i. 17.

That edict of Constantine was worthy to be written in letters of gold; If any of my friends, courtiers, or servants have wronged any, let them come to me, I will not only right them, but reward them. And that act of Brutus memorable, who commanded his two sons to be executed, and saw it done, for conspiring with Tarquin's ambassadors against the commonwealth.³

Thirdly, Bounty and liberality. A justice should not only not be covetous, but hate covetousness, Exod. xviii. 21. It is the dust of money that is blown up into the judges' eyes, that hindereth their sight into causes, Exod. xxiii. 8.

It was a witty speech of a pious person,⁴ He is the best magistrate that is good for nothing. Ye must neither take bribes yourselves, nor by your servants; for *optimus et maximus venderetur imperator*. There is not a gift ye take but will be as a dagger at your hearts another day; like Achan's wedge of gold, it will cleave your souls in sunder. It will in this particular be happy for him that, when he cometh to die, can say, as dying Samuel, 'Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes? And they said, Thou hast not defrauded nor oppressed, nor taken aught of any man's hands,' 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4.

The fourth thing requisite in a magistrate is ability. A magistrate must be not only a man of piety, but a man of parts, quick-sighted, of a deep apprehension, knowing the laws exactly; because if he be not, he will some time or other condemn the innocent, and justify the wicked. And the rather every judge ought to be able, in regard he hath to deal with men that can draw a fair glove over

¹ It is reported of a king of Persia, that he would come off from his horse upon the way to do justice to a poor man.

² But it was a bad speech of Cæsar, *Causa Cassii melior, sed Bruto nil denegare possum*.—*Plut. in Vit. Cæs.*

³ *Plut. in Vit. Public.*

⁴ Vines on 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, p. 25.

a foul hand ; blanch over a bad cause with specious pretences, as Ziba against Mephibosheth.¹

I honour the profession of the law, and I wish that some men did not dishonour their profession, who indeed value their substance above their consciences, not believing that of the father, *In die judicii plus valebit conscientia pura, quam marsupia plena.*

Beza telleth us, that he once saw on a table the pictures of four sorts of persons, and their several posies. 1. The courtier with this posy, By my sword I defend you all. 2. The clergyman with this posy, By my prayers I preserve you all. 3. The countryman with this, I feed you all. 4. The lawyer with this, I devour you all. I request lawyers to consider that of God to Moses, 'Thou shalt not speak in a cause to wrest judgment,' Exod. xxiii. 2 ; and that speech of the apostle, 'I can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,' 2 Cor. xiii. 8. But I have digressed too far already.

Secondly, If ye would fit yourselves for death, live among men exemplarily. You that must die shortly, had need to live strictly. Must you ere long fall, then whilst you stand be holy to admiration, to imitation. *Nihil sic revocat a peccatis sicut frequens meditatio mortis.* Some say the stroking of the belly with the hand of a dead man will cure the tympany ; I am sure the thoughts of death seriously laid to the heart are a good medicine for an evil heart.

Nothing in the war will so much dead the cannon, as a mound of earth. The consideration that ye shall be turned into earth, should dead the cannons of temptation which Satan shoots against your souls : 'As pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,' 1 Pet. ii. 11. Lyncurgus made the first law that the dead should be buried about the temples, intimating thereby that they which are dying should be very religious.² Nothing maketh death evil but the evil that goeth before it ; for without that no evil could follow after it.³ I have read of one that gave a ring with a death's-head to a young ruffian, upon this condition, that he should meditate on it one hour every day for seven days together, which he did, and through the help of God, it wrought a blessed change in him. Take a turn or two daily in Golgotha ; walk often among the tombs ; ponder frequently your own frailty ; it may much quicken you to walk exemplarily.

Your high places call for holy practices. It is esteemed one of King Alphonsus's sayings, that a great man cannot commit a little

¹ There are they that can make *candida de nigris, et de candentibus alba.*

² Plut.

³ *Nihil facit mortem malam nisi malum quod præcedit, vel sequitur.*

sin.¹ I must tell you, ye have many following you either to heaven or hell, in the narrow or broad way; ye had need to choose a right path. Great men's vices are as seldom unaccompanied as their persons. Dives was a great man, and a bad pattern, and he had many brethren following him to the place of torment. Men are led more by the eye than by the ear, and follow rather the doings of magistrates, than the sayings of ministers.²

'Componitur orbis

Regis ad exemplum; nec sic inflectere sensus

Humanos edicta valent, quam vita regentum.'—*Claudian*.

Sin, indeed, cometh in at first by propagation, but is much increased by imitation.

Ye are the heads of the people,³ Num. vii. 2; Micah iii. 11. If the head be giddy, the body must needs reel. Ill humours from the head destroy and consume the vitals in the body.

Ye are the nurses of the people, Isa. xlix. 23; and our naturalists observe that what disease nurses have, the children will partake of. Now how will it gall your consciences, when ye come to die, if ye have been ringleaders in iniquity, and not patterns of piety. Believe it, ringleaders in a rebellion will be most severely punished; and with those whom ye have made wicked without repentance, ye will be made eternally woeful.

Take up the practice of dying Joshua, who was going the way of all the earth: 'I and my house will serve the Lord,' Joshua xxiv. 15.

Theodosius the emperor, being asked how a prince might promote good abroad, answered, By ordering all well at home.⁴ If ye cannot rule your family well, ye are unfit to rule cities and counties. Let me request you to follow David's pattern: 'I will walk in the midst of my house with a perfect heart until thou come unto me,' Ps. ci. 2; or, 'oh when wilt thou come unto me,' lest when ye come to die, ye have cause to cry out as she did: 'They made me keeper of others' vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept,' Cant. i. 6.

¹ As Cæsar said, that Cæsar's wife should be without all suspicion of fault.

² Vivitur exemplis potius quam legibus.

³ Many say to such, as Tiberius to Justinus, *Si tu volueris ego sum, si tu non vis ego non sum*.

⁴ It is a great praise that Melancthon ascribeth to George, prince of Anhalt: His bed-chamber, saith he, was *Academia, curia, templum*. And Xenophon of Cyrus, that a man might wink and choose among his courtiers, he could not miss of a good man.

Thirdly, As your frailty calleth upon you to be faithful in your places, holy in your practices ; so likewise, in the third place, to walk humbly with God. I would have others to have high thoughts of you, because ye are gods ; but I desire you to have low thoughts of yourselves, because ye must die like men. Pride, as one observeth, is the shirt of the soul, put on first, and put off last ; it is a weed that will grow in the best soil ; but men that are highest in place, are usually highest in spirit.¹ It is rare to see a man great in others' eyes, and little in his own. Honour is often the stinking breath of the vulgar, which being blown into the bladder of a graceless heart, causeth it to swell. But here is a pin in the text to prick this bladder, and take down its swelling. Did you but spiritually consider the brittleness of your bodies, it would abate the swelling of your spirits. I should think the evil disposition of your souls, and the frail condition of your bodies, should keep you low while ye live.

Alas ! notwithstanding all your powers, places, or preferments, what are ye but clods of clay—a little refined earth, moving slime, enlivened dust, breathing ashes ? Some naturalists observe of bees, that when they rise and buzz on high, if you throw dust upon them, they will house and be quiet. When your thoughts are lifted up on high, because of those places in which God hath set you, I pray cast some dust on those thoughts ; remember ye shall be laid as low as the worms are. Abraham was a prince, a great man, but how much did this thought humble him : ‘ Lo, I have undertaken to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes,’ Gen. xviii. 27. I have read of Agathocles, king of Sicily, that being a potter's son, he would be always served in earthen vessels, to mind him of his original. Some write of a bird so light and feathery, that it is forced to fly with a stone in its mouth, lest the wind should carry it away. The truth is, men that are high in place, are apt to be carried away with the wind of high-mindedness ; they had need therefore to have earth in their minds, I mean their frailty, and it may prove, through the blessing of Heaven, a singular preservative.²

Oh that you who are judges and justices, would but take the length of your bodies in the dust, where ye must ere long lie, and believe that a little distemper will kill you, a little sheet will wind

¹ A magistrate should be like a star or spire-steeple, the higher he is the lesser he should seem to be.

² There was one Willigis, Bishop of Mentz, who, being son to a wheelwright, caused wheels to be hanged on the walls up and down his palace, with these words written over them, *Willigis, Willigis, recole unde veneris.*

you, a little grave hold you, little worms feed on you, and a little time quite consume you. Could ye then be great in your own eyes? Remember that your remembrance is like unto dust, and your bodies are bodies of clay, Job xiii. 12.

Fourthly, Must ye die, and would ye prepare for it, then be active for God whilst ye live; the serious thoughts of death in your hearts will put life into your hands. This life is all your day of working, death is the night of resting: 'The dead rest from their labours,' Rev. xiv. 13: 'When the sun' of man's life 'ariseth, he goeth forth unto his labour until the evening' of death, Ps. civ. 23. The heavenly bodies are ever in motion, though the earth stand still; and the more pure any being is, the more active it is. *Deus est actus purus*. Fire is the most active of creatures without life; angels of creatures that have life. Oh shew yourselves to be as angels amongst men, by walking humbly with God. The angels veil their faces in his presence, by working diligently for God; angels are ever employed in the service of God.

Work industriously in your general callings as Christians. 'Yet a little while the light is with you. Walk while ye have the light,' John xii. 35. The task of Christianity is great; the time ye have is little, the time ye have lost is much. Oh now bestir yourselves in redeeming time, and improving every opportunity to the best advantage of your souls. How fervently should ye pray, as not knowing but that every prayer ye pray may be your last prayer; that ye may never have another season to beg mercy in for your souls, for your relations, for the afflicted members of the Lord Jesus! How attentively, and how hungerly should ye hear the word of life, even as for life! How carefully, and how conscientiously should ye keep the Sabbath, considering ye may be very near your eternal Sabbath! How sedulously should ye hang on every ordinance, as bees on flowers, never leaving them till ye have sucked some honey, some sweetness, from them! Ponder this, there can be but a few days, and ye shall never pray more, never hear more, never sanctify Lord's day more, never enjoy ordinances more.¹ I that am now preaching, and ye that are now hearing, must shortly be carried on men's backs, and laid in the belly of the earth; and can we do too much in so little time, especially in a work of such infinite weight!

The devil is the more busy because his time is short, Rev. xii. 12, and therefore striveth, in a quick despatch of the works of darkness, to outwit the children of light. The time is short, therefore

¹ *Præcipitat tempus; mors atra impendet agenti.*

be indifferent about earth, 1 Cor. vii. 29 ; the time is short, therefore be diligent about heaven. The word is, the time is rolled up, *ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος* ; it is a metaphor from mariners. The sails that were spread before, when they draw nigh to the haven, are then rolled up : you know not how soon the sails of your lives may be rolled up, how nigh ye are to your eternal haven ; oh bestir yourselves carefully, ply the oars diligently, that the vessels of your souls may not miscarry eternally ! ‘ Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might ; for there is no work, nor knowledge, nor device, in the grave, whither thou goest,’ Eccles. ix. 10.

Work industriously in your particular callings, as magistrates, because ye must die. Be active for the punishment of iniquity, for the encouragement of piety. Let the practice of Christ be your pattern : ‘ I must work the work of God while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work,’¹ John ix. 4. To work a work noteth the strong intention of his spirit about the work : Christ, though he was rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9, and for greatness the Lord’s equal, Phil. ii. 6 ; yet did not, as many rich and great men do, play his work ; he did sweat at work, yea he sweat drops, nay, clods of blood, Luke xxii. 44. Now be ye followers of Christ as dear children, and think you can never do enough for that Saviour which hath done so much for your souls. How sad is it, that great bodies should move so slowly !²

How many talents hath God committed to you ? when others have one, ye have ten. A talent is anything that a man is be-trusted with to glorify God, and it is called a talent because of the great price that is in the least opportunity to honour God.³ Ye have many such talents ; ye may hinder much wickedness, further much holiness ; be a great terror to evil-doers, a great praise to them that do well. Let it not be said of you, that ye do the work of the Lord negligently.

Did not Christ humble himself for you ? and shall you think it below you to search alehouses, those headquarters of hell ; to inquire into men’s observation of God’s day ; to use all means whereby ye may know men’s profanation of God’s name, by hellish oaths, and cursed blasphemies, and abuse of God’s creatures by drunken-

¹ Ἐμὲ δὲ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα.

² Magnarum rerum tarda mole molimina.

³ Nothing more sads the heart when a man comes to die, than his neglect of such opportunities which God’s providence or his own place have put into his hands of doing or receiving good ; nor is there a sharper corrosive than the reflection upon those days that have passed over him, *Male, aliud, nihil, agentem.*—*Vines Ess. Fun.*, p. 19. Phil. ii. 7.

ness, that so they may be severely punished? ¹ Alas! a few days will come, and the best of you shall have no such opportunity to discover your love to God for his abundant mercies, your thankfulness to Christ for his precious merits: do therefore now act to the utmost of your power for the glory of God, and your Saviour.

Be not like the tallest trees, which bring forth either no fruit, or that which is only for swine. Remember God puts no difference betwixt *nequaquam et nequam*, an idle and an evil servant; the unprofitable servant is for outer darkness, Mat. xxv. 26-30.

Do but consider the time of your departure may be at hand; and should not this resolution be in your hearts, to act vigorously and strenuously for God? The nearer ye are to your centre, the faster ye should move: the setting sun shineth most brightly; the dying swan sings most sweetly; the approaches of a needle are so much the more quick, by how much it draweth nearer to the loadstone; the rivers run with a stronger stream when they are about to empty themselves into the ocean. Ye are nearer death than ever; be quicker in your motions for God than ever, that it may be said of every one of you, how young soever ye may die, as one said of Jewell, *Diu vixit etsi non diu fuit*.

Fifthly, Must ye die, and would ye prepare for death? labour to find some inward work of grace wrought upon your hearts; be not contented with forms, but mind the power of godliness.² A man may live by a form, but he cannot die by a form; a heart not balanced with grace may hold out in the calm of life, but when the boisterous winds of sickness blow, and the storm of death cometh, it will suffer shipwreck: when death cometh, when that damp ariseth, the candle of profession, separated from the power of religion, will first burn blue, and then go out: the bellows of death will blow the spark of sincerity into a flame, and the blaze of hypocrisy into nothing. Oh therefore get that saying of our Saviour written on your hearts: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he can never see the kingdom of God,' John iii. 3. A worthy divine, now in heaven,³ observeth four things from this verse: 1. The manner of the assertion, 'Verily, verily.' 2. The matter asserted, 'except a man be born again;' *Non unius partis correctionem, sed totius naturæ renovationem designat.*—(Calvin.) 3. The universality of the assertion; it is equivalent to a uni-

¹ Magistrates are *custodes utriusque tabule*. Socrates was adjudged to death by the Athenians for a dishonourable speech concerning their gods.—*Plut. in Vit. Nici. Vide Lev. xxiv. 16; Job xxxi. 26-28.*

² *Oportet imperatorem stantem mori.*—*Vespa.*

³ Pious Mr Strong on Heb. xii. 14, p. 39, *vide*.

versal proposition. Though he be a man civil in his conversation, a saint in his generation, yet he must be born again. 4. The necessity of it; without regeneration no salvation; he cannot see the kingdom of God.

You know what the pharisees were; how strict in their lives, according to the law blameless, Phil. iii. 6; how abundant in duty, Mat. xxiii. 14; they made long prayers, Mat. vi.; gave much alms, Luke xviii. 12; fasted twice a week, Mat. xxiii. 15; compassed sea and land to make proselytes; nay, they were so holy that the Jews would speak commonly, That if but two in the world went to heaven, the one should be a scribe and the other a pharisee. Yet our Saviour speaketh expressly: 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God,' Mat. v. 20. Pharisaical holiness will never evidence your right to eternal happiness.¹ He that considereth how great their privileges, how seemingly gracious their practices were, will at first wonder why Christ should set a double bolt on heaven's gate to keep them out. But their chief failing was in this which I am exhorting you to, namely, in the want of the power of godliness. Their actions, to the eye of man, good, but their affections were bad; their practices did not proceed from renewed and gracious principles. Whatsoever civility was without in the life, there was no real sanctity within in the heart.

You that are magistrates may probably be free from scandalous enormities. None can tax you, it may be, with swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, or the like; nay, I hope you go farther, that ye perform duty in secret by yourselves, in private with your wives and children, in public with the congregation; that ye instruct your families in the things of God, and be earnest with all under your power to mind their eternal good. These things are commendable, and the Lord increase the number of such magistrates; but I must tell you, that though this reformation in your lives be good, yet without an alteration and change in your hearts, it is not sufficient. I may say to you, as Christ to the young man, 'One thing lackest thou yet.' As the rude satyr in Plutarch, who strove to make a dead man stand upright, had so much wit as to say, *Deest aliquid intus*, There wants something within; so I say to you, If ye go no further, there is spiritual life, the seed of God, the divine nature, the new creation, the power of godliness wanting within; without this all other things will come to nothing. Alchymy gold may shine brighter than true gold; but, as some observe, it

¹ οὐ μὴ, Duo negativa apud Græcos vehementius negant.

will neither cheer the heart as a cordial, nor pass the seventh fire. A drachm of true grace will be of more worth to you, when ye come to die, than a sea of gifts. Heaven is the Father's house, and none can come thither but his own children, such as are born of God.

Lastly, If ye must die, to prepare yourselves for death, make sure of an interest in Christ, in the death of the Lord Jesus. There is no shroud to this—namely, to be wrapt in the winding-sheet of Christ's righteousness.

I would request you to discharge your trusts so faithfully, to work for heaven so industriously, to walk with God so humbly, to live among men so exactly and exemplarily, to mind the renovation of your natures so carefully, out of thankfulness to God for his Son, out of affection to him that hath loved you, and washed you in his blood, out of a desire to clear up your title to the covenant of grace, as if ye were to be justified by your works, to purchase heaven by your holiness; but when ye have done all, throw them away as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6, as a menstruous cloth, as dung and dross, Phil. iii. 8, 9, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

He that is to encounter with this grand enemy, death, had need to have armour of proof, John xi. 25, 26; and as David said of Goliath's sword, so I of this death of Christ, There is no weapon like it. That which makes a man die with true courage, and step with a holy boldness unto the grave, is to remember that Christ died not only before him, but for him, and hath conquered and vanquished the king of terrors upon his own dunghill.

I desire, saith the apostle, to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified. All the mercies that believers enjoy, come streaming to them in the blood of Christ; though there be much attributed to his intercession, yet that, like the king's stamp on silver, addeth no real value to it, only maketh it current.¹ By his death sin is pardoned, Eph. i. 7; God's justice satisfied, Eph. i. 6, and v. 2; his wrath appeased, Col. ii. 14, 15; Heb. ii. 14; Satan vanquished, the curse of the law endured, Gal. iii. 13; grace purchased for the saints here, Tit. ii. 14; Heb. ix. 14; and an eternal weight of glory hereafter, John xiv. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.

The whole ring of Christ's mediatorship surely takes its value, not only from the diamond of his divinity, but also from the passion of his humanity. It is out of the carcase of this lion of the

¹ Calvin observeth on 1 John ii. 1, that Christ's intercession is nothing else but a perpetual application of his death. Christ intercedeth by showing to his Father his wounds in his hands and side, *quot vulnera, tot ora*, to plead for sinners.

tribe of Judah that the true Samsons get so much honey of comfort. Thence it is that the apostle rings such a challenge in the ears of death: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; but thanks be to God, which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'¹ The apostle speaketh as alluding to a soldier that, having fought with, and disarmed his adversary, triumpheth: O sir! where is your sword wherewith you threatened so bitterly? Where is your pistol, with which you would wound me mortally? O death! where is thy sting, with which thou threatenedst to make me smart eternally? O grave! where is that victory of which thou boasteth so exceedingly? Thanks be to God, that hath given us the victory through Christ. Christ died not only *in bonum fidelium, sed in loco eorum*, not only for their good, but in their stead. Now death, like a bee, left its sting, and lost its sting in Christ, that now it may make a noise, but cannot sting the believer.

Surely, if Jacob could say, when he had seen Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen thy face,' Gen. xli. 30, the soul that, with the eye of faith, hath seen this Son of Joseph, may with greater boldness dare death, and encounter the grave. How sweetly doth old Simeon sing out his soul's requiem; having, saith one, laid in his heart that holy child Jesus, whom he lapt in his arms, Luke ii. 29, 30, sings his *nunc dimittas!* I fear no sin, I dread no death. I have lived enough, I have my life; I have longed enough, I have my love. I have seen enough, I have my light. I have served enough, I have my saint. (?) I have sorrowed enough, I have my joy. Sweet babe, let this psalm serve for a lullaby to thee, and for a funeral to me. Oh, do thou sleep in my arms, and let me sleep in thy peace!

Be not contented with any gift from God beneath his Son.² Say, as Abraham, 'Lord, what wilt thou give me if I go Christless?' Lord, thou hast given a plentiful estate, comfortable kindred, a goodly dwelling, lovely children, much honour from men, many lawful pleasures and delights; but ah, Lord! what are these to a Christ? Give me Christ, or I die; yea, Lord, give me Christ, or I die eternally.

View thy Saviour on the cross, fighting with this last enemy for

¹ Vide Mr Herbert's Temple; Dialogue between the Christian and Death, p. 164. *Lenietur mortis damnum; non enim est invicta ut antea, cum Christus illam superavit, ac in suo certamine crucis, felicissime vicit.*—*Pet. Martyr. loc. comm. de Luct. pro mort.*

² Valde protestatus sum me nolle sic a Deo satiari.—*Luther; Melch. Adam in Vit. Luth.*

thy sins, for thy soul. See his arms stretched out to embrace thee, his head hanging down to kiss thee, his feet nailed, that he cannot run from thee, his side opened, to shew thee how nigh thou liest to his heart; and take him down with the arms of faith, and lay him in the sepulchre of thy soul. Oh, be not faithless, but believing! Cry out, My Lord, and my God!

I tell thee, couldst thou heap up mountains of prayers—couldst thou pray so frequently that thy heart even bled within thee, and so frequently that thy knees were as hard as camels' knees, as is reported of James, the brother of our Lord—couldst thou weep, as some speak of Mary Magdalene in Balba, thirty years together—couldst thou fast as many millions of years as there have been moments since the creation—yet without an interest in this death of Christ it would all be of no worth, of no value, to no purpose at all.

I shall, in the next place, annex some motives, that the former particulars may have the deeper impression on your affections.

1. Consider how vain and unprofitable all other things will be to you when ye fall;—do but ponder that word, fall;—when ye die.

(1.) Ye fall from the highest pinnacle of honour and reputation.¹ The place of magistracy, which knoweth you now, will know you no more. One of the ancients, standing by Cæsar's tomb, crieth out, *Ubi nunc pulchritudo Cæsaris? quo abiit magnificentia ejus?* Where is now the beauty; what is become of the magnificence; where are the armies now; where the honours, the triumphs, the trophies of Cæsar? All was gone when Cæsar was gone. Your honours and your worships, your power and your places, all die with you, if not before you. Titles of honour glister, like glow-worms, in the dark night of this life; but in the day of death they all vanish and disappear. It is probable some of you may be nobly born, finely bred, highly advanced; but when ye come to die, ye may say of all these, as Esau of his birthright, 'Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?' Gen. xxv. 32. What good will my honour, my credit, do me? Christ will do me good when I come to die; so will the power of godliness: but none of my places or preferments will.

(2.) Ye fall from your greatest treasures and possessions. As ye brought nothing into the world, so it is certain ye shall carry

¹ Honour is called δόξα, an opinion, Mat. iv. 8; φαντασία, a fancy, Acts xxv. 23; σχῆμα, a mathematical figure, a mere notion, 1 Cor. vii. 31. One was appointed at the pope's enthronisation to burn a wad of straw, and, running before the pope, to cry out, *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

nothing out of the world, 1 Tim. vi. 7. Saladin, the mighty monarch of the east, is gone, and hath carried no more along with him than ye see—*i.e.*, a shirt hung up for that purpose—said the priest that went before the bier.¹

The Holy Ghost observeth well, that rich men are by their wealth rich only in this world, 1 Tim. vi. 17, and they are this world's goods, 1 John iii. 17; for, as the martyr said, I am going to the place where money beareth no mastery; in another world, gold and silver are not current coin. A divine, now with Christ,² giveth me two stories of dying rich men. The one is of a miser, that, being to die, called for his bags, and hugging them, crieth out, Must I leave you? must I leave you? The other is of one that, being on his death-bed, called for some pieces of gold, and laid them to his heart; but presently said, I find them cold, take them away; they will not do, they will not do. The unsearchable riches that are in Christ will do; his warm blood applied by faith will not be cold to thy heart.

(3.) Ye fall from all your friends and relations; when ye die, they that were near and dear to you will leave you. Ye may, when ye lie on your death-beds, look on your left hands, and there is none to help you; on your right hands, and there is none to pity you: on the one side of the bed, thy neighbours may be sighing and sobbing; on the other side, thy wife and children may be wringing their hands and rending their hearts; but if thou canst not then, with David, look up and say, 'Lord, thou art my refuge,' Ps. cxlii. 4, 5, oh, what a sighing, sobbing, weeping condition art thou in indeed!

Oh what a comforting cordial will it be to a dying person to be able, in uprightness of heart, to say, with Asaph, 'My flesh and my heart fail me; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever,' Ps. lxxiii. 26.³ When news cometh that ye must die, can the ablest physician in the world prescribe or provide such a cordial as good Hezekiah had? He turned to the wall and weepeth, saying, 'Lord, thou knowest I have walked before thee with a perfect heart,' Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3.

Believe me, sirs, your honours, treasures, and relations will shake

¹ All the Cains of Adam are Abels; all the possessions of man are vanity.—*Mr Broughton*.

² Holy Mr Burroughs.

³ It was an excellent saying of a worthy person to a great peer of this realm that shewed him his houses, goods, lands, honours, pleasures, and the like: My lord, you had need to make sure of heaven, otherwise your Lordship will be a very great loser when you die.

hands with you at death ; like leaves in autumn, fall from you ; like Absalom's mule, fail you even in your greatest extremity. Then Dives and his dishes, Herod and his harlot, Belshazzar and his bowls, Achan and his wedges, Balaam and his wages, the ambitious man and his honours, voluptuous man and his pleasures, covetous man and treasures, must part, and that for ever, ever. Doth it not concern you, then, to choose that part that shall never be parted with, which shall never be taken from you ?

2. By this means your names may be highly honoured ; true glory is entailed on piety. The heathen would go through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour. 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom ; length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour,' Prov. iii. 13, 15.

I do not say that wicked men shall commend you for godliness ; no, their good word were a blot to your names.¹ What evil have I done, said the philosopher, that this vicious wretch speaketh well of me ? Yet godliness will make you like statues of gold, which the polluted breath of ungodly ones cannot stain : the more the dirty feet of men rub on a figure graven in brass, the more lustre they give it ; but God and godly men will honour you for holiness. What doth God say of a living saint ? 'Hast thou not considered my servant Job ?' Job i. 8—*i.e.*, I am sure, in thy travels and wanderings about the world, thou couldst not choose but take notice of Job ; he is my jewel, my darling, a special man among all the sons of men : he is such a spectacle as may justly draw all eyes and hearts after him. When thou walkedst to and fro, didst thou not make a stand at Job's door ?² I cannot but look upon him myself, and consider him ; therefore surely thou hast considered him. And how honourably doth God speak, not only of a godly magistrate living, but when he is dead also ! 'Moses my servant is dead,' Joshua i. 2 ; 'The seed of Abraham my friend,' Isa. xli. 8. So godly men will honour you if ye fear God. When your eyes are shut, men's mouths will be open ; and what will good men say of a pious judge : There was a judge that would not swerve a tittle from the law, but executed it courageously, without fear, impartially, without favour ; who made the malefactor to tremble with

¹ Salvian complained that in his time men thought religion made noblemen vile ; when indeed, saith he, it maketh vile men noble.

² Caryl *in loc.*, Job was a godly magistrate. Godliness doth truly ennoble a person. The four monarchs, without it, are resembled to four beasts : king Herod to a fox ; Nero to a lion ; the princes of Israel to the kine of Bashan.

Nam genus et proavos et quæ non fecimus ipsi,

Vix ea nostra voco.—*Ovid.*

his frowns, and cheered the innocent with his smiles. He was one that did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God ; of whom the world was not worthy, for he is now enjoying a weight of glory. And of a good justice when dead, what a character will good men living give ! There was a justice that would secure his conscience,¹ whatever became of his credit ; that would please God, how much soever he displeased men ; that was not only strict to punish, but active to find out swearers, drunkards, and Sabbath-breakers. He was one that ever counted the toleration of men in such sins an intolerable sin ; or, if you will have it, in the language of a learned divine now in heaven, he was a justice that would scatter drunkards from their ale-bench, and never understood the language of a bottle or a basket. Oh how gallantly, if ye act nobly for God, will these trumpets sound your praises when ye are in the place of silence !

When of a wicked magistrate they will speak, when he is dead, as Nazianzen of Julian, when he was smitten and wounded, It was to him indeed *vulnus lethale*, but *παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ σωτήριον*, the sickness whereby he died was, possibly, damnation to him, but it was salvation to us: we are thereby freed from his wicked pattern and ungodly practices.² Or as the Romans of Pompey, by a witty solecism, *Miseria nostra magnus est*, The more he was advanced, the more our misery increased. The very heathen can tell us of a long-lived vicious man, *Diu fuit, non diu vixit. Multum jactatus est, non multum navigavit.*³ Believe me, the highest ungodly magistrate, when he dieth, goeth out like a candle, that leaves a stinking scent, a noisome smell, behind him.

3. Hereby your deaths will be truly peaceable. An ungodly man can never die with true peace, though he may die in much security. He may die by his own hands, and yet not with his own will. Such a man's soul is taken from him, and snatched away by force, Luke xii. 20 ; Job xxvii. 8.

Were I not by experience too too much acquainted how hard and desperately wicked the heart of man is, I should much wonder how any man should die in his wits, that dieth not in the faith of Christ ; that their souls go not out of their bodies, as the devils out of them that were possessed, rending, raging, foaming, and tearing. I am confident, were the conscience awakened, no graceless wretch

¹ Pious Master Vines, at Essex Fu., p. 15.

² Caligula could say of his father-in-law, Marcus Silanus, that he was but a golden brute.

³ Senec. ad Paulin., cap. 8.

alive can look death in the face with blood in his cheeks. It must needs make the stoutest heart alive to quake, to look that distemper in the face, that at once may both kill him and damn him.

Yet we see by experience that many die like lambs, whilst their souls are amongst lions, and they are going to the place of dragons.¹ We read, there are no bands in the death of rich wicked men, Ps. lxxiii. 4. And that phrase in Job xxi. 13, 'In a moment they go down to the grave,' is generally interpreted thus: They die quickly and quietly. *In quiete in infernum descendunt*, saith an expositor, like a lamp that goeth out of itself when the oil faileth. So Cæsar said, the day before he was slain, *Finis vitæ commodissimus est repentinus et inopinatus*; and Julian the apostate said, *Vitam reposcenti naturæ tanquam debitor bonæ fidei, redditurus, exulto*. But this quietness ariseth—or rather carnal security to them—not from any knowledge of their good estate, but from ignorance of their bad estate. 'A wicked man's hope is like the giving up of the ghost,' Job xi. 20. He breathes out his soul, life, and hope together.

The good man only hath true hope in his death,² Prov. xiv. 32; Ps. xxxiii. and xxxvii. I am neither ashamed to live, nor afraid to die, having a good master to go to, said Ambrose. And how man-like did that feminine martyr subscribe her confession: Subscribed by me, Ann Askew, that neither wisheth for death, nor feareth its might, but is as merry as one that is bound for heaven.³ He that with the apostle can say, 'I have fought a good fight,' 2 Tim. iv. 8, may sail with a plerophory, with top and top-gallant, into the ocean of eternity. A happy death is the conclusion of a holy life. The godly man and his godliness are like Saul and Jonathan, lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they are not divided.

Now what an argument is here to stir you up to godliness. Is anything more desirable than a good end, than to do your last act well? The evening crowns the day. The last scene commends the act: *Finis perficit tam agentem quam actionem*. Balaam could

¹ Aristotle, when dying, spake thus, saith one: *Dubius morior, quo vadam, nescio*. And Adrian, more dolefully: *Animula, vagula, blandula, que nunc abibis in loca, &c.*

² Some of the martyrs thanked their judges for condemning them: *Sententiis vestris gratias agimus, cum damnamur a vobis a deo absolvimur*.—*Tertul. Apol.*, cap. 5. Si vis in pace mori, sis servus dei.

³ Fox's Acts, vol. ii. p. 576. *Extrema Christianorum desiderantur etsi non exordia*. Florus saith of the Romans, *Populus Romanus sepe præliis, nunquam bello victus*: They were often conquered in skirmishes, but never in a pitched battle. The godly may be often foiled in their lives, but never in their deaths. At that long run they are always too hard for their most potent adversaries.

desire to die the death of the righteous, and to have his latter end like theirs, Num. xxiii. 10. The papists have a proverb, It is good to live in France, because there is most liberty, and to die in Italy, there is most popish purity and strictness. When Julius Cæsar was surprised and wounded in the senate, he cast his robe about him, *ut honeste caderet*, that he might die decently. If ye would not die ill, then be sure ye live well; let holiness be your way, and happiness shall be your end.

4. This will make your estates and conditions eternally comfortable. Death to you then will be no night, but the daybreak of eternal brightness. Oh what welcome will Christ give that magistrate in heaven that hath served him faithfully on earth! All the good ye do for God or his people is now perfectly recorded, and shall then be bountifully rewarded. It is observable the epistles to the churches begin with *novi opera*, and end with *vincenti dabo*, to assure us that Christ is a strict observer of our good works at first, and will be a rich rewarder of them at last.

All your industry in your general callings of Christianity, all your prayers, are now on the file in heaven; all your tears for sin are in God's bottle; all your fastings, watchings, duties in secret between God and your own souls, in public in the great congregation; all your sedulity in your particular callings of magistracy; all your pains to preserve us in peace; all your labour for the Lord's honour; all your justifying the righteous, condemning the wicked; all the good ye do, evil ye prevent, if done out of conscientious principles, are not lost, but will all be found to your praise, honour, and glory at the coming of Christ.¹ Duty is sweet at last; it cometh off with heaven, though hell dog it for a time. If God give that magistrate Jehu, 2 Kings x. 30, who served him in hypocrisy, an earthly kingdom to the fourth generation, surely he will give a heavenly kingdom that is eternal to those magistrates that serve him in sincerity.²

Oh how comfortable will your conditions be when ye die! If ye be cordial to God, and zealous for God, whilst ye live, ye shall be with Christ: is not that enough? Did the wise men rejoice so much

¹ Locker.

² If God valued counterfeit coin at so high a rate, how highly will he value true gold! *Esse Christum cum Paulo summa securitas, esse Paulum cum Christo summa felicitas.*—*Ber.* Aug. on those words, 'No man can see me and live,' saith, *Moriar, Domine, ut te videam.* Augustine desired to see *Romam in flore, Paulum in ore, Christum in corpore.* Bede cometh after him, and correcteth his last thus: *Imo vero regem in solio stellato sedentem*, the king in his glory rather. I wish for death, saith Melanchthon, *ut desiderato fruar conspectu Christi.*—*Melch. Ad.*

to see the star, and will not your hearts, think ye, rejoice much more to see the sun in its noonday brightness? This was the ground of Paul's desiring death, Phil. i. 23. This was the rich inheritance that Christ bequeathed to his in his last will and testament, John xvii. 24. This was the enlivening cordial which the physician of souls administered to the dying thief, Luke xxiii. 43. In a word, this is the top of the saints' ambition here, and the apex of their perfection hereafter, even to enjoy Christ. Ignatius could say, Fire, cross, breaking of my bones, quartering of my members, and all the torments that man and devil can invent, let come, so I may enjoy my Lord Jesus. And Jerome thus sweetly: If my father stood weeping on his knees before me, and my mother hanging on my neck behind, and my brethren, sisters, children, and kinsfolk howling on every side to retain me in a sinful life, I would fling my mother to the ground, run over my father, tread my kindred under my feet, that I might run to Christ. What is that which causeth the saint to be so busy about the Scriptures, but because they are they that testify of Christ; they prize the cabinet for the jewel's sake. What maketh the godly man so frequent at prayer? Surely because therein he enjoyeth communion with his Saviour, with Jesus Christ: his voice to every ordinance is, 'Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' Now this is the felicity of the magistrate that is godly, he shall be with Christ when he dieth. There will be a perfect freedom from all evil. When the sun is at the highest, there shall be no shadow. When the Christian hath passed this Red Sea, he shall see all his enemies, both bodily and spiritual, dead on the shore.

There will be a full fruition of all good: 'In his presence will be fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. The presence of this king will make a court indeed. There will be all that thine eye ever saw, or thine heart ever desired, or thy tongue ever asked, or thy mind ever conceived; yea, ten thousand times more than thou canst either ask or think. There will be all beams of light in this sun, all streams of water in this ocean, out of whom, as out of a crystal fountain, thou shalt drink down all the refined sweetness of all creatures in heaven and earth for ever. And this condition will be eternally thus comfortable, 1 Thes. iv. 17. 'We shall ever be with the Lord.' Oh how sweet is that word, ever! Ever to be happy, and ever happy; to enjoy Christ fully, immediately, and ever to enjoy him. Certainly as the word *ever* is the hell of hell, so it is the heaven of heaven. Frailty is a flaw in the best diamond of nature, which abateth its

price. Eternity is one of the most precious jewels in the crown of glory, which increaseth its value exceedingly.¹

What an argument is here to incite you to live to Christ! Why? When ye die ye shall eternally live with Christ. When the Gauls had once tasted the wine made of the grapes in Italy, they marched eagerly, desiring to conquer it.² I have given you a taste of Canaan's grapes: oh use violence for the inheritance above! 'Be constant, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 58.

To conclude all: It is reported that Scipio Africanus, when he had any weighty work in hand, would go before day into the capitol, *in cælum Jovis, quasi consultans de republica cum Jove*; and also that Moses, in four causes which came before him, two whereof were not weighty, and two were more material, *cæterum tam de his quam de illis dicebat, Non audivi*.³ Of both the lighter and weightier Moses said, I have not heard—to wit, from the Lord; to shew that a deliberation and consultation, as it were, with God ought to be in all judgment before sentence be pronounced.⁴ Your custom, sirs, is commendable, to make your supplication to God before the administration of justice to men. I beseech you again and again, in the bowels of Christ, as ye would have your Saviour to stand by you, when all your friends, estates, honours will fail you; as ye would have your names to smell a sweet savour in the churches of God, when your bodies shall be rotten; as ye would die the deaths of the righteous, and have your latter end like theirs; as ye would render up your accounts with joy, when ye must appear at the judgment seat of Christ, now execute justice impartially, live among your inferiors exemplarily, walk with God humbly, work for God zealously, mind the power of sanctity, and know a crucified Saviour. In a word, let true righteousness towards men, and real holiness towards God, be your work while ye live; that perfect holiness among men that are good, and eternal happiness in the fruition of God, may be your reward when ye die. For though he hath said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High, yet ye must die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

¹ Baxter's Rest, excellently.

² Cyprus famosa divitiis paupertatem populi Rom. ut occuparetur sollicitavit.—*Sextus Rufus*.

³ Plutarch. Pericles, that famous orator, before ever he pleaded, would entreat his God that not a word might fall from him besides his cause.—*Plut. in Vit.*

⁴ Jewish Antiq., lib. v. cap. 6. Plato, in his sixth lib., De Legibus, would have the palaces of princes joined unto temples.