

THE
EVERLASTING UNION
OF
CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS
THE SUBSTANCE OF
A SERMON,
PREACHED
ON THE 21ST OF AUGUST, 1831
AT
THE BAPTIST MEETING, IVINGHOE
BUCKS
BY W. COLLYER
OCCASIONED BY THE
DEATH OF MR. GEORGE CLARK,
MANY YEARS PASTOR
Of the Church of Christ in the above Place
TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED,
A SHORT MEMOIR OF THE DECEASED.

1831

THE EVERLASTING UNION,

&c. &c.

A Sermon.

I heard a voice from, Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do; follow them. REV. xiv. 13.

Beloved, I did not think it would have fallen to my lot to have addressed you on this painful occasion (painful, because of the close union which subsisted between our late beloved Pastor and myself) but, as a Christian Minister [Mr. Richard Glover, Pastor of the Baptist Church, Tring.] whom myself, in common with all of you, highly esteem, is, at this time, absent from his home; and who, but for that absence, would have been requested to have appeared before you today, I am, therefore to attempt this painful duty and service of improving our late dear Pastor's removal Home. And yet it is not painful, but pleasing; when we consider the blessedness of this *solid hope*, that those who have believed in Jesus, have fought a good fight, and have finished their work, are by death released from all trouble, and called *Home* to himself in Glory. May the Lord assist me to speak consistent with Truth; and may he help *you* with profit to hear.

I consider the circumstance which has taken place, to be a voice to us all; loudly proclaiming—“*Be ye also ready, for* in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” So that I am to deliver a message to the *living* and not to the dead.

This Book of God, from which our Text is taken, is called, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and which should be accomplished in his own time and pleasure. During the period of the accomplishment, Seals were to be opened, Trumpets sounded, and Vials poured out: And it is evident that it is the pleasure of God to hide much from man, both of the exact nature of the prophesies themselves, and of the times of their fulfilment; so that no man hath ever been able with *certainty* to declare concerning the same, or of the exact time of accomplishment: But, when God's time shall come, then shall they be disclosed and plainly revealed. This one thing is certain, that the things shewn to John, and spoken of in this Book, are all to be brought to pass during the time intervening our Lord's ascension and that of his second coming to gather his Saints to himself.

In the preceding chapter John is shewn that new persecutions should arise against the Church of Christ. He tells us, that he stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea to whom the Dragon (which is Satan) gave power, and his seat, and great authority. So that this beast, let him be who or what he may, *had his power from Hell*. And, whoever Satan is permitted to influence, move, and work upon, with enmity against Christ and his Church, there is no doubt but such have caused in all ages, and will cause even to the end, great trouble and distress to the Saints of God. We are told in this chapter, that it was given to the beast to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them (that is, to put them to death, Matt. x. 28), and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. So that all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are *not* written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Now as the things which John saw would take place during the long period of the reign of Antichrist, were calculated very much to depress his mind; so this fourteenth chapter opens to his view a most blessed and interesting sight indeed. Here the Lord shews him, that, amidst all the persecutions, *he had not lost one of his family*. Here they are discovered standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion; the Lamb that redeemed them with his precious blood. So that amidst all the ravages of time, the malice of hell, and the fiery trials of the Saints; he preserveth his own in safety, and brings them off more than conquerors, to reign with him in glory for ever. Here they are seen standing with their *Father's* name written in their foreheads; as evident *mark*, denoting that they belonged to God, and that they had made an open and honorable profession of his name before men.

Now while John stands wrapped in astonishment at this glorious sight, he hears a voice from Heaven, bursting forth as it were from the throne of God, telling him to write, — “Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

The words of my text may perhaps refer to the age in which it was commanded to be written; but it has proved a source of great consolation to the children of God, down to the present time; and *will* be so, till time shall be no more.

In my text there are several very blessed and interesting things contained, and which I now proceed to set before you; and shall notice—

First, the place from whence the voice came.—“I heard a voice from *Heaven*.” It is God’s declaration; and he declares it from *Heaven*. Every

word of God is pure; every word of God is true; yea, as unalterably fixed, and as everlastingly secure as the Throne on which he dwells. All his *threatenings* he will as assuredly execute on the *wicked*, who live and die in their sin; as his *promises* shall be fulfilled to all his people. But, “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.” But there is a day coming, when he, whose voice spoke from *Heaven*, and declared those “*blessed which die in the Lord*,” will then call the wicked to stand before his Judgment Seat, to hear his awful voice, saying, “Depart ye *cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*.”

God our heavenly Father, by a voice twice from Heaven declared his approbation of his dear Son; and now by a voice from Heaven, declares his approbation of all the dear children whom he hath chosen, who die in union with *Him* the first-born son: “*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*.”

The next thing in the text, which I shall notice is, the command to John, to *write* this blessed Declaration. But why write it? Because, it evidently appears that the Holy Ghost will have the Church *know* of the blessedness of their Dying in Union to Christ, and that in *all ages*. It is not enough for John, and the church in *his* day, to know it, but he is commanded to write it down, that so, all succeeding ages may *read* and *hear* of this blessed declaration from Heaven.

My dear friends, there is very much contained in these *three* words—“*In the Lord*.” Those who die in the Lord, have an **inbeing** in Him *before* they die; yea, before they had an existence in a time state. There is an union between Christ and his people, from everlasting. This union was not broken by the entrance of sin into our world. Sin blocked up the way

of access to, and communion with God; but the Love of God in Christ to the Church continued; Christ's secret union with his people remained firm; and a way was devised to save the sinner, for grace to reach his heart, and to bring about an open vital union to Christ, that death cannot dissolve. So that they are blessed which die in the Lord, because they die in union with Christ: which union may be described in a threefold way.

First. They which die in the Lord, are *in Him* by virtue of the everlasting Covenant; in which Covenant, God our heavenly Father, gave the Church to his dear Son; and he accepted of them as his Father's gift, and betrothed them unto himself, notwithstanding he saw the dreadful state in which they would be involved, yet he willingly engaged for their recovery; even to ransom them from eternal misery, unto which they would be justly exposed by sin and transgression. His engagements for them, he, in the fulness of time, accomplished and fulfilled; by coming into our world, and suffering all the wrath of infinite justice to be poured out upon him, in the garden, and on the Cross at Calvary. A union between Christ and his much-loved people, subsisted in all this, which neither the world, sin, nor death could destroy; while the Almighty Redeemer of his Church, destroyed all his and their enemies, by the overthrow of sin, death, hell, and the grave. He has arisen triumphantly glorious over all the powers of darkness, and is gone to take possession again of that glory which he had with the Father before the world was; unto which glory he will bring all his redeemed family; then shall they shout, saying, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" Thus, we see that by the bond of the everlasting Covenant, there is a union with Christ that is *indissoluble*. It is a Covenant ordered in all things and sure; that the heirs of promise who are interested therein, may have a strong consolation in all their troubles, trials, difficulties, and conflicts, with which they may be exercised while passing through the world. And as the love of God in Christ is the *cause*

of man's salvation; so, every *after* blessing communicated to the heirs of Glory, originates from this fountain. Love ordained them to *everlasting* life; love appointed every blessing and favour for them connected with *this* life. And as every blessing and every Grace, yea and even Glory itself is stored up, by love, for them in Christ; so they are truly blessed in time, and shall be so *for ever*. There is Grace in Christ to support them; power to protect them; in and through him is their pardon, mercy, peace, strength, comfort, and deliverance in every time of need.

But my text saith, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;" and they *are* blessed. They have been favoured with a sense of his pardoning love, and of an interest in his blood and righteousness. It is evident that they are in union with the Lord; so that they can say with the Apostle, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Rom. xiv. 8. But I would just observe here, that, there is no man in a state of unregeneracy, while he is living in sin against God, has any ground to conclude that he is in union with the Lord. No; it is evident that he is in league with the Devil, is led captive by him at his will; such a man is fulfilling the lust of the flesh, and the desires of his carnal mind; he is under the power and influence of the Prince of Darkness; and living and dying in that state, he will go into *utter darkness*, and die with the curse of God upon him. It is written, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha:" that is, "let him be accursed till Christ shall come;" and if he be accursed till Christ come, he will be accursed for ever and ever. O the awful state of the wicked, and O the vast contrast and difference which Grace makes between them and the chosen, redeemed, and sanctified people of the Lord. The *former* while passing through life, the very thoughts of his iniquitous heart are levelled even at the Throne, Being, Government, and Perfections of God; the *latter* aiming

at his glory, in life, conduct, and conversation; having the fear of God in his heart and before his eyes; living near to his God; enjoying fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John, i. 3. Yes, they are a people *near* unto him. Psalm. cxlviii. 14. They are near to him in Covenant love, brought near by Covenant blood, which purchased their pardon; drawn to him by everlasting love, as a manifestation of their union with Christ in the secret purpose of God. And now this love being let into the heart by the Holy Ghost, it brings the soul to an enjoyment of Christ, and to union with Christ by precious faith; which brings me to remark,

Secondly. That there is an *inbeing* in the Lord by a *vital* union. Now when this union takes place, the Lord unites himself to the soul, and the soul unites itself to the Lord. Then we are enabled by experience to adopt the language of the Apostle, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Gal. ii. 20. So that we see when Christ is formed in the heart the hope of Glory, he brings *faith* with him, and gives it to the poor sinner, in whose heart he has come to dwell. Faith is the gift of God; and when this faith is given, the soul is enabled to live in Christ, and Christ lives in him: thus, *the man is a new creature*; old things are passed away, and all things are become new. He has new joys, even the joy of his espousal to his Lord; he has joy and pleasure in believing; he enjoys the salvation of God in his own soul; he has new views of himself; new views of God; new views of Christ; and new views of sin, for he sees and feels too, the exceeding sinfulness of sin; having new eyes to see, new ears to hear, a new tongue to speak, and new feet to walk: yea, “he is created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Eph. ii. 10. Thus he is united to Christ by a living faith, as the branch is to the vine. For every saved soul must have this precious faith; even that faith which worketh by love; O how precious hath this last expression been, at times, to my soul, “*Faith that works by love.*” Thus have I thought— “Yes, love ordained it; love brought it into my heart;

love set it to work there; and love keeps it moving still.” This love being and love keeps it moving still.” This love being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we have *faith* whereby we realize and lay hold of our justification through Christ; and by faith we are enabled, as it were, to receive daily justification, which the best of men need. But we cannot enjoy these great blessings apart from being born again; we must be called out of darkness into marvelous light; and this is the alone work of God the Holy Ghost. It must be the same Divine Agent who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that must shine into our hearts, before we can see the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When this great work is done, *life* is given whereby we feel, and *eyes* and *light* in order that we may see. Men who are dead in sin, and blind to their state by nature, know nothing of these things: for it is written, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, *because* they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. i. 14. So that the eyes must be opened, and the stony heart must be broken, yea *more* than broken; it must be *melted* with love and blood. And when this mighty power is manifested in the soul, it wins the whole soul to Christ, and the poor sinner is brought to enjoy union with his dear Lord and Saviour, so as to express himself in the language of Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

It is the glorious Gospel which reveals the way of peace to poor sinners, who are enabled by the mighty power of God to embrace and receive the same. The burdened, weary, heavy laden sinner, is directed to the Lamb of God who taketh away sin; and the poor soul being led by the Spirit, comes to Christ for refuge, taking shelter under his protection, where he is for ever safe. “The name of the Lord is a strong Tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” Safe from every enemy; free from every curse; sheltered from avenging justice: the waters shall overflow every hiding place beside (Isa. xxviii. 17) but in Christ as the soul’s hiding place is everlasting security.

They cling to his cross; here is all their salvation:

‘Tis finish’d, complete; they’re redeem’d from all woe;
They read and rejoice, --- “There is no condemnation
To those in Christ Jesus” --- Ah never! O no!

O then how blessed the state of those who die in vital union with the Lord!

But I proceed *Thirdly*, to treat of the *visible* union of those which die in the Lord.

Our Lord saith, “The tree is known by his fruit.” Matt, xii. 33. The tree being made good; it brings forth good fruit. And as those that are born from above, receive the ingrafted word, so there is a budding and bringing forth, of good fruit to the praise and glory of God. The grace of God implanted in the heart, subdues sin, and lays the sinner low. He has then a single eye to the glory of God; he laments over his sins; he longs after Christ as a Saviour and friend of poor sinners. And knowing that *his* sins were among the number of those which procured the sufferings of the Redeemer; therefore with weeping and supplications he is brought to mourn that *he* pierced the Lord. Zech. xii. 10. This is a *visible* proof of his union to Christ. Yet notwithstanding this sweet proof, it may be, the poor sinner is not himself satisfied that he *is* the Lord’s. But I tell *that* soul (whoever he may be) that this is a true token; it is *God* that has given him this holy mourning, and this desire after Jesus. Eternal life is begun in your soul, and though you may not *enjoy*, at present, your interest in, and union with, Christ, yet, you are mourning after him, and longing to enjoy him: and by these things it is evident that such a soul is united to Jesus.

I therefore consider that all the *invitations* of the Gospel belong to such poor souls as these. Hear what the Lord saith, — “Come unto me, all ye that *labour* and are *heavy laden*, and I will give you rest.” Matt. xi. 28. And again, — “Ho every one that *thirsteth*, come ye to the waters; and he

that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” Isa. lv. 1. Such blessed invitations as these, are not to all men; but the characters for whom they are intended are very minutely and particularly described therein: the hungry, the thirsty, the poor, the heavy laden, &c. yea, all who feel their lost, undone, and helpless condition. This is *not* the feeling of *all* men. Man is dead in trespasses and sins; and, no power short of *that* power which raised Lazarus from the dead, can awaken poor sinners from the sleep of death. But those characters that *have heard his voice*, they have a desire to follow him, and to enquire after him, with a “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” Sol. Song iii. 3. There is nothing so desirable to such souls as Jesus.

But again. The visible union with the Lord, appears when the sinner is humbled before God, and is brought to bow at his footstool with sincere repentance. The soul that is made truly Sensible of his sins, by the convincing power of God, and to whom Jesus *gives* repentance (Acts v. 31) he repents with heartfelt sorrow for sin, with an earnest desire to mortify sin; not merely *crying out against it*, and at the same time having no desire *to forsake* it. *Not so* with those in whose hearts Christ has begun his reign of Grace; which Grace subdues sin, exalts Christ, empties and humbles the sinner, and enables him to cry mightily to God. So that his visible union is *seen* in the actings and exercise of that Grace which the Lord has bestowed upon him. Seeing and feeling his own *emptiness*, he comes to Christ to *be filled*; discerning his *own filthiness*, he comes to Christ for *cleansing*; perceiving his own nakedness, he looks to Christ for clothing; yea, knowing that from head to foot there is no soundness in him, he is given to behold that, in Christ, there is everything that he can need: love and mercy to pardon, blood to cleanse, and righteousness to justify. So that, viewed *in Christ*, he can come before God without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. His back is now turned upon the world, and

the worldlings have turned their backs upon *him*. He was once a jovial companion with them; they *see* there is a *change* in the man, and while they see that change, they *hate* it; for Grace in the heart, must and will produce a visible *alteration in the conduct*. Hence it is said that, when Barnabas came to Antioch, “and had *seen* the Grace of God he was glad.” Acts. xi. 23. But it is not so with the *world*, and with *carnal professors*, who

“Gaze and admire, yet *hate* the change.”

Further. There is a *visible union* with the Lord, when the poor sinner bears manifestly the image of his Lord. I mean, as the Holy Ghost has been pleased to impress the image of Christ on the soul, so that soul will wear, bear, and *discover* the image of his dear Lord and Master. But *how* will he discover this? In walking in the way which the Lord has marked out for him; he has left us an example that we should follow his steps. He will be seeking his Lord’s honour, and aiming at his glory. He will willingly honour him in being obedient to his *commands*, and glorify him in attending to the same in *the way which he hath appointed*. Not thinking to *merit* favour from God by *doing*; but, having received favour from him, he cannot but desire to honour and obey him in all things. Our Lord saith, “Ye are my friends if ye *do* whatsoever I command you.” John xv. 14. And again, “If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and *keepeth* them, he it is that Loveth me.” John xiv. 21. By keeping the commandments of Christ, it is openly discovered that we are the disciples and friends of Christ: in this respect there is a visible union with the Lord.

Finally. There is another thing wherein union with the Lord is visible: which is, when those who are born from above, a spirit of Grace and

supplication being poured out upon them, *they will be grateful to God for all his mercies*; they will be thankful to him for his abounding goodness. And, as the Spirit helpeth their infirmities, they will be *praying* to God, who has given encouragement to poor sinners to *call upon him* in all their troubles, trials, distresses, conflicts, and difficulties. And as these things will be noticed by many persons, who knew such characters in the days of their unregeneracy; they will say, “What a particular, what a *peculiar* man or woman my neighbour is become. There is nothing right with him *now* but the *Bible* and saying *his prayers*. He could *before* go to his work and employment without *so much ado*; but *now* he is never easy but when he is either reading, or praying, or singing of *hymns* (as he calls it). We cannot see there needs so much ado as all this comes to about *Religion*.” Well, poor souls, *perhaps you do not*; but I will tell you the reason. God has not, as yet, shewn you your desperate state as *a sinner*; nor discovered to you your need of Christ as *a Saviour*; and therefore, you, at present, are *a prayerless soul*, and are living *without God* and *without Christ* in the world: and so *living* and so *dying*, you must live without them in endless misery and everlasting destruction in the world and place of wretchedness and woe which is to come.

“O awful state of black despair!
To *see* the Lord remove,
And fix your doleful station where
You must not taste his love.”

What you said respecting your neighbour, is *right*; he *is* a peculiar character, he belongs to a peculiar family, who are all of them a peculiar people, because under a peculiar Government, serving a peculiar Master, walking in a peculiar road, and having a peculiar *end* and *home* in view. Thus, being blessed with glorious privileges, he is often frequenting the Throne of Grace for those things which he stands in need of; and having

such encouragements from “*the faithful God,*” he depends on his faithfulness, looks to his power, and rests on his love, to *perform all that he has promised*. Thus it is *visible*, that the *one* is a *praying* soul, and the *other* a *prayerless* soul; and while a prayerless soul, a *Christless* soul; and so *dying*, will be a *lost* soul forever! While, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

But now to assign a reason or two *why* they who die in the Lord are blessed from henceforth.

1. Because when the redeemed of the Lord are no more below, when the body is laid in the dust, and the spirit returned to God who gave it, *then* are they beyond the reach of all their enemies; neither men nor devils can hurt them more; no temptations can perplex them, nor fiery darts distress: they are out of the reach of all sublunary things; absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

2. They are blessed who die in the Lord from henceforth, *because* they are now free from the body of *sin*, which often caused them to mourn and groan; no more indwelling corruptions; no more unbelief; no more trouble; no more sorrow; no more sickness, nor pain, and no more death. They are free from the world’s bewitching snares; they are in that blessed state where the wicked will cease from troubling, and where the weary will be forever at rest: where the Lamb in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and God himself wipe away all tears from their eyes. While here below, the children of God have many things which cause them to weep, sigh, and cry; even their sin, unbelief, hardness of heart, oppositions from the world, darkness of mind, rebellions arising in their minds respecting the providences of God with them, and the hidings of his face from them, whereby they are troubled: these are a few of the things which

cause them sorrow and distress; but now no more any of these to make them grieve, for those who “die in the Lord” are delivered from them all, and are arrived where sorrow and sighing shall never come, but shall flee away forever. Isa. xxxv. 10.

3. They that die in the Lord from henceforth are blessed, *because* they rest *in* the Lord. They are gone to dwell with him in the everlasting *home* of blessedness; and to sit with him upon his Throne; to enjoy the sweet beauties of his face in open glory for evermore. O how blessed then must be the everlasting state of those who die in the Lord!

Now this declaration is *confirmed* by the Spirit. “Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.” But what are those *labours* which they rest from? They have been employed in the service of God; and in his service they have met with much opposition, through which they have had to work their way. They *laboured* striving against sin; they *laboured* under temptations; they *laboured* against every opposition of their enemies, even of Satan, the world, their own corrupt hearts, and all the opposers of the truth. All the children of God have to labour, more or less, in the cause of *God* and *Truth*. Paul saith, “I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel.” Phil. iv. 3. Again the Apostle saith, “We are labourers together with God.” 1 Cor. iii. 9. By which he may mean the *Ministers of the Gospel*, who are employed in comforting, edifying, and establishing the saints of God, and in building them up in their most holy faith. Also, they labour in preaching the Everlasting Gospel to poor sinners; believing God will bless their labours to their souls, and that his word shall not return to him void. *This* hath been the work and labour of our dear departed Pastor for a number of years; and the Lord hath made his labours a blessing to many precious souls. Indeed, this was always his *aim*, to be useful to poor sinners; and

perhaps the extent of his usefulness is not known as yet: for in his labours in praying for souls, and preaching to them, he was always very earnest that the Lord would *bless the means*. And it may be, that, *in time to come*, the Lord will make it appear that the works of his Servant do *follow* him, in causing many more yet, to come and declare that the Lord met with them under the Ministry of George Clark.

And as it respects private Christians, who have laboured much, in praying to God, in their day and generation: Sometimes Godly *Parents* have frequented the Throne of Grace on behalf of their *Children*, and have died without seeing their prayers answered; when *after* their heads have been laid low in the dust, the Lord has granted their earnest request, has answered their cry; and instead of the *Fathers*, behold there come up the *Children* to call the Redeemer blessed. Therefore, in *this* sense, their *works* maybe said to *follow* them, when praying souls have rested from their labours. The text doth not say, that, their works do go *before* them, but *follow* them. Our works, be they ever so good, and profitable to *men*; they can in no wise recommend us to the favour of God: for “’tis not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” Titus iii. 5. Their works do follow them when they rest from their labours, when they see that God hath answered their prayers, in bringing many to Glory after the arrival of themselves there. For the prosperity of the Church, is *that* which every quickened soul desires, and their prayers shall be heard and answered in mercy.

I observe again; there is another sense in which their works do follow them. When on earth they did not forget “to do good and to communicate.” And although those works are forgotten among men, and they themselves thought nothing of them when the *Lord* mentioned them, but said, “When, Lord, did we these things?” A plain proof that they

placed no *confidence* in them; yet Jesus hath not forgotten them, but publishes them before an assembled world, saying, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” Matt. xxv. 34—36. Thus we see, their works do follow them.”

Now, my Brethren, it strikes me most powerfully, that there must be a blessed *meaning* in what our Lord here declares. That what was done to the members of his *mystic body*, he counted as done to *himself*. And in a ministerial point of view, I think, that as God gives his children an appetite to feed on spiritual provisions, *so* the servants of the Lord bringing forth Gospel food for them; and as God creates a thirst in the soul after spiritual and divine things, so the waters of salvation are drawn for them by a faithful Minister. Those heretofore strangers, are taken into the household of God, and received into his family; the best robe is put upon them; all their diseases, faintings, and sicknesses are attended to; and the shut-up and imprisoned soul is visited, and Gospel relief afforded him. Thus, we see that “their works do follow them.” The Lord himself hath spoken all these things in his Word; and we have his warrant to conclude, that he considers all these things to be done to *himself* which are done to his children, to his little ones in his name, and “because they belong to Christ.”

Then, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” But all others, who die *out of Christ*, are said to approach Heaven’s gate, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done

many wonderful works:” and then the King will profess unto them, that, *he never knew them*; and will say, “Depart from me ye that work iniquity.” Matt. viii. 22, 23. So that we see, the *work-monger* hath no solid foundation to rest upon; though he may *think* that he hath many excellencies belonging to him while here below, and may not be deceived till he comes to appear before God. But God himself cannot be deceived. Here then we see the vast contrast; the *one* disclaims all merit, looking to Christ alone; the *other* having no interest in Jesus, is obliged to plead his own fancied performances: the one receives an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; the *other* is hurled into the kingdom of darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. O the blessedness of those that die in the Lord!

There are, no doubt, many here present who are expecting to hear somewhat about the deceased. But to illustrate his *life*, as a Man of God, I should consider the attempt to be vain; for this reason, *he lived in the Lord*, and, like Enoch of old, “*he walked with God.*” Gen. v. 22. You all knew him, and all of you, both sinner and saint, acknowledge him to be a *good man*. I may therefore as well take a candle to the sun, in the full blaze of day, as to attempt to cast a light upon, or illustrate such a character.

To the Church of Christ in this place, who have been for many years under his Pastoral Care, I would say, “My dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord; you have experienced a great loss in the removal of our dear Pastor by death. The Lord hath called him *Home*. He hath been a blessing to you, in feeding, strengthening, comforting, and edifying you. He is no more. He has *done all his Master’s work*, and is gone to receive his reward; even a Crown of Glory, which the Lord hath promised to all his Servants who continue faithful unto death: and he *was* faithful, even to the end. May the Lord enable us to follow *him*, even as he followed *Christ*.”

The usefulness of this man of God has been great. The Lord made him a blessing to many precious souls, who can bless God that they ever heard the sound of salvation from his lips. Many who hear me *now*; many who are at a distance from us; and many who are with him in Glory.

But I would say a word to his aged widow. Although you have lost your dear husband by death, yet there is consolation for *you*. The dear Lord saith to his family, “Fear not, thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole Earth shall he be called.” Isa. liv. 5. A great *earthly* comfort is removed from you, but the Lord is the comfort of his people, and their everlasting consolation. He saith, “I will be a father to the fatherless, and a judge of the widows.” Psalm. lxxviii. 5. Yea, he is the widow’s God; believing widows; who are looking to the Lord, and depending upon Him alone. I trust the Lord will bless you; that he will give you resignation to his will; that so you may be enabled to say, “It is the: Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.” 1 Sam. iii. 18., May you follow your husband, as he followed the Lord; and you shall meet him in *that day*, and so be forever with the Lord, where parting will be known no more.

And you, the children, the son and daughter of the deceased (and the relations), your father was a man of God, and he has called him *Home* to himself. I know that nature hath its cleavings; but still there is cause for *rejoicing*; your dear parent is delivered out of all his troubles, and is at rest in that happy and glorious place which God hath prepared for all that love and serve him. May the Lord help you to imitate his example; and grant unto you a good hope through grace, that *you* may meet *him* with joy when the Lord shall call you hence by death. May you all be helped to say with as much assurance as your father used to express himself, when he was upon earth, that, “the Lord shall come with ten thousand of

his Saints; and (said he) *I shall be there, and I shall be there.*” May it be your mercy to be there also.

Now I would just drop a word to the congregation at present assembled. My dear friends, we are met together on a most solemn occasion. An event hath taken place which you have not witnessed before in this town; even the removal of your Teacher, under God; of one who always expressed an earnest longing desire for the welfare of your immortal souls. O how many cries, how many petitions hath he sent up to the *Mercy-seat* on your behalf. But his cries for you are ended, his petitions are all put up; he can no more pray for you, and no more preach the Gospel to you; his blessed employ from henceforth and for ever, must be *praise!* Yet I trust, that, as many of his requests for you have been heard and answered, so may it appear that some of his cries while here below for you, are yet to be answered on your behalf. Now he is above, in Glory. May the Lord be pleased to raise up another man of God, to go in and out before you; or else woe be to *Sodom* when *Lot goes* out of it. I suppose that if we were to try to find a person that would speak evil of George Clark, I think I may appeal to you, that such a person could not be found. All who ever knew him will say, “*no doubt he was a man of God.*” But I give you to understand, that although he was generally accounted an holy upright man; yet many did not like his religious sentiments and views of truth: so that he came not under that *woe* which our Lord denounced, saying, “Woe unto you when all men shall speak *well* of you! for so did their fathers to the *false* prophets.” Luke vi. 26. I would not have such a woe stand against *me* (as that great and blessed man of God, Dr. HAWKER, used to say) for a thousand worlds; no, not for ten thousand! O I beg that the Lord may enable *me* to preach the *Truth*, fearlessly and undauntedly; whether men will hear or whether they will forbear; that so I may be clear from the *blood of souls!* But the time has passed and I must break off. May the Lord

bless what has been spoken, consistent with His Word, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

**A SHORT MEMOIR,
&c. &c.**

“THE memory of the just is blessed.” Prov. x. 7. Yea it is declared that, “the righteous shall be in *everlasting* remembrance.” Psalm. cxii. 6. The Christian reader is here presented with a very short account, only a few memorandums, respecting a very poor, yet very rich disciple of Jesus; an humble unassuming follower of the Lamb: of one who, though illiterate in worldly learning and science, was yet well taught of God in things that are divine; and who, in a very remarkable way and manner, was sent and conducted by Him (who directeth all the movements of his own Ministers) in his own time, *to* the small town *of* Ivinghoe, in Buckinghamshire; where

he was the honored instrument in the Lord's hand, of first introducing the preaching of the everlasting Gospel; and where subsequently a good sized Meeting House was erected for the Lord's worship (now, through mercy, too small) and a Church of Christ was formed, principally composed of persons whom the Lord had given to him as seals to his Ministry. In all these things we exclaim with thankfulness and praise, "What hath God wrought." Numb. xxiii. 23.

GEORGE CLARK, the son of RICHARD and SARAH CLARK, of Braunstone, in Northamptonshire, was born June 21, 1762. He was brought up to the business of a tammy weaver. About the latter end of the year 1788, it pleased the Lord to call him by his grace, and to awaken him, under the Ministry of Mr. John Simmonds, Pastor of the Baptist Church at Braunstone; and, on the 2nd of June, 1789, he was baptized, and joined the Church of Christ in that place. In the year 1797, the Church encouraged him to the exercise of his gifts in the work of the Ministry. Accordingly, he began to preach occasionally in four or five surrounding villages, under the sanction of the Church. Among some other remarks in his own hand-writing (now before me) he states that, a gentleman made him a present of a suit of clothes, on the very day that he obtained what is *called* his license to preach, from the Magistrates. But soon after, the Lord in his providence began to prepare a way for his removal from Braunstone, having a work for him to do at Ivinghoe. His trade of a weaver declined, and having a wife and family of four small children, and no visible means of support for himself and them, he was obliged to seek after some other employment. Accordingly, he went to work for about six months, as a navigator, on a navigable canal then forming in Warwickshire. Being again without employ, he heard of a canal that was going on near Tring, in Hertfordshire; and felt it much impressed on his mind, that, if he went to seek for one Mr. Thomas Andrews, whom he

knew, and who was a master on the Grand Junction Canal, that he would give him work. Before he set out in quest of this gentleman, as he lay one-night musing on his bed, he thought he heard someone call, "George Clark" more than once. On this he arose in his bed and answered, as he supposed, the person who called. On laying down again, it seemed to him as though he heard someone say, "Go to a place between Stony Stratford and Chesham, and you will be told what you shall do." Stony Stratford he had heard of; but never before, to his recollection, of Chesham. In a short time, he set out on his journey; directed, no doubt, even as Abram was, to a place which the Lord would *afterwards* shew him. Gen. xii. 1. His poor necessitous family he was obliged to leave for a season; but he could leave them in good hands; he knew in whose care to confide *them*, and under whose all-wise direction to place himself. Coming to Stony Stratford (about 30 miles from home), he enquired for Mr. Andrews, and was told that he was somewhere near Tring; but that if he went to a place called *Ivinghoe*, a person there, named Jarrett, could inform him more particularly. To Ivinghoe, under Divine leadings, he came towards the close of the day, wearied with his journey. Finding, on enquiry there, that he must go on to Tring (3 miles farther) to see Mr. Andrews, he endeavored to obtain a bed at Ivinghoe, at some of the lodging houses, but without success. All he could get, was permission from a gentleman, at the request of one of his men, for him to sleep in his *stable* for the night. When just at this instant, Mr. Jarrett, who was clerk to Mr. Meacher, a respectable brewer in the place, took him to his house to tea. Here at this friend's house, he met with two or three ladies, who professed to be Dissenters. They began to converse with him, to enquire if there were any *Meetings* where he came from, and if he ever went to any of these? To these queries his reply was, "Yes" Then they asked him, if he could read; and if he would read a chapter in the Bible to them? He did so. They then asked him, if he could *pray*? He replied that, "he sometimes *tried* to pray."

They said to him, “then perhaps you will *try* to pray with us *now*.” Yes (he said), I will try;” and so he engaged in prayer with them, to the Lord of all his mercies. As soon as he had done praying, one of the ladies said to him, “you shall not sleep in the *stable*, but you shall have a bed at my house.” When he arose in the morning, he had but sixpence left, which he gave to one of the servants in the house, and cast himself again entirely on the providence of his Lord and Master. Those ladies in the house, where Mr. Clark read and prayed, were almost all that made any profession of Religion in the whole place; and they worshipped at New Mill Baptist Meeting, under the Ministry of Mr. Clement.

Mr. Clark succeeded in obtaining employment at Tring; and on coming to his work, he soon met with some religious friends, one or two of whom knew him before. They invited him to go to Chesham, to hear Mr. Sleaf; which he did. And having engaged in prayer with the friends at their Prayer Meeting before public Service, when he had finished, Mr. Sleaf, who then stood by him, said to him, “You shall preach for me to day.” Mr. Clark replied, “I cannot.” “But you *shall* (said Mr. Sleaf), and I will give it out.” Which accordingly he did, after the Morning Service, that, “a friend, a navigator, would preach that evening.” Mr. Clark was very unwilling to engage in this service, and seemed as it were determined in his own mind to avoid it, by not staying the Evening Service at Chesham. But his two friends, who came along with him, held him like a prisoner, and would not let him go out of their sight, until they obtained his promise that he would stay. He preached in the evening from Col. iv. 2 --- “*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*” to a numerous auditory; many brethren from the other Dissenting Places of Worship in the town being there. This service of his, in which he was so loath to engage, was not in vain in the Lord; for *thirteen years after*, Mr. Clark received information that a person had come forward and joined the

Church, declaring that the Lord first met with her under that discourse.

The circumstance of his preaching at Chesham soon spread abroad; and the female friends at Ivinghoe, with whom he first read and prayed, having now heard that the man was *a Preacher of the Gospel*, as well as one that could *pray*; they laid claim to him, called him *their* Preacher, and were determined to send for him to come to *Ivinghoe*, to preach Christ and him crucified. This was acceded to very reluctantly by Mr. Clark, who had made it up in his own mind to preach no more; but the Lord had otherwise determined respecting him. The neighboring Ministers invited him to preach for them, and encouraged him to go forward in the work. Mr. Meacher also, of Ivinghoe, said, he wished the Gospel could be brought into that neighborhood; and that if Mr. Clark would preach in Ivinghoe and the surrounding villages, he would try to obtain houses, and license them for preaching in. Places were at length obtained at Ivinghoe, Pitstone, Cheddington, Horton, and Ivinghoe-Aston. In all these places Mr. Clark stately preached, and also continued working as a navigator upon the canal, about a year and nine months; when the above named gentleman took him into his employ, in which service he continued about four years. During this period, good had been done through the Word preached; and on Mr. Clark leaving his employ, the people were not willing to part with their Preacher, and the poor Preacher was not willing to part from his people; *they were dear to each other*. So, he got work again upon the canal; and the people opened a collection for him on Easter Sunday 1804, which they engaged to continue quarterly. Nine of them also said, that they saw Baptism to be their duty to attend unto; and wished Mr. Clark to baptize them; which he did on Lord's Day July 22, 1804, at New Mill Meeting House, near Tring. "Feeling it incumbent upon us (he writes) to walk in *all* the ordinances of God, we desired to be formed into a Church." Mr. Clark was invited to take the Pastoral charge over them.

Oh the 13th of November, 1804, the Church was formed, and Mr. Clark ordained over them as their Pastor. The following Ministers engaged in the solemn service, *viz.* Mr. Clement of New Mill, Mr. Sleaf of Chesham, Mr. Morris of Dunstable, Mr. Blundell of Luton, Mr. Wake of Leighton, and Mr. Perkins of Amersham. The Worship was conducted in the dwelling house of Mr. George Griffin of Ivinghoe; who at his own expense provided for the Ministers. Mr. G. yet lives, a member and deacon in the Church at New Mill: he cannot be known; and not be loved and esteemed, by all who love Christ.

“On March 9, 1813, we held a Meeting, to conclude whether we *could* build a Meeting House at Ivinghoe. When our neighbors came forward and subscribed £50. 2s. 6d. And 50 persons entered into a club, to pay a penny a week till the building was paid for.” — “May 3, 1813—The dwelling house of William Watts of Ivinghoe, with the garden, and a piece of orchard: on which to build a Meeting House, and have a Burying Ground for the use of the particular Baptist Church at Ivinghoe, was purchased by a committee, for £300.”

Extract from the Church Book.

The Meeting House was immediately and most expeditiously built; for it was opened for worship on July 21st, 1813. Extract— “The Chapel cleared from debt, October 1825.”

The work on the navigation being finished, and as the Church and congregation at Ivinghoe continued *very poor* generally; so, Mr. Clark’s income being always *very* small from his people, and his family large and increasing, he was obliged to look out for work again in his *weaving* business, which he obtained at Tring. But this being coarse work and the

wages low, but little help could be obtained by it; so that he was often much straitened in his temporal circumstances. About this time, he had contracted a *small* debt with two persons at Ivinghoe, who were no friends to the Religion of Jesus. They laid a plan to put both the sums together, and thus to make it sufficient to cast him into prison. This was a great trial to him; he felt for the cause of Christ, and for his family. And the enemies of Religion said that, “When they had sent *him* to jail, they should get rid of the Dissenters, *Parson* and *all*, together.” These things lay heavy on his mind, and caused him to pour out his soul to God in earnest prayer. On the Lord’s Day previous to the day fixed by them to put the business into an attorney’s hands, he went into the field, and under the hedge wrestled hard with his God for deliverance; and then went and preached (as *he* thought) the *last* Lord’s Day he should be permitted, to the few despised people that seemed inclined to hear him: but the God of all Grace and Mercy over-ruled things *far* otherwise to his expectation. On Monday morning Mr. Clark arose first, and proceeded to provide the breakfast; and when *both* were at the table partaking of the same, Mrs. Clark said, “I think we shall be provided for *now*.” Mr. C. observed, “*why?*” “O (replied Mrs. C.), I have had *such* a dream since you went down stairs; I thought I saw a man coming down the Park with a *letter* in his hand [the Park was before Mr. C.’s house], and when he brought it, there was *money* in it.” “O nonsense,” says Mr. C. But surely when breakfast was over, as Mr. C. was sitting at his *loom* at work, he cast his eyes towards the window which looked into the Park, and sure enough he saw a man (the postmaster) coming down the Park with a letter in his hand. And when he came to the door he said, “Mr. Clark, I have brought you two letters; they came *yesterday*, but as I knew you was not at home, I did not bring them till this morning.” The postage was 2*s.* being both double letters; which small sum Mr. C. had not, at that time, as much in the house to pay. On opening the letters, there was £5. in one, and some pounds in the other. So that the

dear Man of God was delivered from this great trouble; for he had enough money sent to pay his creditors, and some to spare. Reader! remember *Him* who hath said, “Call upon *me* in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Psalm. 1. 15. When Mr. Clark paid the two persons their respective demands, they directly became his friends; and continued so until the day of their death: and one of them, there is great reason to hope, died triumphant in Jesus.

BUT Mr. Clark had many trials all his journey through life; and the dear man used to say, that, “he hoped the Lord would bless him with a contented mind, for troubles, trials, difficulties, and tribulations were left as *legacies* to the servants of the Lord.” This one thing is well known, to all that knew his manner of life, that he was of a meek and quiet spirit. As he *lived* the *life* of the righteous, so, he *died* his *death*.

He had for some time been in a weak and declining state of health; but calm and happy in his mind; looking to Jesus, fixed on the rock of ages, and truly experiencing that blessed support, which those *Truths* and *Doctrines* are calculated to afford, that, in the course of his Ministry, he had fearlessly and unequivocally proclaimed. His removal was expected by many, about the spring of the year; but it was the pleasure of the Lord to permit him to tarry a few weeks longer below, ere he called him to his glorious *rest* for ever!

On Lord’s Day morning, 14th August, he seemed not so well as he lately had been; nevertheless, he went into the *House of God*, and entered on his beloved work. Having read a portion of the Word, he engaged in prayer; and while *so* engaged, was taken with *excessive pain*, and prevented from proceeding. Being conveyed home, and to his bed, he suffered much through the day; deriving no benefit from medical aid. And so, continued

in the pains of death until 5 o'clock next day (Monday) afternoon, *when He fell asleep in Jesus*, August 15, 1831, in the seventieth year of his age; having been Pastor of the Church of Christ at Ivinghoe 27 years.

George Clark of Ivinghoe, was an honest man; he began, he continued, he ended, *well*. He was faithful unto death. He might, with truth, have used the language of Caleb, "*I wholly followed the Lord my God.*" Jos. xiv. 8. A plain Preacher; rude in speech, but not in knowledge; he spoke of Christ and him crucified, simply, scripturally, experimentally, and very affectionately; to a people, who, like their Pastor, were very poor, as concerns this world's goods, yet we trust, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. "*So the poor of the flock, that waited upon me, knew that it was the Word of the Lord.*" Zech. xi. 11. This good man was a sufferer *for* his unflinching, uncompromising attachment to the *old* truths, and *now* despised doctrines of Sovereign Grace. Because he could not swerve from the faith once delivered to the saints, he lost friends, he found enemies. Some much-needed pecuniary, resources were withdrawn; his scanty pittance, derived from a little coarse weaving, failed; his flock deeply commiserated; but alas! sheep and shepherd were alike low in the vale of poverty. If he had not *many* to feel for, and aid him, still it must not be said, not *any*: The Lord left not his servant totally bereft; his *bread* was given him, and his *water* sure to the end. And *now* he is quite well, and everlastingly provided for: The Lamb in the midst of the Throne is engaged in feeding him, in leading him to fountains of living waters; yea, his God is employed in wiping away all tears from his eyes. Rev. vii. 17. This honour have all his saints. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. *Amen*.

FINIS.