

The Sin of **Suicide** contrary to  
Nature.

A  
Plain DISCOURSE,

Occasioned by the late Perpetration  
Of *That* heinous Crime:  
*Viz.* on *January 7<sup>th</sup> 1767.*

Delivered (the Substance of it) on the  
Lord's-Day next following.  
*Viz.* on *January 11th.*

A N D  
Published for a Warning to Survivors;  
At the general Desire  
Of the *Hearers*:  
Unto whom it is *Dedicated.*

By Samuel Phillips, M. A.  
And *Pastor* of the South-Church in *Andover.*

Acts 16. 28. *Paul* cried---saying, *Do thyself no harm*  
2 Cor. 11.3. *I fear lest by any Means, as the Serpent*  
*beguiled Eve by his Subtilty, so your Minds should*  
*be corrupted.*----

1 Pet. 5. 9. *Whom resist steadfast in the Faith.*  
James 4 7. *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.*

*BOSTON:* Printed and Sold by KNEELAND and  
ADAMS, in MILK-STREET. MDCCLXVII.

# A Warning *against the Sin of* **Suicide.**

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EPHESIANS V. 29.

For, *no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but  
nourisheth and cherisheth it.*—

I PRESUME, my *Brethren*, I need not mention the sorrowful *Occasion*, of selecting this Portion of Scripture, for the Subject of my Discourse, this Day:—An Occasion quite new, as well as very *awful*; such as, I think, has not occurred among us, till now, since I came into this Place: \* And I pray God, that we may never see the like again!

The Words now read stand in a fair *Connexion* with the preceding, as appears by the *illative* Particle, *For*:—The Apostle is here exhorting to the faithful Discharge of relative Duties:—And particularly, that *Husbands* and *Wives* be very careful to perform the Duties, which *are* mutually incumbent each on other. And as to the *Husband*, the Apostle says, ver. 28. *So ought Men to love their Wives, as their own Bodies; He that loveth his Wife, loveth himself.* Then it follows, as in my *Text*; *For, no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.* Q. D. In like manner, ought Husbands to discover their Love to their Wives, by nourishing and cherishing them: For, the Wife being *made One* with her Husband, *that is*, in a civil and relative sense, therefore he Should love her, with as cordial and unfeigned Affection, as he loveth himself. And the Apostle here refers to the Words of *Adam*, when *Eve* was given to him for a meet help. Gen. 2. 24. *Therefore Shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and Shall cleave unto his Wife, and they shall be one*

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\* Which is now, almost the Space of *Fifty-seven years*.

*Flesh* ver. 31. of my Context. By which, “we are not to understand, that a Man’s Obligation to his other Relatives, as Father and Mother in particular, is wholly made void upon his Marriage; but only, that this Relation is to be *preferred* to all others; there being a *nearer Union* betwixt these two, than betwixt any others.”

But I am not, at this Time, about to discourse on the respective Duties of Husbands and Wives towards each other: But only on the Words *introduced* by the Apostle, as a *Medium, for the Illustration* of his Argument, and which is here laid down as an *incontestable* Proposition, viz. *That no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, &c.* Q. D. Whatever show or appearance of this, there may sometimes have been, yet, *no Man ever did, in Reality, hate his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.*

No *Man*, i. e. no one considered *as a Man*, or worthy the *Name* of a Man, or as answering to the proper *Definition of a Man*,\* *did ever yet hate his own Flesh*, or his own Body; nay, but he is so from hating, that *he nourisheth and cherisheth it*; being very desirous to have the Life of it prolonged.—So that we may make this Observation from the Words, viz.

That it is an unquestionable Truth, that *no Man, while in his right Senses, and so long as he retained the Reason and Understanding of a Man*, ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.

I suppose, I need to say but little for the Confirmation of the Doctrine; the *Improvement* of it is what I especially intend.—However, it is proper that something be offered in *Proof* of the Point.—Wherefore,

1st. The Truth of the Doctrine appears from the *Law of Self-preservation*, which is implanted in the *Nature* of Man, as well as of the

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\* Man is a *reasonable* Creature: Or, as some choose to say, He is a *religious* Creature, having in his *Nature*, some Sense, Belief and Dread of the *Deity*.—Now, *no such Man*, did ever yet hate his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.

Brutes.—This Law of Nature, implanted by *the God of Nature*, inclines and urges every Man, *while in his right Mind*, to endeavour, the lengthening out of his own Life, as also that he may enjoy the Comforts of Life. Nothing in the World is so near and dear to him as himself, and his own Life: And this is owing to his *Nature* and Constitution, and therefore *is transmitted* from Generation to Generation: So that, it is a Truth, although spoken by the Father of Lies, and of Liars (for Liars sometimes speak the Truth) *viz. Skin for Skin, yea, all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life.* Job 2. 4. Men commonly love themselves, more than their nearest Relatives, even, than their own Children, though they be pieces of themselves: And moreover, they will not only hazard their Estates, but give them away, to save their Lives.—And the true Reason of this, is, because Self-preservation is a powerful, commanding *Principle* in the Hearts of Men, so long as they retain their right Senses. And,

2dly. The Truth of the Doctrine further appears from our own *Observation* and *Experience*;—As for *instance*, how strenuously will Men *oppose* an adversary, when endeavouring to deprive them of their Lives. They will kill one, yea, many, if possible, rather than be killed themselves: Nor is it uncommon for Men to rejoice and glory in the Slaughter of those who seek their Lives.—And I may add, that when any are taken *Captive* by a barbarous Enemy, they (and also their friends) think nothing too much to be given for their Redemption, because they are daily in fear of losing their Lives.—And then, as to *the Means Of Supporting* the Body; because Men find, that the Body stands in need of Meat, Drink and Clothing, and cannot, in an ordinary Way, subsist without them; therefore they labour with all Diligence, and strain every Nerve, to procure the same; insomuch, that some Men need to be called upon to slack their Pace, and to be more moderate in the Pursuit of these Things: They don't consider the Danger of excessive and immoderate Labour, but use their Bodies, as though their Strength was the Strength of Stones, and as though they thought their Flesh was Brass; Alas! how many, while they labour for the Body, are, by their Imprudence, actually destroying it; and yet, all the while, they, toil *in Love* to the *Body* and to the Supports and Conveniences of the present Life—And furthermore, if a Limb be *bro-*

*ken* or if the Body be seized with some *Distemper*, which threatens it's Dissolution, then, the Physician or the *Surgeon* is called for in great haste, and no Cost shall be spared for the obtaining of Relief: And the true Reason of all this, is, because, commonly speaking, nothing is so dreaded by Mankind as Death; and therefore, *Death* is styled the *King of Terrors*. Job 18. 14. Yea, Death is so terrible to Nature, that many are *all their Life-time, subject unto Bondage through fear of Death*, Heb. 2. 15. The very sight of a *Corpse* is ghastly, *Abraham* therefore sought to bury the dead Body of his well-beloved *Sarah out of his Sight*. Gen. 23. 4. But when we see *our own* Souls about to leave the Body, how great Reluctance shall we then find?—Yea, our Saviour himself, when Death was approaching, prayed, saying, Mat. 26.39. *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me!* For, *as Man*, he could not but be averse to Suffering and Death: This shows, that He was touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, and that He was tempted as we are, *yet without Sin*; for, He referred himself entirely *to his Father's Will*—In short, so strict is the Union between Soul and Body, that whatever affects the Body, affects the Soul also: For, the Body is not only the Soul's intimate Friend, but even its House and Habitation; as also its Instrument, by which it doth its Business in the World; both natural and religious.

BUT probably, some will *object* and say, these are several Passages of *Scripture*, which seem to *contradict* what has been now advanced—As for *instance*; *Job* said, Chap. 10. 1. *My Soul is weary of my Life*—To which I *reply*, that this was owing to *a fit of Impatience*: And yet it should be remarked, that he did not intend, that he was weary of his Life *simply considered*; but only, that he was weary of such a Life of Pain and Trouble: So that, though he was weary of his Affliction, yet strictly speaking, not of his Life.—Again; it is also written in Prov. 8. ult. *All they that hate me, love Death*.—I *answer*, the meaning of this is, that they love Death *in its Causes*, i. e. they love that which will *end* in Death; and put that away from them which would *end* in Life.—Again, it is said in Heb. 11. 35. *Some were tortured, not accepting Deliverance*: And in like manner, we read in Rev. 12. 11. *They loved not their Lives unto the Death*.—I *reply*, this intends, that they would not accept Deliv-

erance *on the Terms proposed, viz.* to renounce the true Religion, and embrace a false one: Their Love to their own Lives was *overcome* by a stronger Affection to Christ, insomuch, that *in his Cause*, they could freely lay them down: And agreeably, the Apostle *Paul* said, Acts 20. 24. *I count not my Life dear to myself, so that I may finish my Course with Joy.* He was willing, not only to spend his Life in Labour, but also to lay it down in *Martyrdom*: And of the same mind were all the other holy *Martyrs*; for, though Life was sweet to them, yet they were determined to die for Christ, rather than to deny him, and actually did so; and therein complied with the Term of Discipleship, laid down by Christ, in Luk. 14. 26.—So that the Law of Self-preservation did bear *Rule* in them, until it was *over-ruled* by another and higher Law.

IF it be further said by way of *Objection*, that some Persons *make an higher account* of their *Honour*, than of their own *Lives*; namely, such Men who agree to decide their Controversy *by way of a Duel*.—I *reply* briefly, that both he who makes, and he that accepts the Challenge, are *infatuated*: So far from being in the *regular* Exercise of Reason, that their unbridled Appetites and Passions have the *Empire* over Reason and Conscience.—But then I shall add, that notwithstanding *Madness is in their Hearts*, yet, their *Love of Life* is in no measure diminished; for, doubtless, each one nourisheth in himself a fond Desire and *Hope*, that he shall vanquish and *Survive* his Antagonist.

ONCE more, it may perhaps seem very *inconsistent*, that *Self-preservation* should be a *Principle in Nature*, and yet some Persons actually destroy their own Lives, *for fear only of being reduced to Penury*.—I *reply*, that all those Persons (if there have been any such) were *too thoughtful* for the Body, and the Life that now is; and the *continued* Thoughtfulness and Anxiety of their Minds, arising partly from bodily Infirmities, and partly from Losses and Disappointments, was so very great and *perplexing*, as *in Conjunction* with the Suggestion of the busy Adversary, to *over-balance* the said Law of Self-preservation, and even all their intellectual Powers; and then, if God permits, they are led captive by that malicious Enemy of theirs, at his Will: And thus, *the Sorrow*

*of the World worketh Death.* 2 Cor. 7. 10.—But I hasten to that which I chiefly intend, *viz.* the

### IMPROVEMENT.

FIRST, We may here see the *Wisdom.*, and the *Kindness* of *God*, in *putting* a *Principle* of *Self-preservation*, in the *Nature* of *Man*.—This, certainly, ought to be acknowledged with all *thankfulness*, for, if *Men* were *Careless* of their own *Lives*, they would be void of any *Motive* to regular *Actions*: But now, they have *within themselves* a constant *Spur* to *Diligence* in some lawful *Calling*, that so, the *beloved Body* may be supported, and be continued in a *Capacity* for *Service*: And thus, not only *Individuals*, but the *Common-wealth* is upheld and preserved in due *Order*: Whereas, without this *Principle* in *Man's Nature*, all things would quickly go into *Confusion*.—True indeed, this *Law of Nature*, by reason of *Corruption* within, and of *Temptations* from without, is often *exceedingly perverted* (and the like may be said of every other *Talent*) for alas! how irregular and sinful is *Self-love* in the most of *Men*! For, *self* yea, *carnal self* is their *Idol*: They love to gratify their own *Lusts*; and are *Lovers* of *Pleasures*, more than *Lovers* either of *God* or *Man*: They make *Provision* for the *Flesh*, *that so*, they may fulfil the *Lusts* thereof: And this brings in a long *Train* of *Sins* and *Mischiefs*; as may be learned from 2 *Tim.* 3. begin.—And yet, if *Man* was *wholly destitute* of the principle of *Self-love*, and *Self-preservation*, this *World* would be in reality, no better than a larger *Bedlam*.—In a *Word*, it highly concerns us all to beg of *God*, that He would be pleased, to turn *Self-love* into a *right Channel*: That is, that He would, by his *Grace*, dispose and enable us to have and maintain a due *Regard* to our own *spiritual*, as well as temporal *Weal*: And that, for this *End*, “He would put his *Fear* in our *Hearts*; or, that we may be his *Workmanship*, created in *Christ Jesus*, unto good *Works*.”

SECONDLY, From what has been said, we also learn, that it becomes *each of us* to be very *thankful* to *God*, for his *continuing* to us, *our Reason* and understanding, and so, a *Desire* of our own *Preservation* in *Life*.— This is wholly owing to the divine *Goodness*: And a very great *Favour* it is; for, what *Pleasure* could we take in *Life*, if we were become

indifferent, whether we enjoy it, or not? But it would be still much more sad, if Life was become a Burden to us—*Job* acknowledged, not only, that God had granted him Life; but moreover, that by the divine Visitation, his *Spirit was preserved*. Chap. 10. 12. That is, God not only preserved his bodily Life, but also *continued* to him his Powers of *Reason*. For, God is the *Father of our Spirits*; and as He has endued us with intellectual Faculties, so we are indebted to Him, for *Power* to exercise and improve the same. And agreeably, when the Apostle *Paul* says, in Acts 17. 28. *In Him we live and move*—His meaning is, all our *Springs* of Motion and Action, both as we are *living* Creatures, and as we are *moral* Agents, are from God: And indeed, the regular Motion of the Mind depends, under God, very much on the good Constitution and *Health* of the *Body*; and therefore, the Disorder of the Mind, when it becomes *habitual*, is commonly owing to some Indisposition of Body: So then, when we acknowledge God, as the Health of our Countenances, we may not omit to praise Him also, for the Order and Vigour of our Minds.—You are sensible, *my Hearers*, that many Persons, of each Sex, have, in hope of finding Relief, been brought from other Towns, *into this Parish*, who were *disordered* in their intellectuals.—Which I now mention, *to excite us* unto *Thankfulness*, for the Enjoyment of our *own* Understanding for, what more lamentable Objects than those above-mentioned, can be presented *before us*? Surely, the loss of our *Reason* is to be dreaded and deprecated, much more than Poverty, or Pain, or any other bodily Calamity: Because, if *this* should be our unhappy Case, we shall then become a Burden, if not a Terror, both to ourselves and others; and consequently unfit for the Service both of God and Man.—You remember the Story of King *Nebuchadnezzar*, how he was punished for his Pride and Haughtiness: Deprived, not only of his Honour as a King, but even as a Man also; for he became a Brute in the Shape of a Man: *A Beast's Heart was given to him*, i. e. the inclination and Appetite of a Beast; and accordingly, his *Dwelling was with the Beasts of the Field, and he fed on Grass as the Oxen*. See Dan. 4th Chap.—And it is *alike easy* for the most High, to deprive any, yea, *all of us*, of this invaluable Talent, *viz.* the Reason and Understanding of Men, and to rank *us also* among the Beasts of the Field.—And O, that *we may not abuse our Reason*, to the



Indulgence of *Pride*, or of any *other Lust*, lest God be provoked to deprive us of it! But, on the other hand, let us be advised to use and improve it to the best Purposes, even to *provide for Eternity, now*, while we are in good bodily Health; and that *the rather*, because it is very uncertain, whether we shall, by a fit of Sickness, have previous *Notice given to us*, of our Dissolution: And if *this* shall be our Case, yet, how common is it for Persons, at such a Time, to be seized with a *Delirium*, and thereby rendered incapable of serious Reflection, and sincere Repentance and of everything, that has a Tendency to promote the Welfare of our never-dying Souls.—*Today, therefore, if you will hear his voice, harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation.* Heb. 3. 7, 8.

THIRDLY, We may further infer from what has been said, that commonly speaking, such Persons who *offer Violence to their own Lives, have not at that time, the due Exercise of their Reason*—They are destitute of natural Affection; have lost, not only, that Love which they once had to their Relatives and other Friends, but even *to themselves* also: And in this respect, they degrade themselves, even below the Rank of the *Beasts* that perish: For, it is *natural to these*, in their several Kinds, to protect both themselves and their Young, as much as lays in their Power.

AND now, it may not be thought amiss to *digress* so far as to say something here of the Folly and *Madness of all willful Sinners.* Eccl. 9. 3. *Madness is in their Heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*—You may justly look upon it, as an Evidence of grievous Madness, for a Person to *hang* or *drown* himself; and is it not an high Degree of Madness, for Persons, by their shameful *Intemperance*, or *any other Irregularities* of Life, to beget and nourish such *Diseases* in the Body, and quite contrary to all Advice, as will prove *the Cause* of its *Overthrow*; although not so suddenly, yet *as certainly*, as though it was effected by some bloody Weapon?—But then, their Folly and *Madness* appears, not only in destroying their own Health and Lives, but moreover in despising and even *destroying their own Souls*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.—Yea the Reason why the *more sober part* of Mankind are so

*negligent* of their *Souls*, is, because they *don't improve* the Understanding which God has given them, as they ought, nor as they might: Although they know better, yet instead of *minding the One thing needful*, they *postpone* the same to their secular Concerns, and use Religion as a thing only by the Bye: And *these*, though *not scandalous as others*, yet are in the Way to utter Ruin. Mat. 5. 20. *Except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*—Ah! 'tis matter of the deepest Lamentation, that so large a Number of *each Sort* remain in a spiritual *Lethargy*; and though they are often advertised of their Danger, yet persist in their evil Way.—O, that we may all *show ourselves Men*, by walking up to that Light which God is giving to us! For, *otherwise*, we may be said to *destroy ourselves*, and our Blood will be on our own Heads.—But I must hasten on to say,

FOURTHLY, From what we have heard, let us be advised to be *very cautious*, lest we give just Occasion unto any to say *concerning us*, that We are so *unnatural*, as to *hate*, or even to *neglect, our own Bodies*.—Although the *Soul* demands and deserves our *first* and principal Care and Concern, as was just now observed, yet the *Body* may *not be disregarded*.—Indeed, it must be granted, that *while* we are making Provision for the Welfare of the Soul, we are also acting a wise part, in behalf of the *Body*, because, as to the *true Believer*, his whole Man, “the *Body* as well as the Soul, is united to Christ, and partakes in the Benefits of his Purchase: 'Tis bought with the same Price, sanctified by the same holy Spirit, interested in the same Promises, and designed for the same Glory:” So that, although it must *sleep* for a Season in the *Dust*, yet, shall be *raised again*, and *be fashioned* in some Degree, or, according to its Measure, *like to the Saviour's glorious Body*: And in Conjunction with the Soul, shall partake in the Felicity of the heavenly Paradise.—But notwithstanding this, yet, we may not take upon us, like *Hermits*, to retire from the World and devote ourselves to religious *Solitude*; but must consider the *Body*, as consisting of Flesh and Blood, etc. and provide for it accordingly: Our *heavenly Father knoweth that we have need if all these things*; these *necessary* things, Food and Raiment; and He allows us

Time, and has also enjoined it upon us, as our Duty, by Diligence in our Calling, and an humble Dependence on his Blessing, to provide for the Body.—Self-preservation (I say) is enjoined by the Law of Nature, and of Scripture too; both of which are the Law of God: And therefore, the Apostle fitly styles such as were idle, *disorderly* Persons; and also gave in Commandment, *that if any would not work, neither should he eat* 2 Thess. 3. 10, 11.—In a Word, all such who take not a due Care to *provide for themselves, and for their Families*; but indulge themselves in sauntering from House to House, *have denied the Faith, and are worse than Infidels.* 1 Tim. 5. 8.

BUT to come at that which I further intend, and which *the late sorrowful Event* obliges me, to take a more *special* Notice of, *namely*, seeing it is a Sin (only) to *neglect* to make suitable Provision for the Body, it is easy to infer and conclude, that it is a *very heinous transgression, actually to destroy the Life of it.*—’Tis Sin, in the sight of *God*, for any in a Passion, to *wish* for Death, or even to entertain and *indulge* in ourselves, any *Thought* relating to *Self-Murder*: For, such a Thought ought to be rejected *immediately*, and with the *utmost Detestation*, lest it spread, *like the Cloud* (1 Kings 18. 44, 45.) which appeared at the first, no larger than a Man’s hand, but in a little Time, blackened the whole Heaven.—Which leads me to say, that it is still *more* heinous, when Persons begin to *purpose*, or intend to do the thing; and then, to devise or *contrive* in what Way and Manner, and in what particular Place, they had best to effect it.—But then, to proceed *actually to perpetrate* the Crime is heinous and horrible in the *highest* Degree; the most barbarous and inhuman of all bodily Murders.

BUT that we may clearly discern the *horrid Evil* of this Sin, I shall offer a few things to Consideration, from those Topics, which are commonly made use Of.— Particularly,

1st. ’TIS a Sin “directly *contrary* to the Law of *Self-preservation*,” which, as I said before, is the Law of God: For, *God put into Man*, in his *original* Constitution, an Inclination to love Life; and a Desire to preserve it; and therefore it is unnatural, and consequently sinful, for

any to go about to destroy it.

2dly. 'TIS also repugnant to *the written* and revealed Will of God; the *Sixth* Commandment in the moral Law, you know, is, *Thou shalt not kill*. And this, as *our Catechism* well expresses it, *forbids the taking away of our own Life, or the Life of our Neighbour unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto*. Now, here, the glorious Law-giver, who has strictly forbidden the taking away the Life of our Neighbour *unjustly*, has also forbidden, *on any Consideration whatever*, the taking away of *our own Life*: For, though we are commanded to love our Neighbour *as ourselves*, yet *not more* than ourselves; And therefore, if we may not kill him, then surely we may not kill ourselves. And further,

3dly. 'TIS not only a practical Rebellion against the Commandment, “but moreover against the *Government, of God*.” 'Tis a taking of his Work into our own Hands; when, we are not our own, but *His*; and ought to be willing to be at his Disposal in the World, and not go about to dispose of our Lives at our own Pleasure.—It is worthy to be remembered, that the most High *retains his Propriety* in his Creatures; *all Souls*, says He, *are mine*. Ezek. 18. 4. *The Earth is the Lord's and the Fullness thereof; the World and they that dwell therein*. Ps. 24. 1—In short, He that made us is most *rightfully* the Lord of our Lives, and it is most fit that our Times should be in His Hands, and not in our own: How dare any then, to *assume* to themselves his *Prerogative*, so as to cut off their own Lives? Surely, so to do, is no less than a despising of his Authority and Dominion, and practically to say, We are our own Lords, and will not be controlled, no, not by God Himself; which is the very Spirit and Language of the *Devil* and his Angels.

4thly. THIS Sin carries in it, not only undutifulness to God, and a trampling on his Authority and Government; “but moreover, *the blackest Ingratitude*.” 'Tis a vile *abuse* of the *Goodness* and *Kindness* of God towards Man: For, Life is certainly a great Favour, such as we ought to be very thankful for, unto Him, who vouchsafes the same unto us, who is no other but the most High; and therefore, one of his Titles is, that He is *the Preserver of Men* —Nor indeed, may any worldly Enjoyment be

preferred before it. Though *the loving kindness of God is better than Life*, even in its best Estate, yet no earthly Accommodations may be compared with it. *All that a Man hath will he give for his Life*: Now, *the greater any Kindness is, the more heinous is their Sin*, who cast *Contempt* upon it: And this is what *they* are most flagrantly guilty of, who offer Violence to their own Lives.—Moreover,

5thly. THE Heinousness of this Sin appears, in that it implies in it, “the greatest *Disrespect* and *unkindness* towards Our *Relatives*, and even to the *whole community*, or Society, onto which We belong.”—No man is born for himself alone, but also for the Benefit of the Family, and of the Community, of which he is a Member; and unto which he is, or ought to be, in some Degree serviceable.—But now, by destroying his own Life, he wholly deprives both the Family and Commonwealth of that Benefit.—And I may add, that because hereby an Injury is offered to human Society, and a Contempt cast on the Law, both of God and Man, therefore civil Governments, in Christian Countries, *disallow a decent Burial unto such*: And that, not only as a public Testimony of their Resentment of the Crime, but moreover, as *a Warning* to Survivors, that no other may, in like manner, offend.

6thly. THIS Sin, further appears to be very heinous, in that, such who become guilty of it, render themselves wholly *incapable* of advancing the declarative *Glory of God* in the World; and consequently *deprive themselves* of the *opportunity to be laying up their Treasure in Heaven*.—Together with the Day of Life, they put an End also to the Day of Grace; for, *there is no Work nor Device, Wisdom or Knowledge in the Grave*.—What do we live for, but to serve and honour our Lord and Master here in the World; and in so doing, prepare for his Coming? What Madness is it then, for any, with their own Hands, *to put an End to the space*, which God is giving them wherein to repent, and to work out their own Salvation. We, who hear the Gospel-call & Invitation, are distinguishingly favored, and as our Saviour expresses it, are *exalted to Heaven*: And what, shall any such make so light of *this* their Privilege, as to exclude themselves *from the Sanctuary of God*, and no more hear

the joyful Sound, *viz.* by putting a final Period to their own Lives? O, how ungraceful are they to their best Friend and Benefactor, and how unkind and even barbarous to themselves! Without Fear, and as void of Wit. Again,

*7thly.* THE heinous Nature of this Sin may be further they argued from the Consideration, that it is, in the *highest* Degree, *gratifying unto Satan*.—He is called *the Evil one*, and the *Devil*, because he takes Delight in *rebelling* against God; and in *soliciting* the Children of Men so to do. Being abandoned by God, for his first act of Rebellion, he became, an avowed Enemy unto God, and to all that is good.—And now, seeing he delights *only* in *Sin* and *Mischief*, we may safely infer, that it is most highly pleasing to him, when he can prevail with any Person, to destroy his own Life; for, *this* fatal Act is *big* with *both* these kinds of Evil: And accordingly, he is said to be, not only a Liar, but a *Murderer from the Beginning*: Not only *at the Beginning*, by tempting our first Parents to eat the forbidden fruit and truly *that* very Sin brought Death into the World; for *by one Man, Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all*: And therefore *Satan* was, in effect, the Murderer of all Mankind.—But moreover, he is a Murderer *from the Beginning*, i. e. as he was, so *he continues* to be the Murderer of Mankind. Although he knows, that all the Children of Men are under the *Sentence* of Death, yet, is not content therewith; and therefore seeks to *hasten on* the Dissolution of one and another, and if possible, by the most *unnatural* Means; hoping thereby, to destroy both Body and Soul, at one Blow: And agreeably, he is styled our *Adversary*, and is said *to walk about, seeking whom he may devour*: And in this respect, he is compared to a *roaring Lion*, hungry, strong and cruel. 1 Pet. 5. 8. His whole Design is to prey upon, and *devour* the Children of Men; and is therefore *restless* in his malicious Endeavours.—Now, I say, seeing this apostate Spirit, this first Rebel, is *most highly gratified*, when he can prevail with any Person, to destroy his own Life; we may from thence conclude, that the Sin is very heinous: For, the *greater* the *Sin* is, *the more* is *he delighted* at the *Commission* of it.—Once more,

*Sixthly.* THIS Sin further appears to be highly aggravated, in that they who are guilty of it, “expose themselves to *the Hazard of eternal Damnation*”—But pray, don’t mistake me; for, I don’t pretend that it appertains to me, or to any other Man, or Number of Men, absolutely to determine the future and everlasting State of *those*, or of any other Persons: This is the sole *Prerogative* of Him, who is appointed to be the *Judge* of both the quick and dead:—But yet, give me leave to say, here, that according to the Light which we receive from the tenor of the holy Scriptures, their Case seems to be *extremely hazardous*: For, as it appears to us, they expire, not only in the Neglect of Repentance towards God, and of Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; but moreover, in this actual Violation of that express Command of God, in Exod. 20. 3. *Thou shalt not kill*. And thereby they practically put Contempt on the Authority and Government of God, as also despise his Goodness, in granting them Life, and a space to repent in, as was before shown.—And therefore, however *Satan*, by his sly and artful Influence on the *Imagination*, may delude and beguile them, with a *pleasing Dream* of their passing into a much better State than the present; yet, they cannot (at their *Exit*) be reasonably supposed, to have any just Ground to expect or hope to escape the second Death, but abundant Reason to fear the reverse. And agreeably, we read in 1 Joh. 3. 15. *Ye know, that no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him*. That is, a Murderer has not *the Principle* of eternal Life abiding in him.—And seeing this is the Case of him, who, *in his Heart*, destroys his Brother, what Reason has the Man who designedly and actually destroys his own Life, to imagine, that he has a *living* or an holy Principle within himself? For surely, he ought to set as high a Value on his own Life, as on the Life of his Brother: For, although we are commanded to love our Neighbour as ourselves, yet, not more than ourselves, as was before observed.

So then, although I am persuaded, that when Persons are betrayed into the said unnatural Crime, they are, by one Means or other, generally disordered in Mind, yet, I dare not lend abroad any thing which shall bare even the remotest Tendency to abate the Horror, with which we ought to view *every Attempt* of this Nature: For, if any thing be offered

to the Public, tending, in the least Measure, to extenuate the Guilt of this Enormity, though ever so cautiously expressed, there may be great Danger, that in time to come, some Persons in extreme Dejection of Mind, will improve the same to their own Wounding: Or, that they will, upon pursuing the same, be, by reason thereof, *the more easily* induced by the busy and subtle Adversary, to give way to his Temptation.—Though nothing can be said that will be to the future Advantage of the dead, for they are gone to their long home; yet all possible Care should be taken, and the utmost Caution used, in behalf of the *living*, to prevent their being taken in the Snare of the Devil.

BUT then, I shall add that although the said *Crime* should be described in all its awful and terrible Consequences, that so, every Thought which leads to it, may be rejected immediately, and with the greatest Abhorrence, at being unnatural, and *diabolical*; and moreover, though in speaking of the Crime, a Reference is unavoidably had to the Criminals *in general*: Yet, whenever mention is made of this, and the other *particular Persons*, who have been, in this manner, *overcome of Evil*, it seems most safe, and best becoming a Christian, to be *silent* with respect to their fixed and *everlasting* State, and to be content *to leave them to their Judge*; who, we are sure, will never do the least Wrong to any of his Creatures.—And let us all learn to look at home, and to examine our own State, whether *we* be, as yet, passed from Death to Life: 'Tis truly a dark Symptom on People, when they indulge themselves (which alas! is too common) in censuring and *condemning* others; and yet, can't but know, that themselves are very guilty in some other respects. Jer. 8. 6. *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, what have I done? Entry one turned into his Course, as the Horse refuseth into the Battle.*—But this may suffice for the *fourth* Use.—To proceed,

FIFTHLY, Seeing the said Crime is unnatural and very heinous, we may infer, that those *Pleas* or *Excuses*, which are advanced by any Persons in favour of it, are quite vain and *groundless*.

HERE I Shall make mention of three or four, which have occurred,



and endeavour to show the *Vanity of* them. For *instance*,

1st. SOME, it seems, plead, “that there are *Examples* upon Record, *in the holy Scriptures*, of several Persons, who destroyed their own Lives,” namely, King *Saul*, who fell on his own Sword: And *Zimri*, who seeing himself in eminent Hazard of being taken, and put to Death by *Omri*, he went into the Palace of the King’s house, and burned the Kings house over him with fire, & died. 1 Kin. 16. 18.—And *Ahithophel*, who hanged himself.—And *Judas*, who having *strangled himself*, he *fell headlong*, and all his *Bowels gushed out*. Acts i . 18.

To this I *reply*; we may not imagine, that these Examples are left on Record of *the Scriptures*, for our Direction, or that we may imitate them: Nay, but for a *Warning* to all who shall read them, that we may not run into their Transgressions, or any other like them, and so perish, as they did.—Examples are to be followed so far as they are good, but no further: For, we ought to be governed by the *Precepts* of God’s Word, and not by the Examples therein recorded; but only where those Examples *quadrate* with the Precepts.—And it seems the more strange that any should *plead these* Examples, as though they were worthy of Imitation, seeing they were all of them, *ungodly* Men; as appears from the Character given of them, in *the Scriptures*. ’Nor do I remember, that we have an *in scripture*, of more than *One*, who may come under the Denomination of a *good Man*, that can be said to put an end to his Life, namely, *Samson* —But then, as to him, it may be said, (1.) That his next or *immediate* Design was *not* to destroy himself, but his inveterate Enemies: And as he was a public Person, being *Judge* in Israel, he had a just *Right* to endeavour the Destruction of his own, and the People’s Oppressors: But this, *having lost his Eyes*, he had no Prospect of effecting, unless he was willing to share with them, and to lose his own Life in the Overthrow, and therefore, *Hero*, or *Martyr-like*, rather than let slip so fair an Opportunity, to testify his Loyalty to the Most High, and Love to his Country, he readily *resigned* his Life, and his All, *to the Will of God*. And accordingly (2.) He *prayed*, that God would not only remember him, and strengthen him to do Execution on his Enemies; but moreover, that he

*might die with them; i. e. he desired, with Submission to the Will of God, that he might, at that Time, and in that Manner, finish his Course. And (3.) God fulfilled his Request; for, it was a Prayer of Faith, and of an ardent Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Deliverance of his People: As God had put in his Heart, to undertake the pulling down of the House, so likewise disposed him freely to resign his own Life, and to pray as aforesaid:—It appears evident to me, that for the Messiah's sake, God pardoned Samson's amorous Follies, and all his other Transgressions, and received him into his Favour: And in Token thereof, He gave a gracious answer to each of his Petitions.—Once more (4.) It is acknowledged by all, that Samson was an eminent Type of Christ, in that, he willingly resigned his own Life for the Benefit of Israel, as Christ did his Life in behalf of his People; And as Samson pulled down (as it is justly supposed) the Temple of Dagon, and at the same Time, and in the very same Act, died himself; so Christ has, in effect, pulled down the Devil's Kingdom, and through his own Dealt, has destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil. Heb. 2. 14.—Our Saviour, in his Lifetime cast many Devils out of those who were possessed: But at his Death, He obtained a most glorious Victory over all the Powers of Darkness; as it is said concerning Samson, Judg. 16. 30. That the dead which he slew at his Death, were more than they, which he slew in his Life.—Upon the whole, it is abusive and slanderous for any, to indict Samson, as properly a Felo de fe, or, as obstinately guilty of Self-Murder; and therefore this Example can be of no avail.*

AND if any should be so weak, or rather wicked, to make mention of our Saviour himself, in justification of any Persons taking away their own Lives, *pleading*, that He said, John 10. 15, 18. *I lay down my Life for the Sheep:—No Man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself, &c.*

I REPLY; that our Saviour's Design, in those Words, is only to teach us, that He was perfectly free and *voluntary* in his Sufferings and Death: And truly, if He had not been so, his offering would have been of no Value. None could demand his Life of Him in a due Course of Law; nor

could any extort it from Him by *Force*: He laid it down of *Himself*, or, of his own *free Will*, and therefore He said, *Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God*.—But now, also He freely surrendered himself, yet, He did *not actually destroy* his own Life, no; but this was done by the *Jews*, in Conjunction With the *Romans*; as all the *Evangelists* testify.

THUS, having considered the Plea taken from *Example*; I shall proceed to speak of the remaining Excuses, relating to the said Crime:—Wherefore,

2dly. SOME, “because they are quite *weary* of the *Fatigues* or *Toils*, and other the many *Troubles* and *Sorrows* of this World, therefore *hope* they may be *excused*, if by some Means, they can *wholly set themselves at Liberty*.”—To which I *reply*, That these *Troubles* and *Sorrows* can *never justify* any in the said Act of *Suicide* or *Self-Murder*; and the Reason of it is, our Maker and Sovereign has made it to be the Duty of us all, to glorify Him by a *patient Continuance in well-doing*: And our Saviour has taught us, that if we would be *his disciples*, we must *deny ourselves, take up the Cross, and follow him*. Matt. 16. 24. Observe here, our Duty is to *deny ourselves*, not murder ourselves; no, but *take up the Cross*; and not go out of the Way Of Duty, either to meet, or to miss it.—It most certainly argues an high Degree, either of *Pride*, or of *Impatience*, or of both, for any (not wholly bereaved of Reason) to destroy their own Lives, *because of that Condition* of Life, which the Judge of all the Earth has, in his all-governing Providence, ordered out onto them: Our Minds ought to be brought to our Condition; and we may not murder against God, nor offer Violence to ourselves, because of the Difficulties which attend us.—If our Circumstances be not so easy and comfortable, as we would have them to be; yet, they are such, as God will have them to be: And if we, as in Duty bound, shall resign ourselves to his Pleasure and Wisdom, we shall then be in the way to be supported under all our *Troubles*, and also to have them sanctified to us; and then they will prove to be *Mercies*; for many have had Reason to bless God for the *Benefit* received by *Affliction*.—And I shall add, that it seems

very strange, that any should entertain *a thought* of dispatching their own Lives, for the sake of getting out of the reach of the Troubles and Sorrows of this World: For, what can such Persons expect, but only *to take a Leap*, from one Fire to another; and from a lesser, to one unspeakably greater? For, while they are influenced by a selfish and mean Principle, their unhumbled Hearts have also, at the same Time, rising up against the Providence and Government of God.— Let me *forewarn my* Hearers, that it is *one of the Wiles of Satan*, viz. to suggest, that it is much better for a Person, to put an End to his Days, than to live any longer in the midst of so great Vexation and Sorrow; and alas! many have been overcome hereby. But let us bear in mind, that while our Adversary seeks to aggravate our Troubles, and to perplex our Minds about them, much more than otherwise they would be; he, at the same time, is industrious *to keep out of our View*, the much greater Sorrows of the second Death: The god of this World *blinds the Minds* of all those, who are taken in this Snare:—Wherefore, as you have a Value for your own Souls, be intreated to preserve in yourselves, a *steady Belief* of the Scripture-Doctrine of a *future State* of Retribution, viz. both of Rewards and Punishments: In the One, *the Righteous shall eat of the Fruit of their Doings*, and in the other, *the Wicked shall have the Reward of their Hands given to them*. Isa. 3. 10, 11.—Believe me, if you shall *discredit*, or if you only begin to *entertain a Doubt* in your own Minds, respecting the Truth of *that* Doctrine, you will be in very great Danger of being, in a short Time, *taken captive by your Enemy, at his Will*.—The very *first Step*, which the *old Serpent* took to seduce our Mother Eve, was, to lead her to *discredit* the Truth of the Threatening, saying, *Ye shall not surely die*: And he observes the *same Method* still, with respect to *her Children*.— So then, let us adhere closely to the *Voice of God*, contained in *the Scriptures*, as our Saviour, by his own Example, has taught us to do. Matt. 4th Chap.—’Tis an old Observation, and a very true one, “That if we once suppose it possible, that there may be Falsehood or Fallacy in any Part of God’s Word, a Door is thereby opened to down-right Infidelity—But I may not enlarge;—Wherefore,

3dly. SOME, it seems, have pleaded for the *Lawfulness* of Persons

putting an End to their own Lives when thereby, “they may *avoid a more cruel kind of Death*, from the Hands of others.”—But I *reply*, that neither will *this* excuse any Man: For, it is a Scripture-Maxim, *not to do Evil, that Good may come of it*. Rom. 3. 8. Now, it ought to be remembered that the *Act of Self-Murder* is prohibited *absolutely* or without any Toleration or Exception; and therefore we may not be our own Judges and Executioners, under the Pretence of a more easy, and a less public kind of Death.—If we have committed some Crime worthy of Death, then it becomes us to *yield* ourselves up to Justice: And if we suffer, or are in Danger of suffering *unjustly* or wrongfully, we ought to commit our Cause to the Judge of all the Earth, and leave it with Him, to do us Justice, in his own Way and Time, when we cannot, in a *lawful* Manner, obtain Redress from Men:—Nor may we doubt, if we suitably commit our Way to Him, and cast our Burden on Him, but that He will, sooner or later, *bring forth our Righteousness as the Light, and our judgment as the Noon-day*. Psal. 37. 5, 6.—We read in Acts 16. 27. That the *Jailor*, in his Fright, drew his Sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing, the Prisoners were fled: And his *Design* herein was *to prevent a more terrible kind of Death*, which he was sensible, he was liable unto, for letting the Prisoners escape: But *Paul* prevented him ver. 28. *he cried with a loud Voice, saying, do thyself no Harm, for we are all here*. Q. D. Do not sin against thine own Body: Be not thus cruel to that Flesh, which you ought to nourish and cherish. And agreeably, the *same* Apostle teacheth all of us, in the Words of my *Text*.—Once more,

*4thly*. SOME, it seems, have been inclined to think, whether it would not be much better for them, to put an End to Life, than to live longer, “because they find, that *they sin every Day*, and so are continually increasing their own Guilt, and at the same time, are doing Dishonour to the Name of God—To which I *reply*, that although this may appear more plausible than those before-mentioned, yet, neither can *this* justify any Person in the said foul and unnatural Act: For as was observed above, it is forbidden *absolutely*: That is, there is no Toleration or Liberty granted or allowed *to any Person, under any Pretence whatever*, to do this evil Deed.—If we consider the *Felo de fe* as a *bad* Man, then, by destroying

his own Life, he actually puts an End to his Day of Grace, and so puts himself out of the Reach of Mercy: For Mercy itself will not save us in any other Way, but that only which is propounded, and established in the Gospel, namely, the Way of Repentance towards God, and of Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ: And therefore the said *Murderer* may truly be said to destroy his own at well as his Body.—And I may proceed to say, that if he has *been in Reputation* for a good Man; yet, now there is Reason to fear,—because he has unwarrantably deprived himself of any further Opportunity to serve and glorify God *in that way* and manner, which he cannot do in Heaven: Instead of improving his Life to maintain a spiritual Warfare, and to serve his Generation according to the Will of God, he, by the said *Enormity*, greatly dishonors God, and highly gratified his Adversary, as also leaves a mark of Infamy on his own Name, as a Man, and on his Character as a Christian, *viz.* by reason of having quitted the Post or Station, which, God, in his Providence, had placed him; and that (as I said before) in an unwarrantable manner; for even at the very *Time of his exit*, and in the very *Method*, of effecting his Dissolution, he becomes guilty of an heinous Transgression: So that while he *pretends* to be weary of Sin, and to long to be rid of it, he runs *further* into the *Commission* thereof.—But as I said before, we must be content to leave him to the *Pleasure* of his Judge.

My *Friends*, if your malicious Adversary shall ever tempt any of you, to the said horrible Crime of *Suicide*; and shall, at the same time, *insinuate*, that *your Aim and End is exactly right and good*, provided, your Desire is, that you may be wholly and forever delivered from that abominable thing (*Sin*) which the Soul of God hateth; and *therefore*, you shall *certainly find Favour with Him*.—If this (I say) shall, in time to come, be your Case, *beware* lest you be deceived and ensnared by the said plausible Insinuation; and therefore, let this true and weighty *Maxim* have a constant abode in your Minds, *viz.* that *a good End can never justify an evil Action*, in order to attain that End.—I insist upon it, that you never listen to a Temptation, *to do evil that good may come*: And I urge this the rather, because I look on *this* as *the most dangerous* of Satan's Devices, I mean with respect to *such* Persons who are *soberly dis-*

*posed.*

IN a Word, one willful Transgression, merits eternal Damnation; and therefore let us shun the very Appearance of, and the least Approach unto it;—But let us all learn to be very thankful for life, and to improve with Care and Diligence, all our Abilities and Opportunities, so as that, by the Grace of God, we may *keep under our bodies, and bring them into Subjection*, namely, by crucifying our corrupt Affections & Lusts: And not only die unto Sin, but also live unto Righteousness.—But more of this under the next use, *viz.*

SIXTHLY, and lastly, Seeing it is unnatural and sinful for any Person to cut short his Life, let us be advised carefully to *avoid all Occasion* of, and whatever *has a Tendency* to lead us, thereunto. I shall instance here, in a few Particulars, by way of *Direction*:— As,

DIRECT, 1st. Beware of *expressing*, and even of *cherishing* in your own Breasts, *any bad Wishes*.—Some Persons, as I have been informed, have given so much the Loose to their Tongues, as to *wish they may die*, or, that they may *never speak a Word more*, and the like, if what they affirmed, be not the Truth; and yet, by what afterwards appeared, 'tis evident, that themselves *knew it* to be a Falsehood: —If so, how abominable is this!—And now, as to such Persons, it is a Wonder of Mercy, that the God of their Lives did not strike them dead on the Spot, in token of his Wrath and Vengeance; not only for their wronging the Truth, but moreover, because of their *appealing* to Him, *in whose Hand their Breath is*, for the Confirmation of their *known* Falsehood.—But although their Lives be spared to them for the present, yet they may justly expect to be followed with a Curse, on their Names, or Estates, or both! And if not given up to the Will of their Adversary, and *left to destroy their own Lives, which they have made so very light of*; yet, to die an uncommon kind of Death—Sin and Punishment lay at their Door, and will find them out sooner or later, whenever they go: For, it is written in Prov. 28. 13. *He that covereth his Sins, shall not prosper.* And more especially, such who cover them with a *Lie*, and adjoin *in Imprecation*, or the wishing of a Curse to themselves, if they speak falsely: Doubtless, *their own*

*Tongues*, that is, the Sins *thereof*, shall fall upon them, and devour them, unless a seasonable and sincere Repentance shall prevent it.—And if there be any such Person or Persons *in this assembly*. I solemnly exhort and beseech you, to go and humble yourselves; and in the Way prescribed in the Gospel, *agree* with Him, whom you have made to be your Adversary; and do it *quickly*, lest He deliver you up to the Executioners of his Justice; and then, all Liberty for *Bail* will be at an End, Mat. 5. 25, 26.—And let me further say, if you have injured or offended any of your *Neighbours* by your evil Conduct, whether by Word or Deed, delay not to give *christian* Satisfaction: For, this will be not only to the Honour of God and his holy Religion, but moreover to your own Credit and Reputation.—It argues Ignorance or Pride, or both, for People to be so averse, as commonly they are, to confess their Faults one to another. As Sin is a Reproach and Disgrace to any Person or People; so when a Man hath by Sin offended, he can't do *himself* a greater Honour, than to make an humble Confession, agreeable to the Nature and Degree of his Offence, and then, to lead a new Life. James 5. 16. *Confess your Faults one to another.* Prov. 28. 13. *He that confesseth and forsaketh, shall find Mercy.*—But to return.

I SHALL just add, that all such who are of so *unbridled a Tongue*, as those above-mentioned, do act, not only a very wicked, but also a very *foolish* part: For, no wise Man will give Credit to what they say, so readily, as he would, provided they *omit* those *direful Wishes*, and content themselves to affirm their Innocence, in a meek and moderate manner: Agreeable to the Direction of the Apostle *James*, chap. 5. 12. *Swear not—but let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay be Nay, lest ye fall into Condemnation.* That is, lest you be afterwards *condemned*, both by God and your own guilty Consciences. And our *Lord* himself has strictly commanded, saying, Matt. 5. 37. *Let your Conversation be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay:* Q. D. If there be Occasion for it, *double your Yea*, or your *Nay* but proceed no further in your common Conversation: And He gives this Reason for it, *viz. For, whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* i. e. it cometh from the evil One, and from an evil Heart, and discovers a reigning Vanity in the Mind—I shall close this Direction with the Words



of the inspired *Psalmist* in Psal. 34. 12, 13. *What Man it be that desireth Life, and loveth many Days,—Keep thy Tongue from evil, and thy Lips from speaking Guile.*

DIR. 2. Beware of a vain-glorious, or *self-confident* frame of Spirit.—Some, it seems, are much inclined to censure their Neighbours, and to say (and probably, many say in their *Hearts*, who do not speak out) that such and such Persons have gone into gross Enormities; yea, such a Man by Name, has lately *destroyed his own Life*: But I am *determined*, says one and another, that I *will never be guilty* of so foul a Transgression: And alas! at the same Time, they, probably, *trust in their Hearts*, and place their *Confidence* entirely *in their own Strength*; and therefore, are in great Danger of being *left* to commit the *same* kind of Wickedness.—I have been told by one and another *among us*, that they thought themselves to be sufficiently armed against a particular Sin, *viz.* that of *Fornication*, being fully determined in their Breasts, that no Temptation whatever should prevail with them, to offend in that manner; and *yet became guilty*: And then, they were convinced of their Error, in having been *self-confident*: and therefore readily acknowledged, that God was righteous in leaving them to their own Heart's Lusts, seeing they had neglected Him, and looked no further than to their own Strength & Resolution—And alas! the Apostle *Peter* was a sad Instance of the Sin and Folly of relying on his own Zeal and Resolution: He was *determined* against *that* Sin in particular, *viz.* of *denying* his Lord and Matter; yea, he solemnly *declared*, that he would die with Him, rather than *deny* Him: And yet, within the space of two or three Hours, *he denied Him*, and that, not once only, but *twice*, yea *three times* successively—And his Sin was greatly aggravated, in that, he had fair Warning given him, of his Danger, by his Master himself: And moreover, the Provocation was but trifling; for, he was not examined by the Judge, or any of the Officers of the Courts, but only the Standers-by, from whom he had no Reason to fear any Harm;—But as then, so now, it is dangerous being in Company with those who are Enemies to Christ: And this is written for *Warning* to us, that *we be not self-confident*, and so be *left* to Sin, after the Similitude of *Peter's* Transgression. Verily, it concerns us to bear in

mind the Words of the Apostle, in 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* We can't be too diffident of ourselves, nor place too great Confidence on the Lord Jesus.—In a Word, whatever particular Sin, We resolve against *in our own Strength*; we are in great Danger of being *left to that* very Sin; how heinous soever it be.

DIR. 3. Let us also be advised to beware Of an *anxious Care* for the *Body*—Indeed, a moderate & prudent Care ought to be taken of it: But a *perplexing Solitude* is of a *fatal Tendency*; for, this will lead on to an *inordinate Love* of the World: And *this kind of Love* to the World, or to Money, is *the Root of all Evil, which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows.* 1 Tim. 6. 10.—And as *this Love of Money*, was formerly the Occasion of the Apostacy of many from the Faith of Christ; even so, to this Day, it is at the Bottom of many other Sins which bring on Mischiefs without Number. For *they that will be rich* (who are *resolved upon it*) *fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition,* 1 Tim. 6. 9—And *this* is *one* of the Temptations and Snares, which some such Men have fallen into, namely, to *put an End to their Days: For,* when a *covetous Man* meets with many Disappointments, and great Losses, so as that he begins to imagine, that he shall be reduced to Penury; then, the subtle and malicious Adversary, observing his *dejected State*, steps in, and *with Vehemence* suggests to him, that it is much better for him to destroy his own Life, than to live and beg his Bread, and be had in Contempt among Men: —And if the Man is so fallen into the *Arrears*, as to be in a constant *Panic*, lest he be apprehended by the Officer, and be cast into Prison; then, the Adversary has a still greater Advantage against him.—And some *such* Persons, it seems, have been so followed with Temptation from Day to Day, till being *weary of Life*, have committed that enormous Wickedness, which Humanity and natural Conscience startle at—What was it but the Sin of Covetousness, or an inordinate Love to *Money*, that induced *Judas* to Betray his Lord and Master? But when the *Wretch* saw that He was condemned by the *Sanhedrin*, or supreme Council, then, his own Conscience condemned him for his

Treachery, to that degree, that his *thirty Pieces* became a *Burden* to him: Yea, and when he had returned them, then *his own Life* was *no less grievous*; and therefore he *soon put an End to it*. The Love of the World was the *first moving Cause* of this piece of Wickedness, which brought on his Destruction, and that by his own Hand: And the same Cause, I perceive, has produced the like fatal Effect as to many others.—*We* have need therefore to beware, lest the Things of the World gain the *Ascendence* and *Empire* in our Souls, for, if so, there is Danger, by reason of Temptations, of their being the means of *choking* the Body, as Well as of destroying the Soul.

DIR. 4. Let us also beware of *the Sin of Despair*, lest we be led thereby to destroy ourselves.—What was it but a *Despair* of having their *Lives* spared, that moved King *Saul*, to fall on his Sword; and *Ahithophel*, to hang himself; and *Zimri*, to expose himself to the Flames? And it was an utter *Desperation* of finding Mercy for his *Soul*, that hurried the Traitor *Judas*, to put an End to his own Life:—And by the same Means, the Adversary has prevailed with many, to destroy themselves, suggesting to them, that their State is *hopeless*; till at length, Life becomes a mere Burden to them.—The *Devils* themselves do wholly *despair* of Relief, and are looking for no other, but Judgment and fiery Indignation: And so envious and malicious are they, that they would gladly prevail with all the Children of Men, to entertain and cherish the *same* Apprehension concerning themselves; hoping thereby, *to hasten on* the Destruction of Soul and Body together.—Let us be on our Watch therefore against *this* Temptation: And not fail of *looking on the Gospel-call* and *Invitation*, as *directed unto us*, as well as unto others; and be *giving Diligence*, that so, by the Grace of God, we may *now come to Christ*, at his Call.—And this leads me to say, that if we would avoid being taken in the above-mentioned Snare, we must *beware of another*, which the Enemy lays, in the *first* place, and is unwearied in his Endeavours to *lead* People into, and to *continue* them in; and this is the *Sin of Presumption*.—And accordingly, nothing is more common than for *this Deceiver* to insinuate, that because God is merciful and gracious, therefore there *needs no Haste* to trouble ourselves about making our Peace with Him:

The *Devil* never tells any, that *Now is the accepted time, Now is the Day of Salvation*: But on the other Hand, he tempts People to *idle away* their Day of Grace, and *Sabbath-days* in particular, either by drowsing away the Day at home; or if they come to the House of God, then to spend much of the Time in sleeping, or else in a very careless way & Manner of hearing.—And alas! *how many* are led by their Corruptions, seconded and improved by the Tempter, to remain quite easy and *content* with only a *formal* going the round of Duty, until by means of the Word, or some Providence of God, they are *awakened* to consider of their Ways, and to enquire the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward: Which the *busy Adversary* observing, he fails not to improve all his Skill, with a Design to discourage and terrify them suggesting, that now it is *too late* in the Day for *them* to expect to find Mercy: And to give *an Edge* to his Temptations, he is wont to bring to their Minds, and enforce with all his Power, those Texts of *Scripture*, which carry the most threatening & *af-frighting* Aspects; and in particular, that in Prov. i. 24. and on.—And provided, they are thereby *diverted* from their religious Purpose and turn again to Folly, as is too often the Case; then, the Enemy ceaseth to molest them. Luk. 11. 21. *When a strong Man armed keepeth his Palace, his Goods are in Peace*.—But if they *continue* to be solicitous to secure the Welfare of their immortal Souls, then he follows them with his Temptations, of one kind and another, such as are common to the People of God; for, the *Christian's* present State is a State of *Warfare*. Eph. 6. 12.

BUT then, I shall add, that having, by Observation, informed himself of the *Constitution* of particular Persons, he discovers his Cunning, as also his Cowardice in assaulting those that are melancholy and *timorous* in a more *violent* Manner: And if at such a time, they are attended with some *bodily Malady*, which affects the *Brain*, as is not uncommon, they are in great Danger of being overcome, so as to lay violent Hands on themselves; and therefore, a *peculiar* Care ought to be, by their Friends, exercised over them.—Upon the whole *the longer* Persons *presume on* the Mercy of God, *the more Advantage* do they give to the Enemy against themselves: And therefore, as we value our own Souls; yea, if

we *love Life*, and would see good Days, here in this World, let us not any longer *persist in turning the Grace of God into Wantonness*, lest, for our *Obstinacy*, God be provoked to take his holy Spirit from us, and to leave us to the Will of the evil Spirits. And if He shall once say, *take them Devil*; our Case will become *helpless*, and it had been better for us, not to have been born.—*He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*—To proceed.

DIR. 5. Let us beware of the Sin of *Discontent*, on *any Account* whatever: For, remember, *this* is the very Sin, which the Adversary does, in a *peculiar* Manner, graffe [engrave] his Temptation to *Self-Murder* upon, vehemently insinuating into the Minds of those, who are under the *Power* of it, that they had much better bid adieu to Life, than to continue to live in so uneasy and *restless* a Frame: *Death* (says he) will *put a final issue* unto all this Anxiety and Perplexity, and for ever set you at perfect Liberty: And at the same time, he endeavours to hold them in Ignorance or *Blindness*, respecting the *Consequents* of their Death: But if he finds, that they are attended with *some Fear* in that Regard, then he suggests to them, either that there is *no such Place as Hell*, or else, if they will only cry, before they expire, *Lord, have Mercy* on us! It shall be well with them.—In this Manner, *the god of this World blinds the Minds* of Multitudes 2 Cor. 4. 4. He hood-winks, or blindfolds them, in order to make a Prey of them: For, he fully knows, that if Persons saw things in their true Light, he could never prevail with them; to act so *inhuman* a Part, as that of taking away their own Lives.—But now, alas! how many, by reason of their *Discontent*, and the *ensuing Temptation*, have been thrown into so *great Confusion* in their own Minds, as wickedly to destroy their Lives, and hazard their Souls; in order to obtain a *Deliverance* from their *present Vexation*.—Wherefore, be intreated to shake off, or rather root out, all Appearance of, and Approach unto the said *dangerous* Sin of *Discontent*, which has already been the Occasion, doubtless, of the Destruction of the Lives of many thousands.—It may not, no, not the least *shadow* of it, be indulged, so much as *one Moment*, lest it increase, and the Adversary get Advantage to your utter Ruin.—What shall I say more? *Avoid this Sin*, if you would shun the *Devil himself*; for, it is, as I

may say, *his Paw*, which being once admitted, he will soon gain a *full Possession* of your whole Man.—So then, let us learn, and beg of God to teach us, that good Lesson, which He taught the Apostle *Paul*, Phil. 4. 11. *I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.* And this agrees well with the Command, written in Heb. 13. 5. *Be content with such things as you have.* See also Lam. 3. 22, 39.—But then, I shall add, that it is not sufficient, to be *only* or barely content; but we must moreover, be very *thankful to God*, that it is so well with us as it is; for, *this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus, concerning us, that in every-thing we give Thanks.* I Thess. 5. 18. And more especially, for our spiritual Privileges, the Day and Means of Grace; and above all, *for the unspeakable Gift of God's dearly beloved Son*; through whom we enjoy so many & so great Favours, and are waiting and hoping for more & greater. We are taught, that we must *join Thanksgiving* with our Prayers and Supplications. Phil. 4. 6. Yea, *throughout the Day*, we ought, as we have abundant reason given us, to *keep up* and preserve a *thankful Frame* of Spirit: And we *shall find this* to be an excellent Means, or Weapon of Defence, against the most *fiery Darts* of the wicked One —Again,

DIR. 6. Let us, when tempted to Sin, and to that of *Self-Murder* in particular, he cautioned against *keeping the Devil's Counsel concealed*: But be intreated to divulge the Temptation, or, make it known, at least, to some *particular Friend*, who, as you have just Reason to think, is capable of giving you the most seasonable Advice.\* *This*, indeed, is what the Adversary will strenuously *oppose* your doing of, suggesting, that it will be very much to your *Dishonour* among Men, to have it *come abroad*, that you have entertained a Thought, or had any Inclination, to destroy your own Life: Instead of being pitied and relieved (*says he*) you'll be pointed at and despised, all your Days.—But, *my dear Friends*, you must *break through* this, or any other Temptation, that may be pre-

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\* *Our Neighbour*, whose Death we now lament, *was deficient*, in this Respect: For, although he appeared *of late*, to some of his Neighbours, to discover a *Turn of Mind*, different from what was usual; yet, it was not very much regarded. Nor did any Person (as I am informed) *suspect*, that he was under the said Temptation, until being missed, he *was found Hanging in his own Barn*.

sented for your Discouragement, and *freely* and *fully* unbosom your Case (as I said) to some *faithful Friend*: And not only ask, but also thankfully accept of the Advice, which may be given you; and with all Diligence, pursue and prosecute the same, *notwithstanding all* that the Enemy may suggest to the contrary.—Let me tell you, that such Persons are in very great Hazard of being overcome, who gratify the Devil so far, as to *keep that* Temptation of his, *burning* in their own Breasts: For, what else may they reasonably expect, but that the *Fuel*, or Corruption within, will e'er long, *take Fire*, to their utter Consumption?—But now, when *the Serpent* perceives that he is *discovered*, and that all his *Sophistry* and *Cunning is laid open*, he then begins to *hide his Head*, and to *abate* his Violence.—And the plain Truth is, that *the Strength* of the Devil's Temptations lays *in ourselves*, and in our own *Treachery*; for, if we be not false, and even cruel to ourselves, his Power and Malice cannot finally injure us. I shall just add,

DIR. 7. Be advised to beware of too free an use of *spiritous Liquors*: And in all other respects, to exercise a prudent Care for the *continuous of your bodily Health*: For, there is so strict an Union between Soul and Body, that they mutually affect each other. “Whatever touches the Body, by way of Injury, affects the Soul also by Way of Sympathy:” Nothing is more evident, than that *bodily Disorders* (though some more than others) bring on an Heaviness and *Melancholy* of Mind, which gives to the Adversary a very great Advantage; and therefore it concerns you to be *tender of your own Health*; and not, as some do, needlessly and foolishly expose it.—Indeed, many People do err in the *Excess* of Love to their Bodies, which is a criminal kind of Love, for they abuse themselves by their Intemperance;—but then, there are *others*, who are also worthy of Blame, by reason of their *Defect* in this Regard; for, through Inadvertence and Heedlessness, they take such Steps as destroy the good Constitution of their Bodies, and thereby do *lay a Foundation* for one or more afflictive Maladies, to the Prejudice of the *Mind*, as well as of the Body—And provided, *this be already* the Case of any under my Charge, let me intreat you to seek for Relief, as soon as possible: Don't say, as I am sensible, some have done, *viz.* That no Physician can relieve us, be-

cause our Trouble is altogether a Trouble in Mind, and the Body is not at all affected.” Which is, as to many Persons, a very great Mistake; for, very often, this Trouble of Mind *takes its Rise* from bodily Maladies; and therefore unless the Body be relieved, and the dark Cloud which hangs over the Brain be scattered, it will be to little Purpose, to offer them the very best Instructions, because they are, at present, *incapable* of weighing Matters according to their true Value.—Neglect not therefore, in the Case of *Melancholy*, to consult the *Physician*; and if he shall inform you, that *the same* is occasioned by a Disorder of Body, then submit to his Prescriptions.—And moreover, if you apprehend, that I *may be helpful* to you, then you (and even all others of *this Parish*) shall be welcome to my Study; and I shall be ready to assist you, as God shall enable me. I may not omit to subjoin,

DIR. 8. *Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.* These are the Words of an inspired *Apostle*, Eph. 6. 11. And he goes on to inform us, *wherein* this Armour consisteth. ver. 14,—18. *viz.* The *Girdle of truth*, or Sincerity.—The *Breast-plate of Righteousness*, *viz.* both the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and that implanted in us.—*Shoes*; or, a resolved Frame of Spirit to adhere to, and abide by the Gospel.—*The Shield of Faith*; being fully persuaded of the Truth of the Gospel-Promises and Threatenings; as also depending on Christ, and deriving Grace from Him.—And *Hope*, the *Helmet of Salvation*; i. e. such an *Hope*, as hath Salvation for its Object.—And *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*.—And *Prayer* without ceasing, of every kind, public, private and secret.—*This is the Armour*, which *the Christian* must put on and improve, as he would hope to stand against the Wiles of the Devil—And *Prayer* in particular, must, *without fail*, be joined with *all*, and *every* the other Parts of the Christian Armour: Not only keep up a Disposition to this Duty, but also *intermix* it (I mean, *ejaculatory Prayer*) with other Duties: For, as without Christ, we can do nothing so through Him strengthening us, we can do all things. But then, He expecteth, that we *often* implore his Help and Assistance.—And remember, that as our Saviour is a *Friend* to Prayer, so Satan is an *Enemy* to this Exercise: He has not the least En-



couragement given unto him, to pray for himself, and he does what he can, to divert the Children of Men from, and to interrupt them in this Duty: And more especially those, who are *cast down* and *disquieted*, lest they come short of seeing the Salvation of God; *suggesting* to them, that now, in this State of *Disquietude*, it is *not a Season* for them to *pray*; or, that it will be wholly *in vain* for them so to do, seeing they *cannot pray in Faith* and *without Doubting*.—But you may not hearken to the Tempter, *for*, although you cannot pray in Faith, yet you may and ought to *pray for Faith*: Wherefore, open your Lips, and lift up your Souls, as well as you can: Yea, be the *more* frequent, and the *more* fervent, in this Duty, *because* you are *tempted to desist* from it; for truly, you have *Need*, on *this Occasion*, to be *very importunate* in seeking for *Help* from above:—Nor will any thing so much *discourage* the Adversary, from proceeding in his hellish and malicious Design, as when *he finds*, that *he cannot prevail* with Persons to *omit this Duty*. \* *Pray therefore without ceasing*;

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\* I Was formerly acquainted with a good Man, who gave the following Account concerning himself, viz. “That when he was a young Man, he was *so awakened*, as to be filled with a Concern for the Welfare of his *Soul*: And thereupon, he came into a Resolution, to be found in the Way of Well-doing, and in particular, to observe the Duty of *secret Prayer*: But the House where he dwelt being small, he could not find in it any convenient Place for Retirement, and therefore made choice of a *solitary Place*, not very far distant, among the Trees and Bushes, to which he daily repaired, both Morning and Evening; but was soon followed with Temptations *to desist*; and in a short Time, with such as were not only of a discouraging, but also of a *terrifying Nature*; and more especially, *on one Evenings* after he had made some Progress in the Exercise, he was led strongly to *imagine*, that the Adversary was *at his Back*, and would *soon seize* upon him; whereupon, he came to stop, and turned his Face about, not knowing, but that the Devil would make a *visible Appearance*, in one Shape or the other:—But the Man saw nothing:—And yet, being sensible, by Reason of the temptation which attended him, that the *Enemy was very near*, therefore he expressed himself in the following Manner, viz. “*Satan*, I wonder you are not *ashamed* to discover so much of Spite and Malice, as to endeavour to discourage me from continuing in the Duty of Prayer: If it was lawful I would pray for you, as well as for myself: But although your Case is hopeless, mine is not so; and therefore *I am Resolved*, do what you can, to continue, by the Help of God, knocking at the Door of Mercy: For shame be gone.”—And when he thus had said, he turned about his Face, as at the first, and proceeded in his Pray-

*pray and faint not:* And moreover, beg the Prayers of *others* for you; but depend on none short of *Christ*.

ALAS! How few consider of their Danger, *while in this the Enemy's Country?* Surely, if the LORD OF HOSTS did not *hold* the evil Spirits *under Restraint*, they would destroy all of *us*, with as much Ease, as they did the *Swine*, mentioned in Matt. 8. 31, &c. and *with far greater Pleasure*.—And although there be not in these Days, so great a Number of *Demoniacs* (or such who are *bodily* possessed) as formerly; yet alas! What Multitudes of precious *Souls*, have those evil Spirits the Possession of, at this Day, who are led captive by them at their Will!—And truly, *Sirs*, it concerns *each of us*, to be on *our Watch* continually. For, we must *watch* as well as *pray*: Our Saviour has joined them together, and we may not separate them: We must up and be doing, otherwise we may not expect, that God will be with us;—And it concerns us to watch and pray not only *lest we enter* into Temptation, but also *in the very Time* of Temptation, or when we are actually and frequently assaulted. 'Tis *dangerous* to let down our Watch at any Time, or in any Place: If we are old or young, in a State of Prosperity or Adversity, in Company or alone, we must keep up our Watch: Yea, and all our Powers and Faculties, both of Body and Mind, must be carefully watched, lest they offend. Thus, we should make a Covenant with our *Eyes*, and set a watch before our *Mouths*, and ponder the Path of our *feet*, and be on our Guard lest there

er:—Nor was he afterwards followed with the like Temptation, nor with any other, but what is *common to Christians*.—He lived to old-age, and sustained the Character of an *Eminent Christian*, all his Days.—I have published this Account, because, I think, nothing could have been spoken, in his Case, more Brave and Christian-like; discovering at the same Time, a Spirit both Heroic and Compassionate.—An Example worthy of our Imitation on the like Occasion: And truly, unless we have the Grace to become *Resolute* Christians, fully *determined* for the Service of God our Saviour, *in Opposition* to all Temptations from the World, Flesh and Devil, we are no better than *nominal* Christians, or Hypocrites; and may expect *the Doom* of such, to be pronounced and executed upon us. Matt. 6. 24. *No man can serve two Masters*. Matt. 12. 30. *He that is not with me is against me.*]

be any Iniquity in our *Hands*; and more especially, must keep *our Hearts* with all Diligence, for out of them are the issues of Life: Our Lives will be either good or bad, according as our *Hearts* are kept or neglected.— In a Word, we must *pass the time of our sojourning here in Fear*, viz. in the *Fear of God*, that we may not offend Him; and in *jealousy over ourselves*, lest our own *Hearts* deceive us, or wicked Men divert us from well-doing, or the Profits, Pleasures, or Honours of the World ensnare us, or the Devil, by any of his Devices, beguile us. 1 Pet. 5. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant* (be temperate, that you may be watchful) *because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*: The Tipler is in great Danger of being devoured.—But not to trespass on your Patience.—

I NEED not spend Time to caution my Hearers, against taking the Liberty to oppress, or in any respect to injure, the lately bereaved, and very sorrowful Family: I am persuaded better things of you; and that, on the other hand, you will, as you shall have the Opportunity, be kind and helpful to the weakly and disconsolate Widow, and to the three young and fatherless Children.—Nor shall you lose your Reward.

To Conclude. You are doubtless sensible, my *Brethren*, that in the space of *four Weeks*, we have had among us, two sorrowful Instances of a sudden and untimely Death, though in a *very different Manner*.\* And both those Neighbours were so well in Body, as to be *here*, at Meeting with us, on the *Sabbath-day before* they expired, and appeared to us as likely to live longer, as any of us.—But they have left us, and are gone to their long Home: We shall see their Faces (as usual) no more in this World.

AND now, O, that we may *all be awakened* by those very sorrowful Instances of Mortality, to consider more seriously than ever, our latter

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\* The *One*, viz. Mr. *Joseph Abbot, Jr.* attempting to pass over the *Mill-Pond*, newly frozen, dropped through the Ice, and no Help being at Hand, was *drowned*, on Wednesday *Dec. 10th*, 1766—The *Other*, whose Name, as many think, had best to be buried in Oblivion, expired in the manner aforesaid, on Wednesday, *January 7th*, 1767.

End; realizing, *each one of us*, that *we* don't know, what a Day, and much less, what a Week, may bring forth.—Let us accept of the good Advice given by *Eliphaz*, in *Job* 22. 21. *Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at Peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.* And let us come up to *Job's* Resolution, in Chap. 14. 14, *All the Days of my appointed Time, will I wait, till my Change come.* We must be Willing to wait *God's Time*, and give Diligence, that so we may, through Grace, *then be found ready: We* ought to wait for God by waiting on Him, viz. in the several Ways of his Appointment, in public, private & secret; as also, by ordering the whole of our Conversation according to his Word, and as it becometh the *Gospel of Christ*.—Although we ought to provide for the Body, yet we must learn to do our civil, as well as our religious Actions, *after a godly Sort*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink; or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* Our Life ought to be a Life of Faith & Holiness, and we should *have our Conversation in Heaven*: While our Hands are busied in our secular Employments, *our affections*, and as much as possible, *our Thoughts*, should *be set on Things above*: And we must make it our *daily Care* to use the World in such manner, as may further our own good Account in the Day of the Lord Jesus. .

We are, *by Nature*, inclined to desire, that Life may be prolonged; and the Desire, with Submission to the Will of God, *is innocent*: But then, it ought to be *our* great Concern, that *we* may not (as it is to be feared, many do) spend away our Days “in treasuring up to ourselves, Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God: But on the other hand, may answer the End of Life, by bringing forth such Fruit, as that our Heavenly Father may be glorified by us.” And therefore should not only *pray*, that our Lives may be still lengthened out; but also, that we may have the Grace and Wisdom to redeem time, and to walk circumspectly in the World: Or, which is the same thing, that God would so *teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Godliness*.—The God of our Lives reserves the Time of our Dissolution, as a Secret, in his own Breast, that so, we may give Diligence to be found, *through Grace*, in an *actual Readiness* for our great Change, at what Time soever He shall call for us;—You

observe, I said, *through Grace*; for, *without Christ we can do nothing*: But then, we must remember that He expecteth to be enquired of, or sought unto—Good Manners, as well as the holy Scriptures, teach us so to do; and truly it ought to be esteemed *an unspeakable Privilege*, that we may seek, *in hope* of obtaining Audience:—I said, *in Hope*, for, He is *not wanting*, on his part, towards those who seek, and *continue*, with their whole Heart, to seek his Face and Favour.—But then, you may not imagine, that you *merit* his Favour *by virtue* of your seeking for it: Learn therefore, to seek to Him in the most *humble* Manner, under a deep Sense, that you are unworthy of the least Mercy, and that He may justly reject you and your Services.—And in a Word, labour to *look unto Jesus*, as your *Strength* and *Redeemer*; as the Lord your *Righteousness*, as well as the Lord your *Strength*; “and thus be pressing towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus:” To whom be ascribed all Honour, Glory and Power, World without End. AMEN and AMEN.

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