

Ebenezer Parkman's Sermon on the Sudden Death of a Child, 1731

Transcribed by Ross W. Beales, Jr.

Note on the Transcription. This transcription follows the so-called "expanded" method. The thorn "y" is expanded to "th," and letters and abbreviations are brought down to the line and expanded unless the abbreviation is in common use today. Thus, y^e becomes "the"; y^t becomes "that"; y^s becomes "this"; and y^{fe} becomes "there." Similarly, abbreviations like w^t, wth, and w^d become "what," "with," and "would." Sentences end with a period; occasional punctuation is silently inserted for clarity; & and &c. are changed to "and" and "etc." Words that Parkman crossed out have been silently omitted. Insertions, whose place is usually indicated by a caret within the text, are silently moved from the margin or bottom of the page or brought down from above the line.

580.¹

A Discourse
on
Job 14.2.

Occasioned by the Sudden
Death of a Child.

Repeated the Application from Job 7.8² latter part
Apr. 13, p.m. 1740 on Occasion of the Sudden Death
of my Sister in Law, Mrs. Sarah Gott, Wife of
Mr. Benjamin Gott of Marlborough, Physician³

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No. 580}. At Westborough Oct. 24, a. & p.m. 1731
581} occasioned by a Sudden Death among us.

Job. XIV.2
He cometh forth like a Flower

¹Ebenezer Parkman's sermon 580 is in the Parkman Family Papers (American Antiquarian Society), Box 1, Folder 3.

²Job 7:8, "The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not."

³Sarah Breck, dau. of Rev. Robert and Elizabeth Breck, b. Oct. 10, 1711, was the older sister of Ebenezer Parkman's second wife, Hannah Breck. Sarah m. Benjamin Gott, Jan. 20, 1728 [Feb. 13, 1728-29, C.R.]; d. Apr. 11 [10, G.S.], 1740. *Vital Records of Marlborough, Massachusetts, to the End of the Year 1749* (Worcester, MA: Franklin P. Rice, 1908), 34, 227, 362. Only part of the manuscript of Parkman's sermons Nos. 578 and 578 survives. He preached No. 578 in the afternoon of Oct. 10, 1731, and No. 579 in the afternoon of Oct. 17. Parkman Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 3.

and is cut down - he fleeth
also as a Shadow and continueth not.

The very last Subject that entertained us was the Transitoriness of all Temporal Things, the uncertainty of human Life, the Sudden Changes we pass through, as the whole world hastens to a Dissolution. Besides all the Proofs produced you in the Two last Exercises on 1 Joh. 2.15.17,⁴ The Providence of God has frequently given us a very Moving Demonstration and particularly in the Last week, in the Very Sudden Death of a Child, The Youngest of Mr. Samuel Fay junior,⁵ which although to the Parents Apprehension, it was in usual Health but a few Hours before, when they them Selves went to Bed, yet in the Morning Some time before Day, was found Dead upon its Mothers Arm, having never Moved (that could be perceived) out of the Same posture it was laid in when they went to sleep. Truly a very awfull Evidence of the Extream Uncertainty of Human Life, and of all the very Sweetest and pleasantest of worldly Delights and Comforts, and a most Solemn Warning from God to us all, to be always ready for the Summons of Death, Since we know not even what so much as an Hour may bring forth, nor at what Hour our Lord will call, whether at the Second or Third watch of the Night, at Cock Crowing or in the Morning! As our Lord himself has kindly advertis'd us in Mat. 24.42.43.44,⁶ Mark 13.35,⁷ and Luke 12.39.⁸ But although Sudden Deaths do awfully warn every Age, yet this especially calls aloud to Young persons to certifie them that their blooming Youth, vigor, Sweetness and loveliness, their utmost Strength and glory and flourish is no security at all, but the dreadful, irresistible, all-levelling Scyth of Death may suddenly

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cut them down as the Grass is cut down by the Mower: For Life no sooner appears, but as the most vanishing Swift flying Shadow, it is immediately gone - and not the least Sign of it possibly to be found any more. Thus the holy, Sorrowfull Job in the Sacred Passage now lying before us contemplating the Brevity and Afflicted State of our Life and the uncertainty of it at the Same time compares our Birth and rising Life to a Flower and a Shadow, as being Some of the properest resemblances to be found - He cometh forth like a Flower etc.: All I Shall attempt in the present Discourse Shall be to Meditate a little upon these apt Similitudes as they are most expressive of our Life's Uncertainty and Frailty; and then make some Seasonable and serious

⁴1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

⁵Abigail, daughter of Samuel and Deliverance Fay, b. Aug. 26, 1731, d. Oct. 19, 1731. *Vital Records of Westborough, Massachusetts, to the End of the Year 1849* (Worcester, MA: Franklin P. Rice, 1903), 38, 235.

⁶Matthew 24:42, "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Matthew 24:43, "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." Matthew 24:44, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

⁷Mark 13:35, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning."

⁸Luke 12:39, "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through."

Application.

In Meditating upon these Similitudes let us Consider

1. First That man cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down. This allusion to the Flowers, to the Grass and Herbs of the Fields is what the Holy Spirit has been pleased to use, by the mouth of Diverse of his inspired Servants. As for Man, Says one, his Days are as Grass, as a flower of the Field, So he flourisheth. Another at Gods express Commandment Cryeth, all Flesh is Grass and all the Goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field, the Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth. Surely the people is Grass. The Grass withereth, the flower fadeth. A Third Speaketh thus, as the Flower of the Grass, he passeth away. St. Peter also in much like words to the Prophet Isa.: See 1 Ep. Ch. 1 v. 24.⁹

The propriety of the Expression is Evident in this, that a Man rises not only with Such beauteous Form and Such fair and lovely Colours, Such Sweet and pleasant Verdure, and with Rosie Blush or Lillie white, he comes up not only filling us with a thousand Hopes and wishes, and raising us with ten thousand Delights and Joys; But, alas! with the Same tender Growth also, the Same fine Contexture of all the parts; Slim and easily bent and broken down, easily Snapt or put asunder. And then at once its lively vigor, its Sprightly Lustre and all its Gaities are fled. As the flourishing Grass or opening flowers in the Morning, replenished with dew and refreshed and enlivened with moisture and the genial heat of the Sun, Springs up a Growth, wanton in Life, displays therein beauteous Leaves, and charms the Sight with their Sparkling and blazing Glories, and the Smell with its fragrance breathed forth and filling all the abundant air; at the Same time, promising by its vi-

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gorous shooting forward and aspiring to Perfection, that there may be some Continuance, and at length answer all our Expectations from it. But behold! in the height of all this Pride, this Luxuriant Gaiety and Glory, when the Grass or the Flower is putting forth with all its Strength and Sprightliness, the Mower advances in his Swarth and the next Stroke cuts it down; its Vigor flies, its Colours fade; its Beauty all vanishes; Nature is interrupted in its Course, its Strength wastes; the Spirits evaporate into the Air, the heat of the Sun licks them up; and how Surprising the Changes when it now offends the Eye and rattles with dryness! As the Allusion might be transferred to the Flower coming forth with all its Beauty, Life and Lustre and priding it in its Glories for the few Hours of the Day, but at night a Sudden Frost Sharply rips it, Stiffens it and Chases away all its pleasant Verdure, and blooming Sweetness, and turns it into the black hue of Death before the morning Light. In such manner doth man come forth with blooming Beauty, fresh as the morning, with all the Gaiety and sweetness of the most lovely Flowers, with the vessels full of Blood and spirits, with Health and Vigor and fitness for every Business. And while the Blood briskly and strongly flows through the Veins, and the Spirits dance and

⁹1 Peter 1:24, "For all flesh is like grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away."

[wanton?] throughout the Bodie, the mind is Bright and Cheerfull, full of Pleasure and Happiness. But Death, from one or other of the innumerable ways whereby Destruction comes, cuts us down as a mower the Grass, or the tender Herb. The whole animal System or Oeconomy is interrupted and broken; the Blood Stiffens, and this Dust, loosing its comely form, and regular arraignment or Configuration of the parts, returns to Dust again - for Verily Dust thou art and Dust Shalt thou become again. At Ten Thousand passages we may go out, although but by one, we enter in. Neither is it possible to foresee the many Deaths that await us by every kind of accident. And could we look in and See the fine parts of which we are composed and how necessary to Life and Health the regular and full Discharge of the Blood and Spirits is through all the very Slender and narrow vessels of Surprizing fineness and Smallness, we should be filled with wonder and astonishment that we outlive an hour, especially if together with the Smallness and thinness of the vessels we should Consider the next to incredible Swiftness and force the Blood moves with that it doth not burst the veins, and Arteries or even scrap 'em asunder. Again, as the flower that is bright and fair and flourishing in the Day is cut down by an untimely, Sudden Frost, So this Flower, this Grass [Man] withereth and fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Isa. 40.7,¹⁰ The wind passeth over it and it is gone: Ps. 103.16.¹¹ The secret Source of Life is Stopt, and the Streams are all immediately dried up. Indeed if there was not outward violence visible, nor any thing to be discovered throughout the Body, as the proper Cause, under God, of the Death; Yet if there be but the Suspension of the Divine Influence, which is most absolutely necessary for the Sustenance of every Creature; that Suspension or withholding

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would be Sufficient to reduce us to Death, nay to annihilation. Not only at thy rebukes, O Lord, but at thy withdraw we die, and fall down to the Earth: and this may be in an Instant, all at once. But thus much for the first Metaphor, He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. But as if there was not a lively Emblem enough of the Swift flight of Life - and our sudden disappearing, Job adds further

2. Secondly, He fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not. That is, either as a Shadow caused by the interposition of any Sort of Body between the Sun and the Earth or any Thing upon it, Swiftly passeth, because the Sun itself hasteneth to his going down; and as the Sun never Stops nor Stays, the shadow likewise is alwayes flying and abideth not, especially the Evening Shadow which though it look long, and we Should fancy our Selves Giants if we should Measure our Selves thereby; but it Speedeth away upon the Eastern plains and Hills, till it is wholly lost. Ps. 102.11.¹² My Days are as a shadow that declineth, as well as withed like Grass. Ps. 109.23.¹³ I am gone like the Shadow that declineth. So the Life of Man is no sooner begun, but time flies with the most winged Speed, and never Stand still. The watch or the Glass that is

¹⁰Isaiah 40:7, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: sure the people is grass."

¹¹Ps. 103:16, "For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

¹²Ps. 102:11, "My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass."

¹³Ps. 109:23, "I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust."

Set a going to measure time may either of them Stop, but our Life is flying off as continually as our Pulse beats, and we draw one Breath after another,

Or as the Shadows of the Night haste away before the rising Light of the returning Morn, and cannot tarry; the Night's Sable mantle is turned into a dusty Grey, and that into the glorious Brightness of the revolving Morning. Cant. 2.17.¹⁴ The Day break and the Shadows flee away. So Cant. 4.6.¹⁵ But I choose to think that the figure is taken from¹⁶ flying Clouds in a Windy Day, that is ever and anon Clear and then the Sun is hid, then brightly shining again - every Minute these sudden Changes are made; and the Life of man much resembles one of those flying Shadows, which has no Substance, no Continuance, nor (the same) ever any returning; is forever forgotten and as if it never had been: No dependence to be had upon it, but is altogether light, vain, of no abiding. The holy Authors of the Divine writings do therefore make frequent use of this Metaphor. Ps. 104.4.¹⁷ Man is like to Vanity, his Days are as a shadow that passeth away. And much the Same Manner of Expression is that of the Ps. 102.3.¹⁸ My Dayes are consumed like Smoke. (See likewise the Apostle James 4.14.¹⁹ But we may attend to his Instruction farther on.) Last of all here in illustrating this we may profitably hearten to the Same holy Man, that Speaks in the Text, in Ch. 7.7.8.9.10.²⁰ So God remembered Israel that they were a Wind that passeth away, and returneth not again. Ps. 78.39.²¹

This is some of the Definition of our Dying, uncertain State. But when the Text says, it fleeth etc. And Continueth not, It is confined to our Life in this world. The immortal Spirit goes to God that gave it, although the Bodie Sinks into the Earth, a Ghastly Spectacle and a Feast for Worms. 'Tis not the Soul and its everlasting and unchangeable Condition in a Separate state that is here at all reached or pointed at by this Similitude. Oh that will be perfectly different, the very reverse of this! The Soul will act and exert its powers, with quite other freedom, Vigor and cheeriness; and must appear before Gods dreadfull Tribunal to be tried and judged; to be rewarded with Eternal Life or Condemned to Endless punishment and misery according to the Deeds done in the Body, whether Good or Evil. O then Let us contemplate our Frail and uncertain Life in this world as that when this Flower of our Bodies fades or shall be cut down, our Souls may Blossom in immortality and flourish on the Tree of Life in the midst of the

¹⁴Song of Solomon, 2:17, "Until the day break, and thr shadows fell away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

¹⁵Song of Solomon, 4:6, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense."

¹⁶Parkman placed a carrot here, but it is not evident what he intended to insert.

¹⁷Ps. 104:4, "Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire?"

¹⁸Ps. 102:3, "For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as a hearth."

¹⁹James 4:14, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

²⁰Job 7:7, "O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good." Job 7:8, "The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not." Job 7:9, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Job 7:10, "He shall return no more to his house, nether shall his place know him any more."

²¹Ps. 78:39, "For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again."

Paradise of God above! The Manner how we Shall Improve the Meditation, will be shewn in the Second Part of this Discourse.

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We are now to attend to

The Application of this Serious Discourse. It offers us the following Weighty Reflections and Instructions. Scil:

1. First, From hence we may see how widely, nay wildly, the world has judged of, and mis-rated matters, and how Thoughtlessly they have fallen into the grandest Mistake about all sublunary Things. Men are extremely prone to lay out them Selves in all Sort of Schemes and Contrivances, as if when they were born into the world they were to live a kind of Eternity here. And if their Projections Succeed, are almost as Confident in their happiness as if it was Settled, for never Ending ages; and Suppose they are disappointed, are they affected in such a manner as knowing and realizing that this world is ever more changing and that an Unchangeable State hastens on apace; or do they not rather cast about 'em in their minds how they Shall mend their broken fortune, and conclude that there is yet time enough before them to accomplish all that they can now Contrive and project again? In full hopes and Expectation, nay in Strong Confidence and Presumption that all they want, will surely come to pass, multitudes lie down at night, as if they were as sure to rise in the morning as they lie down to sleep; and in the morning, lay out for the whole day till night, perhaps without one Cast of thought that it can fall out any otherwise than they have designed. But this is not from Day to Day only; Many lay out for months, nay for Years. Accordingly all Things are valued and set by, at such an Estimate as if Men had a firm and certain Lease of Life, and that for many Years also. But judge ye by what has been offered on the present Text, whether this valuation of all things here, be according to Truth, and whether we ought so dearly to prize, and esteem and Set by them or No. Surely these things ought all to sink in our Affections, and in a sense to vanish from our Eyes, while we ought to be looking at things Eternal, 2 Cor. 4.18,²² being that the Things that are Temporal are also most uncertain, and we cannot by any means come to know whether we shall Enjoy them an Hour to an End. For we flie as a shadow and have no abiding; if we flourish as a flower, we may be immediately cut down and wither. But especially

2. Secondly, We See from the foregoing Discourse, The exceeding Folly, and even Madness of all such as will Depend upon So flying and so frail a Life: either our own or
1.) others Life. First, How utterly unwise to trust to our own. We have by the most moving and affecting Demonstrations seen that it hangs upon ten thousand uncertaintys, and that it is not possible for us to Secure any Term longer or shorter (for even he that Should murtherously resolve to put an End to his Life ever so presently may be seized and arrested by Heaven even before the wicked Design could be put in Exe-

²²2 Cor. 4:18, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

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cution). The word of God very frequently admonishes us of it, and the Solemn, awfull and sorrowfull Providences of God loudly warn us likewise; nay the lesser Sudden Changes we our Selves feel in our Bodies convince us beyond all Scruple that for any thing we can tell it may indeed be our own Case. But however if we should escape the innumerable Dangers of Sudden Death that we are exposed to, yet it is really a great deal more likely that we Shall die before Old age, than that we should live to it; And is it not then a piece of folly next to, nay verily Madness it self, for persons to rely upon Living? Let not this be counted a needless reflection, for let the Truth before us appear to be ever so evident, yet how clear and undeniable is it also that most Men are guilty [here?]? And do not the very wisest and best find them Selves most unhappily apt and inclined hereto? Not only the firm and strong, the vigorous, healthy and young, raise Dependences and promise future Time to them Selves, but even the infirm and Sickly, the tender and aged, whose Constitutions are broken already, and whose clay, feeble Tabernacle is tottering, cracking and ready to tumble down into Dissolution, yet even they cannot help, though most groundlessly, hoping that the Time of their Departure, if it be at hand, yet is not to come immediately, is not to be to Day. Alas! how fond and mad this vain Confidence, and sottish presumption! O that the warnings we kindly receive from God from one time to another might awaken us out of this wretched Security! O that it might not be lamented over us that, though they are destroyed from Morning to Evening and though they perish for ever; (are dying continually, and die Eternally), yet that it is without any regarding it; although our Excellency, The Chief Glory in us, goes away, yet that we die without wisdom. But above all, It is indeed the most unspeakable Madness for any to continue in an unconverted State, and in ten thousand Dangers of Hell and everlasting Damnation, relying and depending upon Life, and good opportunity yet to come, to make their peace with God in and to accomplish their great Work in. Oh! How unaccountable it is to Delay as reckoning upon Months and Years to come; when we know not but that each might Say as David to Jonathan in 1 Sam. 20.3,²³ but truely as the Lord live the and as thy Soul liveth, there is but a step between me and Death. Oh how amazing is the Thought that Men hang right over the Bottomless Pit, by only the Slender Thread of our frail, uncertain Life, and yet Should be Secure and unsensible of it! And oh how astonishing that whilst we are really and truely in the middst of a thousand and a thousand Hazards of Death and Hell, and everlasting wo and Misery, we should with foolish, with sottish Confidence be dreaming of long Life and many Years yet to come and that there will be time enough, and we can take Things at our Leisure! The Heart of the sons of men, Says Solomon, is full of Evil, and Madness is in their Heart whilst they live, and after that they go to the Dead. Eccl. 9.3.²⁴ Alas

²³1 Sam. 20:3, "And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

²⁴Eccles. 9:3, "This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."

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our own Stupid Security, our worse than brutish thoughtlessness and Dangerous Presumption! This Folly is especially the more inexcusable because our Lord particularly rebuked it by that Parable on Purpose in Luk. 12.19.20.²⁵ Again

- 2.) Secondly, It is vain and fond also to have our Dependence upon the Life of Others. We are apt to run into a fond affection for a Near Relation or a dear Friend, a Loving wife, a tender, beloved Husband, a no less dear than Honored Parent, a lovely, delightfull, pleasant, Beautifull Child, or an Excellent affectionate Brother; a wise able, faithfull, Cordial Friend or bountifull, cheerfull Patron, Counsellor and Benefactor. We are prone to place our Happiness almost intirely on Some one or more of these and to look upon our Selves ruin'd intirely and undone if we should by any means be deprived of these. But doubtless it is very absurd and irrational for us to have our either [*sic*] Affections or Interests So bound up with any as to hurt or ruin us Should they be Separated for ever from us. For we can no more prevent their Death than our own. We can by no means redeem our Brother, nor give to God a Ransom for him. Ps. 49.7.²⁶ Neither could the awfulest Suddenness of their Death be prevented. All these are equally exposed to the irresistable Stroke which may in a moment carry away not one only, but Sweep them all away at once as by a Flood. Ps. 90.5.²⁷ It is plain that it was for this reason that the Psalmist advised So Strongly that we should not put our Trust in the sons of man, no not in Princes, for that in them there is no help: for their Breath goeth forth etc. Ps. 118.8.9.²⁸ Compare with Ps. 146.3.4.²⁹ How Soon may all our hopes be fled, our Delights withered and our Soul comfortless; if our Happiness is determined by the fluttering uncertain Breath of frail Man! In the Morning they are like Grass that groweth up: in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth. Ps. 90.5.6.³⁰
3. Thirdly, The Next Use Shews us from all this Discourse The great wisdom and pressing Necessity of getting ready, immediately ready for Death - and of being alwayes prepared for it, and for this End it shews us what diligent and carefull Improvement we ought to make of our remaining Life and Spared Advantages, before we are seized by Death and Stripp'd and deprived of all. For Tis the very firmest of human Strength and vigor but mere weakness before all-conquering Death, and the most charming Beauty and Sprightliness no Defence nor Security;

²⁵Luke 12:19, "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Luke 12:20, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

²⁶Ps. 49:7, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him."

²⁷Ps. 90:5, "Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which growth up."

²⁸Ps. 118:8, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Ps. 118:9, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

²⁹Ps. 146:3, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." Ps. 146:4, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

³⁰Ps. 90:5, "Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up." Ps. 90:6, "In the morning it flourisheth, and growth up; n the evening it is cut down, and withereth."

and we know not where nor when we Shall meet Heavens Messenger and summons. How ought we to get immediately upon this weighty affair of getting into that posture and obtaining those accomplishments which we would be found with at our Departure? It is in Such a Degree a point of wisdom to prepare for Death, according to the momentousness of the Concern, and the Consequence it will be of to us to die well. And in Such a Degree a point of greatest Prudence to be always

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ready, and therefore to stir and strive immediately to get into good preparation, according as we are altogether unknowing about the Time when we must undergoe that awfull Change, and as we especially know not but that it may be most Sudden and with Surprising Unexpectedness.

My Hearers, there is no Subject I can bring you, of greater weight and Concern to your Immortal Souls as this is - This is of everlasting Moment because on this hangs your Eternal Weal or Wo. If you give me your attention in any Thing, let it be in this matter - if you Shew your wisdom in any Affair, I beseech you manifest it in this - All other is folly it Self to this - And whatever you esteem necessary, This one Thing is above all Things. Houses and Lands, nay Kingdoms and Crowns you can not So wisely Seek after, could you succeed ever so in your Endeavor as to Secure your Everlasting Safety in that Eternal world you are going into: nor is providing the necessarys of Life, this temporal Life, how exceeding needfull so ever you can think it, like making preparation for your Eternal Life. For what infinite Disproportion there is between Things Temporal and Things that are Eternal! Again, If our Life be so exceeding frail and uncertain as we have been admonished and warn'd from God it is, then this Weighty Business will admitt of no Delay at all, but we must Now, instantly, even while we are in this house of God, get upon it. The reason why we may not let any time at all go, is because we may not boast of Tomorrow - it must be to Day, even while it is called to Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts - Nay we cannot be Sure of an Hour, nor of So much as one Minute; because God may Seize us in a Moment before we can Speak another word, or draw another Breath. And these are not bare possibilities; God has done So by many, and the Instance of Sudden Death in this Last week Should be enough to Convince us that there is no room for trifling here; nor for any doubting or deferring at all longer. Nay the very youngest and the Strongest, and whoever would be the most prone to think them Selves Safe, have from hence Solemn warning from the great God to delude them Selves no longer, even upon the peril of their immortal Souls. You must be infinite Fools to neglect your Preparation any longer, upon what pretense soever: you must be worse than Stupid Blocks to omitt at all what you can Esteem necessary to do done Suppose that Death was now to take hold of you. For otherwise the fine and Slender Threads by which you are Suspended over the Eternal world may Suddenly be Snapt, and then your Condition will be irretrievably Miserable, and unspeakably wretched to all Eternity. As for what you are to do in your

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Preparation for Death, and Supposing it Should be Sudden Death you may take these brief,

plain, necessary Directions which by the Blessing of God will make you fit for that awful juncture.

1. First of all, Lay hold of the Encouragement that God has graciously given us to repair to him in the name of Jesus Christ, the great Savior, and implore most Earnestly of Him the Grace to Return, repent, and believe in Christ - Yea Cry mightily and with fervent and Strong Importunity herefor. Beg of God to Shew your Natural undone state, and your utter Inability to Help your Self and your absolute Dependence on His Sovereign Grace.
2. Secondly, actually apply to the work of Conversion to God. For whilst you pray to God to work this you must at the Same time use your own utmost Endeavor to work out your own Salvation etc.

And here first, do your utmost to become thorowly Sensible of and deeply humbled and penitent for all your sins, and see that you renounce them all, without any Exception or reserve.

Again, Fly to God for Pardon, in the Faith of the Blood of the Great Sacrificer, and therein heartily accept of Christ as your only Mediator and redeemer, your Prophet, Priest and King; resign to Him intirely and rely upon him wholly; Submitt your Self to be wholly possessed by His Spirit, governed by his Laws, directed by his Pleasure and Saved by his Merits.

3. In a Word, make a full surrender and Solemn Dedication of your Selves intirely to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be his Servant and his only forever. Give your Selves truly and without any Hypocrisy or Dissimulation, to a Life of Religion and Devotedness to God; Sincerely making it the Business of your Life to Honour God and secure your Eternal Welfare: and resolve in the strength of Grace that you will not knowingly depart herefrom at any time So long as you Shall be continued in this world, nor do any thing that Shall offend the Glorious God any more. But that you will more and more Endeavor to please and glorifie God and fit your Selves with the Endowments of Grace for the Enjoyment of Glory; and wherein so ever you fall short of your Engagement [still?] humble your Selves for and mourn over your Sinfull infirmities and Strive to your utmost to renew and double your Care and watch ever after; and apply afresh unto the Great Advocate for forgiveness and larger measures of Grace and Assistance. As much of this as We can we ought now presently to do, that we may be in some actual readiness immediatly if we Should be arrested by Death. And then this must be our Continual work, for we are ever in Hazard. Stand, says our Lord, with your Loins girt etc. as men waiting; for you know not the hour. But if God bears with us for some time, know that the Same Measures will not do still for we must Grow in Grace etc.

[N.B. The 10th Page is that before the Text.]

(10.)

It may be you would earnestly ask by what Means You Shall obtain the Special and Effectual Grace of God if it should please God to favor you [blot]ce for Repentance and to renew your

1. Heart and Life. M[blot]re I advise you very Seriously and Solemnly That [if?] ever you would Obtain the Special work of God to be wrought upon you, you would Settle into a serious Thought of your Dying and keep your Selves in the continual Expectation of it; and keep alive in your minds the Strong Impressions of the word and Providence of God, and follow the Convictions of the Holy Spirit with a Diligent, faithfull, immediate obedience to what God Demands of you respecting your unfeigned Repentance and Conversion.
2. Be Also Diligent and hearty in attending upon all Ordinances, and be not deluded with the vain Conceit that being Devout sometimes, and keeping Some of the most easy and fashionable Commandments, will do.
- 3.. Realize it that waiting on outward ordinances and enjoying external Privileges doth not infallibly argue Grace; for this is what the worst Hypocrites do: but remember that the Bus'ness lies with the Heart; in Mortification of sin and Lust, and subduing our Soul Destroying Pride and Passion and Self Sufficiency; and in our Self Denyal, Humility, Faith, Charity. It lyes in our Exercising the Graces and performing the Dutys of Christianity. And we ought to be so Steddy and Constant herein that at what Time Soever our Lord Shall come upon us we may be found so doing, and thereby be found of our Judge in Peace.