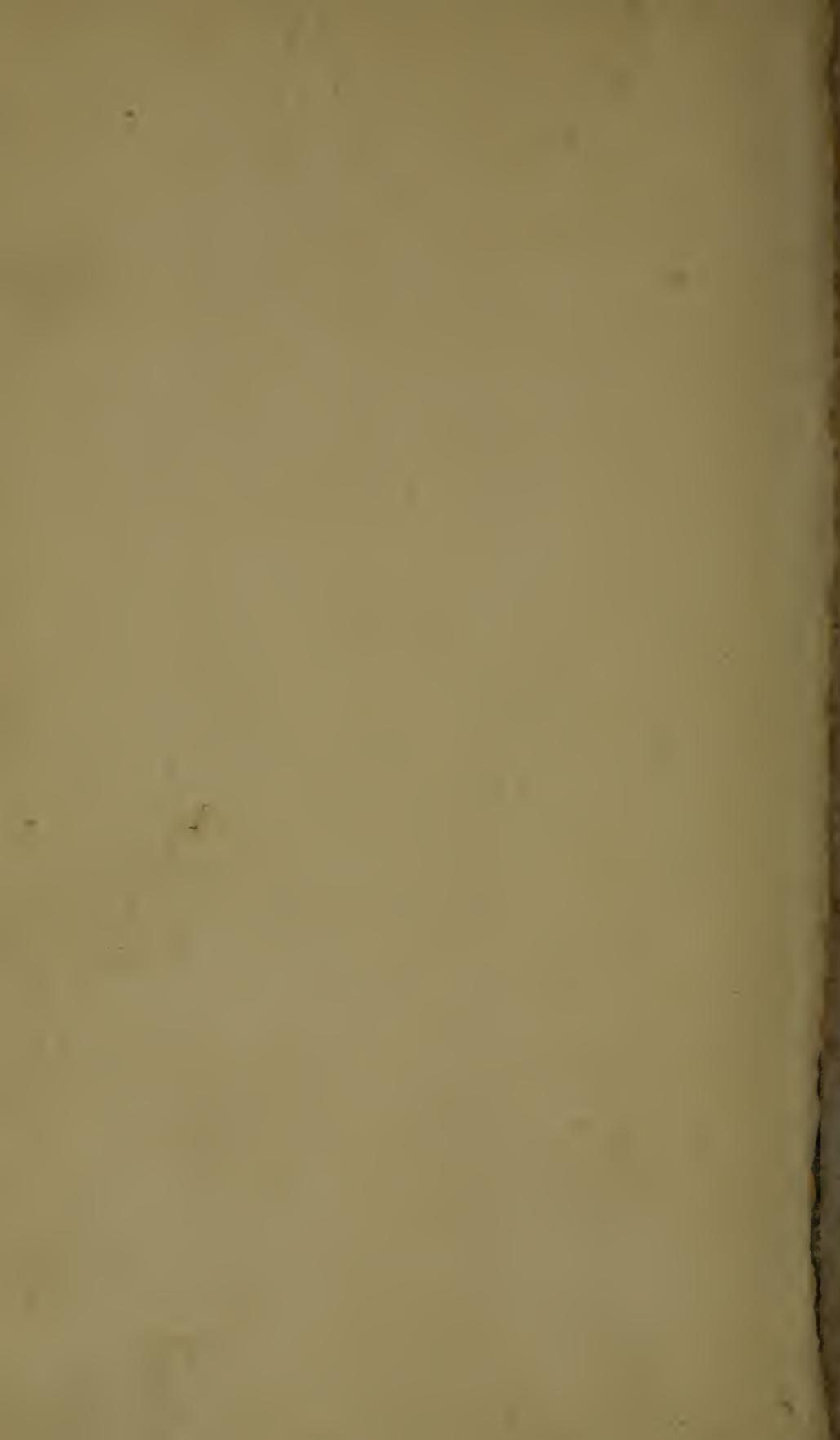


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*The good Fight of Faith, in the Cause of GOD
against the Kingdom of SATAN.*

Exemplified in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the Parish-Church of

*St. Clements Danes, Westminster,
On the 24th of March, 1708.*

A T T H E

F U N E R A L

O F

Mr. JOHN DENT,

Who was barbarously murder'd in the doing his
Duty, in the Execution of the Laws against Pro-
fanenets and Immorality.

1 Tim. VI. Ver. 12.

*Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on Eternal Life,
whereunto thou art also Called, and hast profess'd a
Good Profession before many Witnesses.*

By *Thomas Bray*, D. D. Minister of *St. Botolph, Aldgate.*

*Published at the Request of the Justices of Peace, of the Societies for
Reformation of Manners, and other Gentlemen that heard it.*

London: Printed by *H. Hills*, in *Black-fryars*, near the
Water-side. For the Benefit of the Poor. 1709.

To the Justices of the Peace, and other Gentlemen, at whose Request the following Sermon was made Publick.

Gentlemen,

I Wish I might have been excus'd the Publishing a Discourse compos'd with so much hast, and amidst so much hurry, as must needs render it too crude and undigested to appear in Print; but the Consideration which gave force to your Commands, is the Occasion which may be here taken to publish to the World, that great Countenance which so many Persons of Distinction have given to the CAUSE OF GOD IN THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS, by attending the Funeral of a Martyr in this blessed Cause.

It was a glorious Sight, and will be of singular Use undoubtedly, as well to animate those excellent Persons, who have devoted themselves to this, the best Service to God and their Country, as to discourage the impious and immoral Wretches of both Sexes; to have seen upwards of 30 Constables and Beadles; A also between 20 and 30 of the venerable Clergy to precede the Corps; 12 Justices of the Peace holding up the Pall, and immediately following it; and a great Train of other Gentlemen of Quality. Among them, some Aldermen, and lastly above 1000 worthy Citizens and other conducting this blessed Saint to his Grave. It was a sight, at which the Powers of Darknes, I am perswaded, did Tremble; and I believe is no small Terror to those Evil-Doers, who are in Nature also themselves Devils, as much as they can be in humane Shape; for hereby they may conclude, that as much as Impiety and Immorality have advanc'd of late Years; yet God has those, who will also advance on to meet them whatever they suffer by it.

And as so noble an Appearance was a comfortable Sight, as it respects the Cause, so likewise as it regards the Person who suffered thus gloriously in it. It was not his Birth and Quality, nor his Estate and Posts in Publick, whilst he lived, (for you knew him to have been but a mean Man) that could induce you to give him such uncommon Respects at his Death. But several Gentlemen in the Commission, which you do so much adorn, found in him; throughout his many Years Service in the Great business of Reformation of Manners, i. e. in bringing before you the lewd and disorderly Criminals, a most extraordinary Zeal, with a perfect Integrity, and a single Aim at the Glory of God and the Good of his Fellow Creatures. And this made you so greatly value and respect him, whilst he lived; and to honour him, as you have done, when dead. And upon the whole, when the Magistracy of this Nation, shall come universally to appear thus publickly. as, for ever blessed be the Almighty, you more and more do, in the Cause of God and Good Men. (And when they shall have read Mr. Disney's most incomparable Essay upon the Execution of the Laws, as I hope all will) in the midst of our Melancholy on the Occasion of so publick a Degeneracy both in Principles and Practice; it gives a comfortable Prospect of an happy Recovery of the Church of God its primitive State of Piety and Virtue, and that the Kingdom of Satan will not stand long; nor Satanical Men wilifie, insult and murder the Servants of Christ without End.

'And that the Almighty may increase the Number of such Ministers of God for Good, as you shew your selves to be, is the hearty Prayer of,
Gentlemen, Your most Affectionate and Obedient humble Servant, T. BRAD

1 TIM. VI. Ver. xii.

Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on Eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast profess'd a Good Profession before many Witnesses.

I Little thought, that a late Discourse I made before many of you, should be a Prologue to so fatal a Tragedy as we have here presented to us. As I then told you that there are two Powers in the World contending for Dominion over Mankind; God, and our Lord Jesus Christ our Rightful Lord and Sovereign, and the Devil that Arch-Rebel, and Usurper; And that in this War the whole World is engag'd, and none can stand Neuter; So now our sad experience shews us this Truth, that we who profess our selves the Servants of Jesus Christ, must *fight the good Fight of Faith, as we will lay hold on Eternal Life, that thereunto we are called, and have professed in our Baptismal Covenant a good Profession before many Witnesses.*

But to illustrate this matter the better to you, I shall proceed as follows.

First, I will remind you of your Christian Profession, Covenant and Engagements; shewing you that as the State of one in Covenant with God, is a State of Warfare; so our *Baptismal Covenant*, is a *Military Oath* taken by us, to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jesus Christ, in his and our War against Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darkness.

Secondly, That it being of absolute Necessity that we continue Faithful in our Covenant unto our Lives end; and yet there being an Enmity, as between the Serpent himself, and the Seed of the Woman, so between the Seed of both, *viz.* The Wicked and Righteous, the latter are almost sure to undergo Persecutions from the former; and that therefore it is a Duty incumbent upon the Sons and Servants of God in Covenant with him, constantly to resist the Temptations of the Serpent, and his Seed to confess Christ and his Truths, and to stand firm in his Cause even unto Martyrdom.

Thirdly, I will shew you what Spiritual Weapons and Armour you must use in this sharp Conflict and Engagement; and how by using them you shall become Victorious. The Armour whereby we shall certainly become Victorious; if we put it on, and make use of it, is Faith. *Fight the good Fight of Faith.* And,

Fourthly, I will move you by all means to Fight, to stand your Ground, and daily more and more to gain upon your Spiritual Adversaries, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; and in a Word, to beat down Satan's Kingdom, in this your Christian Warfare. I will move you to this from the following Considerations.

1st, Because this is a *good Fight*, well worthy our Engagement in it,
and

and the fittest in the World to exercise our Courage and our Skill, *Fight the good Fight of Faith.*

2dly, Because if we become Victorious in this Fight, we shall *lay hold on Eternal Life*; we shall be crowned with greater Honours than in our Earthly Conquests, even with *Eternal Life*; *Lay hold on Eternal Life.*

3dly, I will excite you to be vigorous, resolute, and steady in your Christian Warfare, because we are *thereunto called*; The Nature of our Profession, engages us to be so: *Whereunto we are also called.*

4thly, Because we have so publickly and solemnly engaged to fight under Christ's Banner; and it will be our utmost Disgrace and Cowardis to fly from it our selves, and to give way in the Battle; especially having made such Publick and Solemn Engagements to the contrary; *We have profess'd a good Profession, &c.*

And then, *lastly*, because the Examples of stout Leaders are of mighty Consequence to encourage those that follow them, to do their Parts also bravely, I will represent to you with what Courage, Resolution, and undaunted Magnanimity, the Martyrs that have gone before you have fought in this Christian Warfare; and particularly our good Brother here before us.

First, *I will remind you of your Christian Profession, Covenant, and Engagements*; Shewing you, that as the State of one in Covenant with God, is a State of Warfare; so our Baptismal Covenant is a military Oath taken by us to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jesus Christ in this, which is both his and our War against Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darknes.

I have been long of this Perswasion, and for any thing I can see, must ever continue of the same Opinion, that there is nothing within the whole Compass of our Religion of greater Consequence to be well understood and throughly apprehended by us, than the whole doctrine of the covenant of Grace, viz. *the occasion thereof by Reason of the Fall, the Nature, Terms and Conditions of the same*; By whose Mediation it was obtained for us, by what Assistance we shall be able to perform it, and our Obligations thereunto. And that, as for many other Reasons, not here to be mentioned, and for which I must therefore refer you, (a) as well as for the knowledge of the thing it self, to what I have said elsewhere; so particularly for this? That as the State of a Christian, as such, is a State of Warfare; so our Baptismal Covenant is a military Oath taken by us to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jesus Christ, in this which is both his and our War against Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darknes.

That the State of a Christian is a State of Warfare, wherein the Sinner is on the side of Satan, and the true Christian in the Cause of God, I did at large shew you on those Words of St. John, 1 Epist. 3. 8th Ver. *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil: For the Devil sinneth from the Beginning*: And the whole Discourse being on that Subject, I shall not

(a) *Lectures on the Prelimin, Quest, and Answ. of the Ch. Cat. or the short Discourse on the Bapt. Cov.* repeat

repeat that matter her but rather refer you to the *Discourse* it self for Satisfaction,

But that our *Baptismal Covenant* is a *Military Oath*, taken by us to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jesus Christ, in this our War against Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darknes; As this is a point not yet spoken to, so it may well deserve our Consideration. That the *Roman Soldiers* were constantly wont to take a *Military Oath* to their General, is what every one who is any thing seen in their Antiquities, does very well know; as also that such their Oath was call'd a *Sacrament*, whence the Phrase *Sacramento se obstringere*, to bind ones self under the Oath or Sacrament, when they took such an Oath to be faithful to their General. And in allusion to this, it is, that both the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are also called Sacraments; Because in the one we did first enter, in the other we ratific such our Covenant with God, our Lord Jesus Christ; in the most solemn manner obliging our selves therein utterly to *Renounce the Devil*, and adhere to Christ our Rightful Lord and Master to our Lives end.

And here I cannot but admire the Wisdom of our Church above any whether Reform'd or others, that so agreeably to the whole Tenor of Scripture, and to the Practice of the ancient Church, under the Form of a *military Oath*, she enters and binds down all her Children to an utter Abjuration of Satan, and a faithful Service and strict Allegiance to Christ. Take the Scripture from one end to the other, and it consists of a History of a long and fierce War between Christ and his Church on one side, and Satan and his Adherents on the other; together with the Laws of Christ's Subjects; in conforming to which they must express their Allegiance to him, And the constant Phrase of the ancient Church in the entring of any of its Children by Baptism into Covenant with Christ, was altogether *Military*, as may be seen in *Tertullian*, the Constitutions called Apostolical, *St. Cyprian*, *Ambrose*, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, and in whom not. So that from the beginning it has been always thought, and it continues still to be esteemed, that as the State of a Christian is a mere Warfare under Christ his General, against Satan that great Rebel; So our *Baptismal Covenant* is the *Oath of Allegiance* we have taken to Christ our Saviour; the *Military Oath* whereby we have bound our selves to serve faithfully under him. And thus much may suffice for the first. Proceed we on next to our next Head of Discourse; Namely to shew;

Secondly, *That it being of absolute Necessity, that we continue faithful in our Covenant unto our Lives end. And yet there being an Enmity, as between the Serpent himself and the Seed of the Woman; So between the Seed of both, viz. The Wicked and the Righteous; the latter are almost sure to undergo Persecution from the former. And that therefore it is a Duty incumbent upon the Sons and Servants of God, in Covenant with him, constantly to resist the Temptation of the Serpent and his Seed; to confess Christ and his Truths; and to stand firm to his Cause even unto Martyrdom.*

Having taken this Military Oath to Christ; it is of absolute Necessity, that we continue Faithful in our Covenant with him, to our Lives end. This if we do not, we shall come under the Guilt of being *Covenant Breakers*, and such you will find among fearful Company, *Rom. 1. 31.* We shall be also guilty of the highest Perjury. And know, that as the *Law is made for the Lawless and Disobedient, for the Ungodly, and for Sinners, for Unholy, and Profane, for Murderers of Fathers, and Murderers of Mothers, for Man slayers, for Whoremongers for them who defile themselves, for Men-stealers, for Liars;* So for perjured Persons, *1 Tim. 1. 9, 10.* And as the Law is made strict against them, so it will be one Day executed *severely* upon them. But then you are to consider withal,

That there being an Enmity, as between the Serpent himself, and the Seed of the Woman; so between the Seed of both, *viz.* The Wicked and the Righteous, the latter are almost sure to undergo Persecution from the Former. The Serpent is the Devil, and the Seed of the Woman is the *Messiah* our Lord Christ; And as, soon after the revolt of Mankind from God to Satan, a perpetual and bloody War proclaim'd between the Devil and his Vassals, and Christ with his Subjects, in those remarkable Words, *Gen. 3. 15. I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel;* And in the same Words, it was foretold that Christ and his Followers should suffer severely from Satan and his Associates; so the Malice of the Satanical Crew did soon appear, and continues even unto this Day. The peculiar Character of Satan is, that *he is a Murderer;* and those who are of a like murderous Disposition with him, are said to be his *Children*, *John 5. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lust of your father ye will do: He was a murderer from the beginning.* And this Disposition both of him and them, was very early exemplified in his First-born *Cain, who was of that wicked one; and slew his Brother Abel. And wherefore slew ye him? because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's Good.* Ah! here is the true Cause generally of whatever Murders, and always of the Persecutions and Massacres which have been in the World. Impious and wicked Men, horrible and outrageous Swearers, Profaners of his sacred Name and Word, Breakers of his Sabbaths, and Contemners of his Ordinances, as also those Sons of *Belial*, Adulterers, Whoremongers and Drunkards. These as well as Idolaters, are his profess'd Votaries, and are usually his more immediate Servants, who constantly attend his Chappel, the *Play-House.* And now the faithful Subjects, and true Servants of God, as they are the very reverse of all this in themselves; so they with an Heroick Zeal, for the Honour of their Lord and Master, labour all they can to bring off those wretched Men from their vile Servitude to Sin and Satan; and for this both Satan and Satanical Men rage horribly against them, revile and malign, and gnash their Teeth upon them, and if they can, will murder and destroy them. Thus stands the Truth of the Case, and then, *marvel not, my Brethren, if* the

the World hate you, 1 John 3. 13. nor be ye discouraged at it ; for what says the great Captain of your Salvation, your Leader, John 15. 18, 19, 20, 21. If the the World hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the World, the World would love its own ; but because you are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World ; Therefore the World hateth you. Remember the Word that I said unto you, the Servant is not greater than the Lord, if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you, for my Name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. Thus you see in what noble Strains your great General does rouse up your Courage, and be not disheartned.

But let every Son and Servant of God, who is in Covenant with him, and so has taken the *Military Oath* to be faithful to, and to stick by him, look upon it as a Duty incumbent upon him, constantly to resist and repel the Temptations of the Serpent and his Seed, so confess Christ and his Truths ; Nay, and to stand firm in his Cause, even to Martyrdom it self, if there should be occasion. You have entred into Covenant with him, to renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh ; to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith ; and to obey God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same all the Days of your Life. And you must make it your first care, in your own Persons, to resist and repel whatever Temptations he himself, or his under Tempters, the World and the Flesh, shall ply you withal, to induce you to falsifie your Vows to God. And both his and their Temptations being very many, various and wilely, as I have already largely shew'd the World (b) you must be very watchful, and very Resolute, lest you be ensnar'd and overcome by them. But when through the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, which will not upon your earnest Prayer for it, be wanting to your Support, you shall find your Virtue pretty well established, proceed in the Name of God,

To Confess openly and bravely your Adherence to Christ in the Vindication of his Cause, of his Truths, and of his Laws. And accordingly if any Impudent Blasphemer, shall vilifie and ridicule the Scriptures, or arrogantly dispute against any the Fundamental Articles of your Faith ; or shall deride Piety and Virtue, and be found in the breach of any the Capital parts thereof, by profane Cursing and Swearing, by the profanation of the Lord's-day, by Rioting or Drunkenness, by Chambering and Wantonness, if they appear incorrigible, and beyond the force of Perswasion to reclaim, give them not only to understand, but to feel, that we live under a Christian Government, and that as yet, Thanks to our Law-makers, who are gone before us, there are Laws to restrain their Madnes.

And thus you must by Virtue of your *Military Oath*, or Covenant, stand firm in God's Cause, even to *Martyrdom* it self, if there should be

(b.) See *Gov. Lett.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Occasion. It is a vulgar Error crept into Mens Heads, that in those Nations where Christianity is entertain'd, or at least profess'd in the purity thereof, there is no place for Martyrdom. Such suppose *Martyrdom* is a suffering to Death in the Prosecution or Vindication, of the *Doctrinal part* of Christianity only, of all's *some* Article of their Creed; but that as to the practical part, to suffer with reference to that, does not deserve the noble and glorious Title of a Martyr. But the Truth is otherwise. And Martyrdom properly signifies a suffering even to Death, in the Testimony and Acknowledgment of God's Sovereign Authority over us, be it with respect to any Truth he requires us to believe, or of any Duty he obliges us to discharge. And in this latter acceptation *John the Baptist* was a Martyr, when he was beheaded from having frankly reprov'd *Herod* for marrying his Brother *Philip's* Wife; And I will be bold to affirm, our good Brother here before us, as he was murdered in the *best Service* in the World, the promoting a *Reformation of manners*, may also deserve the most noble of all Titles, that of *Martyr*. In both the Authority of God is equally asserted, in both therefore the Crown of Martyrdom is equally attain'd. And in either case, should any of us be providentially call'd forth to give our Testimony to God's Authority; either by confessing him and his Divine Truths, or by yielding Obedience to his Commands, we must do it at the hazard of our Lives, and the expence of our Blood: *Not fearing them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: but rather fearing him which is able to destroy both body and Soul in Hell*, Mar. 10. 28. And that this we might be able to do, should it be the Divine Will and pleasure to call us forth, at the Expence; even of our Blood to assert his Cause, I shall proceed,

Thirdly, *To shew you what Spiritual Weapons and Armour you must use in this sharp Conflict and Engagement. And how by using them, you shall become Victorious.* The Armour whereby we shall certainly become *Victorious*, it we put it on, and make use of it, is Faith. *Fight the good Fight of Faith.* This is the Direction of *St. Paul* in the very case we are upon, our Spiritual Warfare, or the Fighting God's Cause against all the Powers of Darkness, *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood*, not only against Humane force and violence, and corrupt Nature, *but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against Spiritual Wickedness in High Places.* *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the Evil Day, and having done all, to stand.* *Stand therefore, having your Loyns girt about with Truth, and having on the breast plate of Righteousness; and your feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace; Above all, taking the shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance, and Supplications for all Saints,* Eph. 6. 12, 13, 14.

15, 16, 17, 18. Here we are directed indeed to the whole Armour of God, whereby we may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil; and a noble Place of Scripture it is, worthy a Comment upon every Part of it, would Time permit. But that which the Apostle himself more particularly recommends to our Use, is Faith; *Above all, take the Shield of Faith*, and the Force of that is what alon I can now speak to. And as *without Faith it is impossible to please God*. by discharging as we ought, our Covenant Engagements to him; so in Virtue of it there are no Difficulties in our Christian Warfare, be they never so great, but we may overcome; as appears by what others have done before us in the Strength of it; a noble Record of whose Glorious Achievements, with a most pathetic Exhortation to follow their Steps, we have in the 11 and 12 Chapters to the Hebrews; a Place of Scripture which will yield an exceeding great Support to those who are call'd forth to the more rough and dangerous Services of Religion, and such as may probably bring them at last to Martyrdom, in the Cause of God against Satan; and which therefore I would particularly recommend to the serious Meditation of many here.

But of what Nature, you will say, is that Faith, by the Virtue of which we can do such mighty Things; and how shall we use it, so as to become *Victorious* by it? And to sum up, in as few Words as possible, what may be to our present Purpose; in short it is this, a well-grounded firm Perswasion, that it is God who gave us our Being, and all that we are, and all that we have, so that we are entirely his Property, and ought to live and die solely to his Glory. That he continually exercises a watchful Providence over us, such as a wise Prince does over his People; So that we are to look upon our selves as his Subjects, to yield our selves obedient to his Laws, and to reckon upon both our Persons and Services as absolutely at his Appointment: That when at the Instigation of Satan, Mankind had revolted over from God to him; the divine Goodness, in mer Compassion to our deplorable Condition, as Rebels to the best of Masters, and Slaves to the cruellest of Tyrants, did send his own Son into the World to bring us back to him our God, and to redeem and rescue us from under the Power of the Devil; So that we ought most devoutly to look up to him as our great Deliverer and Redeemer. That in order to compass a compleat Redemption for us, by mediating an entire Reconciliation between God and us; tho' himself in Nature God, he took upon him that of Men. and being God-Man, a middle Person between God and us, he put on a Treaty of Accommodation between us, for which surely we can never sufficiently bless him: That under this Character of *Mediator*, he first took upon him the Quality of a *Prophet*, to enlighten our benighted Minds in our Way home to God, and to prescribe us the Terms and Conditions of that Covenant, on whose Conditions alone he would receive us to Mercy. And surely this we ought to close with; And that He moreover, because the divine Justice must be fully satisfy'd for so high an Affront done to God by our Revolt, took upon him the Office of a *Priest*, to that Degree, as never was done before or since; even so as to

lay down his Life, and offer his own most precious Blood a Sacrifice for us to atone and appease the Wrath of his Father conceiv'd against us; so that we are his purchased Possession with a Witness. And after his Sufferings on Earth, having ascended into Heaven, and there being vested with all the Power and Authority of a *King* over his Church, were committed altogether to his Government, and we are under his Conduct; and must therefore look upon our selves as altogether his Subjects, Servants, and Soldiers; to fight his Battles against his and our Enemy the Devil, In discharging our Parts well in which Warfare, as becomes us in the several Posts and Stations in which he shall allot us, we may assure our selves of being infinitely and unspeakably Rewarded by him, for so he has promis'd us; But if we shall prove recreant and Renegadoes, and Revolt again over to the Devil, he will most direfully punish us; for so, he has plainly Threaten'd. And this may be sufficient at present to be spoke to, as to the *matter* of that Faith whereby we may come off Victorious and Conquerors in the Day of Battle.

But if you do demand farther, How are we to use this noble Weapon of Faith, and when most seasonably? Why, you are always with great Seriousness, and great Intenseness and Application of Thought, to *meditate* upon these awful Points now mentioned. But especially whenever you find your self likely to be engag'd in the Resistance of any strong Temptation to violate any one Article of our Covenant with God, or in any Difficult and dangerous Service, whereby we are call'd forth to do him eminent Honour: Then especially be sure you have your Eye fixt upon those great Things, *Praying withal all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit*; For so St. Paul advises us, that we should do in Concurrence with Faith, *Eph. 6. 18.* And being thus prepar'd and arm'd with Faith and Prayer, you may safely throw your selves into the Heat of the Battle; and no doubt you will come off Conquerors. And such is the Nature of this Warfare, that you will be more the Conquerors should you fall and die in the Field. But this being a Service so very formidable to humane Nature, it behoves me surely therefore to lay before you some very urgent and powerful Reasons to engage you in it; And this was my fourth Proposal. And I will move you to this from the following Considerations.

1st, *Because this is a good Fight, well worthy our Engagement in it, and the fittest in the World to exercise our Courage and our Skill: Fight the good Fight of Faith.* It is a good Fight upon a double account; first, because it tends to make *our selves Good*; And next, because it tends to make the *World Good*. And truly the Fight must begin first at home, and with our selves, or we shall have little Success abroad. But this I need not urge to you, who are sufficiently sensible, how watchful an Eye the World has upon you, that you be your selves reformed, who so nobly endeavour the Reformation of others. And it must be attributed to the peculiar Providence of God over your Undertaking that Malice it self has not in so long a time been able to find a flaw either in your selves or Con-

duct.

duct, with respect to that great Work, such as may deserve its Animadversion. To pass on therefore.

Next. As it is a *good Fight*, well worthy our Engaging in, in that it tends to make us in *our selves so good*; so much more as it will do a great deal of *Good in the World*. The World, as it is, is bad, very bad, God he knows; And were He not infinite in his Patience, Forbearance, Long-Suffering, and Goodness, as he is in his Holiness and Justice, we had e'er this been in respect of Punishment, as well as of Sin, as *Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrha*. And undoubtedly we should e'er this have come up to the height both of their Sin, and Fate; but that so many excellent Persons (of which our Brother here before us was truly a great one) with the Zeal of *Phineas*, have brought so many of the Criminals to exemplary Punishment, to the Terror of Evil-doers; and so the *Plague has stayed*. And if this *Fight of Faith* then, does not good to the World, I know not what does. And it has been a Thousand times an Amusement to me, that any serious Christian should arraign it; That the *Sons of Belial*, the avowed Servants of the Devil, should gnash their Teeth against it, and take so much Pains to misrepresent and bely it, I do not in the least wonder; for why? *The Devil is the Father of Lies, and the Works of their Father they will do*: It is natural to them. But that any sincere Christian, and that any especially, who are *chief Members* in the Household of Faith, should express any evil Will to this noble *Fight of Faith*, and those who are so gloriously engaged in it; to speak my Mind freely, It perfectly *confounds* me whenever I think of it: for my Life I cannot account for it.

But yet, tho' many will not with that diabolical Enmity and Fury as some very visibly do, *outrage* this blessed and good Work, and those who are so signally engaged in it; yet too many of those who take themselves for very good Christians, think they may excuse themselves from this the roughest part of this *Fight of Faith*, as not being *called* to it; but to rouse up these Persons out of so dangerous a Sloth and Indifference in the *long and extended War* between God and Satan; That I may keep close to the Method I have proposed, having,

2dly, Shewed that the *Crowns of Glory* belong only to those who shall endure Hardships and Sufferings in this spiritual Warfare; And withal, of what a lustrous Nature those *Crowns* will be, far beyond the fading *Garlands* which are obtained by Earthly Conquests; I will proceed to shew, that there is no baptized Christian (and I am not *Latitudinarian* enough, to reckon those who despise and affront the Ordinance of Baptism, in the Number of Christians) but is *called*, even to this Degree of Warfare.

But first of all let me tell you, that those who are piously, ambitious of *Crowns of Glory*, must endure many Hardships, and grievous Sufferings in this spiritual Warfare. The Apostle indeed in the Account which he gave of the Gospel, saying, that *we must, through much Tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Acts 14. 22. seems to intimate, that Christianity brings many Tribulations *necessarily* along with it; and

So our learned *Hammond* understands those Words. And truly tho' to *Hades* a Man may go with a whole Skin, yet I much doubt, whether in the streight and narrow way to Heaven, that more unfrequented and untrodden Path, he shall not inevitably meet with *briars* and *Thorns*, and receive some Scratches and Scars, at least. But admit in the more *haleion* and peaceable Days of the Church, it may be otherwise; so that an Admittance into the lower Stations of Bliss (as there are many Mansions in our Father's House) may be obtained by those who have suffered nothing, either in Life, Goods, or Reputation; yet the *Crowns of Glory* will, I fear, fall to none of their Share. But that distinguished Reward, seems all along reserved for those who are content, through much Tribulation, to make their way to Heaven. Such a one was *St. Paul*, he had fought a Good Fight, he had finished his Course, he had kept the Faith; and thenceforth he became assured, there was laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. And such is he to whom this Degree of Blessedness is declared, James 1. 12. Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation, that is, Affliction; for when he is tried, he shall receive a Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. And such was the Church of *Smyrna*, Rev. 2. 9, 10. I know thy Works and Tribulation, saies the First and the Last, Fear not those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days; be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.

But how shall I describe how full of Lustre those Crowns will be? How far beyond the fading Glories obtain'd by earthly Conquests? How fading, how uncertain these Latter are, may be easily made appear. It is what we see every Day. One unfortunate Action shall efface the Memory of many triumphant Campaigns: Nay the mere Envy of those worthless Creatures who lie soking at Home, in Ease and Luxury, shall tear off the Laurels, tho' fresh and verdant, from the Brows of the most glorious Heroes returning from the Toils of War. But the Crown of Confessors and Martyrs in the Cause of God, is not of so transitory a Nature. The former Fight to obtain a corruptible Crown, but these an incorruptible. 1 Cor. 9. 25. No, these shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. And if you want to be further satisfied in the blissful State of those who have come out of Tribulation, you have it nobly described, Rev. 7. 15, 16, 17, Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple; And he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them; and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters; and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.

Such are the glorious Rewards of all who shall signalize themselves in the Service of God against the Dominion of Satan. And hence it is, that our Saviour pronounces such blessed, Matth. 5. 10. Blessed are they which

are persecuted for Righteousness Sake. Nay, and hence it is, that they are bid to rejoice; nay, and to leap for Joy in the parall: Place, Luke 6. 23. Accordingly hence it is that the Apostles, when they were beaten before the Sanhedrim for giving their Testimony for Christ, departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake, Acts 6. 41. And lastly, hence it is that Christians, in the primitive Times, even crouded the heathen Tribunals to receive the Crown of Martyrdom, of which we have Instances innumerable in Ecclesiastical History.

But notwithstanding these so glorious Promises, and noble Examples; Many, very many; so they can but escape Hell, and barely enter the Kingdom of Heaven, will be contented to be Door-keepers there, tho' here they are eager enough of uppermost places. But this they would rather than pass through Briars and Thorns in the way, being of too tender and delicate a Constitution forsooth, to bear rough and hard Usage: And they hope they may at least enter the Kingdom of Heaven; because as they suppose, all Christians are not called to Sufferings. But,

III. I shall now shew them the contrary; and that they, even they, be they who they will, are thereunto called. And that I may be sure to comprehend all; I say, that there is no Mortal Man or Woman upon Earth, from the Prince upon the Throne to the Beggar upon the Dunghil, but is thereunto called. My Meaning is, there is no one Christian, but who in the Station he is in, some way or other, is bound to discountenance, discourage, and when milder Methods will not do, to bring to condign Punishment, the Workers and Works of Darknes, *Blasphemy, profane Swearing and Cursing, Lewdness, Profanation of the Lord's Day, excessive Drinking*, and all dissolute, immoral and disorderly Practices, whereby God is so highly dishonoured, and the Devil so directly serv'd; and this notwithstanding the ill Usage they meet with in the way of their Duty; And this I would prove with respect to *Princes, Ministers, Magistrates*, and the *People*; but that on a late Occasion, to which this is but a sorrowful Appendage. I have already done it: And to that I must again refer you. And shall therefore, instead of particular Arguments to each Rank and Degree of Men, proceed to my

IV. *Motive*, which I am sure concludes all baptized Persons under the Obligation; and that is, that all such have so publickly and solemnly engaged to fight under Christ's Banner; and it will be our utmost Disgrace, and the *highest Degree of Cowardice* (pardon the Expression, for I think there can be nothing high and truly great in Cowardice) to fly from our baptismal Covenant our selves, and give way in the Day of Battel; especially having made so publick and solemn Engagements to the contrary. *We have professed a good Profession before many Witnesses*. And what are those solemn and publick Engagements made in Baptism? Why there we have in the Presence of God and his Church, *renounced the Devil, and all his Works, the World also, and the Flesh*; we have profess'd to believe (a thing quite different from the Infidelity and Profaneness sure which now reigns) *all the Articles of our Christian Faith*; And we have engaged to obey; what?

All

All Gods holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same, without Tergiverſation, upon any difficulties and dangers, to our Lives End. And I am ſure, among the principal of God's Commands thoſe muſt take place, which put us upon promoting the Deſtruction of Satan, and the Advancement of Chriſt's Kingdom. Thus all *have made a good Profeſſion before many Witneſſes*; yea before many and great Witneſſes, even God, Angels and Men. And this may be thought ſuch a Covenant or *military Oath*, as I have explained it, as may be deem'd enough to oblige us to the *good Fight of Faith*, in what Field ſoever, be it a Field of Blood, into which Providence ſhall call upon us to fight it.

But further yet, the more ſtriſtly to engage us; Our Holy Mother this Church, from the Honour and Regard, it peculiarly bears to our Saviour; (as appears by its concluding every Collect, every Prayer, I had almoſt ſaid every Petition it makes, in his Name) *Sings every baptized and covenanted Member of it, with the Sign of the Croſs*; That being the Banner under which we are to fight: *In token that hereafter he ſhall not be aſhamed to confeſs the Faith of Chriſt crucified, and manfully to fight under his Banner againſt Sin, the World, and the Devil, and to continue Chriſt's faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our Lives End.* And ſurely this Engagement of our baptiſmal Covenant and Oath ſo ſolemnized, is ſo ſtrong, that Nothing can be more forcible. Thus you ſee all baptiz'd Chriſtians with us eſpecially, are doubly concluded under an Obligation to *fight the good Fight of Faith*. But all you will ſay are not in the peaceable Times of the Church *thereunto called*. In Times and Places of Perſecution, as under Pagan or heretical Powers, the true Servants of God are often called forth to ſuffer, they will own; but where orthodox Chriſtianity is the national Religion, and by *Law eſtabliſh'd*, as God be prais'd it is with us, there is no Room to ſuffer. No, what not for *Righteouſneſs Sake*? Martyrdom, as I before told you, is a Teſtimony given to the Authority of God, as well with Reſpect to the Preceptive as the doctrinal Part of Religion. And that in an *eſtabliſh'd Church* Men may be pointed out for Death, for aſſerting and ſtanding up for his Laws, we have too ſad an Inſtance before us. And as to an inferior Degree of ſuffering; if any one ſhall attempt to do any uncommon or conſiderable Good to the Advancements of Chriſt's Kingdom in the World; I am very much miſtaken if he ſhall not ſoon bring the World about his Ears; as much Chriſtian as it is ſuppoſed to be. *A Gallio that cares for none of thoſe things*, may paſs through the World peaceably enough, but whether with what Pace he ſhall reach Heaven, I very much doubt. For I think as he is liſted in a War, where the utmoſt Vigour is required, he is *called* to ſomething more, than what he thinks to be innocent but is in Reality to be good for nought. In ſhort, this is a War whereunto we are *Call'd*; and this is an Argument ſo preſſing to rouse us from Sloth or Indifferency in it; that I need not add more. However,

V. And *Laſtly*, Becauſe the Example of ſtout Leaders is of ſuch mighty Conſequence to encourage thoſe that follow them to do their Parts alſo bravely, I will repreſent to you with what Courage, and undaunted Magnanimity;

namity, the *Martyrs* heretofore have fought in the hottest Parts of the Battle in this Christian Warfare; and particularly our good Brother here before us. And here I might lay before you a glorious Scene of triumphant Achievement and Sufferings in the pulling down the Kingdom of Satan, by the Apostles; Confessors, Martyrs, in the several Ages of the Church, down throughout the Times of *Pagan* and *Papal* Persecution and Tyranny. But this would be to transcribe a *Martyrology*, and I must refer you to the History it self of the Martyrs. But as to the Manner of their heroick Bravery and Sufferings, I cannot better give it you, than in the very Words of the Apostle, *Heb. 11. 12.* The Capters I before so earnestly recommended to your most serious Consideration, to fortify you in all your Undertakings, and to support you under whatever Sufferings in so glorious a Cause and Conflict. The Words are these beginning at the 33. v. *By Faith they subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, stopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire, escaped the Edge of the Sword, out of Weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in Fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens. Women received their dead raised to Life again; and others were tortur'd, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection. And others had tryal of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea moreover, of Bonds, and Imprisonment. They were stoned, they were saun asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword: They wandred about in sheep-skins, and in Coat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. (Of whom the World was not worthy) they wandred in Deserts, and in Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the Earth. And these all have obtained a good Repors through Faith.*

And now what have I more to do, but to give you some Account also of your dear Brother, whose Obsequies we do here solemnize, that you may see how nearly he trod in the Steps, and has been honoured with the Fate of the preceding Confessors and Martyrs. And that for your Example and Encouragement in this glorious Fight. And the Account I can give of him with good Assurance is this.

That he has been above Thirty Years a strict Professor of Religion, and led his Life accordingly.

That he had a great Zeal for God's Honour, and the Salvation of Souls, and a great Hatred against Sin; which made him almost from the first engage himself in the Work of *Reformation of Manners*.

That in the 17 or 18 Years, that he has been concern'd in it, none in all that Time could ever fix upon him, any Thing that was either wicked dishonest or; even his worst of Enemies, the Whores, and Rogues, could not but give him a good Word; nay have been heard to say; that they Believed him to act therein, merely from Conscience.

That he had been aiding and assisting to the apprehending and prosecuting of several Thousands of lewd and profligate Persons, besides a vast Number of Sabbath Breakers, prophane Swearers, and Drunkards.

That he was of a sweet, gentle and courteous Temper, and of a very modest, and humble Behaviour; very good natur'd, and always ready to serve

serve and assist every one, even his very Enemies; and he had a singular Plainness and Sincerity shining thro' all his Actions; He was very courageous, and fear'd no Encounter, yet had great Calmness and Presence of Mind in Danger.

That he has often been much abused, beaten, mobb'd and wounded and in very great Danger of his Life in detecting, and bringing to Justice, the lewd and disorderly Persons. And was the first, that took it to his Arm, for among the Rioters, Mr. JOHN COOPER, a Constable, about Seven Years since murder'd in the Execution of his Office, in suppressing the publick Lewdness, and Disorders at MAY FAIR, tho' there were then above Fourty Soldiers, with their Swords drawn.

That tho' he was almost continually in Danger, and Broils, and by his great Pains and constant Labour and Service in the Work, he had very much broke and impair'd his Health, and Strength, yet he was unwearied in it to the very last.

And in his last Work you see, he has fallen a Victim by the Sword of God's Enemies, being murdered by Three private Soldiers; a sort of Men, I am sorry to speak of (of whom if we may judge by their horrid Oaths and Curses, and by their wicked Lives and Manners, which with too much Tolerance surely from their Commanders, they are permitted to lead) who, tho' they receive the Christians Pay, are Night and Day fighting the Devils Bartlet. Thus this brave Soldier of Jesus Christ has fallen. And this short and true Account I have given of him for your Example and Encouragement who survive him, that you also may proceed conquering, and to conquer in the same glorious Fight.

It may seem indeed at first Sight to be rather a Discouragement to you. But you may remember what you have often heard, that the Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church. And the Church of God has indeed ever flourished the better for being watered by the Blood of the Martyr. And I believe also it will do the like amongst us, for the Innocent and precious Blood which has been lately shed in this Cause of Reformation of Manners. It is but a few Years since that honest Man Mr. COOPER fell a Martyr in the Cause, by the hands of an Atheist, assisted also by Soldiers, for fetching before Justice some of Satans Vassals out of that horrible Den of Impiety, May-Fair; and you have heard how that innocent Man's Blood has cried, and does still cry for Vengeance, so as to cause the worthy Magistrates and Juries, both of City and County, to petition to have that execrable Place of Debauchery and Impiety totally put down; and I hope the Cry both of it, and them, and of many other good Men throughout the Nation, joining with them, will be soon heard.

And now the Blood which has been shed on the like Occasion, and in the very same Manner; how know you but that it also may cry so loudly, as to shake the very Foundations of the Play-House; a Seminary of Atheism, Impiety and Immorality, not at all inferior to the other. And would not its Fall rejoyce your Hearts? Courage, Courage, brave Soldiers of God, and of your Lord Jesus Christ. There is no hurt yet. Our martyred Brother has lost nothing, I am sure, for he has received his Crown of Glory. And your blessed Cause, I am perswaded will suffer nothing by it; it will be more firmly established, it will be better cemented by his Blood.

Upon the whole then; persevere in the Name of God, to fight the good Fight of Faith, to lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto you are not only called, but have witnessed a good Confession before many Witnesses.

Nay, and from the very Example of the Martyr before you, let me exhort you, my beloved Brethren, that ye be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord. Amen, Amen,

F I N I S.



