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A
Short and Authentic Account
OF THE
PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THE
LAST TWENTY - FOUR HOURS
OF THE
L I F E A N D D E A T H
O F
W I L L I A M D A V I E S,

WHO WAS EXECUTED

On *Wednesday*, DECEMBER 11th, 1776.

By the Rev. THOMAS MAXFIELD,
Who attended him to the last Period of his Life.

L O N D O N :

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M. D C C . L X X V I .

A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF
WILLIAM DAVIES.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 8th, 1776, on hearing that Mr. Davies who was condemned for forgery, was to suffer on the Wednesday following, he was brought so much to my mind (though I did not know him) that every time I prayed, in public (as well as in private, and particularly at the sacrament) I was constrained to pray for him, and found great access on his account.—On Monday I had an uncommon desire to see and speak to him, and some friends I talked to about it, said I ought if I could by any means.—I tried

on Monday but could not. I had also, so many discouragements when I was going, that I do not remember I ever knew an instance to come up to it. His most intimate friends told me again and again, that there had been of all sorts of people to talk with him, and they assured me, that he did not like to speak, or to be spoke to, about the state of his soul. And when one and another were speaking to him, he would desire them to talk to Dover; he wants it, and it will do him good (said he) but I know as much as you can tell me; besides, I have other business, that I must attend to at this time, &c. therefore it would be of no service at all, my giving myself the trouble. It greatly damped, though it did not take away, the desire I had to see him. On Tuesday by using Mr. — name, I got into Newgate-chapel, in the time of morning prayers; was near Mr. Davies, but did not know him, neither did my friend that was with me.

When prayers were over, I asked for him, went to him, and asked him how he found his heart, in regard to what he was to pass through to-morrow? As that was
the

the time he was to die. He told me things appeared very dark and gloomy. I then said, are you willing I should speak to you on the state of your soul? as I had heard by several that had been with him, that he did not care to speak, or to be spoke to, on that head. He said, yes, and I shall be very much obliged to you for it. I said, I have heard that your mind has been so much taken up, in expectation of a pardon from the King, that you have hardly applied much for a pardon from heaven. He answered, that has been too much the case. I then asked him, if he thought JESUS had paid his debt of sin? He said, he thought so, but he had no sense of it upon his heart. I then pressed him to believe what JESUS had done and suffered, was all for his pardon and salvation; and his enjoying it, all depended upon his believing it. And while I was pressing him to believe, one of the other condemned sinners, (Richardson, I think they called him,) cried out, May not I expect the same, if I believe? I answered, yes, by all means. He said, I do believe, and I will believe, and I feel my heart very light at the thought. I said, CHRIST has died for your sins as well as for

mine. He answered, something tells me my sins are forgiven; and that, I think, cannot be the devil. I said, no, no, it is not the devil, then said he, (clapping his hands together, and the tears running down his face) it must be GOD, and I do, and I will believe it, and I am not afraid to die, if it was this moment. I then spoke to them all one by one, and have reason to think, that to some of them, the LORD blessed the word.

I then turned to Mr. Davies again, who seemed much cast down. I asked if he thought JESUS did not love him? He said, he had been such a backslider that he could not tell what to say to that. I then asked him, (upon hearing him say that) if ever he had known the Lord? He answered, Oh! yes, I was once very happy, under your ministry; and my heart leaped within me, when I saw you come into the chapel: but oh! what am I now! When I had spoke a little more to them, altogether, and they were gone into their cells, I went with Mr. Davies into his room. When we had talked awhile, and I had been to prayers with him, (as many of his friends came to take their last leave of him,)
I and

I and my friend left him, with his heart somewhat refreshed. But he earnestly entreated me to come again in the afternoon, at chapel-time. I promised him, and accordingly went. I had much talk with him before chapel; and after I stayed with him late. He asked me, if I thought JESUS could forgive such a backslider as he? and if GOD could yet look upon him, with an eye of pity? I said, if I was to offer my life to-morrow, and his Majesty would accept of my dying in your stead, after my death can you think, he would require your life also? No, no, said he, I must be clear, I must be set at liberty. Now then, said I, if JESUS has died for you and for me, then GOD cannot, will not condemn us, if we believe he has paid the price that was due to our sins. I see it and believe it, said he, and it sinks into my soul! I feel my heart happy at the thought.

And, while I was speaking to another in the room, that was to die with him, (Dover I think they called him) he wrote the following paper, and gave it me; but I knew not a word that was in it till I came home.

“ I have

“ I have had the advantage of hearing
 “ the Rev. Mr. Maxfield, in the year 1767.
 “ I believe, I was under his ministry, for
 “ about half a year, during which time I
 “ found the greatest peace and happiness.
 “ *I never heard the gospel before.* I esteem-
 “ ed Mr. Maxfield as an angel, and longed
 “ and earnestly desired to be his servant.
 “ I wished much to have the honor to
 “ clean his shoes. But as the zeal of my
 “ friend, who is now gone, I hope, where
 “ I shall go to-morrow, abated, I did not
 “ attend him so constant; but I always
 “ respected him as a father, and as he first
 “ enlightened me, I ESTEEM IT KIND IN
 “ GOD, to send him to see my last. As
 “ he has first comforted; I have happily
 “ received encouragement and comfort to
 “ night through his means. But I must
 “ observe here, that it is an evil, and a
 “ grievous thing, to sin against GOD,
 “ by departing from the ways of GOD.
 “ Had I attended his ministry, and follow-
 “ ed his advice; I am sure, I should not
 “ die this ignominious death. I advise all,
 “ to miss no opportunity, of waiting up-
 “ on GOD. And that they hear with at-
 “ tention, and live up to what they hear—
 “ For

“ For people may persuade themselves,
 “ they can repent, when they will ; I say
 “ they cannot.”

Newgate,
 DEC. 10, 1770.

William Davies.

He earnestly desired that I would go with him to the place of execution, as he believed it would be a means of keeping his mind more staid upon the Lord. I told him, I would, and came on Wednesday the 11th to Newgate, soon after 7 o'clock in the morning. He told me as soon as I came into the room, that he had been very happy good part of the night, but between 4 and 6 o'clock, (as his candle was all burnt out) he gave himself up more closely to prayer, and believing JESUS had paid his debt in full, he had such fellowship with CHRIST, that he never found himself so much blessed before. O! said he, how much better is the LORD than sinful man! I could not get my pardon from man for this one crime, for which I must die. But he, blessed be the name of JESUS, he has pardoned all my *many, many* sins, and healed my backslidings. I do rejoice, in His goodness, His mercy, and His love.

After

After the chapel prayers we had the sacrament together. On the way to the place of execution, we sung this hymn.

JESU, lover of my soul,
 Let me to thy bosom fly;
 While the nearer waters roll,
 While the tempest still is nigh;
 Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
“ He does (said he) ”
 Till the storm of life is past,
 Safe into the haven guide,
 O receive my soul at last.
“ He will, He will.”

Other refuge have I none,
“ I want no other.”
 Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
 Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
“ He will not”
 Still support and comfort me;
 All my trust on thee is stay'd;
 All my help from thee I bring;
 Cover my defenceless head,
 With the shadow of thy wing.
“ He does.”

Thou,

Thou, O CHRIST, art all I want,
 More than all in thee I find;
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
 Heal the sick, and lead the blind;
 Just and holy is thy name
 Man is' all unrighteousness;
 Man by nature's full of sin,
 Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plent'ous grace with thee is found,
 Grace to cover all my sin;
 Let the healing streams abound
 Make and keep me pure within:
 Thou of life the fountain art,
 Freely let me take of thee
 Spring thou up within my heart,

“ *He does,*”

Rise to all eternity.

“ *He will, &c.*”

All in the coach felt it to be life to our hearts. And speaking of the things of the kingdom of GOD, he, as well as all the company were very happy indeed.

Sometimes his heart would sink a little, at the thought of death, and then I spoke a word or two to him, which revived and comforted his soul, and he again would weep

weep for joy, that he was so near the kingdom of glory.

Going up Holborn, he said, CHRIST has loved and washed us from our sins in his own blood, has he not? I answered, yes, and has and does love you, as the prophet says, *He watches over us, with all his heart and with all his soul, to do us good.* And I feel that I could die this hour, if your salvation depended upon my life, rather than you should not be saved. And what would not CHRIST do? who is the ocean and fountain of love in all its fullness? and I have but one drop at the most. I feel, said he, that one drop of his love at this time is better to me than all the world. Once he said, where are we? I answered in Oxford-Road; then, said he, in a very little time I shall see his face with joy, who has forgiven all my sins. Then we sung part of the following hymn.

JESU canst thou love a traitor, &c.

until we came to the place of execution.—
When all was fixed for the final blow—he called me up into the cart to him, and said CHRIST JESUS is the same to the end, is he

he not? I answered, yes; as sure as that GOD cannot lie.—I feel it, I know it, said he, and yet doubts are darted at my mind.—I said these are the *last* fiery darts of the devil. Now in this last moment regard them not, they cannot hurt you. Cast all the weight of your soul, with all your sins, upon JESUS CHRIST. He cannot be worse than his word. He must save you, or cannot be the faithful, loving redeemer. When I had spoke a few words to each of them, he kissed me, and I left him in the hand of JESUS.

When he had made the following pathetic speech to the company, he turned to his fellow sufferers (when their faces were all covered) and exhorted them to cast all their sins and souls upon JESUS, till the cart moved, and they fell into eternity.—May my end be happy like his.

His last speech was sent to me by a gentleman, that wrote it while he was delivering it.

Mr.

Mr. DAVIES's last Speech at Tyburn.

My dear friends,

See what sin has done.—Little did I think the 17th of last January of coming to this shameful end.—But I departed from the Lord and his ways, therefore he left me, and has suffered me to come to this ignominious (but I trust through grace) happy end. Oh! it is a sad thing to sin against a GOOD GOD.

Here is a young man, not five and twenty years of age, (he meant Dover) who is about to suffer for a highway robbery, and he desires that if there are any of that sort here (and I fear there are too, too many) that they will take warning by his example, that they may avoid the same punishment.

He has been long seeking repentance, and I hope he has found it, for repentance is the gift of GOD; but let none presume upon that, for alas; I fear it is not the case with all.

It is likely that some amongst this large concourse of people may be called by a natural death into an awful eternity, before a week is at an end! Let me beseech you then, as a dying man, to seek the Lord while
while

while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near. That you may meet us in a joyful eternity. I die depending only on the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, for my whole salvation. He died a far more shameful and ignominious death than I am about to do; he suffered more excruciating pains than any I shall feel.—He died the just for the unjust; He, the just, for me the unjust, that he might bring me near to GOD.

We are certainly objects of your pity, and I hope we shall have your prayers.—May GOD bless you all, and keep you from this shameful end.—And may GOD bless us and receive us into his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

After this he spoke affectionately to his fellow sufferers, and, among other sentences, this remarkable one—Courage, my friends—Christ can save Tyburn sinners—He can take you to heaven from the gallows.

After the handkerchief was tied over his face, he cried aloud, Saviour of sinners, help! and when the cart was drawing away, Come, dear JESUS, and take me to thy BOSOM.

The following letters were wrote and sent by Mr. Davies, one the day before, the other, the morning of his execution ; and are published with this account by the desire of Messieurs Horton and Bourne.

London, Dec. 1776.

SEVERAL eminent merchants and traders, of this city, who knew the unfortunate *William Davies* who suffered on the 11th of December, for having deposited some forged India Warrants, as a collateral security for the re-payment of a sum of money, which he had borrowed, were pleased, in recommending his petition to the secretary of state, to give their opinion of his integrity in the following strong terms.

*“ We whose names are subscribed, beg leave
 “ humbly to recommend this unfortunate peti-
 “ tioner to your lordship’s favor, in confide-
 “ ration of the very excellent character which
 “ he bore, and from a conviction that he had
 “ no intention ultimately to defraud.”*

It is apprehended his Majesty might have extended mercy in this case, where there
 is

is reason to believe no injury was designed, but for the dangerous tendency of this species of crime in a commercial state.

The day before he suffered, he sent the following letter to the Assignees of his estate.

Messrs. WOODNORTH and PEPPER.

“ S I R S,

“ **O**NE of the reflections that pains most a
 “ dying man, is, that he cannot satisfy
 “ every demand that is upon him. To de-
 “ part this world then, without making all
 “ the restitution in his power, to the injured,
 “ is a mark of impenitence. Therefore, I
 “ think it incumbent on me, before I die, to
 “ give up, unreserved, some bills and other
 “ property, which I might have left for the
 “ maintenance of my wife and children. You
 “ will find them inclosed. My creditors have
 “ a just right to them. I believe and hope they
 “ will lose but little. I wish I could pay them
 “ in full with interest.

“ As for my distressed WIFE and helpless
 “ ORPHANS, I commit them to the pro-

B 2

“ tection

“tection of my GOD, and the benevolence
 “of my surviving FRIENDS, who are born
 “to a happier fate than is the lot of the un-
 “fortunate

“W. DAVIES.”

This remarkable instance of his honesty, has induced several gentlemen, together with those who recommended him to mercy, to use their best endeavours to raise a subscription, in order to establish a small fund for the future support of his three helpless orphans, as well as to make some provision for the present relief of the disconsolate widow, who is now pregnant of a fourth.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for this benevolent purpose, are to be paid into the hands of Mr. *John Horton*, in Wood-Street, and Mr. *John Bourne*, of Exchange-Alley, who have undertaken, at the particular request of the unhappy sufferer, to become guardians to his innocent children.

London,

London, Dec. 14, 1776.

Some unjust reflections having been made upon the behaviour of the late Mr. Davies, whilst under sentence of death, those gentlemen who interest themselves to obtain a subscription for his unhappy widow and children, (from a regard to truth) publish the following letters, received from him, which shew the true state of his mind.

To Mr. H————

“ S I R,

“ **M**Y Maker has put me under the
 “ greatest obligation to a stranger,
 “ to you, sir; for I find by several I have
 “ a great friend in you. I long to see your
 “ face before I depart hence. I do not
 “ know you; but I am persuaded God
 “ does. For HIS sake (though I am the
 “ vilest he ever saved) let me see you to-
 “ morrow: I hope I shall soon see you in
 “ a happier state.

“ May the Lord bless and reward you!

“ —So prays an unworthy creature of
 “ HIS, and fellow creature of yours,

Newgate, Dec. 1776.

“ WILLIAM DAVIES.”

To

To Mr. B——.

“ My dear Friend !

“ **I** HAVE followed your advice, which
 “ is salutary and relieves my mind. In-
 “ closed is a copy of my letter to the as-
 “ signees. I commit my dear wife and
 “ children to you. I am persuaded they
 “ never had a better friend. Oh, the
 “ goodness of God in raising friends to the
 “ friendless and helpless ! may the blessing
 “ of those who are ready to perish come
 “ to you ! your charity and compassion
 “ will be greatly admired, while you feel
 “ the satisfaction and inward pleasure of
 “ it in your own bosom.

“ If it pleases God to open the hearts of
 “ his creatures, and you should, through
 “ the zeal of my friends, receive a suffi-
 “ ent sum, which I fully believe you will,
 “ I could wish you to put it in the funds,
 “ for the use of each of my children,
 “ *Mary-Anne, Susannah, Elizabeth,* and
 “ the *Infant* unborn, if it lives ; and, with
 “ your permission, I beg leave to nominate
 “ you and Mr. H——, their Guardians.
 “ More fit I know not. To your discretion
 “ I leave

“ I leave it to give what share, and in
 “ what manner, you shall think proper,
 “ to my dear, dear wife. In my dying
 “ hours I rejoice I have for my family
 “ such friends. I heartily pray that God
 “ may bless you, and be *your* guardian. I
 “ hope to see you in glory.

“ This day, blessed be God! I hope to
 “ be in paradise, through the merits of
 “ a precious Saviour, who came to suffer
 “ for me an ignominious death, indeed the
 “ just for the unjust, that he might bring
 “ me to God. Oh! what manner of love
 “ is this, that God should so love the
 “ world, as to give his only begotten Son,
 “ that whosoever believeth in him, should
 “ not perish, but have everlasting life.—
 “ THIS, I find, bears a poor creature
 “ up above the fear of death. To HIM I
 “ commend you and yours; and intreat
 “ you to be satisfied with nothing less than
 “ a sense of his pardoning love. THAT
 “ is heaven begun. Adieu, for ever, my
 “ dear friend, and the friend of my poor
 “ wife and children.

*Newgate, half past 4 o'Clock,
 Wednesday Morning.*

“ WILLIAM DAVIES.”

“ If

“ If you can be of service to a poor
 “ friendless boy, who is remarkably attach-
 “ ed to me, I hope you will. It is the
 “ bearer. He can write, and I believe
 “ may be made a very useful servant.”

*Mr. Davies sent several letters from the place
 of execution, among which was the follow-
 ing, to Richard Callow, a young lad, who
 had been some time in his service.*

“ Dear Dick,

“ **I** HAVE recommended you to several
 “ of my friends, and have reason to
 “ believe they will take care of you. My
 “ wife will keep you until you have a
 “ place.---When you have one take care
 “ to keep it, and please your master.---
 “ Never tell lies.---Go to church or meet-
 “ ing as often as you can.---Never come
 “ to see any body in Newgate.---Be a good
 “ boy, and God will bless you. Farewel!

Dec. 11, 1776.

“ WILLIAM DAVIES.”

F I N I S.