

HEAVEN

William Lawrence was a Puritan and an eminent Christian. When he died, Philip Henry (the father of Matthew Henry, the Commentator) preached his funeral sermon at Wem in Shropshire, 26 February 1695. His text was “Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” (Luke 23:28)

Years later William Lawrence’s son, Samuel, died, and Matthew Henry (Philip’s son) was called upon to preach his funeral sermon at Nantwich, in Cheshire, on 28 April, 1712. Matthew’s text was, “Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” (Philippians 2:27)

This sermon was subsequently published, along with “a concise account of Samuel Lawrence’s life.” In that account, Matthew said that he had found the notes of his father’s sermon on “Weep not for me...” preached back in 1695; and quoting from those notes, he showed how his father had evidently thought that if the deceased could speak, the words of his text (“Weep not for me...”) would accurately and wonderfully express his happiness in Heaven. MHW

“If you consider the happiness I am entered into, that fair palace in which death was but a dark entry, you would not weep for me, but rejoice rather.

“Would you know where I am? I am at home in my Father’s house, in the mansion prepared for me there. I am where I would be, where I have long and often desired to be; no longer on a stormy sea, but in a safe and quiet harbor. My working time is done, and I am resting: my sowing time is done, and I am reaping; my joy is the joy of harvest.

“Would you know what I am doing? I see God, I see Him as he is, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face; and the sight is transforming, it makes me like Him. I am in the sweet enjoyment of my blessed Redeemer, my Head and Husband, whom my soul loved, and for whose sake I was willing to part with all; I am here bathing myself at the spring-head of heavenly pleasures and joys unutterable; and therefore weep not for me. I am here keeping a perpetual Sabbath; what that is, judge by your short Sabbaths; I am here singing Hallelujahs incessantly to Him who sits upon the Throne, and rest not day or night from praising Him.

“Would you know what company I have? Blessed company, better than the best on earth; here are holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; I am set down with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob in the

kingdom of God, with blessed Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, and all the saints; and here I meet with many of my old acquaintance, that I fasted and prayed with, who got before me hither.

“And, lastly, will you consider how long this is to continue; it is a garland that never withers; a crown of glory that fades not away; after millions of millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now; and therefore weep not for me.”