A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REVEREND & EXCELLENT DIVINE

DR. THOMAS JACOMB.

APRIL 3, 1687.

RIGHT HONOURABLE

ELIZABETH

COUNTESS DOWAGER of EXETER.

Madam,

I Present a sermon to your view, that drew forth your tears in the hearing, and is like to be a revival of your sorrow in reading; but I could not without indecence decline the inscribing it to your name. It is designed to the precious memory of one, whose piety and prudence had rendered most worthily and affectionately respected by you: one who for forty years faithfully served you in the affairs of your soul, and in that long space there was a continual circulation of favours on your part, and observance on his. As his presence and counsel, and example in your family was an excellent blessing and dearly prized by

you, so in proportion your afflicting grief rises for the loss of him. But you are instructed to be content with the divine disposal: and our gracious God by withdrawing intermediate comforts, calls you to more intimate and heavenly communion with himself.

I might here take a just occasion to speak of your eminent virtues, and of your serious religion that crowns the rest: for then praiseworthy excellencies may be duly and safely represented, when he that commends is not in danger of falling into flattery, and the person commended is not in danger of being swelled with pride: and such is your excellent and conspicuous goodness, that it reflects a lustre upon your nobility, and is above verbal encomiums; and your rare humility is most relucent amongst your other shining graces. But it is needless to illustrate that worth that is so visible to all.

I shall only observe, that as you have been so happy as to find wisdom, the true spiritual wisdom that directs us to our last and blessed end, the wisdom that excels rubies, and by an incomparable comparison all the admired things in the world; so the promised reward of wisdom has been your portion: length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand wisdom and honour-

You are now come to old age, and are apt to complain (such is your zealous piety) that, your strength being spent, you are useless, and with impatience desire a dismission from hence. But as a servant that stands and waits upon his master's pleasure, as truly serves him, as he that is most industrious in his business; so by an humble patient waiting upon your heavenly Lord, till he shall call you to the blessed state above, you as truly please and glorify him, as when your active powers were fresh and lively, and you went about doing good.

Be encouraged, Good Madam, with unfainting perseverance to expect the final reward: "For your salvation is nearer than when you first believed." Let the love of Christ always reign in your heart, and the crown of glory be always in your eye, that you may finish your course with joy. These are the most unfeigned desires of him who is,

MADAM,

Your very humble and faithful Servant,

WILLIAM BATES.

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If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him wilt my Father honour.

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IF it so pleased the wise and sovereign Disposer of all things, how much nother would I be an attentive hearer of that blessed servant of God who is now above, than preach his funeral sermon at this itime. That my and voice should be reserved for this mourable service, is both contrary to my desire and expectation. O frail and faithless life of man! Who would have thought, that Dr. Jacomb, whose natural vigour and firm complexion promised a longer continuance here, should have a period put to his days, and that I should survive, whose life has been preserved for many years like the weak light of a lamp in the open air? but he has finished his work, and was more fit for heaven to the last Lord's day be entered into eventating rest: and I with you are still upon the earth, that we may make a better preparation for the divine presence in heaven, and that holy assembly that serves him who sits upon the, through without

imperfection or intermission for ever. In order to this end, I have chosen the present subject of my discourse.

In the verse our Saviour gives a most important command and indispensably obligatory to all christians; " If any man serves me, let him follow me:" if he assumes the title, and enters into the sacred engagement of being my servant, let his carriage be answerable to his condition, let him follow the divine example I have set before him. And since the way is narrow and beset with thorns, our celestial Leader who by the cross ascended to the throne, assures as of a blessed retribution that shall infinitely out-weigh all the numerous and heavy troubles to which we are exposed in his service; all our grievous sufferings shall end in eternal joys: "where I am, there shall my servant be:" and he is at "God's right hand, where there is fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasure for ever." And all the clouds of disgrace and contempt that darken our present state, shall be dispelled and overcome by unfading glory: " If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Joy and glory are the bright sum of heaven: the complete felicity that a steadfast faith in our Saviour's promises, opposes to the greatest evils, all the ignominy and reproaches, all the pains and miseries that can afflict life, or imbitter death: the lively hope of it inspires his servants with an invincible courage and patience to sustain whatever evils for his sake.

I shall confine my discourse to the last part of the verse: "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour:" having upon the like occasion treated of the joy that shall recompense all the serrows and labours of the saints.

The proposition I shall insist on is this: God will crown the fidelity and constancy of Christ's servants with the highest honour.

In the managing of the point, it will consider j-what the service of Christ implies;—upon what accounts it is due to him;—the final reward that shall certainly attend it;—and bring it home to our own bosons by application.

I. What the service of Christ implies.

In the general notion, to serve Christ, implies obedience to his will as the rule of our actions, with aims at his glory as the end of them. His will revealed in the scriptures is a rule eminently and exclusively. Eminently, for it has all the perfections

of a rule: it is clear and complete, sufficient 40 to make us wise to salvation," and to direct us in " the way everlasting." It is called the "holy, acceptable, and perfect will of God." It is a rule exclusively. To speak strictly, no creature can be a rule to another; for they are all in an equal line of subjection to the Creator: one may be a guide or governor to another according to the rule of God's word. The laws of men cannot reach and bind the conscience immediately, but by virtue of God's command; nor unlimitedly, but as they are consonant with his laws. Now a universal respect to the will of Christ, as the rule of our lives, is truly to serve him. And the aiming at his glory in all our desires and endeavours, either actually or habitually, is an essential ingredient in his service. The actual intention in every performance is not absolutely necessary : many good actions may proceed from the influence of the habitual intention: an arrow that is directed by aim may hit the mark, though in its flight the eye may be turned off from it. But the ultimate scope of our life, which ought to be often renewed in our minds, must be to please and glorify Christ; according to the apoetle's expression, "to me to live is Christ." I will more distinctly open these things under the following heads.

1. The church is a distinct society from the world, of which Christ is the head; and the state of christianity is " a high and holy calling;" and all who are brought into it by the outward ministry of the word, or in conjunction with it, by the internal grace of the Spirit, are obliged to the faith and obedience of the gospel; the same duties and the same rewards are common to all: and living according to that spiritual state in "godliness, righteousness, and sobriety," is to serve Christ. Thus the adoration, the honour, the homage we render to God, the making him the sole object of our highest love, an entire reliance on the Mediator for our salvation, an earnest desire to please him in all things, and an equal fear to displease him, the exercise of compassionate beneficent charity towards men; briefly, a hely and heavenly conversation, is the universal duty of Christ's servants. And that our service be accepted, it must be performed with humility, zeal and constancy.

With humility and dependance upon the Mediator for divine grace and acceptance. Every spiritual act requires a supernatural power: not a hely thought or word springs from naked

nature. Our Saviour tells his disciples, "without me you can do nothing." As the branches derive life and active sap from the root that makes them flourishing and fruitful; so from his sanctifying Spirit, (that was purchased by his meritorious sufferings, and is conferred by him in his glory,) we are made fruitful in every good work: and in the "beloved Son," we " are only accepted."

This general service due to Christ, must be done with zeal. We are commanded to be "fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord;" to "work out our own salvation," Rom. 12, 11, as the apostle with most lively emphasis enforces the duty. Our most ardent affections and active powers are to be employed in this work, remembering that our lives are short and uncertain: time flies upon the swiftest wings: that the work is of infinite, and everlasting consequence, in comparison of which our fervent diligence in worldly affairs, is like the throwing of atraws and feathers with our utmost strength: remembering, that we are always under the pure eye of our divine Master, that will call us to an exact account. To be cold and careless in his service, disparages his excellency, and will defeat our hopes: "the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence."

With constancy. "He delivered us from the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in helinese and righteousness before him all the days of our lives." Luke 1.74, 75. The travail of faith continues till heavenly vision be brought forth, and the labour of love till the reward be obtained. I will not insist on this, being to resume the consideration of it afterwards.

2. In the various conditions of life in this world, we are to serve Christ. The entire man is the object of God's tender care and providence, and accordingly he has wisely ordered divers conditions, and special callings of men, wherein they are engaged, and employed for the support and comfort of themselves, and the public good. And as in a circle, from every point of it, a straight line may be drawn to the centre: so in the vast sphere of this world, from every lawful calling there may be a direct prosecution of our last and blessed end, the glory of God in conjunction with our salvation.

There is no state of life so low and mean, but a christian thay so manage it, as to excel in holiness, and consequently

honour Christ: as * Phidias that famous sculptor expressed his art to admiration, not only in gold, and marble, and ivory, but in mean materials, in wood or ordinary stone. The apostle often inculcates this lesson upon servants, to ohey their masters with fidelity and cheerfulness, " for ye serve the Lord Christ;" Col. 3. 24. Eph. 6. 7. It was to a mortal man, and if it might be of a perverse humour, their service was immediately addressed; but if from conscience of their duty to Christ, and a direct intention to please him, they performed it, that respect sweetened and ennobled the service. It is the spirit and perfection of christianity to transform and elevate the lowest actions: it makes the service of a slave to be divine obedience. which is the most free and noble act of the reasonable creature. From hence the same apostle enforces the duties of servants. that they "may adorn the gospel of God our Saviour:" Tit. 2. 10, the faithful discharge of their service redoubles the lustre of the glorious gospel, and recommended it to their Pagan masters. And it is equally true, that in every lawful condition of life. when men are conversant in the duties proper to it, with a respect to the command of Ghrist, when their civil actions are ultimately resolved into his glory, they perform religious obedience. This is enjoined in that comprehensive precent, "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (" that is, with a respect to his will, and for his honour. I shall only add that diligence in our civil callings. must always be in subserviency to the great end of our general calling, the salvation of our souls; to which we are primarily and indispensably obliged. The life of a christian is a walking with God, and the way is in the performance of holy and civil duties. And as companions in a journey are together all day, but have set times of refreshing themselves; so a christian in his celestial journey, is to walk always before God uprightly, in all temporal affairs to regard his presence, and every day at set times to draw mear to him, by prayer and thanksgiving; and to represent his greatness and glory in so solemn a manner, that

Et si adhuc viliorum materiarum obtulisses, fecisset quod ex illa fiert optimum possit. Sic sapiens virtutem si licebit, in divitiis explicabit, si misses, in exilio. Quamcunquo fortunam accoperit, aliquid ex illa memorabile efficiet. Senec. Ep. 78.

there may be a serious habitual constitution of spirit respecting him in all his actions. If there be a neglect of heavenly communion with him, and of our spiritual state, and a perpetual consumption of our thoughts, time, and strength for secular advantages and interests, men are slaves of the world, not servants of Christ.

- 3. The service of Christ is more eminently performed in some special offices ordained for the glory of God and the public good. And such are the civil magistracy, and the spiritual ministry.
- (1.) Magistrates the highest and subordinate in the scale of government, are by designation to their office to serve him. They " are called the ministers of God, for the good of the people." Rom. 13.4. Princes may be considered in a double capacity, as christians, and as princes, and in both they are obliged to serve Christ. As christians, by an infloxible necessity, without privilege or dispensation they are bound to obey his hely laws as strictly as every private person; as princes, they are subject to him not only upon the account of his Deity simply considered, but his office as Mediator. In his mortal state he did not exercise regal power, nor appeared with conspicuous marks of royalty, for it was incongruous to his end: the redemption of the lost world was to be obtained by sufferings: but his supremacy over the world, is a prerogative sanexed to his being head of the church, a title that infinitely transcends all angelieal, much more human principalities. He is styled "the Prince of the kings of the earth." Princes are commanded "to kiss the Son," a token of the adoration, and homage they owe to him. As princes, they are to exercise their power and authority to repress wickedness, and preserve the public tranquillity: for without the restraints of fear, the most savage fierce beasts would be less dangerous than men to men. They are to encourage moral goodness, and not only to promote the civil prosperity, but eternal felicity of their subjects. Accordingly the apostle exhorts christians to " offer up prayers and supplications for kings, and all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." When princes are inspired with sentiments and resolutions, becoming their lieutenancy to the Lord Christ, when they govern their greatness, and employ their power in subserviency to his interest, when

they protect and encourage all that "seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof," as the clear direct way that leads to it, they shall obtain the brightest, richest crowns in the state of glory: but those who are a terror to the good, and encourage evil doers, their mighty aggravated sins will sink them into the deepest damnation.

(2.) Those who are consecrated to the spiritual function of teaching, and governing the church, are in a peculiar manner the servants of Christ, not as he is the Lord of the earth, but of heaven; considering the quality of their work and the end of it: for it is wholly conversant about the souls of men, "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ:" and as it is expressed in other words of scripture, "to translate them from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1. 13.

This relation extends itself from the highest apostle to the lowest in the sacred office: St. Paul frequently styles himself the "servant of Christ:" Rom. 1. 1. and by that title he expresses any that are by office employed for the saving of souls: "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach." As Christ is called "the servant of God" by way of eminency, and "was appointed to preach the gospel;" so those who are dedicated to that work, are his servants in the most proper sense, and are to follow him, the most excellent example, and highest master in that divine work. This I will more particularly insist upon, being suitable to the present occasion, and lay down some rules directing how the ministers of Christ may serve him acceptably, so as to be rewarded in the heavenly glory.

Lat. They must by serious study furnish themselves with divine knowledge, and substantial learning, for the discharge of all the parts of their office: to instruct the ignorant, to refute the erroneous, to reform the unholy, and to comfort the humble and disconsolate. Our Saviour compares the ministers of the gospel "unto a man that is an householder, which brings forth out of his treasure, things new and old;" Matt. 13.52. it is his duty "to give to the flock mean in due season," Matt. 24.

45. for which not only fidelity but wisdom is requisite. It is the apostle's charge to Timothy; "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear before all." I Tim. 4. 14, 15. If Timothy who had supernatural gifts by inspiration, was obliged to be intent and diligent in the application of his mind to the mysteries of godliness; how much more should those who must acquire knowledge by search and industry, and the divine blessing upon it. As fountains by secret passages derive from the sea the waters that flow in their stream; so ministers by reading and contemplation, and prayer in their retirements, obtain the knowledge of divine things, which they convey in their sermons to the people.

With the notional, an experimental knowledge of divine traths, is absolutely necessary to a minister to save himself, and most useful to save others.

It is not a perfect system of divinity in the head, not an universal knowledge of spiritual things confined to the brain, that has a saving efficacy; it is not composing a sermon with exquisite art, and the delivering of it like an orator, that makes him accepted with God. For without a cordial sense of divine truths, he only lends his tongue in that holy service; like a reciter in a scene, all he does is but external appearance. sees and requires the heart: without it neither the head nor the tongue of a minister, though his speculations are sublime, and his words drops of gold, are of any value. And usually the sermons of such are without profit to the hearers. The sound of words only reaches the ear, it is the mind convinces the mind, and the heart persuades the heart. He that is strongly convinced of the truth of eternal things, he will speak of them with assurance, as an eve witness, and in a lively manner: he that is burning in his own breast will inflame others; but if there be no spark of celestial fire in the minister's breast, if he does not value the consequence of divine truths, he speaks of them without a deep concernment; and a cold preacher makes a careless hearer: and the sermon is lost in the air between the lips of the one and the ears of the other.

2dly. The matter of their sermons must be the doctrine of the gospel revealed from heaven to reduce men to their duty, and

restore them to felicity. This is the tenor of the commission given by our Saviour to his apostles, "Go teach all nations, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The preaching unrevealed or trivial things, impertinent to the salvation and perfection of souls, is directly contrary to the end of their office. The wisest method of recovering lost sinners is to unfold the two covenants, and represent the two worlds to them. covenant was with man created in natural righteousness and holiness, but was of a short continuance: for by his rebellious sin he made a deadly forfeiture of the image and favour of God. of communion with him the fountain of our felicity. He is cut off from that blessed life, and must remain in the state of corruption and death for ever without redeeming mercy. It is a necessary preparative for the conversion and recovery of sinners, to convince them of their guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, and the everlasting hell that follows it, that they may be roused out of their security "to fly from the wrath to come." The terrors of the Lord make the first breach into the hearts of men, and grace victoriously enters, and subdues the reluctant will. After the conviction of sin, it is seasonable to convince them of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ; that he is the tree of life, for the reviving dead sinners, that he is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, a universal remedy for all the evils that lie upon man in his fallen state. And it is requisite to open the terms upon which God offers his mercy, the law of faith in the gospel, that consists of commands and promises,' both to check presumption that flatters so many into hell. and to prevent despair that works as dangerously, though not so frequently, to the ruin of souls. That men may not from corrupt minds and carnal affections misinterpret the gospel, to live at ease in their sins, a faithful minister must show them. that the promises of pardon and salvation are made only to a certain order of sinners, the repenting and reforming sinners, that rely upon Christ alone for their acceptance; that he is a King as well as a Priest, and none can regularly depend upon his sacrifice without subjection to his sceptre: in short the sovereign balm of his blood is to be applied only to those whose hearts are broken for their sins, and from them. And to raise and encourage drooping spirits that feel the intolerable burden of sin, and both from their guilt and unworthiness, and their impotency to

perform the conditions of the gospel, are apt to be hopeless of obtaining salvation, the gospel assures us that God is rich in mercy, ready to receive humble contrite suppliants: that although sins are of different degrees of guilt, and accordingly conscience should be affected, and the springs of godly sorrow be opened, yet God can as easily forgive ten thousand talents as a few pence: that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sins. these that are of a crimson die, as well as from those of a lighter tincture; that the promise of pardon is without limitation to all penitent believers. And although in the fallen state man is destitute of spiritual strength, "no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him;" though carnal lusts have fettered nature, and captivated the will, that men cannot rescue themselves from the bondage of sin, yet divine grace is offered in the gospel, to enable us to do what is impossible without it; and the Holy Spirit is promised to all that sincerely ask it, who is styled the "Spirit of love, and power, and a sound mind," with respect to his heavenly operations in the hearts of men. Therefore as it would be folly in a scholar that is invited to the school of a learned master, to discourage himself from going because he wants learning: for that is to be obtained there, and only his desize and capacity of instruction is requisite for his admission: so it is unreasonable for those who have an humble sense of their ains and misery, to be discouraged from coming to our Saviour: for he is most willing to reconcile God to them by his prevailing mediation, and to communicate divine grace that they may perform that obedience which God will graciously accept. This is to imitate the apostles, of whom it is said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

It is of excellent use also for preachers often to represent to men the two worlds, so vastly in the qualities, the degrees and shuration of the good and evil things that are enjoyed or suffered in them, that they may discover the errors of their ways before they come to their end, and death opens their eyes to see and lament what is lost and never to be recovered. All the admired shings in the sensible world, are perishing vanities; like an inchanted feast that feeds the eye, without real nourishment: but in the celestial world all is substantial, satisfying, and eternal. All the evils, the calamities, the injuries, and troubles suffered decre, are no more to the plagues prepared by reverging justice

for impenitent sinners, than the slight raising of the skin is to a deadly wound in the heart. Now the fundamental delusion of men is in valuing the present state of things above what is future, and infinitely better or worse. They think and call them only happy, * who live in pomp, and flow in riches and pleassures; but as vainly as the heathens dignified their idols, with the titles of celestial deities: they count them only miserable that are in poverty, sickness, and afflictions here. And as it is observed, by the great physician, † that if a delirious person proposes his incoherent fancies, seriously as the product of consideration, his case is more dangerous and hardly curable; so the solemn folly of men that think it reasonable to esteem what is present and sensible, above what is future and spiritual; and accordingly to choose the present as the real substantial good. and neglect the future as a matter of fancy and conceit, is hardly cared. Their minds and affections, their aims and desires centre in the earth: their fears, anxieties, corrows terminate there. And it is one necessary part of the minister's work to divest the world of its masquing habit, that appears so rich and glittering in the night by toreh-light, to strip it naked as it shall burn in the consuming fire at this last day: and to unveil the glory of heaven, and represent it to the eyes of christians so as to ravish their hearts: in short, to make such a convincing discovery of things unseen, that men may judge, that only the saints above are truly and perfectly happy, and only the reprobates in hell are really and finally miserable, and accordingly regulate their lives.

I shall add to this, that the language of sermons should be suitable to the quality of the matter, and the end of that divine ordinance. A minister must speak as becoming the oracles of God: with solemn expressions according to the sanctity and importance of the great mystery of godliness. The apostle tells us "his speech was not with the enticing words of man's wis-

Cui ideo reor veteres pagnai tam speciese appethationis titulum dederunt, ut quia in eo non erat namen, vel nomen esset. Et quia non habebat aliquam ex potestate virtutem haberet saltem ex vocabulo divinatem. Salv. do Provid. L. 8.

^{† &}quot;As di mapateparana pata annon's inserparaterna. Hippod:

dom." A luxuriant flourish of words, a vain estentation of wit. debases the majesty, enervates the vigour, and corrupts the pure taste of the gospel. True eloquence is always suitable to the subject, and springs from it; as the native beauty of the countenance that springs from a sound complexion of body, and is not varnished with the paint of art. When the truth of eternal things is planted in the heart, and the vital sense of them is shed in the will and affections, it will furnish us with fit and powerful words to express them. Besides, in the managing of a sacred argument, salus populi suprema lex esto: the salvation of souls is the rule to which the language of sermons must be parallel. Divine truths must be represented with those clear and solemn expressions, as may powerfully affect the conscience, and excite the practic faculties of the soul, with such weighty and serious words, as may awaken sinners to fear the powerful and terrible Judge of the world, and to hate sin that provokes his displea-.sure. The curious contexture of words of pleasant sound without substance, is an elaborate folly: it is the framing a net only fit to catch flies, the vain applauses of the injudicious, not to take souls, the divine work of a minister. And the account must be woful for those ministers to the Redeemer of souls, whose study, thoughts, and time are wasted for so guilty and

Sdly. The motives of their affections and endeavours in this holy service must be the love of Christ and precious immortal souls. Our Saviour with repeated earnestness recommends this to St. Peter, "Lovest thou me, feed my lambs, feed my sheep." The salvation of souls is his dearest glory, and satisfying pleasure: as it was prophesied, that he shall "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied:" and our zealous endeavours to save them from death, is the natural and necessary effect of our love to him. A true minister of Christ has a diviner principle, a sublimer soul, than to aim at carnal fruitions, at temporal and terrestrial rewards. The blessed end of his office must be the end of all his studious thoughts and labours, the honour of his Master in the conversion und salvation of sinners.

If the world be in their eye and heart as the scope of their ministry, they are guilty of the most unnatural disorder by employing the most excellent means for low and sordid ends, they use God to enjoy the world: this corrupts and stains their ser-

vice. Such mercenaries "are empty vines, that only bring forth fruit unto themselves:" they have their reward here. But the love of Christ and souls reigns in the heart of a faithful minister: this regulates his work in order to their spiritual and everlasting good.

This will make him descend to the capacity of the meanest, and plainly to instruct them in things concerning their salvation. As "Elisha put his mouth upon the mouth, and his eyes upon the eyes, and his hands upon the hands of the dead child," and thereby conveyed a living heat into him; so a minister should apply himself suitably to their capacity, who are but children in knowledge. It is his duty to raise the low understandings, as well as to humble the high and swelling passions of men.

This love to souls will inspire him with tender mclting affections: without which, unless God renews the miracle of Aaron's dry rod blooming and bearing almonds, our discourses will be barren, without fruit in the hearers. A plain sermon dictated from the heart with a holy heat of affections, makes a solid impression upon the hearers: when an elaborate discourse, not animated with the affections, is of little efficacy. As a blunter iron, if burning hot, pierces more easily and deeply into a piece of churlish wood, than a sharper that is cold.

The love of Christ and souls inspires with joy and alacrity in his service. No element is heavy in its own sphere.

A mercenary spirit performs the work as an irksome task; but love sweetens all the duties of the sacred calling, even such as are most distasteful to the carnal. This entitles to the blessed reward. The apostle saith, "If I preach the gospel willingly, I have a reward:" otherwise his abundant labours would be of no comfortable account at last.

4ly. The ministers of Christ must with most faithful diligence attend his service. The subject and end of their work challenges this of them, the conversion and salvation of souls. What earnest and repeated calls are necessary to awaken those who are involved in carnal security, to persuade them to love what they hate, and to hate what they love? and when the foundation is laid in serious repentance, and the work of grace begun, what diligence is requisite to raise it to perfection? How does the

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malicious incessant enemy of our salvation strive by a thousand temptations to blast our endeavours?

The work of a minister is not like the work of an artificer: a statuary with long labour cuts the marble to form it into a noble image, but he leaves his work at his pleasure; and when he resumes it, the matter being durable, it is in the same state towards finishing as when he left it. But the heart of man is of a strange nature, hard as marble, and fluid as water; heavenly impressions are with difficulty made in it, and easily defaced. When by many prayers and tears, many tender addresses of ministers, the heart is softened, and the image of Christ, the lineaments of his divine graces and virtues are first drawn in it, without a continual eye and attendance upon the work, how soon are those blessed beginnings spoiled, and the carnal lusts regain the heart? How hard is it to prevail with men to enter into the narrow way, and to preserve them from defiling lapses in it, or woful excursions into the pleasant ways of ain, and to bring them safely to heaven? The solemn adjuration of the apostle to Timothy should excite ministers with the most watchful care and useful diligence to attend their work: "I charge thee before the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. What opiate can stupify the conscience of idle ministers so as not to be awakened by these ardent expressions? How can they appear before the most High and Everlasting Judge? What will be a sufficient defence before his enlightened tribunal? What apologies will screen them from his fiery displeasure? Will their ignorance, or abundance, or slothfulness excuse the neglect of their duty? They may deceive themselves with vain allegations to palliate their negligence, but God will not be If in the last judgment those who neglected to feed the poor with material bread to support their bodies, shall be placed with the reprobates at the left hand of Christ, how can those whose office it is to dispense the bread of life to souls, and neglect to feed them, escape condemnation?

The useful diligence I have been urging upon ministers, is not only necessary in public solemn preaching the word, but in sea-

worable applying it to particular persons within their compass and care. Of this we have an excellent pattern in St. Paul, who gives this account of his spiritual work: "We preach Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." A minister should with watchful diligence take all opportunities for the saving of precious souls; and sometimes one short lesson seriously applied to a person in private, more powerfully affects the conscience, and moves the affections, than a long and well studied sermon.

5ly. The servants of Christ must with resolution and constancy despise the allurements and the terrors of the world in performing the duties of their office. The apostle declares his fixed mind, "I count not my life dear to me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus:" Acts 20. 24. though amongst the pikes of a thousand dangers he was never faint-hearted, much less false-hearted, in the cause of Christ. The two principal parts of the minister's duty are to preserve the truths of the gospel inviolate, and to open and enforce the commands of it in their spiritual purity and extent: they are styled "the lights of the world, and the salt of the earth."

All the truths of the gospel are of precious value, but not of equal clearness and moment: and christian charity should moderate between dissenters in smaller matters, who agree in the main points of religion. But those truths of the gospel that are primary and radical, and those that by necessary consequence are deduced from them, require our most vigilant care and zeal to preserve them entire and untainted. It is a universal duty respecting christians, to search out the truth "as it is in Jesus," to understand the reasons of the religion they profess, and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But the ministers of Christ who by virtue of their office are depositaries of the truth, are chiefly obliged to assert and defend it: especially when there are many snares spread abroad to entangle ignorant and unstable souls with dangerous errors. Our Saviour has set us a pattern of our duty, who declared, "For this end was I born, and came into the world to bear witness to the truth." They are false to the sacred trust reposed in them, when, by silence the truth is in danger of being oppressed. It is their duty and glory to be "valiant for the truth," when false doctrines boldly oppose it, and poisoned arrows are shot into the eyes of men by erroneous teachers. It is said of John the baptist, "He was not the light, but as next in dignity, he came to bear witness of the light." But if they withdraw their testimony when the truth challenges it, they will be covered with confusion at the last day; according to that fearful threatening, "Whosoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." The ignorance of saving-truths will not excuse the people; and silence will condemn their guides who should illustrate and defend the truth even in the face of danger.

Besides they are guilty of unfaithfulness to Christ, who by colourable temperaments adulterate the purity of the truth, and by milder modifications qualify and lessen errors; who would join the word of God with the traditions of men, which are incompatible as midnight and midday. None are more artificial than fearful spirits: they have many turns and expedients to compound necessary controversies, and to make it seem indifferent which opinion is chosen. They transform their fearful apprehensions into counsels of prudence, and disguise the baseness of their cowardice under the reputation of being discreet. The wisest of men who understood the incomparable value of truth, advises, "Buy the truth, and sell it not:" and we are told by St. James, "The wisdom, that is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable:" but the worldly-wise, with art and industry endeavour to secure their outward peace with the violation of truth. How contrary is the judgment of God to the vain opinions of men? He is jealous of the simplicity of his truth, and the chastity of his worship, and will at last convince such of their extreme folly who would reconcile religions that can never flow into one another.

It is therefore an indispensable obligation of the servants of Christ to adhere to the eternal truth in scriptures, though vilified by some as an insufficient rule, or impertinent and not absolutely necessary: and to preserve the pure doctrine and transmit it to succeeding ages. And this divine encouragement should sustain them with unfainting resolution to do their duty, that if they cannot save the truth from being overborn at present, yet the truth will save them, and that it will pierce through

all opposition, and be victorious in the issue. The church of Christ is of a supernatural original and order, and contrary to the custom of human things, is enlarged and established by the means used to destroy it. When the heathen powers with the utmost rage and cruelty attempted its final ruin, it prospered the more: the patient deaths of the martyrs, as well as conspicuous miracles, gave credit and conveyance to the gospel.

And the ministers of Christ must with faithfulness and courage enforce the commands of the gospel upon all. Carnal men would fain relax the strictness of the gospel; and endeavour to make their principles correspondent to their practices: they try to bend the rule to their disordered and licentious appetites, and will not regulate their hearts and lives according to the sanctity of the rule: and those who are high in the world, very uneasily bear the conviction and the reproof of their sin: but a minister must be faithful to Christ and their souls, and press upon them the commands of our Judge, "to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand," upon the heavy penalty of being made entire victims to revenging justice for ever.

6ly. They must with a prudent temperament of zeal and meekness, insinuate and open a passage for sanctifying and saving doctrine in the hearts of men. This is the successful method to convince those who are seduced with errors, and to reclaim the "Disobedient to the wisdom of the just." The defence of the truth must be managed in a calm peaceable manner; as the sun scatters and overcomes the darkness of the night and clouds without noise. It is the apostle's counsel, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: without contumelies and revilings; for injuries convince no man. The human spirit is naturally proud and stiff, and will resist such arms: fierceness and scorn irritate the passions, and hinder impartial and serious deliberation, that opens the mind for receiving the truth. To persuade the soul, the mild and placid manner of conveying the truth is as effectual as the irradiation and evidence of it. And to reclaim the disobedient there is nothing more powerful than gentleness and the constraint of love. The most fervent reprehensions of sinners must be mixed with tenderness to their souls. Under the law there was a severe prohibition of offering sacrifices with the common fire: but only with that fire that came from heaven, and was preserved day and night in the temple: the allusion is easy and fit: the reprehension of sinners in the pulpit must be always from zeal for the honour of God and the eternal salvation of souls, not from natural fiery passions. If a minister denounces the judgments of God with compassion to souls, if he thunders and lightens in his sermons, as hower of repenting tears will follow in convinced sinners.

7ly. A minister of the gospel must join a holy life with sound doctrine, according to our Saviour's description of him: "He that shall do and teach my commands, shall be great in the kingdom of heaven." He must not only be free from pollutions, but excel in virtues; nothing in his conversation should be worthy of reproach, nothing but what is worthy of imitation. must lead a life answerable to the excellence and end of his calling. He is to preach a doctrine so holy and divine and venerable, that it would become the unspotted angels to be ministering spirits in revealing it to men. He is therefore strictly obliged to show forth the power of godliness, and the beauty of holiness in all his ways. He must imitate and honour his master, who inseparably united 'saying and doing in himself:' he must adorn the gospel by expressing the efficacy of divine truths in his actions. Under the law he that had touched a dead body, was forbidden to approach the sanctuary: and what a violation is it of all the rules of decency and reason, for one who is employed in the holy service of the gospel, to be polluted with dead works? * Tertullian writing of the excellency of patience, and reflecting upon himself, how opposite his fiery nature was to that virtue, was deeply affected with grief and shame, and drew up his own arraignment and process for his impatience: how much juster cause has an unholy minister to be surprised with horror and confusion, considering the irreconcileable opposition between his doctrine and his life? How just and stinging is the upbraiding speech of God to such? how peremptory the rejection? "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and to take my covenant into thy mouth since thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee?" The end of the sacred ministry requires holiness in those who perform it: that is to convert men

^{*} Miser ego semper meer caloribus impatientim. Confiteor ad dominum deum, satis temere me, si non etiam impudenter de patientia componere ausum, cui priestanda idoneus omnino non sim.

to the faith and obedience of the gospel. Now the practice of a minister gives weight and efficacy to his doctrine, the exemplifying of it in his actions is the most powerful persuasive to draw men to their duty. Therefore the apostle commands "Titus in all things to show himself a pattern of good works." As the plants that are productive of balm, and myrrh, and incense, have a fragrancy not only in the precious liquor that distils from them, but all their branches, and leaves, and bark, are aromatic. Thus a minister of the gospel, must be holv not only in his doctrine, but in all manner of conversation. "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," is the solemn charge to Timothy. He that is holy in his profession, and unholy in his life, both discredits the gospel, and hardens men in their sins. Though his tongue may direct to heaven, if his life leads to heil, the authority of his actions will be more prevalent than of his instructions. of a minister are more conspicuous and infamous than of private persons: as a blemish in the eye is more conspicuous and disfiguring than in a concealed part of the body; and they have the most corrupting destructive influence upon others. For there is nothing more natural than for men to think that ministers do not believe what they preach, when there is a visible contradiction between their lives and their words: that their most zealous sermons are rather pageantry than serious piety, and accordingly to slight them. This is a principal reason that the conversion of sinners is so rare: it is not from any defect in the word, for that is not like some medicinal drugs, that lose their virtue by age, it has the same divine power to revive dead souls, to transform the carnal into spiritual persons, to clarify the mind that it may see things invisible, to reconcile the will to the sanctity of God's law, to calm the stormy affections, and leave an impression of its purity in the hearts of men: but the admirable and secret grace of the Holy Spirit is not usually concomitant with the ministry of those who grieve him, and quench him in themselves; and they render the holy doctrine ineffectual by their discordant It was the character of the wicked pharisees conversations. from the mouth of Christ: "They say, and do not:" and to them, and all that are involved in the same guilt, the Saviour of the world threatens the most heavy damnation.

8ly. Humble, fervent, and continual prayer to the "Father of mercies, and the Father of Spirits," that he would bless the outward ministry, is requisite to make it effectual. The conversion of man is not wrought by man, but by the energy of the Holy Spirit. God instructs us what he does in the more secret operations of grace, by what he does in the more visible operations of nature. This is expressed by the apostle; "Paul plants, and Apollos waters, but God gives the increase." A man plants a green stick, and waters it; but the God of nature forms the tree in all its parts, the root, the sap, the trunk, the branches, and the fruits: the planting by the hand of man is necessary for the growth of a tree, but what is that to the divine blessing? Thus according to the ordinary method of divine grace, God unites his marvellous power with the weak ministry of men for the salvation of souls, and according to the apostle's arguing, it is an impossible event that " men should believe without hearing the gospel, and hear without a preacher:" but the converting and saving of souls is to be ascribed to God. And thus in the spiritual husbandry, the occasions of pride and slothfulness are equally removed. As the same apostle saith, " he that plants is nothing, and he that waters is nothing, but God that gives the increase." This consideration should be an incentive in our breasts, to petition the God of all grace that he will please to give life and efficacy to his word. In Jacob's vision of the mysterious ladder that reached from heaven to earth, the angels were ascending and descending: an emblem of a minister's duty. they must first ascend in prayer and contemplation, and then descend in preaching to the people. It is observable that sometimes men of excellent accomplishments are blasted in their ministry; and others of meaner abilities, but of more holy affections, are very instrumental to save souls: the reason is plain: those who are thost frequent and fervent in prayer, obtain the richest abundance of the Spirit, and are usually most blessed with success. When the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, descending in the significant emblem of fiery tongues; what an admirable influence had their preaching upon the obdurate Jews? The first sermon presently convinced and converted three thousand, that were murderers of our Saviour, with the stains of his blood fresh upon them. Tongues of flesh are without vigour, make no lasting impression upon the hearers: tongues of fire have a divine force and operation, to dispel the ignorance and errors of men's minds, to quicken the dull earth of their affections, to refine and purify their conversations.

Lastly. To sum up all in one general consideration; he serves Christ, that employs all his abilities, and uses all opportunities in the circle of his calling, as was before spoken of, for the honour of our Saviour. This is represented in the parable of the talents, which the master committed to his servants; different in their number, but to be faithfully improved for the master's interest. Under the talents are comprised all that we have and are; whether in the order of nature, and with respect to our civil state in the world, all our intellectual and sensitive faculties, all our innate and acquired endowments, our time. our health, our dignities and power, our estates; or spiritual blessings, all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, the light of the gospel, all the advantages we have of doing or receiving good for our more excellent and immortal part, the salvation of our souls. Every one according to the character wherewith he is invested in this world, and according to his capacity of doing good, must be diligent in the service of Christ. In what relation soever men are, as fathers, masters, or magistrates in a superior rank, or as friends and associates in an equal line, and as they stand related to all men, they are either by authority and command, or by counsel and compassionate care and encouragements to promote with diligence, their temporal and eternal welfare. The apostle's advice with respect to acts of beneficence for relieving the poor, "let us do good unto all as we have opportunity," is by just analogy binding to all other expressions of love, to direct, to persuade men to their duty, to comfort them in their sorrows, to assist them in all their wants and exigencies. Briefly, the wisdom and goodness of Christ's servants consist in their faithful improving all their talents for his glory, as our Saviour declares, "who is that wise and faithful servant;" and, " well done good and faithful servant."

II. We are to show upon what accounts our service is due to Christ. If we seriously consider things, it will be evident that by all the titles of justice and gratitude, by all divine and

rational rights we are obliged to serve him entirely and for ever.

In the present state there are four ways whereby men become servants: some are born servants; some are by ransom and purchase; some by victorious rescue and deliverance; others are servants by covenant and agreement. Now all these titles concur in obliging us to serve Christ.

1. We are his servants by nature, he has an original and inalienable right in us as our Creator. God to satisfy the inquiry of Moses defines himself, "I am:" all the intimate and eternal attributes of the Deity are implied in that short title: he is the only necessary being by his nature, and consequently has all perfections in himself, and is the fountain of all being. "His hands made us and fashioned us, he breathed into us a living soul." All our faculties and their efficacy are from him. produces this evidence of his right in us. "Remember O Jacob thou art my servant, I have formed thee:" Isa. 44. 12. the psalmist declares, "Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and sheep of his pasture:" we owe to him an obedience as ready and unconstrained as the meekest creatures pay to those that feed and conduct them. His perfections qualify him to be our absolute master, for his will is always directed by infinite wisdom, it is the rule of goodness, and his benefits in making and preserving us, acquire to him a supreme right in us. Now if there be a spark of reason in our minds, it is impossible to have the least shadow of doubt, that a derivative being has a dependant working, and is to employ his active powers according to the will of his Maker, as the rule, and his glory as the ultimate end of all.

The connexion is indissolvable, "for of him, and through him, and to him are all things." The psalmist ardently calls the whole world; "bless the Lord all ye his works, in all places of his dominion." Psal. 103. The angels who by nobility of nature are superior to all his other works, yet are not sui juris, at their own disposals, but his ministers "that do his pleasure:" they employ "their excellent strength" in humble obedience to his commands: they fly with incredible swiftness to perform his orders. Dan. 9. And in the visible world, the heavens in

their motion, the earth in its seasons, with an invariable tenour observe the law impressed upon them in their creation: as the psalmist speaks, "they continue this day according to thy ordinance, for all are thy servants." Psal. 119. 91. And if the creatures without reason and sense are perfectly subject to his will, much more should man who understands his obligations to the Creator. Now the Son of God made us, and maintains our beings by his powerful providence; from whence it follows, we are under an eternal obligation to serve and glorify him to the utmost of our capacities. His unexcited and most free goodness decreed our beings from everlasting, and in time brought us into the world, whereas he might have created innumerable other persons, for omnipotence is without bounds, and left us in the pure possibility of being, without the giving actual being to us. The natural law that shines in the minds of men, in the knowledge of what is just and good, and in the conscience of what is evil, binds them with the deepest humility to acknowledge the greatness and goodness of our Creator, and in the sense of this first and fundamental benefit to consecrate ourselves for ever to his service.

2. We are his servants not only upon the general title of creation, but in a more peculiar manner by redemption. Man by his disobedience was fallen into a woful bondage, his guilt subjected him to the threatening, that contained two deaths in one sentence, the temporal and present of the body, and the eternal of the soul. The righteous Judge of the world, whose law was broken, required an honourable reparation of it: the most costly sacrifices of beasts, a sea of blood could never atone his displeasure: nay, the obedience and sufferings of men and angels were of no value to satisfy his injured justice: thus mankind was desperately lost, our ruins (if I may so speak) were sowed with salt, we were concluded under his most righteous and fearful wrath: if the love and wisdom of God had not accorded to find out that astonishing expedient of uniting the eternal Son of God with the human nature in one person, that as man he might voluntarily submit to bloody sufferings, and as God give an infinite merit and value to them, and thereby purchase our redemption. This is accomplished by Jesus Christ; " the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all; he gave his life a ransom for us:" from hence a new right springs of his dominion over us;

as the apostle invincibly argues, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirit, which are God's." The naked representing of this to the serious mind must awaken a dear sense of our obligations to our Saviour: but if we solemnly and deliberately contemplate this amazing benefit, out of what rock is the heart framed, that is not softened and melted in love and obedience to our blessed Redeemer. To heighten the sense of our obligations, Consider,

- (1.) A more excellent goodness is visible in the redeeming man than in creating the angels, upon the account of the distance of the terms and the difficulty of the way to effect it. the creation of angels, goodness was rich indeed, there being no possibility of desert in pure nothing, but it was simply free; whereas in our salvation it is merciful beyond all imagination, for by our rebellion we were justly fallen under the wrath of God: their creation was without the least strain of his power; "he spake, and it was done:" but there was a legal bar against our restitution: to remove it, " his Son endured the curse of the law for us, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Divine love in our redemption not only exceeds what was showed in the creation of angels, but is admirably illustrated by a higher comparison: for the Father seemed to love us above his only begotten Son, "whom he spared not, but delivered him up for us all: and the Son loved us above his life, which he laid down for us."
- (2.) By the way of our redemption he has infinitely honoured our nature that was so vilified by the fall. Man, whose soul was an immortal spirit stamped with the lively image of God, capable of everlasting communion with him in glory, was sold for nought. "Be astonished O ye heavens at this, and be very desolate:" that man, who had the two great lights of natural reason and divine faith, should prefer the pleasing an irregular appetite before the favour of God, and for a vain fancy lose the most substantial happiness. Thus "man being in honour, and understood not, became like the beasts that perish, nay viler than the earth." And all the children of Adam sin "according to the similitude of his first transgression." O the cheap damnation of sinners! For transient pleasures, and mean profits they venture upon eternal death. This guilty and woful folly

not only defiles, but debases men to hell. Now the Lord of life and glory by suffering an ignominious death for us, has with the clearest evidence discovered the true worth of souls: that they are precious beyond comparison, since the whole world is not a valuable compensation for them: * "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without spot and blemish:" that sacred treasure of heaven that was laid down for us, exceedingly increases our obligations to the blessed Redeemer.

- (3.) By giving himself for us, he has not only freed us from the wrath of God, but restored us to his dearest favour: we are translated from the fearful state of being God's enemies into the amiable joyful state of his children: and consequently our Redeemer has purchased for us not only salvation from hell, but eternal glory, a life more divine and durable than the natural life in paradise. How can we seriously think of this transcendent benefit without a rapture of affection? He infinitely deserves our love and service who has bought us with so dear a price, and purchased for us a glorious and incorruptible inheritance.
- 3. We are his servants by his deliverance of us from our spiritual enemies, satan, sin, and death. Since the devil obtained a woful victory over us in the fall of Adam, great was the triumph of hell: and though he be an usurper of God's right, which could never be extinguished, yet by our overthrow he has a kind of a title to us, and keeps us as the spoils of his victory: and having revolted from God, we are justly though miserably under the powers of darkness. We are chained in the lowest and the vilest bondage: the soul and body are under his tyrannous dominion, and suffer the deepest wounds of infamy and cruelty. He fetters our minds with dangerous delusions, our wills with divers lusts and passions, and leads men captives in the ways of sin, till they fall into hell the centre of misery. Now as in redeeming a captive, there must be the paying the ransom, and the breaking his chains, that he may be restored to liberty: so, besides the price that was paid to God the supreme judge, for our discharge, our Saviour has broken our chains; he by the sanctifying Spirit dispels the darkness of our

^{*} Idoneus sui operis æstimator, magno pretio nos redemit. Arnob.

minds, softens the hardness of our hearts, subdues the rebellion of our wills, rectifies the disorder of our affections, that we may be freed from the dominion of sin, as well as from the obligation and terrors of the law. He has broken the powers of darkness that conspired to keep us fast in the entanglements of our iniquities, he has freed us from the spiritual Pharaoh, Luke 11. 21. and his cruel task-masters, the imperious violent lusts that are seated in the heart, and restores " us to, the glorious liberty of the sons of God; by dying he destroyed him that had the power of death, and triumphed over principalities and powers on the cross." We have freedom of pardon and of grace, and the natural and necessary consequence is, that we cheerfully serve him that set us free. This is expressed by Zacharias in his divine thanksgiving, that "being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives." In what a holy ecstacy does the psalmist break forth, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid, thou hast broken my bonds:" yet this was but the rescuing of him from some temporal imminent danger: how much dearer and stronger engagements bind us to serve our Redeemer, who has freed us from the power as well as punishment of sin? Love should correspond with love: as love descends in favours and benefits, it should ascend in thankfulness and duty. St. Paul had such a lively apprehension of our Saviour's love, that it had an absolute empire in his heart and life; he expresses it in the most significant manner: "The love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." The word constraineth, signifies properly to be entirely under the power of another: as the prophets inspired by the Spirit of God, only spake and acted according to his extraordinary motions in them.

Thus the love of Christ had such an absolute empire in his heart, that his whole life was spent as a vowed oblation to his service and glory. And whoever does not live a spiritual life, as the servant of Christ, never yet felt the misery of this bondage of sin, nor the sweetness of that liberty which the Son of God has purchased for his people.

· Lastly; We are the servants of Christ by solemn covenant, and the most sacred engagement. In the covenant of grace God and man are the parties: and such was his condescending love. that he came down from heaven and assumed our nature, on purpose to seal his part in his own blood, the promise of his pardoning mercy, of his sanctifying Spirit, and his rewarding goodness, to all that with unfeigned consent and firm resolution will seal the counterpart of their duty and obedience to him. We are entered into his family and the relation of his servants in baptism; and vowed universal obedience to our new master. in defiance of all temptations whether inviting or terrifying in the world: for this reason baptism is called "the answer of a good conscience towards God." 1 Pet. 3. 12. We wear his colours, are distinguished from the heathens by the title of christians: we ratify in a most solemn manner our covenant by the seal of the Lord's Supper, wherein we sacramentally eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour. Now from hence arises a new obligation to serve Christ: he had a sovereign right in us antecedently to our dedicating ourselves to his service, but from our voluntary consent accrues another title, whereby he claims our perpetual service. The law of God binds us without our consent, but our consent increases the obligation; and if we are careless of our duty, and desert his service, we break double bonds, and are guilty not only of disobedience to the law, but of perfidious violation of our covenant. It is observable in the parable of the talents, they were committed to servants, from whence a double obligation springs, to employ them with entire fidelity for the master's profit. A merchant sends goods to his correspondent, who is bound to make faithful returns upon the account of commutative justice that reaches all: but a servant is under a special obligation, and if he wastes or neglects the improving his master's goods, he does not only break this trust reposed in him, but violates the duty of a servant, that obliges him to manage them according to his master's will, and for his profit. The account will be particular and exact for all our talents at the last: none so high that shall be excused, none so mean that shall escape that strict inquiry: for he that knows all things, shall be our Judge. The servant that had but one talent was called to account for it, and condemned for neglecting to

improve it: he pretended that he hid it out of caution lest it should be lost, knowing his master's severity; but his vain excuse was retorted upon him, to aggravate his sin and sentence: "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth:" a judgment as righteous as terrible: for the guilt of his rebellion, in not using his talent according to his master's order; and unthankfulness, in despising his gifts, and an unrighteous depriving of others of that benefit, that was by the master's will due to them.

- III. We are to consider the final reward of Christ's servants under two heads.
 - 1. The order of the reward.
 - 2. The excellency of it.
- 1. The order, in giving it after the service of Christ faithfully and constantly performed. It is the revealed will of God, that "all men should honour the Son- as they honour the Father:" the Son is the heir of his love and glory, and in serving him the Father is honoured and obeyed. And as our Saviour reigns eternally in heaven, after the finishing his work enjoined him by the Father, so according to his example, we receive the crown of life after the course of our obedience. This is the tenor of the promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3. 21.

The order in dispensing the blessed reward, does not in the least eclipse the honour of God's grace, or afford the least shadow of presuming upon any merit in our best services. "The wages of sin is death, it is the just desert of it; "but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." The eternal election of persons to life, the preparing of them by sanctifying grace for glory, and the actual possession of it, is from the most free favour of God. Election is "the first fountain of water springing up to eternal life: for what could induce God when all mankind was equally involved in guilt and misery, to choose some to be vessels of grace and glory, but his sovereign pleasure and pure grace! The elect were in the eye and heart of God from eternity, appointed to supernatural happiness, but that free and insuperable decree is accomplished according to the "Law of faith," the unchangeable order of the gospel; and that is, that heaven

shall be the reward of the faithful servants of Christ; not for the true desert of their service, but the most gracious and rich bounty of God. The angels of glory cannot from a plea of justice claim any reward from God: for the rights of justice suppose some equality between those who respectively are obliged by them, though not in all regards, yet so far as a certain common rule makes them equal: but there is such an immense distance between the divine majesty and the highest creatures, that there is no foundation for such a plea between them.

Besides, the duty of obedience is absolute: for all our natural powers and supernatural strength are his gifts, and were there no reward assured to us, are to be faithfully employed in his service. Now the payment of a debt cannot deserve a reward. Our best services are blemished with many imperfections, and without the mercy of the gospel that mollifies the strictness of the law, would make us liable to law, would make us liable to punishments; "God spares us, as a father spares his son, that serves him:" now pardon and merit are utterly inconsistent. And what proportion can there be between our mean and short services, and "the eternal weight of glory?" Even martyrdom, which is the most signal act of love and obedience to our Redeemer, the highest advancing of his glory, the most noble testimony of his truth: when our example works upon others, and engages them to Christ, and entitles us to a kind of interest in all they do and suffer for his name, yet even the laying down our lives is by infinite degrees below the glory of heaven, that is the promised reward to it. This St. Paul testifies from his deliberate judgment, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." From hence in scripture the reward is often expressed by mercy: the apostle prays for Onesiphorus, whose valiant love in visiting and supplying him in the time of his imprisonment. was set off illustriously by the discouragements and inconstancy of. others who neglected him; "The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." And we are exhorted to "keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." But although there is no merit in our service of the reward, yet God has wisely established an order and consequence between them, as the most

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conducing for his glory and our good. For not only the superabundant mercy, but the righteousness and truth of God appear with an eminency of glory in this way of making us happy. The promise of the reward was from excellent goodness, but the performing it to his faithful servants is from his justice and fidelity. He was unlimitedly free, but having pleased with such condescending favour to make a covenant with us, upon our sincere compliance with the terms of it, he is obliged for the honour of his truth and righteousness to accomplish it: though in strictness he can owe nothing to us, yet he is a debtor to his promise. From hence the apostle saith, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course; from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give unto me." The honour of his truth is sacred and inviolable: thus he is proclaimed in a style expressing how glorious his truth is, and how dear to him, "The Lord thy God, he is God;" and the only attribute that is annexed is, "the faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy." At the last day he will be glorified not only as the free and magnificent donor of all the treasures of heaven, but as the God of truth, who has fulfilled all the exceeding great and precious promises made to his servants.

And the connexion between our duty and the reward, has a powerful influence to excite our sincere and earnest endeavours to please God: it is the strongest engagement to universal sanctity and obedience. For the gospel is an everlasting covenant, and the condition of it is unalterable: heaven is not promised as an absolute irrespective gift, but as a reward consequent of services. There can be no lively regular hope of future happiness, but according to the revelation of God's will, who gives it: the accomplishment of his promise has a dependance upon our duty. The crown of life is promised to "those that love God; and love is the fulfilling of the law:" if any one aspires to that dignity, he must from love, which is the internal character and disposition of a saint, obey and serve God. To presume of obtaining our last and blessed end, without a diligent use of the means prescribed in the gospel, is such idle preposterous folly. that men would be ashamed of with respect to the gaining of temporal things. Can he that sows no seed, expect a harvest?

or that plants no vineyard, expect a vintage? Can a merchant hope for rich returns from a foreign country, without trading thither? And it is as vain to hope for the eternal reward, without following holiness. The presumption is heightened and more fatal, when any shall think, if they are predestinated to glory, they shall obtain it without their best diligence in making "their calling and election sure." This is to make a diametrical opposition between the decrees of God, and the record of his will in the gospel. Election is a chain that reaches from heaven to earth, to draw men from earth to heaven: it has intermediate links that must not be left out. Between election and glorification the faith and obedience of the gospel intervenes: the apostle informs us, "that we are chosen to salvation. through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth." The decrees of God are a secret we cannot dive into. We can discover what is secret only by what is revealed; our election by our effectual calling, which is the infallible and sensible effect of it. To lie down securely in the secret decree. neglecting to "work out our own salvation," is such pernicious sophistry, as can only be inspired from the father of lies. If ever such a thought is suggested, that if I am elected, I shall be happy though careless of my duty, chain it up, there is folly and frenzy in it. Heaven is bestowed as a gift of his infinite grace and power, but according to the wise and immutable order set down in the gospel; which is so far from lessening and obscuring the glory of his mercy, that it makes it more conspicuous: for holiness, to which we are so strictly obliged as preparatory for heaven, is our most divine perfection, and qualifies us for the enjoyment of God.

2. The excellence of the reward is to be considered: "He that serves me, him will my Father honour." Such is the wisdom and equity of God in his moral government, that he has by a graceful order annexed honour as the reward to virtue. The general rule is, "Those that honour me, I will honour; and those that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." There is such a majestic beauty in holiness as commands the esteem and affections of men, unless they are prodigiously degenerate and corrupted by their lusts. The heathens were convinced that honour is the intrinsic tribute always due to virtue; and some were so strict, and had such divine thoughts as to maintain that

virtue is the only true nobility. It is foretold in scripture, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance:" they leave an honourable evidence of their graces and virtues in their works, and are of precious memory, "when the name of the wicked shall rot." But the reward our Saviour promises, is "the honour that comes from God only:" and as his majesty infinitely transcends all earthly principalities; so in proportion, the honour that he confers upon his servants is above all the titles of honour, all the swelling praises of men. This reward is given in the next world. Here the servants of Christ are sometimes darkened with many afflictions, and buried in sad obscurity before they are dead; they are the objects of scorn and contempt: St. Paul who was an incarnate seraphim, whose zeal in the service of his Divine Master exceeded all the apostles, vet was, as he declares, vilified as the offscouring of the world. Now such is the excellent goodness of God, that he will certainly in the next life reward with the highest honour all who have advanced his honour.

The honour and glory of the future state is concealed at present, it is wrapped up in a cloud; only some glimmerings of it glance upon our eyes: "Light is sowed for the righteous," the plenary revelation is hereafter. It is true the apostle tells us, "that life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel:" but that is only to be understood of a comparative revelation, to what was under the law: it is brought to the light of faith, which is like to break of day, when the shadows of the earth and the light of heaven are mixed. There is a veil between us and the glory of heaven, partly to try our faith, whether we will believe the promise of God without sensible discoveries of it; and to try the sincerity of our love, whether we love God for himself, without the distinct unfolding of that excellent glory: and to comply with the weakness whilst we are in such tempered tabernacles of flesh. If the beams of his glory were displayed before our eyes, we should be struck with blindness, as Saul was at the brightness of Christ's appearing to him: the flood of light would swallow us up in ecstacy and amazement. Our faint faculties cannot sustain his glorious presence. As God told Moses, "No man can see my face and live;" St. John tells believers, " Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: now our names are written in the

book of life," in the rolls of eternity; now we are adopted into the line of heaven; now we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, the royal purple robe died in his blood; we have the privileges of the justified state; we have a right to the eternal kingdom by our Saviour's purchase, and the firm covenant of grace; we have the "Holy Spirit of promise," who is "the earnest of our inheritance, and the seal of God's love to us:" but the full partaking of that glory is reserved till we leave this visible world.

I will briefly glance at the several degrees of the reward that shall be conferred upon all whom "the King of glory delights to honour in the next world."

(1.) The scripture reveals, that "the souls of just men first come to the perfection of glory." If Adam had continued in his holy state after a short immortality upon earth, he had been translated alive, and entire in soul and body, to heaven: the everlasting doors had been opened wide for his reception; but since our disobedience, though our guilt be pardoned, the gate is so strait that the gross spoils of our flesh must be left behind us. Now immediately upon the dissolution of the saints, God sends a guard of angels, his most noble creatures, to convoy their souls into "the courts of his honour," into the chamber of his glorious presence. Divine dignity! This is the privilege of his chosen friends and favourites, of the most illustrious and blessed creatures. In heaven the divine majesty is seen in its glory: and if one ray of it, reflecting upon suffering Stephen, adorned him with angelical glory, how much more will the face of God most radiant and resplendent transform the soul into an admirable similitude of his perfections? "When we shall see him as he is, we shall be like him," by his everliving Spirit, the principle of the divine life and beauty in the soul, as the soul is of the natural life and beauty in the body. There will remain no shadow of error in the mind, no mixture of evil in the will, no pollution in the affections, but the full likeness of God in holiness and joy. This is the highest honour an immortal spirit is capable of. The state of innocence wherein man was created is called a "state of honour;" the angels are dignified with the title of saints: and God is "glorious in holiness:" it follows therefore, when "the spirits of just men are made perfect" they

partake of the heavenly and divine honour. If the joy that springs from believing whilst we are in this vale of tears be "unspeakable and full of glory," how glorious is the joy that springs from the clearest sight and the most intimate fruition of the blessed God, the joy that is without defect or end? as the psalmist expresses, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

(2.) At the last day their bodies shall be raised and refined to a spiritual excellency, and transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. The apostle declares, that the consummation of the saint's glory shall be at Christ's appearance. Then their souls shall be reinvested with shining robes of immortality: they shall be placed at the right hand of the everlasting King, which implies the highest honour; as God's being at our right hand, implies protection and defence: they shall then receive a most glorious testimony of his acceptance, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy:" after they are approved, they shall sit upon thrones, and judge the world, even the prince of darkness with all his apostate trains; they shall give their solemn suffrages to the judgment pronounced by our Saviour, saying, "Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments." Add after the last act of his regal office, our Saviour will lead them into the kingdom of his glory to reign with him for ever and ever. Who is able to unfold this excellent glory? all human words are unworthy and too narrow to express it; only the lively and ravishing experience of that glory can fully reveal it to us. The meanest saint in that kingdom shines in glory that infinitely exceeds all the most solemn and magnificent representations of an earthly majesty, all the trophies and triumphs of the most famous conquerors. To raise our thoughts by a distinct comparison of them, consider,

The glory of saints is substantial and solid, it is inherent in them. The apostle says, "It is a glory that shall be revealed in us:" a plenary infusion of all glorious endowments both in soul and body shall conform us to the Son of God. The glory of this world is but an airy opinion, a verbal sound without substance, empty titles, external appearance, and confers no real

dignity to the person that receives it. There is no greatness in worldly honour: it is fancy heightens some by comparison with those that are below them. But heaven is the kingdom of true glory, and every saint there is truly glorious. The psalmist declares God's judgment of all the honour and prosperity of the world: "As a dream when one awakes, so O Lord, when thou awakest thou wilt destroy their image." They are painted shadows, splendid toys. What difference there is between the clear and sound judgment of a person throughly awake, and the vain fugitive fancies of one that dreams, there is, and much more between the swelling images of worldly honour, and the real heavenly honour of the saints.

The heavenly glory brings entire satisfaction. "As for me." saith David. "I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." When the morning of glory arises, and the soul awakes from the heavy eyelids of flesh, and sees the King of spirits in his beauty, and the impression of the divine excellencies conspicuous in itself, what a joyful satisfaction, as sweet as life, is diffused through all its powers? What a heavenly subbath composes all its vast and restless desires? The glorified saint sings with the psalmist, "Return to thy rest. O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee." But how unsatisfactory is all secular greatness and ho-Of this we have the fullest testimony from some who ascended to the top of worldly glory: Solomon whose calm and flourishing state was scarce ever paralleled, yet declares that all was vanity. And the Roman triumphs, wherein the world was represented in its highest glory, was but an empty show: * Vespasian the emperor in his triumphant way often reflected upon his folly in being induced to suffer such a tedious vanity. It is true the dreaming minds of men are deceived with vain complacence in it for a while, and this makes them unwilling to be convinced of their foolish prizing it; yet they cannot find any solid true satisfaction: they are charmed with a superficial pleasure, that cannot reach to the centre of the soul.

P Nam ut mens per diem veris visionibus avocatur ne dormiat, ita faisis nocte ne excitetur. Lactant, de Opific. Det. c. 18.

To sum up all, The honour of the servants of Christ is eternal: they will shine like the stars, that never faint in their watches and influences, with a durable glory. But the glory of this world, like a blaze in straw, presently vanishes: not one ray of secular glory shall enlighten the highest monarchs, in the shady valley of death, nor in the regions of darkness beyond it.

IV. The application.

The proper and main use of what has been spoken, is,

1. To direct our ambitious desires and endeavours to seck heavenly honour. Nature has instilled the desire of praise and glory: and this is like some plants that in their native soil have a poisonous quality, but transplanted into another soil and climate, are not only innocent, but healthful. Pride ruined both worlds: the angels were expelled from heaven, and Adam from paradise for their pride. And ever since it is a seminal sin productive of innumerable evils and mischiefs: "4 pride of life is one of the great corrupters in the world:" it is the cause of envy and emulation: of envy that would degrade those that are above; of emulation that urges those who are below by any guilty means to ascend higher: it is one of the great destroyers of men here and hereafter. The affection of the praise of men makes so many ashamed "of the gospel of Christ," of owning its truths, or subjecting themselves to its pure rules. This account is given of the infidelity of some in our Saviour's time, "they sought the honour of men, and not the honour that comes from God only." But let the desire of glory be consecrated, let our aspirings be transported to a new and heavenly object, to the incorruptible crown, and it is a saintly ambition becoming the breast of a christian. The changing of the object will be an excellent means to rectify our inordinate desire of honour, of what is pompous and specious in this world. There is some resemblance in curing the diseases of the mind, and those of the body. A disease is not only cured by what is manifestly contrary, but sometimes by what seems like to it, yet has a secret contrariety. The feverish heat is not only spent by cooling julaps, but by cordials that fortify the natural heat that consumes those humours that are the inflammable matter which foments the fever. Thus the sensual desire of worldly honour is extinguished

by a pure ethereal affection, the desire of that honour that comes from the God of glory, who is the absolute and eternal fountain of honour.

2. Let us be effectually excited to choose Christ for our master, and devote ourselves to his service for ever. Though his dominion is supreme, and his right in us inalienable, yet he will be glorified by our free obedience. Our resolution and consent to serve him, that it may be acceptable, must be deliberate, entire, and permanent.

(1.) Deliberate; from the conviction and sense of our duty and interest: for the ignorance and deception of the mind, the sudden surprisal of the will is contrary to that clear consent that

is requisite to establish a covenant.

There is a competition between the Son of God, and the god of this world, who shall reign over us: one we must serve: it is therefore our highest wisdom to choose a gracious master, and most just to serve him who by full right may claim due service. If with free judgment we ponder things, if our carnal senses and passions have not the decisive vote, we shall readily yield ourselves to Christ, who by so many dear titles has a right in us: " for to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." He " is the true vine" that left " his sweetness, the good olive that left his fatness to reign over us;" and shall we choose the bramble to domineer? He requires our service not for his profit, but that his love and bounty may take a rise to reward us: but satan will torment them most who are most obsequious to him: and what charm, what impression upon the human mind can induce us to prefer a murderer before our Saviour?

any of his laws, or his providential wills and any reservation of our own lusts and appetites. He has told us, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." The commands of Christ and satan are absolutely inconsistent: obedience to the one is direct rebellion against the other. We may not capitulate with him, and think by some good works to compound for our exorbitances, and that strictness in some duties will excuse our indulgence of some sins: he will not accept of

bankrupt obedience, but strictly requires the payment of sincere obedience to all his commands.

The apostle expresses our universal duty in active and passive obedience to Christ; "None of us liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord, whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's:" that is, our lives must be employed in his service, and our deaths be at his order and disposal. Is the external acknowledging of him, and a specious homage worthy his most precious sufferings? Can his death excuse our disobedience? Can his sufferings that purchased his dominion to rule us, procure a licence for us to rebel against his commands? Such a thought is blasphemy.

And our consent must be entire; that is, we must serve him with all the freedom and force of our internal faculties, with all the diligence of our outward members, with all possible industry to advance his glory. It is not the empty title of Lord, nor the performing some slight observances that will please Christ. The commands of the gospel frequently urge us to be fervent in our heavenly calling, "First seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof: strive to enter in at the strait gate: take the kingdom of heaven by violence: work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: abound in the work of the Lord: be rich in good works: add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge," and every grace in degrees of eminence: "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure:" " we must walk circumspectly and exactly becoming the dignity and purity of our high and holy calling." We have many duties to perform, many sins to subdue and mortify, many graces to perfect, and the most intent application of mind, the most zealous industry is requisite for such great ends. By diligence and culture our souls will be as fruitful gardens abounding "in the fruits of righteousness:" but if we are remiss and careless, they will be barren as the sands of Africa. We should with as much zeal and vigour serve Christ as ever we served our lusts, those imperious exacters of our time, and strength, and affections. It is the prisportion St. Paul enforces, "As you have yielded your members servants and weapons to uncleanness, so yield your members weapons and servants of righteousness."

But how many that have made a trade of sin, are as careless in religion as if it were a slight recreation? How many please themselves with a mediocrity in religion, and pretend if they be but saved, they are content: they do not aspire to excellent degrees of glory, nor to higher degrees in the favour of God, and are lukewarm and remiss in his service, presuming what they do will be sufficient to secure their souls: but was ever any person so deserted of reason, that in worldly trade when he might gain a hundred pounds he is contented with ten? Besides this disposition and language is of one that principally desires heaven, to escape hell: and all that he does religiously is the effect of servile fear, which is no saving grace: for were it not for the terrible punishment, such a person would securely commit the sin. Briefly, as the Lord Christ "has saved us to the uttermost," we should serve him to the uttermost: we should with such alacrity and diligence, with such willing hearts and earnestness serve him on earth as he is served in heaven; if we had the powers of the angels, yet our service would be short of our obligations.

(3.) Permanent. Our service of Christ must be upon firm principles and permanent reasons to our lives' end. Sometimes there are desires and resolutions kindled in the breast, and the carnal passions blow so violently as to quench them. * Like some cursed women, that by violent potions destroy the living conception in their bowels. Others in the sunshine of prosperity will adhere in profession to Christ, but when storms arise, they withdraw themselves. Others "begin in the Spirit," run well for a time, but "end in the flesh." Our Saviour has spoke the doom of all such, "No man having put his hand to the plough. and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God:" he is not worthy the honour of being Christ's servant, and he will quickly find the fearful consequences of Christ's rejection in the next world. We read of Shimei, that upon Solomon's confining him to Jerusalem, with the threatening of death if he went forth: "And Shimei said to the king, the saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, thy servant will do." I Kings 2. 31. What an easy confinement was it to remain in the holy city, where all

^{*} Que in ipsis visceribus, medicamentis epotis originem futuri hominis extinguunt & paricidium faciant ante quam pariant. Minuc. Fet.

the tribes came twice a year, and when they returned left their hearts behind them: it seems to be a privilege and favour rather than a punishment. Yet a petty interest drew him out, and for the violation of his promise he lost his life. This is a representation of those who for temporal respects desert the service of Christ, violate their promises to him, and leave the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Our Saviour will accept of none into his service but upon his own terms; "Whoever will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me." Who would not be ambitious to be the copy of such a divine original? We should rejoice if called forth to sharp trials for his name, as having an occasion to give the clearest testimony of our superlative love and entire fidelity to our blessed Lord.

To conclude the argument, Let us be persuaded to dedicate ourselves wholly to the service of Christ, and to live according to out dedication. This should be the early act of the reasonable creature; for is it equal to put him off with the relics of the world to whom the firstfruits, the best of all we are and have is due? But if we have been careless of our duty, let us not any longer defer to make a voluntary consecration of our lives to his glory: remember that life is but a "span's breadth," our opportunity of serving Christ is short, and the omission of it is irreparable. What is there to recommend a service to us, but is to be found in the service of Christ? It is the most honourable service, whether we consider the divine majesty of our Master, who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords:" the quality of our fellow-servants, the angels of light, and the glorified saints, who are the princes of his court, and the heavenly nobility: and the nature of the work that is sublime and excellent, becoming an intellectual soul, that is spiritual by nature, and divine by grace.

It is the most sweet and easy service: this will seem incredible to those who judge of the delights of the spirit by the principles of the flesh. In this sense also, the "carnal man understands not the things of the spirit:" who can discover the pleasure of music to one that was born deaf? or describe the light of the sun to one that was ever blind? who can see a taste? The truth is, the life of carnal men has the appearance of joy, but not the reality: and the life of the saints has a gloomy melancholy appearance, but has an inward cordial joy

incomparably above all the vain flashy delights of the world. * A carnal man "that serves divers lusts and pleasures," is sometimes racked and vexed betwixt contrary passions. Every lust has a secret sting with its honey. And as the corrupt heart is its own tempter, so the guilty conscience is its own tormentor. Besides the fearful apprehension of what shall follow in the next world, when the revenging justice of God, and the cruel malice of satan shall concur to make the sinner miserable, is sufficient to poison the sweetest pleasures of sin. But the life of a saint is regulated by a law that is always at union in its precepts. has divine assistance to enable him to perform it. His gracious Master will pardon his infirmities. The content of conscience. the joy of the Holy Ghost, that rewards our duty here, far exceeds all the severity and difficulty that the carnal nature complains of in obeying the divine law. "The yoke of Christ is" truly "easy, and his burthen" truly "light."

His service is the most profitable: he will protect, maintain, and everlastingly reward his servants. Is there any master so rich, so liberal, so faithful as Christ? How often do the slaves of the world complain that they have spent themselves in vain? As Jacob reproached Laban, "Thou hast deceived me, and changed my wages ten times;" so may the worldlings say, whose hopes have been often charmed with the specious promises of the world, and deluded in the end. Dear bought experience at last convinces them of their woful folly, in seeking for happiness where it was not to be found, and neglecting to seek it where it was. But the servants of Christ have at the present "their fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life." The service of Christ here, is freedom, victory, empire, and hereafter a triumphant felicity.

I shall now address myself to the present occasion, which is to pay our last solemn respects to the memory of the Reverend Dr. Thomas Jacomb: who was so universally known, esteemed, and beloved in this city, that his name is a noble and lasting elogy. I shall not give an account of the time he spent in Cambridge, where he was fellow of Trinity College, and worthily esteemed in that flourishing society: but confine my discourse to his ministry in London. Here the divine providence disposed

Fussisti Domino sic et est, ut pœna sit sibi omnis inordinatus animus. Aug.

him into the family of a right honourable person, to whom he was deservedly very acceptable, and whose real and most noble favours conferred upon him, were only to be equalled by his grateful and high respects, and his constant care to promote serious religion in her family.

He was a servant of Christ in the most peculiar and sacred relation: and he was true to his title, both in his doctrine and in his life. He was an excellent preacher of the gospel, and had a happy art of conveying saving truths into the minds and hearts of men.

He did not entertain his hearers with curiosities, but with spiritual food: he dispensed the bread of life, whose vital sweetness and nourishing virtue is both productive and preservative of the life of souls. He preached "Christ crucified, our only wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." His great design was to convince sinners of their absolute want of Christ, that with flaming affections they might come to him. and "from his fulness receive divine grace." This is to water the tree at the root, whereby it becomes flourishing and fruitful; whereas the laying down of moral rules for the exercise of virtue. and subduing vicious affections, without directing men to derive spiritual strength, by prayer, and in the use of divine ordinances, from the Mediator the fountain of all grace, and without representing his love as the most powerful motive and obligation to obedience, is but pure philosophy, and the highest effect of it is but unregenerate morality. In short, his sermons were clear, and solid, and affectionate. He dipped his words in his soul, in warm affections, and breathed a holy fire into the breasts of his hearers: of this many serious and judicious persons can give testimony who so long attended upon his ministry with delight and profit.

His constant diligence in the service of Christ, was becoming his zeal for the glory of his master, and his love to the souls of men. He preached thrice a week whilst he had opportunity and strength. He esteemed his labour in his sacred office both his highest honour and his pleasure.

At the first appearance of an ulcer in his mouth, which he was told to be cancerous, he was observed to be not much concerned about it, than as it was likely to hinder his preaching that was his delightful work: and when he enjoyed case, and

after wasting sickness, was restored to some degrees of strength, he joyfully returned to his duty. Nay, when his pains were tolerable, preaching was his best anodyne when others failed; and after his preaching, the reflection upon the divine goodness that enabled him for the discharge of the service, was a great relief of his pains.

His life was suitable to his holy profession. His sermons were printed in a fair and lively character in his conversation. He was an "example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

He was of a staid mind, and temperate passions, and moderate in counsels. In the managing of affairs of concernment, he was not vehement and confident, not imposing and overbearing, but was receptive of advice and yielding to reason.

His compassionate charity and beneficence were very conspicuous amongst his other graces. His heart was given to God, and his relieving beneficent hand to the living images of God, whose pressing wants he resented with tender affections, and was very instrumental for their supplies.

And as his life so his death adorned the gospel, which was so exemplary to others, and so gracious and comfortable to himself. The words of men leaving the world make usually the deepest impressions, being spoken most feelingly, and with least affectation. Death reveals the secrets of men's hearts: and the testimony that dying saints give, how gracious a master they have served, how sweet his service has been to their souls, has a mighty influence upon those about them. Now the deportment and expressions of this servant of Christ in his long languishing condition, were so holy and heavenly, that though his life has been very useful, yet he more glorified God dying than living.

When he was summoned by painful sickness, his first work was to yield himself with resigned submission to the will of God. When a dear friend of his first visited him; he said, 'I am in the use of means, but I think my appointed time is come, that I must die: if my life might be serviceable to convert or build up one soul, I should be content to live, but if God hath no work for me to do, here I am, let him do with me as he pleaseth: but to be with Christ is best of all.' Another time he told the same person, 'that now it was visible it was a determined case.

God would not hear the prayer, to bless the means of his recovery,' therefore desired his friend to be willing to resign him to God, saying, 'It will not be long before we meet in heaven, never to part more, and there we shall be perfectly happy, there neither your doubts and fears, nor my pains and sorrows shall follow us, nor our sins, which is best of all.' After a long continuance in his languishing condition without any sensible alteration, being asked how he did, he replied, 'I lie here, but get no ground for heaven or earth:' upon which one said, 'Yes in your preparations for heaven,' 'O yes' said he, 'there I sensibly get ground I bless God.'

An humble submission to the divine pleasure was the habitual frame of his soul: like a die that thrown high or low, always falls upon its square: thus whether hope of his recovery were raised or sunk, he was content in every dispensation of providence.

His patience under sharp and continuing pains was admirable. The most difficult part of a christian's duty, the sublimest degree of holiness upon earth, is to bear tormenting pains with a meek and quiet spirit. Then "faith is made perfect in works:" and this was eminently verified in his long trial. His pains were very severe, proceeding from a cancerous humour, that spread itself in his joints, and preyed upon the tenderest membranes, the most sensible parts, yet his patience was invincible. How many restless nights did he pass through without the least murmuring or reluctancy of spirit.

He patiently suffered very grievous things "through Christ that strengthened him;" and in his most afflicted condition was thankful.

But what disease or death could disturb the blessed composure of his soul, which "was kept by the peace of God that passes all understanding." Such was the divine mercy, he had no anxieties about his future state, but a comfortable assurance of the favour of God, and his title to the eternal inheritance.

He had a substantial double joy, in the reflection upon his life spent in the faithful service of Christ, and the prospect of a blessed eternity ready to receive him. This made him long to be above. He said with some regret, 'death flies from me, I make no haste to my Father's house.' But the wise and gracious God, "having tried his faithful servant, gave him the crown of

life, which he hath promised to those that love him." His body, that poor relic of frailty, is committed in trust to the grave, "his soul sees the face of God in righteousness, and is satisfied with his likeness.

The hope of this should allay the sorrows of his dearest friends. When the persons we love and have lived with, are to be absent a few months, it is grievous, but at the last lamenting separation, all the springs of our tender affections are opened. and sorrows are ready to overwhelm us. But the steadfast belief of the divine world, and that our friends are safely arrived thither, is able to support our fainting spirits, and refresh all our sorrows. The truth is, we have reason to lay to heart the displeasure of God, and our own loss, when his faithful ministers are taken away. When the holy lights of heaven are eclipsed. it portends sad things: when the saints are removed from earth to heaven, their souls freed from the interposition of their dark bodies, they truly live, but we that remain, die, being deprived of their holy lives, their examples, that are a preservative from the contagion of the world. A due sense of God's afflicting providence is becoming us: but always allayed with hope of our being shortly reunited with our dearest friends for ever in the better world. O that our serious preparations, our lively hopes, and the presence of the great Comforter in our souls, may encourage us most willingly to leave this lower world, so full of temptations and trouble, to ascend into the world above, where perfect peace, full joy, and the most excellent glory are in conjunction for ever.