

you have need of him daily, make daily use of him. He is the true Christian, in whom Christ is formed, and he the growing Christian, who grows up into Christ in all things.

Your ministers were of St. Paul's spirit, to them to live was Christ, to preach Christ; nor did they desire to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Let the same mind, therefore, be in you, and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Live upon the mercy of Christ, see yourselves lost without it, and cast yourselves upon it: let that be your stay, and stay yourselves upon it; let that be your comfort, and comfort yourselves with it. Be ready to own your dependence on Christ, and your obligations to him; Christ is a Christian's all, and therefore, blessed be God for Jesus Christ. Let that be the burthen of every song.

Lastly, Live in the believing hopes and expectations of eternal life through the mercy of Christ. If, by the grace of God, you have taken some care, some pains, to make it sure, (I hope I speak to many who have done it,) take the comfort of it. Be still looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, and with patience wait for it. Let actual thoughts and expectations of eternal life be the daily entertainment of your souls. Look upon it as real, as near, as yours; and please yourselves with the prospect of it. How often do our foolish, idle fancies build us castles in the air, and please us with the imagination of things uncertain, unlikely, impossible! When at the same time, if we would set our faith on work, that would entertain us with the delightful contemplation of real bliss, which we shall very shortly be in the possession of; and which will so far exceed our present conceptions of it, that we need not fear, lest (as it is with the things of this world) the raised expectation of them should be a drawback upon the enjoyment of them, and lessen the pleasure of it. But on the contrary, the more we converse with it in faith and hope, the better prepared we shall be for it, and the more will the capacities of the sanctified soul be enlarged to take

in those joys. What! sirs, do we hope to be in heaven quickly, to be there eternally, and yet think so seldom of it, and please ourselves so little with the foresight of its glories, and the foretaste of its pleasures. Let us raise our expectations, for the things are neither doubtful, nor distant, nor despicable, but sure, and great, and very near; and the hope of them, if built on Christ, will not make us ashamed.

Let our hopes and expectations of eternal life wean us from this world, and take our affections off from it. What an inconsiderable point is this earth, to one who has his conversation in heaven! How trifling are the things that are seen, that are temporal and transitory, to one who keeps his eye and heart on the things that are not seen, that are eternal. Let this hope purify us from all the pollutions of sin, and pacify all the tumults of our spirits, that we may be found of Christ in peace. Let it engage and quicken us to the utmost diligence in the service of God: it is sure worth while, to take pains in that work, which no less than eternal life will be the recompence of. Do we hope for the mercy of Christ? Let us then put on, as the elect of God, bowels of compassion, and upon all occasions show mercy, as those who hope to find mercy. And since temporal death must be our passage to this eternal life, let our expectations of it not only take off the terror of death, but make it welcome to us. Why should we make any difficulty of putting off the earthly house of this tabernacle, in order to our removal to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Rather let us hasten to meet with cheerfulness that messenger which will fetch us to life, though it come under the name of death; and all the days of our appointed time continue waiting till it come; with reference to the burthens and troubles of this life, waiting with a holy patience; and yet, with reference to the joy set before us, (if I may so speak,) with a holy impatience: *Why are his chariot-wheels so long a coming!* Let us have our eye to this eternal life when we pray daily, *Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come.*

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## A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

## LIFE OF THE REV. MR. FRANCIS TALLENTS.

If my information be right, his grandfather was a Frenchman, and was brought over into England by Sir Francis Leak, (whose descendants were Lords Deincourt, afterwards Earls of Scarsdale) who did

honourably for him, because in France, upon some occasion or other, he had been instrumental to save his life.

Our Mr. Tallents was born in Nov. 1619, at a little

town called Pelsley, not far off Chesterfield, in Derbyshire.

There is this remarkable concerning his family; that his parents, who were religious good people, both died when their children were very young; he, who was the eldest of six, was then but fourteen years of age; but of all those six children, not one died for above seventy years after: but (he it observed to the glory of God, as the orphans' God, whose providence takes up, when father and mother forsake) they all lived in reputation and comfort, were eminently religious, and considering what was left among them, wonderfully prospered in the world.

His father's eldest brother, whose name he bore, was a clergyman, and was a wise and tender father to these orphans; he was, first, chaplain to my Lord Deincourt, and tutor to his sons, and was afterwards presented by him to a good living: this nephew of his, and another, he bred scholars. The other was Mr. Philip Tallents, a very worthy conformist in Lincolnshire, who died not long since, and an entire and close affection there was between the two brothers, notwithstanding the difference of their sentiments in some things.

His uncle sent him first to the free-school at Mansfield, afterwards to that of Newark, where he made such great progress in learning, that one of his masters sent his uncle word, "He was not a silver but a golden talent."

He spoke sometimes of a sermon he heard, when he was very young, on these words, (Ps. cxix. 113.) *I hate vain thoughts*; which much affected him, and gave him occasion to ask a good grandmother he had, "Whether the devil could know our thoughts?" And he was much satisfied when she told him, "*No, God only knoweth our thoughts.*"

When he was about sixteen years of age, he was sent to Cambridge by his uncle, and was entered first in Peter-House; but after some time he was removed thence, whilst he was under-graduate, to Magdalen College, to be sub-tutor to two or three sons of the Earl of Suffolk, who we think were successively Earls of Suffolk, and the third, the present Earl.

Soon after he came to Magdalen College, it pleased God to call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him. I find not any account of the work of God upon his heart, under his own hand, which were to be wished, nor can I recollect the steps of it, as he has sometimes related them to me. He sometimes said pleasantly to his friends, "When I began to be serious, I soon became a notorious puritan; for which I bless God's holy name."

I have heard him speak of the strong temptations to infidelity with which he was assaulted, and which for some time he grappled with; but by divine grace he got over them. It was an easy thing, he would say, to believe the being of God, and his pro-

vidence, and the principles of natural religion; but to believe that Jesus Christ, who was crucified at Jerusalem, is the Son of God, and my Redeemer and Saviour, and to rest upon him alone for righteousness and life, this is a hard thing. But this was it which he was all his days abundantly filled with, and more and more confirmed in, that *Christ is all in all*. There was nothing which he more frequently, nor more earnestly, pressed in all his preaching, than this, as having himself experienced not only the comfort of it, but the power and efficacy of it to promote sanctification and a holy life. Christ is the life of our souls, and the foundation of all true religion: and yet if we look into the world, and much more into our own hearts, we shall find that we are least acquainted with him, and are easily drawn from him. We are apt to rest upon our own works, to trust in our own strength and righteousness. Nature in some sort teaches us to do many good things; and when we do amiss, to be sorry for it; and to ask pardon of God, because he is good and merciful; and thus we hope to be accepted of God, though we lay aside Christ, if not in words, yet in the actings of our souls and spirits: whereas we are made accepted only in the Beloved, and no pardon and salvation is to be had, but by Jesus Christ the Son of God. To cleave to Christ alone, and live by him, is both honourable, and pleasing to God, and makes us have high thoughts of forgiveness of sins, and acceptance with God; and without this, we are even fit to turn Quakers. He called it a golden saying of St. Austin, *In causâ duorum hominum per quorum unum sub peccato venditi sumus, per alterum liberamur, tota consistit Christiana religio.*—*The transaction of two men is the sum of the Christian religion, by one of whom we are sold under sin, by the other we are redeemed.* And quoted Damasus's creed for it, *In hujus morte et sanguine credimus emundatos nos, &c.*—*In whose death and blood we believe that we are cleansed.*

But to return. About the year 1642, he went to travel in France, and other foreign parts, as tutor to the Earl of Suffolk's sons, and I think was abroad with them above two years; and there he improved himself very much with the conversation of the learned men he met with, and was always very communicative of the observations he made. I have often heard him say, that what he saw abroad with his own eyes of the popish religion, and what conferences he had with its advocates, added much to his conviction of the falsehood and wickedness of it, and confirmed him in the protestant religion.

Upon his return from his travels, he was made Fellow of Magdalen College, by the interest of the Earl of Suffolk. Dr. Fuller, in his History of the University of Cambridge, says, That the mastership of that College is neither in the gift of the crown, nor the choice of the College, but at the disposal of the Earls of Suffolk, hereditary patrons of that foun-

dation. He afterwards became Senior Fellow, and President, or Vice-Master of the College. Having entered upon his Fellowship, he became an eminent tutor in the College; among many others, very many, Sir Robert Sawyer, afterwards Attorney-General, was his pupil, and Dr. Burton.

In the latter end of the year 1645, he began to preach in Cambridge. His first sermon (as I take it) was on Rom. viii. 31. *What shall we then say to these things?* in which he endeavoured to encourage others with the doctrine of Christ's mediation, which had been so great a support and comfort to him; over that sermon, as one who aimed to be an experimental preacher, he wrote those words of the Psalmist, when he had obtained the joy of God's salvation, *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* He preached often in the College Chapel, and at St. Mary's.

He was solemnly ordained to the ministry at London, Nov. 29, 1648, in the parish church of St. Mary Wolnoth, by the third classical presbytery in the province of London, being called (so the letters of his ordination run) to the work of the ministry in the University of Cambridge, as Fellow of Magdalen College there; he is therefore solemnly set apart to the office of a preaching presbyter, and work of the ministry, with fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands.

The University of Cambridge being authorized by Queen Elizabeth to choose every year twelve Doctors or Graduates, who should have power to preach in all parts of England or Ireland, without licence from the Ordinaries, Mr. Tallents was chosen one of them, and was so empowered by an instrument under the University seal, bearing date Oct. 6, 1649.

In the year 1652, he left the University, and came to Shrewsbury to be minister of St. Mary's church. Being to come into the country, he refused to take his degree of Bachelor of Divinity, (though I think he performed his exercises for it,) because that might have been an occasion of his being forced to take place of many in the country, who were his seniors in the ministry.

Now he applied himself entirely to the work of the ministry, and laid out himself to do good to the souls of those who were committed to his charge. And though he had been near twenty years an academic, and intimately conversant with all sorts of learning, yet he preached as one who would seem to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified, studiously accommodating himself to the capacities of his hearers, and delivering to them the great things of God, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

He was much honoured and respected by all the ministers of those parts, and his judgment and advice sought and valued by many. The character Mr. Baxter gives of him in his memoirs is, "That he was a good scholar, a godly blameless divine,

and that he was most eminent for extraordinary prudence, and moderation and peaceableness toward all;" and we know that this record is true; and that he was that just and righteous man whom Solomon describes, (Prov. x. 31, 32.) *Whose mouth bringeth forth wisdom, and whose lips know what is acceptable*,—what is apposite.

Soon after he came to Shrewsbury, he married the daughter of ——— Clive of Walford, Esq. by whom he had one son, bred a scholar at Cambridge, but did not prove a comfort to him. Grace does not always run in the blood. Here there was no reason to fear it did not: but his days were not long in the land.

In the year 1656, there was a public dispute in the parish church of Ellesmere in Shropshire, between Mr. Porter (that eminent divine) minister of Whitchurch, and one Mr. Haggar, an anabaptist, concerning infant baptism, occasioned by a sermon Mr. Porter had preached on that subject at the lecture of Ellesmere: in which dispute, Mr. Tallents was pitched upon to be moderator. An account of that dispute was then printed, in which it appears, that as Mr. Porter abundantly confirmed the doctrine he had preached to the satisfaction of all indifferent persons, and plainly made out the right which the infant seed of believers have to baptism, and so did his part as a disputant, so Mr. Tallents did his as moderator, beginning and ending with prayer, and directing the progress of the dispute (which continued five hours) with prudence and candour, that is, like himself.

In the year 1658, his dear wife died, after she had lived with him but four or five years; thus is our mountain shaken many times, when we think it stands strong, and shall not be moved. He buried her in the same grave in which he himself was buried fifty years after.

When the king was restored in the year 1660, he not only showed an entire satisfaction in that resettlement of the government, after its foundations had been long out of course, and a sincere affection to the king, as the presbyterians throughout the kingdom did, but intimated likewise his readiness to conform, as far as he could with a good conscience, to the changes that were then made in the church. He therefore read (as I think I have been told) some parts of the liturgy at that time.

But when the Act of Uniformity took place on Bartholomew day, 1662, his conscience being dissatisfied with the terms of conformity thereby insisted on, he was necessitated to quit his place, which was his livelihood, and (which was more grievous to him, and many others) his work and usefulness, which were his life. He has sometimes observed, that before the wars the puritans generally made a shift to conform and come into the church, notwithstanding the hard usage they foresaw (by the trouble frequently given to those of that character) they were

likely to meet with in it. To prevent which, for the future, two new barriers or fortifications were erected by the Act of Uniformity to keep them out; one was the declaration, "that it is unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the king:" and this fort they who erected it, about twenty-six years after, were obliged to quit, as not tenable; for when they had broken through it, by joining with those who took up arms against King James, and setting the Prince of Orange upon the throne, they silently took away that declaration, both out of the Uniformity Act, and that of corporations, by an act in the first of King William and Queen Mary; trusting to the other as sufficient to answer their intention, which was the declaration of an unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the book entitled "The book of Common Prayer," &c. (and the Act of Uniformity itself is the first article in the contents of the book so entitled, and must therefore be unfeignedly consented to;) which declaration still remains to many tender consciences such an objection against conformity as they cannot get over.

Mr. Tallents, as long as he lived, generally observed Bartholomew day every year, as a day of humiliation and prayer, either publicly, or in private, especially toward his latter end. "A day to bring to remembrance," so he used to call it. On this occasion, he sometimes called people wisely to consider the work of God; to consider the condition of those ministers who were then silenced, how they were hated, despised, and imprisoned, and what great hardships they and their families were reduced to; how sad it was with the people, who were deprived of those helps for their souls which they had greatly valued, and been edified by, and how they sat down at first as men astonished. "Consider," (said he) "that though men were the instruments of it, it was the work of God. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord? It is the Lord that hath covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud.* It was our Father, it was our dear Lord and Master, who made this breach upon us. He did it righteously for our sins; the sins of us his ministers. It was not for our sins that men put us out, but it was for our sins that God put us out: who of us have not acknowledged this? It was for the sins of the good people who loved us, who did not profit as they might have done. It was for the sins of those who hated us, and were set against us, who desired to be rid of such preaching and praying, and said, *Prophecy not; therefore they shall not prophesy.* Yet we hope many of us got good by our sufferings, were purified by them, and our hearts made better by our sadness. God would show us, that he can carry on his work another way, and multiply his people, even when they are in affliction; and make even the sufferings of his ministers to turn to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ."

He sometimes observed with thankfulness the care God took of his ejected ones, how wonderfully he provided for them, so as to keep them alive; as the disciples, who were sent out without purse or scrip, and yet when they were asked, *Lacked you any thing?* answered, *Nothing, Lord!* Especially, that they obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

One remark more I shall take notice of which he made upon the silencing of the ministers; "Lord," (said he,) "what poor weak creatures are we; when some applaud this as an excellent deed, and yet others look upon it as a great sin."

But as he was truly conscientious in his nonconformity, and entirely satisfied in the reasons of it, so he was eminently moderate in it, and let his moderation be known unto all men: he loved all good people of every denomination, and took all occasions to witness against bigotry on all sides.

For the most part, he attended the public ministry and the liturgy both morning and afternoon, and preached only in the evening, and on the week days, as he had opportunity, and fell not into any constant stated work for some years (as I think) after he was silenced, waiting to see what God would do with him.

In the year 1670, he went to travel in France a second time, as tutor to two young gentlemen, Mr. Boscawen and Mr. Hambden, with whom he spent about two years and a half in making the complete tour of that kingdom and the parts adjacent. We find among his papers a very exact journal of all his motions and observations, from the day he set out from London to the day he returned. There we find him at Diep, Roan, Caen, Alençon, Angiers, Nantes, Saumur, Tours, Orleans, Thoulouse, Montpellier, Nîmes, Marseilles, Thoulon, Lyons, Geneva, Bern, Basil, Zurich, Strasburg, and at length at Paris. Of these, and abundance of other places, he gives a very particular account, describing the rarities both of nature and art; their civil government, the churches, and religious houses; and especially an account of the protestants and their churches; the learned men in every place, and his conferences with them, and the informations he received from them; in recording which, there appears a great deal of care. Had he put his last hand to this journal, and published it then, I doubt not but it would have been both an acceptable entertainment to the world, and a considerable reputation to him: but his great modesty concealed it, not only from the world, but from his intimate friends, for I know not of any to whom he communicated it; so far was he from the ostentation of a traveller, so little did he value himself upon these accomplishments, which many would have been proud of, and so much was he taken up with the better country, the heavenly. Yet when there was occasion, he failed not to inform and entertain his friends with his observations he made when he was abroad. Mr. Boscawen, one of

the gentlemen that he travelled with, died at Strasburg of the small pox, to his great grief.

While he was at Paris, where he continued some months, he wrote a pretty large treatise, giving a particular description of the Roman catholic religion, by comparing their books, which he carefully read, and their practice, which he carefully observed, with each other. He gives an account, 1. Of their doctrine and opinions, chiefly from the Council of Trent, which he gives an abstract of; also from the canon law, and the writings of their doctors. 2. Of their worship and ceremonies: which he gives an account of by their books, put out by order of their popes, &c. of which the pontifical, ritual, breviary, and missal are the chief: also by their ordinary practice in public and private; their extraordinary devotions in processions, jubilees, confraternities, &c. and by their religious orders of men and women. 3. Of the means they use to support it, to confirm their own, win upon others, and overcome those who will not be won upon by them: and lastly, of the several sorts of religions, or religious orders, among them. Of all which, he says, *Vidiſſe eſt confuſaſſe*—*The appearance itſelf is a ſufficient confutation*. He adds ſome of his thoughts on that queſtion, Whether thoſe who are devout in the Romiſh religion may be ſaved? and concludes their caſe highly dangerous, becauſe they are idolaters; but expreſſes himſelf with great tendreſs and compaſſion, bearing them record that many of them have a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. He ſhows in the cloſe the folly and wickedneſs of thoſe proteſtants who make light of popery, and think there is no great hurt in it.

This treatiſe is dedicated to the Reverend Mr. Samuel Hildersham, (ſon of Mr. Arthur Hildersham,) to whom he was nephew by marriage.

At his return from his travels in the year 1673, he found the diſſenters in England bleſſed with ſome breathing time from the extreme perſecutions with which for ſo many years they had been haraſſed, and their aſſemblies tolerated. This ſoon brought him back to Shrewſbury; for no employment, no entertainment, was in his account comparable to that of preaching the goſpel, for the honour of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of precious ſouls; when, therefore, a door of opportunity was opened for that, among the people he had formerly ſtood in the relation of a paſtor to, he preſently embraced it, though it was no way to his ſecular advantage, and though it broke him off very much from his converſation with ſcholars and great men. Herein he was a follower of the faith of Moſes, who though he was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, viſited his brethren the children of Iſrael, and was content to take his lot with them.

Mr. John Bryan (the ſon of Dr. Bryan of Coventry) was turned out from St. Chad's church, Shrews-

bury, and under his miniſtry the preſbyterian diſſenters there ſat down; a pious man, and a good preacher. With him Mr. Tallents joined, and they divided the work between them: the congregation meeting in the houſe of that eminent Chriſtian, Mrs. Hunt, relict of Col. Hunt, member of parliament. Much good was now done in that place by the miniſtry of theſe two worthy men.

Mr. Tallents had formerly, for the uſe of his pupils, drawn up a ſcheme of general chronology, which he had found of great uſe to them in reading hiſtory. This, having leiſure for cloſe ſtudy, now he was again ſettled in Shrewſbury, he ſet himſelf to enlarge, which he did to that degree of fulneſs and exactneſs, that it very well deſerves the title under which it is known to the world: *A View of Uni-verſal Hiſtory*. It coſt him abundance of pains, more than can be imagined, to bring it to perfection, and to put it into that curious form in which it now appears: he was very exact in comparing his authors, and careful to avoid miſtakes; every line there was the product of more ſtudy than perhaps ſome pages of another nature would be. He was very intent upon it, and applied himſelf to it with great induſtry. If any came to ſpeak with him in his ſtudy hours, he would deſire them to deſpatch their buſineſs in as few words as they could, that he might return to his buſineſs, which was his great delight, next to the immediate ſervice of God, and the work of his miniſtry, which he always preferred. I remember with what affection he would bleſs God with his family, on a Lord's-day morning, that on that day we were to lay aſide our ſtudies and our books, and give ourſelves to communion with God in holy joy and praiſe.

Thoſe chronological tables which give that view of uni-verſal hiſtory, were finely engraven on ſixteen copper plates in his own houſe, and published about the year 1684, made up either in books or maps. How well they were received, and how much they are and will be valued by the learned world, I need not ſay. Some of his friends were very urgent with him to publish them in Latin, for the benefit of foreigners, but he ſaid he intended them chiefly for the benefit of the nobility and gentry of our own nation, that they might have things which lay diſperſed ſet before them in a clear and ſhort view. It is certain there is nothing in them of partiality, or that looked deſigned to ſerve any party, but plain truth as far as it can be diſcovered.

I find among his papers many chronological diſquiſitions, and hiſtorical remarks; ſome ſeem to be drawn up in preparation for thoſe tables, others for the illuſtration of them, but a vaſt deal of learning there is in them. That which encouraged him to take pains herein was the exceeding great uſe and benefit of hiſtory; that it ſhows us God's ways and dealings with his church and people, and the nations of

the world ; it helps us to understand the prophecies of Scripture ; and it raises us above that narrowness of spirit which most are subject to, and keeps us from thinking that there is no religion but in our own way ; besides, that it gives great light to all kinds of knowledge and learning. If he would have been prevailed with to publish annotations upon his tables, and such historical dissertations, as I find he had furnished himself with materials for, I doubt not but they would have been both very acceptable and very useful.

About the year 1683, the meetings in Shrewsbury were suppressed, and he was then forced again into obscurity ; and durst not be seen there, for fear of the Five-mile Act, which Mr. Bryan was brought into trouble upon. But in the year 1685, his dear wife going to Shrewsbury on some occasion, and dying suddenly there, he ventured thither to the last office of respect to her, which opportunity his enemies laid hold of, and it being just at the time of the Duke of Monmouth's attempt in the west, under pretence of that he was taken up, and sent prisoner to Chester castle, but upon the defeat of that attempt he was enlarged, and retired to London, where he lived very privately. Solomon speaks of a time when a *man is hid*, such a man.

But at the coming out of the liberty for dissenters in 1687, he returned to Shrewsbury, and joined with Mr. Bryan in the ministry there : and burning and shining lights they were in that place. And now they confined not themselves to the evening of the sabbath, as formerly ; but some time after this revival of their liberty, they began to keep their meetings at the same time with the public worship, both parts of the day.

Upon occasion of that indulgence, he wrote for his own satisfaction a pretty large tract, which we find among his papers, concerning compelling people to the Christian religion, and punishing those who err in it. All agree, that those may be restrained and punished, who go against the light and law of nature, and disturb the civil government. But he undertakes to prove, that the magistrate is not to force Jews and heathens to embrace Christ's truth ; nor those who err in matters of faith and worship, to own the right ; nor to punish or destroy them if they will not : but that the same weapons are now to be used for the preserving and reforming of the church, which the apostles used for the planting of it ; which were not carnal but spiritual ; and yet mighty through God to pull down strong holds. He largely examines, not only the arguments, but the authorities, on both sides, and concludes, that Christ builds his church by faith and love, not by craft, violence, and persecution.

When King William and Queen Mary were happily settled on the throne, and each side seemed to come to a good temper, to promote it, he published

a small tract of two or three sheets, which he called "*Sure and Large Foundations.*" The design of which was to promote catholic Christianity and catholic charity, as the only healing methods.

Some overtures being made in that reign towards a comprehension, some worthy gentlemen who greatly valued his judgment, sent for him up to London, to discourse with him concerning it ; particularly concerning the re-ordaining of those who were ordained by presbyters. Upon mature deliberation, he declared, he could not for his part submit to it ; and drew up his reasons at large, which we find among his papers.

He not only pleaded for, but earnestly pressed, occasional conformity, as a token of the charity we have for those with whom we cannot stately join, long before such a noise was made about it, with reference to offices ; and it was his opinion, that as the dissenters, to show their charity, ought occasionally to hear the church ministers, and join with them in their worship, so the church ministers ought occasionally to hear the dissenters, and join with them in their worship ; supposing that if they understood one another better, they would love one another better, and be brought nearer together.

In October, 1690, good Mrs. Hunt died, a great example in her place of serious piety, and all Christian virtues ; lively and unwearied in the exercises of devotion, abounding in every thing that was good, free and charitable, and very active to promote religion, and the power of godliness, without any regard to parties. Upon her death, the meeting removed to Mr. Tallents's house about one year, while they were building and fitting up a very decent place for the purpose, which they entered upon, Oct. 25, 1691, Mr. Tallents preaching the first sermon on Isa. lvii. 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.* He caused it to be written upon the walls of the meeting-place, that it was built, "not for a faction or a party ; but for promoting repentance and faith, in communion with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Adding that Scripture with which the French churches usually begin their public worship, *Our help stands in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* He sometimes told his hearers, "If you come to be a people only differing from others in some opinions, but grow proud and carnal, and worldly and sensual, God will pull your place down ; and let him pull it down."

He took all occasions to declare how much he hated from his heart the limiting of Christ's church to a particular opinion or party. We are far from thinking, said he, ourselves the only preachers, and condemning all others ; as some do in effect, *Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?* (1 Kings xxii. 24.) No, we rejoice that Christ is preached by many others : but we cannot think there

are so many good preachers, as that there is no need of us, or that we should be laid aside or forbidden; and therefore we say, as Elihu, without reflecting on others, *We also will speak*; we will throw in our mite; for we are called to the work, and therefore will lay out what God has given us, since the ministration of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal. He made it his great business to preach Christ, and faith in Christ, as the great principle of holiness, which he said, he feared many spoke of very dimly and very coldly.

I cannot avoid taking notice here of a most impudent and malicious calumny, which the enemies of this good man cast upon him, "That he was a popish priest:" but if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, much more them of his household. When he was at London in the year 1686, it happened that a desk he had left at Shrewsbury was opened by mistake, in which, among other things, was a piece of an old white damask bed scooped, and a plain pair of slippers, and a book, in which was entered the names of his pupils in Magdalen College; a malicious fellow that was there reported, that "he saw in a desk of Mr. Tallents's such vestments as priests say mass in, full of crosses and images, and I know not what, and a book in which were the names of such as were admitted into the order of Jesuits." When Mr. Tallents came down, and found this base slander industriously spread to his prejudice, he had the fellow before the mayor, produced the things that were found in the desk, and so convicted him of falsehood and malice; but because he was a poor man, gave him no other trouble but that of a check from the mayor: yet there were those who would do all they could to support the slander; and one at length who happened to say it in the company of divers, again and again, "Tallents is a Jesuit, and he has read mass at St. Omer's, and I will prove it." There being full evidence of this man's speaking these words, Mr. Tallents was advised to bring an action against him; which he did, and it was tried at Shrewsbury assizes in 1693, and the man was cast; but he being poor, the jury brought in but fifty shillings damages.

In the year 1701, he buried his fourth wife, with whom he had lived about fourteen years in much comfort; upon which he left off house-keeping, and went to be a tabler; but still having care of the poor families of many, when he had none of his own.

In the year 1704 he wrote his excellent *History of Schism*, for the promoting of Christian moderation, and the communion of saints. He was in the eighty-fifth year of his age when he wrote that book, and as it is the product of a great deal of learning, so it is the result of a great deal of thought, of a mind deeply tinctured with Christian piety and charity, that found itself much aggrieved to hear many, who may justly be thought to fear God, and

work righteousness, anathematized, and condemned to the pit of hell, for some mistakes (to say the worst) concerning church government and ceremonies. All the point that book aimed at the gaining of was, "It is possible a dissenter may be saved." A very modest postulatam, one would think, and easily granted to heathens and papists. But it seems, it might not be granted to the dissenters, at least not without reluctance; for the book was answered by one *S. G.* with a great deal of passion and indignation, upon Mr. Dodwell's principles. Mr. Tallents, like a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman, answered it with fair reasoning and abundance of candour and meekness. *S. G.* replied with more falsehood and bitterness than before, with the most base misrepresentations, and most scurrilous reflections that could be. Some of Mr. Tallents's friends offered to expose and banter him, but he would by no means suffer it; and would himself have been at the pains mildly to show him his mistakes, but that some of his friends reminded him of the old observation—"He that fights with a dunghill, though he be a conqueror, is sure to come off dirtied;" and one worthy gentleman, who upon inquiry found out now who this *S. G.* was, sent Mr. Tallents an account of his character; adding, that it was one of the greatest honours ever done him, that he had once thought him worthy of his notice, and treated him with so much civility and respect, but that he would by no means have him trouble himself with him a second time. Answer not such a writer according to his writing.

Let us now observe something concerning him, and his character and conversation, which may be of use to us.

1. In all his address and conversation, he was a great example of giving honour to whom honour was due, and love to whom love. To persons of rank and figure, he was in the highest degree respectful and complaisant, nor have I ever known any more observant of the rules of decency, nor with a better grace, which was a great ornament to his learning and piety. To his intimate friends he was most affectionate and endearing; with what expressions of love he used to embrace them, and lay them in his bosom, how dear they were to him as his own soul, how he would be pleased and revived with the sight of them, and how naturally he cared for their state, must never be forgotten by those who were blessed with his friendship. To his inferiors he was remarkably condescending, would hear their complaints with great patience and tenderness, and with great freedom and familiarity discourse with those who desired his advice in their affairs, relating to this world or the other.

2. In his old age, he retained the learning both of the school and of the academy to admiration; and would readily repeat verbatim observable passages

of a great length out of the classic authors, as there was occasion, for the entertainment of his friends. Those who would be thus rich when they are old, must take pains when they are young. He had something to communicate to those who conversed with him concerning all sorts of learning, but history was his masterpiece, and in that no man more ready. He sometimes advised young students to trace learning to its fountains, and though they read new books, yet to keep the old ones by them, and dwell most upon them.

3. He abounded very much in pious ejaculations, as one who had learned to *pray always, to pray without ceasing*, and to intermix prayer and praise not only with the slumbers of the night, (which I have reason to think he did,) but with the conversation of the day. When he was in serious talk with his friends, how often would he send his heart to heaven, and direct theirs also that way, in such devout and holy breathings as these, "God look on us!" "God pity us!" When he heard that his friends he inquired after were in health and prosperity, with what seriousness and solemnity would he lift up his eyes and hands, and say, "God be praised!" If he heard of the afflictions of any of them, "God relieve them, refresh them, comfort them!" If of the falls of any, "God give them repentance!" If of the deaths of any, "God fit us to die!" When he sent his service unto his friends, he would usually add an ejaculatory prayer for them, "God do them good!" "The Lord refresh their souls with his love!" adding sometimes, "and my poor dry soul too!" As the slightly careless use of the expressions of prayer, as by-words, is an evidence of a vain mind, not possessed with a due reverence of God and his great name, and is really a profaning of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow to the Lord their God; so the serious and devout use of them, with the indications of a due attention and affection, is an evidence of the dominion of grace and holiness in the heart: and it is pity when the former is so much in use among the profane, his enemies, who take his name in vain, the latter should be so little in use among professors, his friends, who desire to give unto him the glory due unto his name. Of this instance of devotion Mr. Tallents was a great example.

4. He was very happy in counselling and advising his friends who applied themselves to him, according as their case and condition was, their temper, or their distemper. He knew how to speak a word in season to the weak, to the weary, to the wilful, to comfort with all tenderness, and yet to rebuke with all authority and faithfulness; and how to express at the same time a just indication against a sin, and yet a due compassion for sinners.

He sometimes expressed his fear concerning many weak, melancholy Christians, that they had

tired themselves in the exercises of devotion; and would advise such to compose and quiet themselves, and keep their minds as calm and sedate as may be, and not aim to put them always upon the stretch. He would sometimes pleasantly say, "The quietest are the best Christians." And certainly we must take heed of placing religion too much in the passions and pangs even of holy love, for we truly honour and enjoy God not only in the elevations of the soul toward him, but the repose of the soul in him. *Return to thy rest, O my soul, and be at home, be at ease, in God.*

And as to the external performances of religion, he sometimes said, "Let the work of God be done, and done well, but with as little noise as may be:" *The kingdom of God comes not with observation.*

5. He was eminent for his charity; was charitable in his judgment and censures of others, and made the best of every body; charitable in forgiving injuries, and passing by affronts; and charitable to the poor, ready, very ready to every good work; not only exciting the charity of others, but exerting his own, to his power, yea, and beyond his power; sparing from himself to supply others: he was as dead to the wealth of this world as most men I ever knew, knowing no good in it, but doing good with it. The little he left behind him (much of which too he left to the poor, having no children) is an evidence for him, (as it was for Calvin at Geneva,) that he had no way of laying up what he had but by laying it out in works of charity, which is the surest way of laying up *Θεμελιον καλον*—a good security, pawn or pledge, (so some understand it, 1 Tim. vi. 19.) *for the time to come, and so lay hold on eternal life.* He was particularly kind and charitable to strangers in distress, whom we must not be forgetful to entertain, (yet with prudence and caution,) because though some thereby have entertained devils incarnate, yet others thereby have entertained angels unawares, Heb. xiii. 2.

6. His preaching was very plain and familiar, but very affectionate, and that which manifestly came from the heart, and therefore was most likely to reach to the heart. He studied not words but things, remembering that of Minucius Felix, *Quo imperitior sermo, eo illustrior ratio est*—*The discourse would be lucid in proportion to its simplicity*; and that oftentimes there is most power and demonstration of the Spirit there where is least of the enticing words of man's wisdom. His explications were clear; his reasonings strong and convincing; and his quotations of Scripture very pertinent, and sometimes surprising.

I find a sermon on Jer. iii. 4. *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?* which he begins thus, "My brethren, what shall I speak to you this day from the Lord, for your spiritual encouragement, and strengthening in the ways of the Lord? We



meet together for this end, and we have gracious promises, that he will be with us to teach and strengthen us: I have it in my heart at this time to tell you, that you are to look upon God as your Father, and to hold that fast in your hearts."

Another thus; "I would fain speak a good word to-day concerning Jesus Christ, for the good of you here present, and of my own soul."

Another thus; "What I have now to say, is that which has somewhat affected me in my own private thoughts, and I hope may affect and work upon you for good, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He would often in his preaching speak with application to himself; "This word is to me, O that it may reach my heart." He frequently intermixed pious ejaculations with his preaching, and sometimes recommended it to others, as that which was both proper to affect the hearers, and the way to fetch in divine grace for the making of what he said effectual.

In times of distress, and fear, and expectation, he comforted himself and his friends, not only with the doctrine of God's universal providence, (many of the heathen encouraged themselves with that,) but he fetched his support chiefly from those principles which are purely Christian, as most proper for us, and most powerful, *That we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour*, (Heb. ii. 9.) and *that he nourisheth and cherisheth his church*; and not only protects, but guards, it, Eph. v. 29.

He was very frequent and earnest in pressing the necessity of brotherly love among Christians in the several instances of it, and reproofing what is contrary to and destructive of it; love was the air he breathed in.

I remember once, when I came to visit him not long ago, he told me he had been preaching the day before concerning the Holy Ghost, and had observed, among other things, that he thought it was a defect among us, that we only prayed for the Holy Spirit, (as we are directed, Luke xi. 13.) and did not pray, so much as we should, to the Holy Spirit, for his gifts, and graces, and comforts, which we ought to do; for he is God, and therefore to be prayed to: and he mentioned the Litany for an example, *O God, the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon us*.

He earnestly pressed young ministers to preach Christ much, and the mystery of the gospel, wherein (says he) if I may judge of others by myself, we are generally so ignorant, and live so little by it; that enlightens, softens, humbles, sweetens the heart, and makes it truly fruitful and thankful.

He was much upon it in several sermons not long before he died, to show, that Christ our Lord merited for us, not only in his death, though chiefly then, but also in the obedience of his life: both his life and his death were exemplary to us, and meritorious for us.

7. I must observe, that he was in his judgment much for extolling free grace, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification, and the operation of the Spirit in us for our sanctification. A little before his death, he said that Scripture, Isa. lv. 1. *Without money and without price*, had often been his comfort and support; "For" (said he) "I have nothing put a poor naked soul to bring to Christ." He also said sometimes, that we must take heed of resting too much upon our covenanting with God; for it is by his promises to us that we partake of a divine nature, not by ours to him.

It was not long before his death that he wrote thus to me: I insert it both as a specimen of his letters to his friends, and an intimation of his sentiments in these things: "I send this by one that is a poor, melancholy, afflicted, grieved, but, I think, a holy woman; I hope I got good by my discourse with her. Alas, we are generally secure and dull, and any that are awakened indeed, and under temptations, are useful to such. Lately reading Luther's life in Melchior Adamus, besides other things, I find an excellent passage concerning justification by faith, which sets the matter most lively before us. *Nemo pro nostris peccatis mortuus est nisi solus Jesus Christus Filius Dei; iterum iterumque dico solus et unus Jesus Dei Filius a peccatis nos redemit; et impossibile est ut Christum aliter quam solâ fide amplectar, &c.*—No one has died for our sins but Jesus Christ the Son of God; I repeat it, only Jesus Christ the Son of God has redeemed us from our sins; and I cannot receive Christ any other way than by reposing all confidence in him. And shall we join our sufferings or obedience to his? Yet he died to purchase a holy people to himself, requires holiness in his, works it in them by the ways he appoints, and through holiness, which he makes necessary to salvation, will bring them to it. Farewell, dear sir, our God I trust will carry us on through faith to salvation. Let us pray for it in faith. Go on, rejoice in the Lord, abound in his work; and pray for poor old dull me, that I may not be altogether useless, but may finish my course with joy."

Take his sense of this with application to himself, as it is found in a paper written with his own hand. "I prayed much for the pardon of my sins, so great and many even to this day; for great mercies and forgivenesses, that righteousness may be imputed to me, Rom. iv. 11, 23. That I may be justified as holy Abraham was, by a righteousness imputed; as holy David was, having my sins covered, that is, by Christ's atonement; as all the saints have been, not by their own works and righteousness, (which is but rags,) but by the righteousness of Christ wrought for us, the righteousness which is of God by faith, and be found in that. Let me live by that, and have peace with God by it; if others despise it, let me highly praise it; if others cast it away, let me

live by that; if others speak against it, let me make my boast of it; let it be my joy, my crown, my life, my peace, my glorying, my all. Let his Spirit be imparted to me, to sanctify, to rule me; his righteousness be imputed to me; this is all my hope, that I may be found in the crowd, among the many thousands of God's people, (Numb. x. 36.) whom he cares for and loves, though but among the least of them, a little member of that great body." Such as these were the constant breathings of his pious soul.

Let me add one thing upon this, that though he differed much from Mr. Baxter, concerning justification and other things, yet he highly valued that great man for his learning and piety, and the service he had done the church by his practical writings, and often spoke of him with great respect and affection.

He took occasion sometimes to speak the hopes he had of the flourishing of the Christian church in the latter days; that the Jews should be converted, the papal antichristian kingdom destroyed, and religion, in the power of it, should prevail. He grounded his hopes on the prophecies of the New Testament; "And," said he, "when God shall repair the breaches of his church, and build it up greatly, the subtilties of the schools, and many canons of councils, and customs of old, will be laid aside, and a great simplicity in things of faith and worship shall be owned and practised; no more conditions shall be made for communion of churches, than Christ makes for communion with him, and uniformity in smaller matters shall not be made necessary to unity."

We have now nothing to do, but to give some account of the end of this good man's conversation. It pleased that God, in whose hand our times are, to lengthen or shorten as he pleases, to continue him long a burning and a shining light in his church; purely to his good providence it must be attributed, and not to any thing that appeared extraordinary either in his constitution or management of himself. Moses observed, that in his time, if men lived to be fourscore years, even their strength was then commonly labour and sorrow; but here was one who went almost nine years beyond that, and yet his strength did not seem to be labour and sorrow, but he continued both cheerful and useful to the last, even in those evil days, of which men commonly say they have no pleasure in them; he had the pleasure of looking backward upon the grace of God bestowed upon him, and forward upon the glory of God prepared for him, and little of bodily pain and distemper to be an allay to his pleasure. Thus in his advanced years he continued to walk humbly with God in holy security and serenity of mind, and a believing expectation of the glory to be revealed.

In the year 1699, Mr. Bryan, who had long been

his fellow-labourer in Shrewsbury, finished his course with joy: thereupon Mr. James Owen of Oswestry was chosen to join with him in the work of the ministry there; but it pleased God to put an end to his most useful life and labours in April, 1706. Upon his death they chose Dr. Benion, then minister at Broad Oak, who came and settled among them that year, and was every way agreeable both to Mr. Tallents and to the people, but *Te tantum terris ostendunt Fata nec ultra esse sinunt*, he had soon finished his testimony, and was remanded (March 4, 1707-8) when he had been but a year and three quarters at Shrewsbury. He was very dear to Mr. Tallents, and as a son with the father, so did he serve with him in the gospel; and his death did accordingly go very near him, he scarce looked up with any cheerfulness after.

He had had a very little sickness; but as he grew into years, complained sometimes of faintness, and feebleness, and shortness of breathing, which obliged him to favour himself a little in his work; and if he had spent himself but in discourse with his friends, he found it requisite to retire and repose himself a little.

On Wednesday, March 24, about a fortnight after the doctor was buried, as he was washing him, and for ought appeared as well as he used to be, he fainted away of a sudden, and had fallen to the ground, if those about him had not been immediately aware of it and helped him. In a little time he came to himself, and the next day wrote a letter in his bed, made some alterations in his will, gave directions about his funeral, and then addressed himself to his dying work, with the holy cheerfulness that became so good a Christian, as one who had nothing else to do but to die. Sometimes he intimated, that if it were the will of God, he could desire to live a little while to see the congregation well settled under another minister, and there was sometimes hope of his recovery, and that he might yet have been instrumental therein; but the wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, ordered otherwise, that he should leave them just at a time when they most needed him. Many a time after Dr. Benion's death, he prayed earnestly to God to provide good ministers for that congregation, which lay so near his heart. And since his death, we have seen his prayers answered: but God will show that he can do his own work without the agency even of those instruments that we think necessary, and depend most upon. He uses the service of many, but needs the service of none.

And though to abide in the flesh might well be thought, especially at that juncture, more profitable for them, yet he soon got over that difficulty, and left the care of the sheep to the great Shepherd, who when he has work to do will never want fit instruments to do it with. He therefore prayed, that

if his work were done, he might be, by the grace of God, not only willing, but desirous, to depart, and to be with Christ, which he knew to be far better.

He charged all about him, that they should not pray for his life, but that he might be enabled patiently to wait for his change.

When he came to himself, by God's blessing on the use of means, from that fainting fit, with which his illness began, he said to those about him, "Why did you not let a poor old man go away quietly?" He often expressed his repentance for sin, and his reliance on Christ alone; and some days before he died, he blessed God that he was more full of inward comfort and joy than he was able to express.

He complained very little either of pain or sickness, but gradually decayed, and burnt lower and lower, like a candle in the socket. He often prayed to God for a blessing on those about him, and said, "Here I lie waiting, waiting." After some time he began to think it long that he had not his release, and to cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*; but he knew God's time is the best, and therefore would wait with patience for it; for the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie.

On Lord's day, April 11, 1708, he said he would have those about him go to worship God in the solemn assembly, and would have only one to stay with him. That day he took more refreshment, and seemed to be more revived, than he had been of some time before. Divers savoury words dropped from him; and he continued very sensible; calling

upon God, till about nine or ten o'clock that evening, when he sweetly slept in Jesus, and on that day of rest, entered into his everlasting rest. Praised be that God by whose grace he was enabled to finish well.

On Thursday following, (April 15,) the dear remains were solemnly deposited in St. Mary's church, and a sermon preached at his own meeting-place the same evening on that sad occasion, and many, very many, did him honour at his death, as they did to Jehoiada, (who died in a good old age,) *because he had done good in Israel.*

A paper was found after his death, appointing what epitaph should be inscribed on his grave-stone, and expressing the year of his life then current; intimating, that he did not expect to out-live that year.

*Reliquiæ D. Francisci Tallents, Olim Col. Magd. Cant. Sen. Socij, Postea Concionatoris Publici in hac Ecclesiâ ab Ann. 1652. ad Aug. 24, 1662. Qui post varios Labores, expectans misericordiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi in vitam æternam tandem decessit, Anno Ætatis suæ 89. Mense die—*

*The remains of D. F. Tallents, formerly Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, afterwards preacher in this church from 1652, to Aug. 24, 1662: who, after various labours, expecting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, died in the 89th year of his age.*