

A
FUNERAL
SERMON
FOR THAT
FAITHFUL, LEARNED, AND MOST WORTHY
Minister of the Gospel,
THE
REV. PETER VINK, B. D.

Who Deceased September 6, 1702.

TO
THE TRULY PIOUS MRS. MARY VINK,
RELICT OF THE DECEASED.

My dear and honoured Sister,

THE relation I stand in to you, by that union which some years since the good providence of God hath brought about between our families, obliges me, besides what I owe you upon the common christian account, to partake with you in your sorrows, for this late afflicting loss; as I have, according to my measure, in the satisfaction of enjoying so pleasant and delectable a relative and friend. And I would not only bear my own much lighter part of this burden, but (if I knew how) ease and lighten your part. It ought to do much towards it (by helping you to poise and balance your burden) to put you in mind, that you have a greater and nearer relation left. Your Maker is your husband: God all-sufficient, in whom is immense fulness: who can be always present, and most intimately converse with your spirit; who never dies, and to whom, your relation is eternal. Which are all, things not agreeable, or possible, to any earthly relative. This God is to be your God for ever and

ever, and your guide unto the death : even in this wilderness, on this side death, where we most need a guide. Nor hath your most tender deceased consort, otherwise left you alone. He hath left you with an observant son and his yoke-fellow, with a dear and only brother, that, it is to be hoped, will severally be found full of dutiful and brotherly affection towards you. And you have genuine relatives and branches remaining to you, daughter and daughter's children, that through God's goodness may be continuing and growing comforts to you.

And this season of your separation from so pleasant a companion and guide of your life, will be of no long continuance. It should occasion you to intermingle thanksgivings with lamentation, that your union and enjoyment continued so long : and for what remains the time is short. Therefore they that lose such relations, are to weep as if they wept not—remembering that the fashion of this world passes away. Especially it ought to be considered, that such a sad parting will be recompensed by the most joyful meeting : when they that have slept in Jesus, God will bring with him ; and the survivors, at that day, be caught up into the clouds, to meet their Redeemer (and, no doubt, the redeemed) in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. Wherefore let us comfort ourselves and each other with these words ; which have a fulness in them richly sufficient for you, and for,

My dear sister,

Your sincerely affectionate, and

very respectful brother,

JOHN HOWE.

FUNERAL SERMON.

Acts 5. 20.

Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life.

THE present speaker in this text is an angel of God ; one of those blessed spirits from among the principalities and powers in heavenly places, who greatly delight, as you have lately heard,* and I hope are, God willing, farther to hear, to be concerned about the affairs of God's church on earth. So that we depart not much from our former subject in diverting to this. But whereas the speaker was an immortal angel, and the subject spoken of words of life ; these, you may think, are things very remote from the design of a funeral discourse : yet you are withal to consider, that the persons spoken unto were mortal men, Peter, with the rest of the apostles, whose lives were in jeopardy every hour. That they are so mentioned in this history, Peter, and the rest of the apostles ; and what we find expressly recorded of him besides, that it was endeavoured the diseased might be put under his shadow passing by ; and that he afterwards in this chapter is only named, with the addition the other apostles, making their defence, being convened before the council, (ver. 29.) shews that Peter was more eminently active, vigorous, forward, and zealous in

* Having a discourse in hand about this time, on Eph. 3. 10. To the intent that now unto the principalities, &c.

the work of Christ: but far from the affectation of principality over the rest. Quite another consideration may well be understood to have urged him; and which our Lord seems to refer to, when he said, Go, tell my disciples, and Peter. But he with the rest, we are sure, were all mortals alike. And they were also from time to time, assemblies of mortals to whom they were directed to speak the words of life.

And, my friends, the very name of life cannot but have a grateful pleasant sound to them that dwell in the midst of deaths; to them that find the dark and dismal shadow of death continually spread over the whole region which they inhabit. When they find that death, in all its more gloomy appearances hath so general a power over ministers and people, preachers and them that were to be preached unto; how pleasant is the mention of life, and such a life, as surmounts, as exceeds the sphere where any death can come; a sphere by itself, all full of vitality, and in which death, or any shadow of death, can never find place! To be told of such a life, amidst surrounding deaths cannot but be a pleasant and grateful thing to them that have sense enough, in reference to their present case, and any faith, in reference to the future. Indeed the power of death appears so much the more absolute, and its commission is seen to be of so much the greater amplitude and extensiveness, that it equally reaches to preachers and hearers; must equally reach such men, as these apostle's were, and all the people they were to speak to the words of this life. But so much the higher and more glorious are the triumphs of that life, the words whereof are here mentioned. For it is evident these words do mean and intend a life, into which every thing of death and mortality is to be swallowed up. And therefore though death do stop the breath of preachers, and the ears of hearers, it can never prevail against that word in which this life is wont to breathe. For though all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; yet the word of the Lord endureth for ever, that word which by the gospel is preached unto us, 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25.

This indeed was an ancient, and very eminent minister of the word of life, whose decease and death occasions this solemnity, and this discourse, now at this time. And it ought to please us so much the more, that while we are now to consider, and lament the death of such a preacher, the word he was wont to preach shall never die. And that we are to consider at the same time, the life which such words do both concern and cause, is finally victorious over death in all the kinds and forms of it; a life hid with Christ in God; whereof he is the root

and original, who avowed himself to be the resurrection and the life; and hath assured the partakers of this life (whether preachers or hearers) that when he who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory, Col. 3. 3, 4: But so vain were the opposers of the preaching the words of this life, the obdurate, infidel Jews, that they thought to shut it up, and the preachers of it, within the walls of a prison: for that was the case here. A sort of men full of malignity and bitterness, especially, as you read in the context, those of the sect of the sadducees, who were the prevailing party at that time in their sanhedrim, who believed nothing of a life to come, and had drawn in the high priest to be on their side; and who as we read in the foregoing chap. ver. 1, 2. with the high priest, were grieved (pained as the word signifies) that they (namely Peter and John, though the former was orator) preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. These are (as they were before) the active, industrious instruments to restrain the preachers, and suppress the preaching the words of this life: they, as is said above, filled with indignation, laid hands on the apostles, threw them into the common prison, and there they think them and their word securely inclosed, and shut up together, that the world should never hear more of them. And did ever malice more befool itself! Could spite ever act or attempt a part more ridiculously absurd! Did they think to imprison celestial light! to bury immortal life! heaven derides their attempt, and exposes them to be derided. For as we are next told, the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, (why made they not him their prisoner too?) and brought them forth, and said, as follows in the text, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life. These two things are here very plain.

First, That by this life is meant a peculiar sort of life; this life, τῆς ζωῆς αἰώνιας, *this same life*, that was so highly preached, and cried up at that time, so that no one could be in doubt what kind of life it was. It is true, out of those circumstances, when we use the phrase of this life, we ordinarily refer to the common affairs of this present life. But that it cannot be so understood here is most evident: the whole business under present consideration had quite another reference. The apostles had no controversy with the rulers of the Jews, about the affairs of this world, or of the best way of living a few days on earth; but what was the surest way of living for ever: and whether believing on Christ as the Messiah, he that was to come, were not that way. Their only contest with the people was (as his own was, while he was yet among them) that they would not come to him that they might have life. So here the angel of

Lord commanding these servants and apostles of his to preach the words of this life, using the demonstrative term *ταυτης*, this same life, this way of living, or obtaining life, now so much disputed, and which began to make so great a noise in the world; cried up by some, decried by others: this sufficiently distinguished it. There were more obscure notices of it before, but now it was more clearly revealed, and more loudly to be spoken out. The manner of expression signifies it to be a peculiar and more excellent sort of life, very divers from, and far transcending what is common to men; nor leaves us in any doubt of the angel's meaning.

Secondly, That the words of this life must necessarily mean the gospel, namely, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whereof these were the ministers and apostles, bound by special office to diffuse to their uttermost this life and the words of it. Whence, therefore, for our own instruction, we may take up this twofold observation:—That the gospel contains, or is composed, and made up of, words of a peculiar, and most excellent, and noble kind of life: and—That it is the part of the ministers of this gospel, even by angelical suffrage and determination, as they have opportunity, to publish such words, that is, to preach this gospel. In speaking to these two conjunctly, I shall particularly insist on these heads, namely.

I. To shew how peculiar and how excellent a sort of life this is.

II. To shew you how usually and fitly the gospel is so paraphrased, by the word or words of life, and of such a life.

III. To shew you, that it cannot but be the part of the ministers of this gospel, to preach the words of this life.

IV. We shall also take the incidental occasion of observing to you, and insisting briefly on it, that they have the very suffrage of the angels of God to that purpose, that it is their part and business to preach the words of this life.

V. And so shall make use of all.

I. We are to shew the peculiar excellency of this life. That it is a peculiar sort of life, we have already noted from the angel's speaking so distinctively of it, calling it this life, this same life, that is now every where so much spoken of; that is the matter of present discourse, and of inquiry at this time. And that it is a most excellent, a most noble kind of life, the expression itself also doth not obscurely point out to us. That it is called *this life*, *και εζοχως*, life in the highest and most eminent sense. Never talk of this shadow, this dream of life, we are now passing through, but speak to the people the words of

this life; this is a life worth speaking of. And the excellencies of it will appear in these several respects; as,

1. That it is most manifestly divine life; and not at the common rate, as all life is from God; but as it not only proceeds from God, but resembles him, bears his peculiar impress upon it; upon which account it is called the life of God, the divine life, in Eph. 4. 18. where the apostle, lamenting the sad and dismal state of the gentile world, saith, that they were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, and the blindness of their hearts. It is, in a very special sense, a God-breathed life; not as the natural life, and soul of man were breathed at first from God; but as there was a peculiar divinity in this life, not only as coming from him, but as having in it a chosen dependance on him, and tendency towards him, by its own very essence, which the life of the soul of man, at first, had not. For if a voluntary dependance on God, and tendency towards him, had been essential to the natural life of a man's soul, it had been impossible they should ever have been lost. Such a posture God-ward was agreeable, and con-natural, not essential. But it now is proper and peculiar to this life; though still not essential, as it never was, but more deeply fixed in the soul by grace, than it was at first by nature, to tend to God, as it is by faith derived from him, as is expressed, Hab. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 38. The just shall live by faith; and Rom. 6. 11. Alive to God, as by love it works towards him, Gal. 5. 6. and Gal. 2. 19. I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. The soul was never otherwise dead, than as it was dead towards God; and now, while in the present sense it lives, it lives by, and to him. It being the steady, habitual determination of the soul God-ward, as its first and last, both in itself, and in the design of its implantation. And so is the imprinted image of the life of God himself, so far as the condition of a creature can admit, that is, that as God lives of, and to himself, the soul, by this life, lives not in a merely natural (which is common to all creatures) but in an apprehended, and designed dependance on God, and subordination to him.

2. It is a christian, as well as a divine life; a life that comes from God, not as Creator only, as all life, and as the life of our soul particularly at first did, with its very being, which involves life in itself; but a life that comes from Christ, as our Redeemer, as God-man, and Mediator betwixt God and man, whereof he is the immediate Author, and which he procured by his own death, and by his resurrection from the dead, wherein we partake with him, when we live this life. I am crucified with Christ, saith the apostle, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but

Christ liveth in me, Gal. 2. 20. To me to live is Christ, Phil. 1. 21. He is the Author and Fountain, as well as the end of this life. It is a life owing to the Redeemer dying, 1. Pet 2. 24. He bare our sins, that we might live to righteousness. And we are taught, upon his dying, mentioned before, (Rom. 6. 11.) to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And he is therefore said to be the immediate Donor of this life, John 4. 14. And I am come, saith he, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, John 10. 10. The beginning, and improvements of this life to perfect plenitude, are all from him; and it is therefore said to be a life hid with Christ in God, Col. 3. 3. He is said to be their life, ver. 4. by all which Christ is signified to be the Author and Giver of this life. And he is as expressly said to be the end of it. His love in dying for us, constraining us no more to live to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again. To which purpose are the words, Rom. 14. 7, 8, 9. Again,

3. It is a pure and holy life, such as, wheresoever it is, cannot suffer a man's soul customarily to mingle with the impurities and pollutions of this world. It is a life that carries up the soul into a purer region, where it draws purer breath, If you live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit, Gal 5. 25.

4. It is an active, a laborious, and fruitful life. They that live this life, live by union with Christ; and they that are united with him, abiding in him, bring forth much fruit, John 15. 5. when without him they could do nothing, as it there follows. They that live this life come thereupon, their love abounding more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, or spiritual sense (as the word *αισθησις* there used, may most fitly be rendered) discerning the things that differ, or approving, or preferring the things that are more excellent, to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God, Phil. 1. 9, 10, 11. This is the tendency of this life. It is a principle, in those in whom it is, tending to usefulness, and common good; and in order thereto, to growth and self-improvement. Again,

5. It is a most generous sort of life, that disdains mean things; cannot feed upon earth and ashes. Such communications it must have, as are suitable to the life of a man's spirit. Herein stands the life of the spirit, in receiving and drawing in communications from God. They that live this life, do hunger and thirst after righteousness, that they may be filled, Mat. 5. 6. They seek honour and glory, and immortality, that they may finally attain eternal life, Rom. 2. 7. This is a noble sort of life, that cannot be maintained, as it was not attained,

by common means; that cannot live upon low, mean, and base things. They that are of the earth can live upon things that spring from the earth; but heaven-born ones must be continually maintained by heavenly communications, beams of light accompanied with vigorous influence that descend from thence.

6. It is a devoted life, sacred to God in Christ Jesus, I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live to God, Gal. 2. 19. For as in the principle, it is an habitual determination of the soul towards God, through Christ: so, in the exercise, it is a continual, or often repeated, self-devoting, or dedicating of ourselves accordingly. A yielding ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. 6. 13. And so Rom. 14. 7, 8, 9. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, be Owner, and so Ruler, both of dead and living. Then, to whom should we live, but to him?

7. It is finally immortal, eternal life. It is so in its tendency, and it is so in its complete and perfect issue, in its mature state, eternal life, such in the plenitude thereof, every thing of mortality is to be swallowed up, 2 Cor. 5. 4. This is that which the aspirations and groans of renewed souls aim at, not barely to be unclothed, that were a mean thing, only to lay down this flesh that thereby we may escape the troubles, that, being in it, we are exposed to; that would go but a little way; but to be clothed upon with the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, furnished and enriched with all the delights, and glories of the divine presence. Therefore our Saviour says of this life, they that have the beginnings of it, They that drink of this water, it shall be in them a well of water springing up into life eternal, John 4. 14. The spiritual life that renewed souls now live, will be eternal life. They differ not in kind; but the one will grow up into the other. Therefore saith our Saviour, I give my sheep eternal life, John 10. 28. I shall never have done giving, till I have improved the life I have given, to eternal life, in which there will be no ebbings and flowings; but where life shall be perfectly pure, and in its full, mature state, without any mixture of death, or deadliness. As any thing is said to be pure, that is full of itself, without the mixture of the least thing that is alien, or disagreeable thereto. Every thing of mortality shall be swallowed up in this life.

II. We are to note to you, according to the order proposed,

the frequency, and aptitude of this paraphrase of the gospel, (words of life) or of what is equivalent thereto. For that the gospel is meant by it, is out of question. It is all one, as if the angel had said, Go, preach the gospel. That some such phrase is usual to signify the gospel they can well tell, that are not strangers to the Bible. Sometimes this phrase is used to this purpose in the singular number, as Phil. 2. 16. Holding forth the word of life. Sometimes in the plural, as in the 6th of John's gospel, ver. 68. Thou hast the words of eternal life. And sometimes instead of life is put salvation, which is the same thing. To be saved, and to live this life is all one, whether you consider salvation begun, or salvation consummate: salvation begun, is but this life begun, He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, 2 Tim. 1. 9. When he regenerates any, he is said to save them. He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus 3. 5. And that complete; consummate salvation, should be signified by this life consummate and complete, is obvious and familiar, the phrases salvation and eternal life, being so promiscuously used in Scripture to signify the same thing, that many places need not be quoted, Acts 13. 26. To you is the word of this salvation sent. Eph. 1. 13. The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. And not perishing, or being saved, is expounded by having eternal, or everlasting life, John 3. 15, 16, 17. And for the aptness of it, or that the words that compose and make up the gospel, are fitly called the words of life, will appear upon several accounts: as,

1. Inasmuch as this word is the means of begetting this life. James 1. 18. Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. In regeneration is infused the first principle of this life. And our Saviour prays for his disciples, John 17. 17. Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth. And sanctification, in the rise and beginning of it, is nothing else but regeneration.

2. Inasmuch as this word improves this life, or is the means of improving it, and carrying it on towards its perfect state, 1 Pet. 2. 2. As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. It is the means of our spiritual growth.

3. Inasmuch as this word carries in it the promise of this life in the most perfect state of it. 1 John 2. 25. This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life, chap. 5. 11, 12. This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life. This is a re-

corded thing, and is the final and terminative promise of the gospel. All the promises of it run into this.

4. The gospel is the rule of that judgment, by which all that shall partake therein are finally adjudged to eternal life, to this life in perfection, Matt. 25. 46. Those that are absolved by our Lord Jesus Christ from the condemning sentence, and have the saving sentence past upon them, of them it is said, They, namely, the righteous, go into life eternal, just immediately from the tribunal of their judge; which sentence, and judgment, is according to this gospel. God will judge the secrets of all hearts, according to my gospel. Wherever that impress is to be found, gospel righteousness, it distinguishes them that belong to Christ, and marks them out for eternal life. These things fall under the former observation; the other two, which are to succeed, belong to the latter.

III. That it is the part of the ministers of the gospel, as they can have opportunity, to preach the words of this life. For the making out of this, I shall speak to these two things:—1. to shew, that it ought to be their design, and end, to help souls into this state of life:—2. that they ought to preach the gospel, or the words of this life, in order hereunto.---That ought to be their end: and this their work, in order to this end.

1. It ought to be their end, to help souls into this state of life. For,

(1) It is the end of their office, therefore it ought to be their end. It would be unaccountable, that they should design a diverse end, from the proper end of their office, or that they should not design that. Now the gospel is, by its designation, to be the ministration of spirit and life unto souls, 2 Cor. 3. 6.

(2.) They ought to design the bringing of souls to Christ, to get them into Christ, who is the Fountain of this life. You will not come to me, that you might have life, saith our Saviour, John 5. 40. And sure it is the business, and ought to be the design, of the ministers of the gospel, as much as in them is, to bring souls to Christ, and to counterwork the disinclination that is in men thereto. You will not come: but we will do all that in us lies to persuade you to come, and to come for this end, that you may live.

(3.) It undoubtedly ought to be their end, to have souls under their ministry, regenerated and born again. This they ought to design, and this is the very beginning of that state of life; and they are therefore entitled fathers, in reference to this their great design and business. If you have had ten thousand instructors, yet you have not had many fathers; for I have begotten you to Christ, saith the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 4. 15.

You were regenerated by my ministry. And this ought to be every minister's design, that souls be regenerated by their ministry. So the same apostle speaks of that servant of Philemon's, and his own son Onesimus; I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Phil. 10.

(4.) They ought to design the perfecting of souls unto eternal life. For this end was the ministry given, in all the degrees and kinds of it; namely for the perfecting of the body of Christ, as you find, Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. And he gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And then is this new man perfect; when this new life is mature in him, and grown up to its fulness.

2 As that ought to be their end, so this ought to be their work, in order to that end, to preach this word of life, as they can have opportunity. This will appear several ways; as,

(1.) They are commanded so to do. Christ commands it, Go teach all nations, &c. Mat. 28. 19. His apostle gives it in charge, even before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the word, to be instant in season, and out of season, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. And in the former epistle, having before given the same charge, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, 1 Tim. 4. 13. He afterwards, in reference to this, and many other precepts, urges his charge before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, adding, and the elect angels, to observe these things, &c. And here there is a command from God by an angel, Go, and speak to the people in the temple, the words of this life. The obligation by this precept, given the apostles with circumstances, lies in substance, upon all that are ministers of the gospel of Christ.

(2.) They are directed how to do it, as well as commanded to do it. The great God instructs his prophet Ezekiel, say to them, as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel, Ezek. 33. 11. Words are put into his servant's mouths, even these words of life.

(3.) They are threatened if they neglect to do it; as in the 8th verse of that 33d, of Ezekiel, If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall

die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

(4.) There are encouraging promises of great reward, (though that reward is all of grace) to them that succeed in this work. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars, Dan. 12. 3.

(5.) They have special assistance, according as they depend and seek it from the blessed God, in this work. He abets them in it. Hereupon they strive according to his power that works in them mightily, Col. 1. 29. Though all have not assistance equally, yet all have what is suitable to the pleasure of the free Donor, when they faithfully engage and persist in this blessed and glorious work.

(6.) They are assured of acceptance in it, though they succeed not. So pleasing is this work to the blessed God, the endeavouring to bring souls into this state of life: Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, Isa. 49. 5. This, indeed, is spoken principally of Christ himself; but subordinately of all that serve him in this work. So saith the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16. We are unto God a sweet savour (or odour rather, as the word *οσμη* more properly signifies) of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the odour of death unto death: to the other the odour of life unto life. And this lay with a mighty weight upon his spirit. O that ever we should be the savour of death unto death to any! Who is sufficient for these things! But whether of life or death, we are a sweet odour to God in Christ, as to both; when he sees the sincerity of our hearts, and how fain we would fetch souls out of the state of death into this life. So grateful and pleasant to him is the work effected of saving souls, that the attempt and desire of it is not ungrateful.

IV. We are farther to shew, that this is the part of the ministers of the gospel, to preach the words of this life, even by angelical suffrage and declaration. We have the concurrence in one, of that whole most excellent order: for among them can be no disagreeing votes or sentiments, to put us out of all doubt that this is our business. And that is a great additional enforcement of it upon us. But here it is requisite to do these two things:—to shew how far only the angels can be concerned in a matter of this nature: and—that though they are concerned no farther, yet we have here sufficient evidence of their suffrage, and complacential approbation.

1. How far only they can be concerned in matters of this nature.

(1.) Not so far as to do this work themselves. They are not

to be the preachers of this gospel; God did not think that fit. If that had been the known and stated course, the apostles might have replied, upon their being sent to preach this gospel; You that are an immortal angel, whom no violence can touch or hurt, go you and preach this gospel. No, they were to do no such work: by the counsel of heaven this work is committed to men. In that marvellous conversion of the apostle Paul in his way to Damascus, he is sent to Ananias in the city, to be told by him what he was to do, Acts 9. 6. And when there was that special regard had to Cornelius's prayers and alms, that God was resolved he should not want the express discovery of the gospel of Christ; he sends an angel to him, not to instruct him himself; but to direct him to send for Peter, as you find Acts 10. and the following chapter, who was to speak to him words, by which he and his house were to be saved, as appears by comparing those two chapters together. So that they are not to do this work themselves. Nor,

(2.) Are they so far concerned, as to confer the office. The office of a preacher doth not come from an angel. When the very angel saith this to these apostles, they were apostles and ministers of Christ before, he doth not make them such; nor is that God's way of conveying the office. No, it comes from Christ himself originally: he gave the first commission, Go, and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Mat. 28. 19, 20. So that the same office comes from Christ, to the end of the world. Though the persons that first received the commission were to continue but their own short time; yet the commission is continued to such as should, in several ages, succeed them, and still from Christ; but by other appointed means, which he hath settled, and which remain stated in his church; those that are in that office of preachers or ministers themselves, conveying it to others, who shall according to fixed gospel rules, be found qualified for it. But the business of angels, wherein God hath been pleased to employ them, in reference to these affairs of his church, is only sometimes to determine circumstances, as the angel here to these apostles; now is the time, Go forthwith to the temple, and preach to the people the words of this life. The obligation to the thing did not come from the angel, but the determination of the season, and place, for that time. So we find as to other circumstances. The apostle Paul is directed by an angel appearing in the likeness of a man of Macedonia, to go and preach to the Macedonians, saying to him, come over, and help us, Acts 16. 9. Thus God does when he thinks fit; but we are not warranted to expect the signification of his mind

this way ; he having appointed other means that are sufficient
But yet,

2. Notwithstanding that angels are concerned no further than you have heard ; yet that they may be concerned, and have been concerned so far, is an evidence of their complacential approbation of the thing. And this will appear partly by the consideration of the nature and temper of those excellent creatures ; and partly, by the consideration of several concurrent things, of which the holy Scripture gives us notice.

(1.) Consider their very nature, unto whom their sanctity, and their benignity is their very nature, in this their confirmed state. We are not to think that this angel, this messenger sent from God, conveyed his message, as if it passed through a dead trunk, that could be no way affected therewith ; but as one highly savouring his message, taking great complacency in it. It was pleasant to him in the delivery, thus to direct these apostles of our Lord, Go to the temple, preach to the people the words of this life ; your immediate call is from the prison to the temple, to teach the people, how they may be set at liberty from the bonds of death, worse bonds than yours. So much we may collect from their habitual sanctity and devotedness to God, the dutiful, ready compliance, and conformity of their will to the good and acceptable will of their Maker and Lord, and the peculiar benignity of their nature, that they were glad to be thus employed ; it was welcome work to any one of them that carried this message.

(2.) Several other things concur, mentioned in the holy Scripture, to make us apprehend their complacential approbation of so grateful an errand, as,

[1.] The solemn jubilee that they held upon our Lord's descent into this world upon this saving design. Then an innumerable multitude of the heavenly host are brought in triumphing together, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men, Luke 2. 14. This appears to have been their common sense, and so, no doubt, was the sense of this angel at this time. They all celebrate the descent of our Lord, upon his saving design coming down into this world, to be the light of men, as it is expressed, John 1. 4. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. A luminous life it was, that he came to bless this world with. And when the angels did celebrate this descent of his, with so much joy and jubilation, it was in pursuance of a proclamation that had before passed through all the spacious heavens, when he brought his first begotten Son into the world, it was said, and let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. 1. 6. They were all to adore the Redeemer, as such, because he vouchsafed to be a Redeemer to such as we were, buried and lost in death

[2.] Consider the ordinary stated course of their ministrations what that is, and whither it tends, you find expressed, Heb. 1. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation! Heirs of salvation, and heirs of eternal life, are the same, as hath been noted before. This they in their stated course pursue; this is the design of their ministry, to be helpful to those who are to be the heirs of salvation.

[3.] We may collect it from the joy that they express for the success of the gospel of this kind. Where they observe it to succeed, if in the conversion but of one sinner, Luke 15. 10. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, if but one sinner repenteth. The heavens are hereupon filled with joy, the angels rejoice that one is now added to their happy number gained from under the power of death, and satan, the great destroyer of souls.

4.] The prospect they have, that all that partake of this life, here in the beginnings of it, shall partake with them, in the eternal life, and blessedness of the future state. All that are here converted, and regenerated, they are by degrees, coming to the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. 12. 22, 23. All this is plain evidence that there is a complacential concurrence and suffrage of angels to the ministers of Christ, doing their work, preaching the words of this life, according as they have opportunity.

V. The use of this you may easily apprehend might be vastly copious, but we must be within necessary limits.

1. We may learn hence, that such as the gospel is, such ought our attendance to it to be. There ought to be a correspondence between what the gospel in itself is, and our manner of attending the dispensation of it. Doth it consist of words of life? then so ought it to be attended to, as containing the words of life, the words of this life, this noble, and most excellent sort of life. Methinks this should strike the consciences of some: I wonder if it do not of any! How few do attend the dispensation of this gospel, as apprehending it to contain the words of such a life? In what agonies of spirit should we attend upon the dispensation of this gospel, if we understand the matter so? They are the words of the most excellent kind of life that we hear, when we hear the gospel of Christ truly preached. This ought to carry a sting and pungency with it to the hearts of such as upon inquiry, (when did I attend upon the gospel, as containing the words of life?) cannot give to their own hearts, and consciences any satisfying account. Let the inquiry proceed

further, have I got life by it? Did it ever enter into my heart, as the word of life? Did I ever so much as design, expect, or wish that it should? What shall be said to such, that if they answer truly, must give it against themselves?

2. We may learn hence, that when God is pleased to put such a dignity upon poor mean men, as to speak to men by them, and about so great concerns, the affairs of this life: things so high and sublime as the words of this life import: we ought hereupon both to acknowledge God's wisdom and compassion towards us; and be sensible of our obligation highly to esteem them for their work's sake.

(1.) We ought to acknowledge the wisdom and compassion of God, that he hath chosen this way to treat with men: that he doth not always, as he did once, speak to the Israelites, by thunder and lightning, and a terrible tempest, and a voice of words, which voice they that heard, entreated they might never hear it any more; and thereupon desired Moses that he would speak to them from God, for they could not hear such a voice, but they must die for it. No, God speaks to men by men, like themselves, who have the same nature, and the same interest, that are to be upon the same bottom with them, and preach the same gospel of salvation, by which they are to be saved themselves. And,

(2.) We are to honour such, as he puts this honour upon, for their work's sake; to esteem them highly in love on this account, 1 Thes. 5. 13. How beautiful are the feet of them, that bring glad tidings? Rom. 10. 15. How welcome their approaching steps! How graceful is their motion towards us! They that labour in the word and doctrine, are upon that account worthy of double honour, 1 Tim. 5. 17. And all this not for their own sake, but for their work's sake. For the greatest instruments that ever were in the world, employed in this work what are they? That great apostle Paul, counts himself as nothing; though not behind the chiefest apostles, yet a mere nothing; so he nullifies himself, diminishes himself to a thing of nought, a perfect nullity. Elsewhere, I laboured more abundantly than they all, saith he, yet not I! 1 Cor. 15. 10. Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 1 Cor. 3. 5. Who is Paul? As if he would say it cannot be told; too little a thing to be seen or known! or that any notice should be taken of him. We cannot, indeed, have too mean thoughts of ourselves; so little we are, compared with the greatness of our work: and none can have so mean thoughts of us, as we ought to have of ourselves, who should know ourselves best, and better understand our own little value, than any others can. But when any esteem the ministers of Christ for their work's sake,

they only express a respect to him that sends them, to the message they bring, and to their own souls, that are in such a way so tenderly cared for.

3. We may learn hence, how peculiarly spiritual and intellectual this life is, which such words do so nearly concern. Do you know any life besides, that is produced by words, and by words maintained and improved? No words can otherwise affect us, than as they convey a sense into our minds so as to be understood, and into our hearts and spirits, being inwardly received and believed there. This must be an intellectual and most pure sort of life, that depends upon words, that can be begotten by words, and improved by words, and perfected by words. It shews it to be a sort of life far above the sphere of this bodily life; this bodily life is not to be begotten or maintained by words. You cannot by words recover life into a dead finger, much less into a dead corpse. And again, what admirable words are those that can make us live? Transmit life into the very centre, and make our hearts live! It is true, it is not the mere words, but divine breath animating those words, that begets this life: but that still proves it to be a spiritual life. The divine word hath a peculiarity with it: that, indeed, through the efficacy of a divine blessing accompanying it, makes the ordinary means available, for the sustaining of our natural life; man lives not by bread only, but by the word that proceeds out of God's mouth; much more is his vital word necessary to the production and maintenance of the life of our souls.

4. Hence we may collect how dismal and sad their case is, that sit from time to time with dead souls under the words of life! Year after year there are words of life spoken and breathed forth, in those assemblies where they are hearers; yet when the truth of the matter comes to be told, must say, I feel nothing of this life in my soul; my heart is dead still, is still a stone or a clod! No words that I have heard, have awakened, quickened, melted, purified my heart, warmed and inflamed my heart! Dead I was in trespasses and sins, and so I remain notwithstanding all the words of this life which I have heard! This is a dismal case; when it was God's chosen way to make his word the ministration of spirit and life to souls, if it do not breathe in these words, wherein can it be expected to breathe?

5. We may collect hence, that if, by angelical suffrage, it ought to be the business of ministers to preach the words of this life; then, undoubtedly, by angelical suffrage, the words of this life are words worth the hearing; worth attending and listening to. An angel would have been loth to have been the messenger to these great worthies, the apostles of our Lord,

charging them to go and preach in the temple to the people a jargon of impertinent, idle stories. No; but when he saith, Go, and preach to the people the words of this life, that leaves the matter out of all doubt, that here was a ready concurrence both in judgment and complacency of the angel hereto; and that in full effect, he pronounced these things worth listening to. Though we cannot suppose him so assuming, as to think he could by his approbation add any thing real to his authority who sent him; yet as to the reputation of the message, with us, it is not without its weight: as it makes a great difference, whether a prince signify his mind, in this or that affair, by a person of honour, or by a foot-boy. Therefore when any of you have heard the words of this life, with neglect and disregard, you have set your judgment against the judgment, at once, of the great God, and of the glorious angels of God: it signifies as if you thought yourselves wiser than God, and than any angel in heaven. They esteem these words worthy the most serious attention and regard; but you look upon them as trifles, not worth the regarding. Worms of this earth, mushrooms lately sprung up, mean abjects, but beginning to crawl, set their mouth and heart against heaven; oppose their rash, presumptuous judgment to the judgment of the supreme Lord, and of those wise sages, the blessed and holy angels, that stand always in the presence of God, and hear his wisdom! The vanities of this world are thought worth the regarding; but the words of eternal life are counted unworthy to be regarded, or listened to! What absurd insolence is this? to persist in a practical judgment, so directly contrary to the judgment of the wise and holy angels; and, as is evident, of God himself, who sent this message! When such men do meet, is not all their talk vanity? running upon the things only of the earth and time, mere impertinency at best to such as have souls to save! But also are not bold, profane jests, about things most sacred, usual ingredients in their conversation? namely, what is most opposite to such a design! These things, they reckon, sound well in a coffee-house, or a tavern: but how do they sound in heavenly places, whither the report presently flies up as may be collected from Eph. 3. 10. To the principalities and powers in the heavenly places is made known by the church (that is, in, or about the affairs of the church) the manifold wisdom of God. Which cannot but imply their animadversion upon the follies of men, counterworking that wisdom. Nor can the censure of so excellent creatures, and of so bright understandings, be lightly esteemed by any, but most stupid minds. And if such an addition signify nothing, why doth the apostle, having given a charge before God,

and before Jesus Christ, add, and before the elect angels?

6. Learn farther, that if any servants of Christ have faithfully, in a continued course, to the end of their time, but intent upon this business, preaching the words of this life, their memory ought to be very precious to us, when they are gone: they who have been employed in this work, called to it by God; it is all one whether his mind were signified to them by an angel, or any other way. For it was not an angel that gave the authority, but only conveyed this particular command, as hath been noted. When God in his ordinary method hath called forth a servant of his to preach the words of this life, and he hath laboured in it faithfully to the uttermost, the memory of such a one ought to be very dear and precious to all, to whom he was known, and that have had opportunity of hearing from him the words of eternal life, or that shall receive a faithful account of him. We are so directed and taught, Heb. 13. 7, 8. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the work of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. And he still as much requires the same thing as ever he did.

And truly such a servant of Christ was this my dear and worthy brother, the very reverend Mr. Vink, whom God hath lately taken from among us. He was the son of a noted citizen of Norwich: nor will equal judges of his true worth think it a despicable degree of lustre added to that city, that such a man was born there. His ancestors were early protestants, when the reformation was struggling for a birth in Flanders. Where, when the persecution against that profession began to rage, the zeal and fervour of their religion not admitting to be concealed, or suffering them to temporise, providence ordered their seasonable transportation to that city of refuge, which became native to their following posterity, and among them to this worthy man; who hath often been heard to say, He reckoned it a greater honour to have descended from so pious ancestors, than if he could have derived his pedigree from the greatest princes. He was, indeed, designed for multiplying the offspring of the everlasting Father; and seemed formed for this work from his entrance upon the stage of this world: so were those things very early interwoven in the frame and temper of his soul, that were to be the elements of great future usefulness in this kind of service. For, in his very tender years there appeared very early religion, great seriousness, an habitual awe and reverence of the divine majesty; insomuch that none could observe, when he first began to be a fearer of God.

Which pious disposition of mind was in conjunction with so great a propensity and addictedness to books, with desire of learning, as was very unusual at that age, even in his childhood.

And very early was his preparatory endeavour for that noble employment to which he afterwards betook himself. For as nature and grace appeared to have betimes combined to frame him as an instrument for such service; it was soon very evident, that in the former, God had inlaid a deeper foundation, enduing him with singular parts, above the common rate; which as they came gradually to shine out, in the great improvements he had made, under instruction, in a little time; there appeared such quickness of apprehension, solidity of judgment, strength of memory, quickness of fancy, without exorbitancy, as are seldom found to meet together: and these were accompanied with so spontaneous diligence beyond what the usual methods of education obliged him to, that in his tender years, while yet under the eye of his parents, they have thought it requisite sometimes to hide his books, lest he should injure himself by over intent and close study. So that he was ripe for a university much younger than others ordinarily are. Accordingly he was sent up in his fourteenth year to Cambridge, where he remained many years a fellow, and great ornament of Pembroke-Hall, even beyond the time of his taking the degree of bachelor of divinity; in which time he had treasured up a large stock of all useful learning, and might be fitly styled a universal scholar. But religion governing the whole course of his studies, kept him steady to his great end; and made him most intent upon such things as might render him most useful for his designed work. The original languages, with such rational learning as was subservient to theology, and then theology, and the study of the holy Scriptures themselves.

For diversion he was no stranger to history, namely, civil, which was fundamental but more diverting; as well as ecclesiastical, which was more immediately necessary to his purpose. And among his other accomplishments, his skill and accuracy in the latin tongue, was, as I have been otherwise informed, much remarked in the university; so that the professor in the chair, when he took the above-mentioned degree (as was reported by the eye and ear-witness) disputing *pro forma* with him, after he had somewhat longer than ordinary opposed him, he still answering in neat and elegant latin, said, Mr. Vink, I only so long continued my opposition to you, to give you opportunity to entertain the auditory with that judgment and eloquence, which have appeared in your answers. And that to express himself politely in that tongue was become habitual

and familiar to him, appeared in that writing, in that language, a weekly account of the more remarkable things that occurred to him in the course of his life; which since his death, hath come, to my view; though in such a case a man only writes to himself; yet I have observed therein such strictures of elegancy, both of style and phrase, as signified it was become impossible to him, if he writ any thing, not to write handsomely, and as might become both a christian and a scholar.

This narrative was continued until his growing infirmities put a period to it, some months sooner than to his life itself. The mention of it here, you see, was occasional, and somewhat digressive. Therefore, to return, when he had passed through the long course of his academical studies and employment; London, whither his fame had now reached, could not long want such a man. Hither he was called; and here he shone a bright light in two churches of this city successively, namely, Saint Michael's in Cornhill, which he easily quitted upon another's claim; more from an indisposition to contend, which was little suitable to his calm temper, than from defect of title, could his friends, that so highly valued him, have prevailed with him, to admit of its being disputed, but they had the less reason to be urgent upon him, for that he was so immediately chosen to a neighbour church, where he continued preaching the words of this life, till August 24, 1662, when not satisfied with some things in the act that then took place, he calmly quitted his station, but not his ministry; which he never refused to exercise, when desired in distinct assemblies, when they had only the favour of a connivance. But his more ordinary course was, after he was deprived of his former public liberty, to preach for many years, as the apostle Paul did, in his own hired house; whither his great abilities, and most lively vigorous ministry, drew an assembly not inconsiderable; whereto he both dispensed the word, and (to such as were qualified, and desirous) the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at certain seasons. And this course he continued, especially that of preaching in his house, till bodily disability made it impossible to him; which then he deeply lamented. Yet did he not decline all communion with the established church. Whereupon he had experience of the haughty, supercilious temper of some men's spirits, on the one hand, and the other; who assume to themselves an interdicted, unhallowed liberty of sitting in judgment upon other men's consciences; and adventure to censure them, as men of no conscience, that abandon not their own, to follow theirs; taking notice, sometimes, with just regret, that he incurred the anger of two sorts of men; of some, that he went no farther; of others, that he went so far.

Looking into his memoirs, I found that rich vein of religion and godliness, running throughout the whole, that I think no

serious man could read them without being very deeply affected therewith. Week after week, whatsoever was more remarkable, relating to himself, his family, or the church of God, is punctually set down, and intermixed with most pious ejaculations, "My God, and my All." If any trouble occurred, "Yet God is mine, and I am his." You every where discern the breathings of a holy devout soul. Ejaculatory supplications are very frequent for his relatives, and domestics, The Lord sanctify them, the Lord wash them, the Lord protect them, lead them by the truth and counsels. On all occasions that spirit of prayer, and universal godliness discovers itself all along, mixed with the greatest tenderness and compassion that I have any where met with. If any one were sick in his family, his dear consort, his son, daughter, or daughter-in-law, his most beloved brother, or if a servant, male or female, it is noted down, with his *suspiria*, the breathings forth of earnest supplications on their behalf. And afterwards upon their recovery, most solemn thanksgivings. But if any one died, then such self-humiliation, such lying low before the Lord, such yielding compliance with the divine pleasure, with the design of spiritual improvement thereby, as I believe, hath been seldom seen. And in whatsoever case, there are expressions of a steady trust in God, in reference to all his affairs, both of this world and that which is to come. If any difficulties came in view, upon the mention thereof, he presently subjoins, "But I will trust in God; he will shew me the plain, and the right way, wherein he would have me to go. His charity to the distressed was always flowing, and very exemplary; but much more the pity which wrought in his heart towards such, whose miseries and necessities were such, as it was never possible for him to relieve proportionably to the largeness of his soul. He in the mean time suffered the calamity of every one whose case came to his notice. His humility was such, as did shine through all his other excellencies. He was, indeed, a great man in every one's eyes but his own. No one ever thought meanly of him, that knew him but himself. His love of solitude, and retirement was peculiarly remarkable. No man had more opportunity, in his circumstances, to multiply friends and acquaintance; but I never knew any one who minded, and studied it less; yet where once he was acquainted, there could not be a more pleasant and delectable friend. It was remote from him to seek acquaintance: nor did he need; it was enough for him to receive those, that were so kind to themselves, as to seek his. And it is evident, that love of solitude is peculiar to those, who, through the grace of God, and especially, a sort of self-benignity,

have been capable of becoming good company to themselves. For empty persons, or such as are only full of malignity, men of ill minds, and conscious to themselves of ill design, for such I do not wonder, that, of all things, they care not to be alone. They can never be grateful company to themselves. But he had laid up such a treasure of human and divine knowledge, that I know not where he could find pleasanter company than his own. And his special gratitude for divine mercies was very observable. I have found, in his memorials, he was much in admiring God, that he had done so much for him and his, and more especially for the helps he had from heaven in the performance of his ministerial work. Blessed be God for the assistance he gave me such a day. And very particularly at the Lord's supper. Blessed be God for what hath past between him and me at his table; blessed be God that his bonds have taken hold of my soul!

Though his temper, and the chosen circumstances of his life, kept off from him in great part, more frequent occasions of communicating to the world the rich treasures wherewith his mind was stored, yet when such occasions have occurred, he neglected them not. But while, through his own continuing dissatisfaction, he remained excluded from a public station; besides his constant ministerial labours, in a private way, he embraced other occasions that providence offered, of doing such work as became much more public; and wherein he did more than speak from a pulpit to a single congregation of hearers, speaking from the press to the world, as any should think fit to be his readers. Divers of his excellent sermons, have been long extant to common view, wherein being dead, he yet speaketh. An account of which, though elsewhere given,* it is not unfit here to repeat. As, before his ejection, he had one sermon in the first volume of the Morning Exercises, preached in the church of Saint Giles, upon original sin; so after it, he had another, in that against popery, upon the grounds of the protestants' separation from the church of Rome. Another, upon the worth of the soul in the continuation of the Morning Exercise Questions, with another, on gospel grace the best motive to holiness, vol. 4. And to these I must add that valuable performance of his on the acts of the holy apostles, in the supplement to Mr. Pool's annotations of the Bible (by mistake ascribed to another worthy person, who hath to me disclaimed it, and assured me it was Mr. Vink's.) And it is a satisfaction to me, that I have his concurring judgment

* In Mr. Calamy's Abridgment, &c.

in the interpretation of this text. Who writing upon it, when he could little apprehend, his own funeral sermon, was, so many years after, to be preached from it, tells us, that though, some admit of an hypallage in the expression "the words of this life," and join the pronoun to the other substantive, reading it, These words of life.—Because by this life is ordinarily understood the present temporary life, as in 1 Cor. 15. 19. Yet he says, there needs not this translatious sense; by this life the angel might very well understand, eternal life, and salvation, for that was it which the sadducees denied, and for the preaching of which life, the apostles were imprisoned. To which purpose also the learned Doctor Hammond speaks in his annotations on the same place.

The words of this life he preached to the last, and lived it, in its initial state, as he now lives it (being in the kind, the same life) in its perfect, eternal state. And we may now put in him with those holy men (as he speaks in the argument, which he prefixes to this book) who having lived answerably to their profession and hope, do, when we read these things, seem to speak unto us, and tell us (what they say was inscribed upon the statue of some deified hero) *si feceritis sicut nos, eritis sicut nos; if ye shall live as we have done, and suffer as we have suffered, then shall you be* (glorious and happy) *as we are*. And yet such a life as this must end, a life transacted at such a rate! Whither should this carry and direct all our thoughts and aspirations? I bless God we have such instances of many, of whom we must say, it is impossible but that such men are got into a good state. A great confirmation of the truth of our religion. We must be assured such a one cannot be lost in a grave; his works must follow him into a higher region. But I add,

7. That, since they who do preach the words of life, do yet themselves die, let us attend upon their ministry accordingly. We have such and such to preach to us the words of life; but they are mortal men, and must not preach to us always. Therefore let such a thought take place; take we heed that we do not lose them, while we have them: O let the words of life, which they preach, be entertained as such. Our Saviour saith of John the baptist, he was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. You can rejoice in no such light but for a season. You may say, if such and such that are now preaching to us the word of life do drop, God can raise up others in their room to preach the same word: and I hope he will, that when such a one as I drop, he will raise up some other to preach to you at another rate, with more warmth and vigour, and success, than ever I have done. But

yet you are to consider that you are mortal too, as well as we. And admit you have those who shall far exceed them that have gone before; yet you know not how short your time may be under them. Therefore whatever your hand finds out to do in this kind, do it with all your might. Labour to catch at the words of this life, as once one in distress did at words of a much inferior concern, and when a meaner life, hung in doubt. We are continually hovering between life and death! how fast are we dropping away from one another! Every one that dies from among us, doth, even dying, utter such a voice. Amidst so many deaths, admit, draw in, as vital breath, the words of this life. Dread, as the most frightful of all deaths, that the very words of this life should be to you the savour of death unto death.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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