

KING DAVID'S EPITAPH.

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NOTE.

'King David's Epitaph' appeared originally in 'The Beams of Divine Light' (4to, 1639). The separate title-page is given below.* For general title-page, see Vol. V. page 220. G.

* K I N G
D A V I D ' S
E P I T A P H :

OR,

An Epitome of the life and death
of King DAVID.

In three Sermons.

By

The late learned, and reverend Divine,
RICHARD SIBS.

Doctor in Divinitie, Master of Katherine-Hall
in Cambridge; and sometimes Preacher at *Grayes-Inne*.

Luke i. 74, 75.

*That we being delivered from our enemies, might serve him
in holinesse and righteousness before him, all the dayes of
our lives.*

2 Sam. 14. 14.

For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground.

L O N D O N,

Printed by E. P. for Nicholas Bourne
and Rapha Harford.

KING DAVID'S EPITAPH.

For David, after in his own generation he had served the counsel (or will) of God, he fell asleep, and was laid to his fathers, and saw corruption.—
ACTS XIII. 36.

THE words are part of a sermon of blessed St Paul, wherein he proves out of the Old Testament, Ps. xvi. 10, that David prophesied of Christ, and not of himself. David saw corruption, but he of whom David spake 'saw no corruption,' therefore David was not the Messias. He shews that the things there spoken do no way agree to David, but to the Messias, who saw no corruption. 'For David, after he had served in his own generation, fell asleep, and saw corruption.' In general, observe this :

One of the best ways to understand the Scriptures is to compare the Old Testament and the New together.

1. *That which was spoken and foretold of Christ in the Old Testament, and fulfilled in the New, that must needs be true.* Christ is the true Messias. Why? It was foretold so of him in the Old Testament, and accomplished in the New. Therefore Christ is the true Messias, comparing the prophecy and the event together. For the Old and New Testament make up but this syllogism: he that should be so and so, as was prophesied, born of a virgin, that should come at such a time, in the latter end of Daniel's weeks, &c., he is the true Messias. But Christ was such a one; he was born of a virgin, came at such a time, he saw no corruption, for he rose the third day. Therefore Christ is the true Messias.

2. Again, *You see the Holy Ghost here could not mention David without terms of honour:* 'David, after he had served the will of God in his generation,' &c. Precious to God is both the life and death of his saints, Ps. cxvi. 15. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, Ps. cxii. 6. The name of Josias is as an ointment poured out. So indeed the names of holy men are as ointment poured out; they sweeten men when they are gone. David's body was buried among them; but David had a better tomb. He was buried in the best monument: in the hearts and remembrance of God's people, and in the remembrance of God. God wraps him up as a valiant man in his own colours. He mentions not David barely here, but his serving the will of God.

Let wicked men cast what aspersions they will upon the names of God's people, let them eclipse them and cloud them as they please, as their

malice instigates them therein, the names and reputations of God's people are not in their keeping and power. For David shall have a good name, in spite of all the Doogs and Shimeis, when they are rotten, body and name together. We see here, many hundred years after, he is mentioned with titles of honour. It should encourage us, therefore, to serve God as we regard a good name.

Mark here *the language of the Holy Ghost, the language of Canaan*. When he speaks of a good man, he speaks of him in favoured terms. He doth not say that David, after he had been so long, or lived so long, or reigned and flourished so long, as we see in stories, such a man lived or reigned, &c., so long, and then died; yet this had been true; after he had lived and reigned so long, he died. But that is not the language of the Holy Ghost; but after he had 'served God' so long. The Scripture values men by that that God values them, and not as men do, by their life, and reign, and flourishing in the world, and their esteem with men, but as his carriage hath been to God. David 'served the will of God' in his generation.

And then, when he speaks of his death, 'he fell asleep;' he sweetens the harsh name of death with a sweet term the Scripture puts upon it. It is a comfortable thing to consider the very language of the Scripture; how savoury and heavenly it is, raising us up to comfortable and heavenly thoughts, even from the very manner of the phrase. Different, as I said, is the phrase of Scripture from other histories, that say, such a man lived and reigned so long, and then he died. And indeed a man may say of a wicked man, he was so long in the world; but if he did no good, a man can scarce say that he lived; for what is life without doing good but a mere being in the world? Or if his life be ill, we may say such a man troubled the world so many years, and then went to his own place, as it is said of Judas, Acts i. 25. But this is the epitaph of a holy man. He served God so long, and then he slept and had happiness of God: another manner of epitaph than other men have when they are gone. This I observe from the very language or phrase. 'David, when he had served the will, or counsel, of God,' as the word is (a).

3. Again, In the third place, observe this in general, *that God sets down David here only as he was a good man, and passeth by all his infirmities and breaches*, whereas, alas! David's life was woven with good and ill. There were some ill spots in that excellent garment; there were some ill parentheses made in that excellent speech; there was somewhat, by the infirmity of man, that was not so good. But doth God speak of that when he mentions David? Oh no. But David, after he had served God in his generation, &c. The Spirit of God in St Paul passeth by all that was amiss, and sets down that which is good, to shew us this comfortable point, *that God values those that are in Christ* (and have repented of their sins), *not by what they have been or have done at some time, but by what they are, and what they resolve to be*.

God values them by their better part; by that that is his in them, by that that is spiritual in them. He judgeth them by the tenor of their lives, and not by a particular flaw in their lives. This is God's infinite mercy; when he pardons, he pardons absolutely: he forgets as well as forgives. Therefore the phrase of Scripture runs, 'He will cast our sins behind his back, and cast them into the bottom of the sea, that they shall never rise up in remembrance,' Micah vii. 19. When we have once repented of our sins, they are to him as if they had never been done, they are as things

forgotten. Peter, after his foul fall, he was not so much as upbraided by Christ in particular, 'Thou hast denied me,' &c.; only Christ comes sweetly over him with a question, 'Lovest thou me?' John xxi. 15. He tells him not, thou hast betrayed me thus and thus. No; he doth not so much as upbraid him with the mention of it. So curious* is God for troubling the peace of his people, that when they have soundly repented of their sins, they shall never hear of it to their confusion, nor at all, except it be to better them, and to perfect the work of humiliation.

Contrary to the fashion of the corrupt poisonous nature of man: if they have but one thing in all a man's life to hit him in the teeth with, he shall be sure to hear of it oft enough, and pass by whatsoever is good in him. God doth not so with his children; but though they have some breaches in their lives, he passeth by them, and takes notice of that which is good in them, as we see here the apostle doth, being directed by the Spirit of God.

But though God so sweetly pass by David's faults when he mentions him, and calls him a 'man after his own heart,' &c., yet there is one thing that God puts in as a scar upon David. 'He was a man after God's own heart in all things but in the matter of Uriah,' 1 Kings xv. 5. Why doth that come in Scripture? Surely God mentions that, because that was done with more deliberation and advice; it was done in cold blood. It was not infirmity, but presumption in that. Now the more will there is in any action of sin, the more heinous the sin is, the more the guilt is increased. There was more will in that, for it was not done in heat of passion, but deliberately, therefore it was a foul act. The Spirit of God takes notice both of the good and of the evil; as we see in the epistles, in Rev. ii., to the churches. He had found fault with them before, and indeed God discerns directly when we are to blame, 'yet this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans,' &c. If there be any good, God takes notice of it. David, after he had repented of that foul sin, and was sharply corrected for it, as indeed he was, David was a good man for all that, 'he served God in his generation.'

But to give you an item by the way: however God passed by the sin in David, and accounted him after his repentance a good man, yet he must be sharply corrected for it. Let no man therefore presume upon this that God will judge him by the tenor of his life, and therefore he will commit particular enormities. Oh no! It cost David dear; for besides his heart-smart in his own particular, God made his heart bleed. It cost him many a salt tear, besides that it was punished in his posterity. God raised up his own bowels to take arms against him; he made him wish a thousand times that he had not so offended God. It is ill trying conclusions with God. Though God afterwards pardon us, and turn all to good, yet it shall cost us dear first. Though God will bring us to heaven, yet if we will venture upon sins against conscience, and take liberty to offend God, he will take sharp courses with us. Yet it shall not prejudice our salvation. You see those sins of David, after he had repented and was corrected for them, they were forgotten, and David, in regard of the course of his life, 'served God.' His life was a service of God, notwithstanding some particular actions. These things may be useful to the best of us all. Therefore I observe them in general from God's manner of mentioning David here with honour, and passing by his infirmities. To come more particularly to the words.

* That is, 'careful or scrupulous.'—Ed.

'Then David, after he had served in his generation the will of God,' &c.

The words are a short epitome of the life and death of the blessed man David. First, I will speak of his life, and then of his death. In his life there are these two parts :

First, The time in which he lived ; when this service was done, 'in his generation.'

And then the manner of his carriage in that time of his generation. It was a service of God, 'he served God.'

And this service of God is set down by the object of it, 'God.' By the rule of his worship, 'the will of God.' He served God, but how ? As he had revealed his will to him, not at random. God will be served according to his own will. And then here is the act, 'he served.' So here is the proper object of worship, 'God,' in whom all our service is terminate. Whatsoever we do, it must rest in him. If we do good works to men, it must be for God's sake ; we must serve God in it. Then here is the proper rule carrying us to that object, 'his will.' And then it must be a service ; it must be done in obedience to God. 'David in his generation served the will, or counsel, of God,' as the word is (b). For his death, we shall speak of it after.

First, *For the time* : 'in his generation.' 'Generation,' in the Scripture, signifies a succession of men one after another, as you have it in Mat. i. 1, from such a one to such a one ; so many generations, so many successions. You know in the Latin tongue, *seculum* is taken for an age or generation, the space of an hundred years, though Moses shut up the life of man in a shorter time. Succession of one man after another is a generation. Generation, sometimes in a general sense, is taken for all of one kind. The generation of Noah, and the generation of the righteous ; that is, all of that kind, without restraining it to succession. But most commonly it is the consideration of men from succession of them, having the term from the way whereby we enter into the world, that is, by generation ; therefore the succession of men from one to another is called generation.

Now, here generation implies both the times and the persons. The persons of men are a several generation, and the time wherein they live is a generation, and both are here included. 'David in his generation,' among the age of men, and in the time wherein he lived, 'served God.' The meaning of the place is clear. The points considerable here are,

First of all, That there is a generation, a succession of men one after another.

Secondly, That every man hath his particular generation. David had his generation, wherein he served the Lord.

Thirdly, That 'he served God in his generation ;' that is, the whole time of his generation ; yet with this limitation, he served God only in his generation while he was here, before he came to heaven. In heaven there is a kind of service, but it is not by way of work, but of reward. We must serve God in our generation here. If ever we look to reap hereafter, we must sow now. 'David served God in his generation.'

Obs. 1. First of all, *There is a generation, a succession of men.*

Particular men go off the stage, but the *species*, the kind, is eternal. Kinds of things continue for ever. Man dies not, but Paul, and Peter, and David die ; there is a succession of particular men. It is with men as it is with the waves of the sea ; one wave goes away, and another comes after. It is with men as it is with trees ; for men are compared in Scripture to trees, trees of righteousness ; and man, take him in his nature, is

like a tree. The poet could say to that purpose (c). It is with men as with trees; some fall off in autumn, and others come in their place the next spring. So it is with men. They have their several generations. There is an autumn, a decay, and there is a spring of them. There is a succession of generations.

Use 1. To teach us this lesson, *that our time being short here*, every man hath his generation; one generation goeth away and another cometh, as the Scripture saith, Eccles. i. 4. We must be laid with our fathers, and others must stand up in our place. 'Rise up,' Joshua, 'for Moses my servant is dead, saith the Lord,' Josh. i. 2. One servant of God dies and another rises. There be many that must act their parts in this world. Therefore some must go off the stage, that others may come on. Therefore while we have time here, let us be sure to do good, before we be taken away, suddenly, we know not how soon, and there be no more generation. Here there will be a succession of generations, till we all meet in heaven, and then there will be no succession, there shall be no more death; but as the apostle saith, 'we shall be for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Use 2. And it should teach us likewise, considering that in regard of our being and natural condition in the world there are several successions, generation after generation, that now we are here, and presently after no more seen in the world, *to make sure an eternal generation; to be born anew of the immortal seed that never dies*, as St Peter saith, 1 Pet. i. 23, that tends to immortality. There is no death in that birth. A Christian, as he is a new creature, hath a generation to eternity; he never dies. In regard of our being here, there is generation after generation, successions of men; but when we are new born, though we cease to be here, we go to heaven. 'He that believes in me,' saith Christ, 'shall never die,' John xi. 26. 'Man that is born of a woman,' saith Job, 'hath but a short time to live,' and that short time 'is full of misery,' Job v. 7. But man that is born of the Spirit hath an eternal time to live, and that a happy life. All flesh is grass in regard of this life we lead, which is supported with meat and drink, and the comforts of this life: all flesh is grass, and the beauty of it as the flower of the grass; but the word of God endureth for ever; and as St John saith, 'he that doth the will of God endureth for ever,' vi. 27. The word of God endures for ever, because it makes us, having the Spirit of God, to endure for ever. The world passeth, and the lusts of it, but he that doth the will of God, that is new born by the word of God, and transformed to the obedience of God, he abides for ever. Would you abide for ever, and not pass from alteration to alteration—as wicked men, they alter and come to nothing, and worse than nothing? Then labour for this estate. This is the way to abide for ever. This life hath no date of days, no death.

Labour to plant ourselves in Christ by faith, that so in him we may have an eternal estate. 'Thou art our habitation from generation to generation,' Ps. xc. 1. It was a psalm that was made upon occasion of their falling away in the wilderness. They dropped away as leaves, and few of them came to Canaan. 'Well,' saith he, 'we fall away here, and wither as grass,' &c. 'But thou art our God from generation to generation;' that is, we have a perpetual subsistence in thee. A Christian when he is in God by being in Christ, hath a perpetual everlasting subsistence. As we are temples of God, so he is our temple. We dwell in him, 'thou art our habitation,' &c. Who would not labour to be in such an estate? for in this world there is nothing but a succession of generations.

Obs. 2. Secondly, *Every man hath a particular generation.* There is some emphasis in this. 'David in *his* generation.' For men drop not into the world at all adventure; but every man hath his own time appointed; when to come into the world and when to go out; some in one time, and some in another. Therefore the times wherein they live are foreknown of God. He hath set down when such a man shall be born, in such an age of the world. So long he shall live; such work he shall do; and when he hath done his work, he shall be taken away hence, and another shall come and stand up in his place. So every man hath his own generation designed, and appointed, and ordained by God himself from all eternity; not only his generation, but all the circumstances of it. The very place of his abode, the time, and season, and country where he shall live, all are set down.

Use 1. It is useful for this end to observe in what times our lot is fallen, to what times God hath reserved us; what generation and age we live in: to consider of the state of the times.

(1.) *Are they good?* Bless God that hath reserved us to those times. We pity some good men that lived in ill times; as our countrymen in Queen Mary's time, and other dark times. They were worthy men, and it was pity they lived not in better ages. Certainly they would have been excellent men then. Therefore we should bless God for reserving us to better times. What makes the times better? The discovery of salvation by Jesus Christ: the discovery of the means of happiness in another world. In what age there is a clearer discovery, where there is most Spirit working together with the outward means, that is a blessed age. The Spirit of God was not working so much in former times of darkness and popery. Then there were many that followed the beast to their eternal destruction, though God had mercy on many souls that followed him. As it is said in Scripture, 'they followed Absalom in the simplicity of their hearts, not knowing whither they went,' 2 Sam. xv. 11, so they followed popery in the simplicity of their hearts, not knowing the danger. God had mercy on them; yet certainly thousands of them were wrapped up in darkness. They were miserable times then. Those that know popery will say so. Those that read the story will say so. The world was wrapped in wars and miseries in those times.

It is true our times are not so good as they should be, and in many regards they are miserable times; and we must not murmur at this dispensation of God, if God hath so appointed that our lot shall be to live in hard and ill times. I say in some respects these are bad times; for the world, the older it grows, the worse it is. As it is in a sink, the farther it goes the more soil it gathers; so all the soil of former times are met in the sink of later times, and in that respect this generation is an ill generation.

(2.) *But if we consider what makes times good;* the manifestation of Christ's glorious gospel, that hath shined for a hundred years and more in our church; the discovery of the means of salvation so clearly; the abundance of the Spirit with the means, making men to apprehend the means; enlightening their understandings to make use of them, and working their hearts to obedience. Look in what age these are; they are happy times. Witness our Saviour, and he is the best judge: 'Happy are the eyes that see the things that ye see, and the ears that hear the things that you hear,' Mat. xiii. 17. Oh, in former times, if they had seen that that we see, and heard that that we hear, they would have accounted themselves happy. Oh, those that lived two hundred years ago, though they

were good men, if they had lived to see that that we see, and to hear that that we hear, living in the glorious lustre and sunshine of the gospel, how would it have rejoiced them ! Therefore, as we have cause to consider of the ills of the time and generation, that we be not swayed away with them, so we have cause on the other side to bless God, that hath reserved us to these times of knowledge. In regard of the ills we may say with St Austin, ' Lord, to what times are we reserved !' (d). But in regard of the good things we may say, Blessed be God, that hath reserved for us these things, that he hath cast our time thus ; that we should be born in this generation ; in the blessed time of the gospel ; in this second spring of the gospel. We should bless God for it.

Use 2. Well, but that is not all. We are to be accountable to God for the time and means we enjoy here in our generation. *If we be not the better for it, we shall be so much the worse.* It had been better for us to have been born in times of popery and darkness, in places of ignorance, than living in the glorious times of the gospel, and in places where the light is discovered, and to be naught in the midst of such light. Those that are bad now are very bad. We see by experience, that of all men, the most outrageous wretched persons are those that are ill in good places ; for God gives them up to more than an ordinary measure of profaneness. A man shall have better and more civil usage. He shall see better carriage in a pagan than in many Christians that are not good under the means. There be degrees of those that are naught. Some God gives up to a profane spirit in the midst of the means, a fearful brand. Those that are bad now in the glorious times of the gospel, their sins are presumptuous sins. They are not damned simply for sinning, so much as for sinning against the means, for sinning against such light, for sinning in these times. Those that lived in darkness they could do no better. What, to be swearers now ! to be licentious, disordered persons now ! to contemn holy things now ! to be corrupt in our callings now ! in this generation, when the light of the gospel hath so gloriously shined ! What excuse can men have for their sins now ? Certainly it shall aggravate their damnation, that they were children of darkness in the midst of light. Nothing will trouble their consciences so much as that they have offended against so many means, and so many helps as they had in the days they lived in. I beseech you, therefore, as we should bless God for reserving us for these times and places of knowledge and light, so let us take heed lest they be a means of aggravating our damnation afterward, that we shall wish that we had never been born in such times, but rather in times of darkness. It shall go better with our forefathers that lived in darker times, than with us, if we live in profane and ungodly courses.

Use 3. Now there is no generation so good, but there be gross sins in all times and generations, therefore *let every man be careful* (as to consider the good of the generation, to take good by it, so likewise) *to consider the sins of the times wherein he lives, that he be not tainted with the sins of that generation.* God's children have a counter-motion, a contrary motion to the motion of wicked persons in every generation ; therefore in our generation let us do as David did in his generation, stand against the ills of the times, go against the stream in that which is ill. It is the commendation you see in the Old Testament. ' Noah was a good man in his generation,' Gen. vi. 9, and such and such were good men in their generations. ' David in his generation served God,' and yet the times were naught. ' Help, Lord,' saith he, ' for godly men perish from the earth,' Ps. xii. 1. The

times were naught when he lived. There was Doeg, and Ahithophel, and Shimei, and other wicked men; yet David 'was a good man in his generation.' He was not carried with the stream of the times.

A godly man considers who are good and who are naught in his generation, and he walks to heaven with those that are good, though they be never so few. He goes in a contrary motion to others. He doth not conform to the world, Rom. xii. 2, 'he fashions not himself according to the world,' according to the wicked men in the generation he lives in; but he fashions himself to them that are of another world, that go a contrary way to the world.

Use 4. Every generation hath a genius both for manners and study; former times they were given to barbarism; now these times are more refined for outward respects. So for sins: *every age hath particular sins that reign*; superstition in former times, but now the clean contrary: profaneness, atheism, hardness of heart against the light, presumption, looseness, and the like. Now these being the sins of our times, we should go so much the stronger against the stream of profaneness and atheism. The devil discovers himself in divers shapes, in divers generations. Sometimes he prevails with ignorance, and then he is a spirit of darkness, sometimes he is a spirit of profaneness and looseness. Now consider by what sins the devil hath most advantage, and be sure to set ourselves against them.

Use 5. And let every one in his place *labour to make the generation we live in as good as we can*. Why doth God speak thus honourably of David? 'He served God in his generation.' That time was the better for him. We have all cause to bless God for such men, they are blessed men. Let every one of us in our generation carry ourselves so, that when we are gone, it may be said, Such a man did much good in his time and place, and hindered much ill. What a blessed thing is it when in our generation we hinder all the ill and do all the good we can, that others may say to our comfort and credit, The times and place was the better for such a man. Beloved, every one of us hath his generation. Some have a longer generation, some a shorter; some have a longer glass appointed to run out, some their glass is run out in a shorter time. Well, be it longer or shorter, let us be careful that we trifle not out our generation and time wherein we live unprofitably. That little part of time that God hath given us to work in, let us be sure to bestir ourselves in our generation, we know not how long or short our generation is.

Alas! if most men ask their own consciences, wherefore they live? what is the life of many, but an annoyance? They infect the air with their oaths, they are a burthen to the earth, they mis-spend the blessings of God; but what hath the times been the better for them? Their lives have been scandalous, wicked, and vicious. It should be our glory to shine in our times, 'as lights in the midst of a sinful generation,' Philip. ii. 15. I beseech you, therefore, let us take the counsel of holy St Paul: Gal. vi. 9, 'While we have time, let us do good.' While we have a part to act here upon the stage of this world, let us act our parts, do that wherefore we came into the world. We have not assurance from God that our generation shall hold thus long or thus long. Therefore whatsoever we have to do, let us do it presently; let us reform our wicked lives presently, 'before we go hence and be no more seen,' Ps. xxxix. 13. And for the good we have to do, do it presently, put it not off. No man is assured of his continuance here.

Obs. 3. In the next place, 'David served God in his generation.' He did

not do it by starts and fits. He did not do this or that good act ; but he served God in his whole generation. So must every man not only be content to do now and then a good action ; for the veriest wicked man in the world may do good sometimes, and the best men may do ill sometimes ; but in the whole course of our life, we must do good in our generation. Our course must be holy, the whole tenor of our lives, while we are in the world. All things have their time, but there is no time for sin ; there is no time for vanity ; no time for swearing ; no time for sensuality and looseness.

Therefore let the whole course of our lives be spent in the service of God. What do we know but that that little time wherein we yield to the service of the devil may be the time when God will fetch us hence ? And what will become of us then ? Therefore resolve not a moment to serve sin. Our whole time is but short in respect of eternity. What is our generation to world without end ? Therefore let us be content to serve God our whole generation.

'He served God *in his generation*,' that is, in his lifetime, while he was here. For God hath placed us in the world to do him some work. This is God's working place ; he hath houses of work for us. Now our lot here is to do work, to be in some calling and course to work for God. We are not sent here into the world to play, or to live idly. Religion is no vocal profession. Every man must have some calling or other, and in his generation he must do good. For what will our account be afterwards else, when we shall give an account to God how we have spent our time in our generation, what good we did, what ill we hindered ? It will be a fearful account when we have spent our time idly, perhaps scandalously and offensively, and sent others to hell by our example. We must serve God in our generation, in our life.

Thou that livest profanely day after day, when dost thou mean to serve God ? At the hour of death ? Did David serve God when he was to die only ? No. 'He served God in his generation, and then fell asleep.' Alas, why do we put off ? There is no sowing after this life. Then is the time of reaping. And why wilt thou defer the time of sowing till thou come to reap ? It is a time to reap the comforts of religion at the hour of death. Shall we defer to serve God's will till we come to make our own will ? And oftentimes it is forced what we do then. No. We must serve God all our time. 'David served God all his generation.' To do a few good works at our death only, it is a swinish doing good. The swine will do good when he is dead. Then there is profit of his flesh, though all his life he were noisome. Those men that put off thus, they are rather swine than men, beastly men. God seldom accepts the good they do then, and it is a forced good. If they were not to die then, no good at all would be done. That they do is because they can keep it no longer. It shews they have no grace nor faith at all, for if there had been faith to depend upon God they would have done good before. But they think, I may come to misery myself, and I know not what distasteful, base thoughts ; therefore they will do no good in their lifetime. But we must serve God in our generation if we will be saved. These things are of some use, and we should not forget them. But I come to the service itself, which I shall a little more stand upon.

'David served the will of God.'

Here is considerable, as I told you, these three things.

The object whom he served, 'God.'

The rule by which he served him, 'his will.' And then

The service itself; for to know 'the will of God,' and not to serve him, it is to no purpose. All must go together. We must serve 'the will of God,' as we see here David did.

1. For the first, it is a known truth, *that God is the main object of all our service.* Indeed, we serve men; for in love, which is a very busy grace, we must serve one another in good works: but the love of God must set all on work, and all must be done in obedience to him. God is the object that must terminate all our service to men. Whatsoever duty we do, we must do it as to God. If we serve men, if we be Christians, it must be with reference to God, because he commands us, and that we may honour God. We can do no good to him, Ps. xvi. 2. What doth he care for our goods? But he hath substituted men in his place, he hath appointed such and such men in our generation to do good unto, and he accounts what we do to them for his sake, as done to him. God is the object of our service, God in Christ as our Father.

'God,' as God, without Christ a mediator, ought to be served for our very creation, if we were to go to hell when we had done, or should vanish to nothing with the beasts; for our very subordination and subjection to God as creatures implies service. He is the object of service, as being our maker, having given us a being, having given us reason to serve him. But now God considered as a Father in Christ in the covenant of grace, we ought to serve him in a higher regard; not as creatures the Creator only, and as servants their Lord, but as a gracious Father. So God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and Christ, Mediator, God-man, are the objects of our service, the whole adequate, fit object. We must not go beyond them, for whatsoever else we do, it must be in reference to them. I will not dwell upon the point. It is a foundation to that I am to speak of.

The next thing is the rule of his service: 'He served *the will of God.*'

'The will of God.'

The word signifieth 'counsel,' and it is better translated 'counsel' than 'will,' because it is more emphatical. God's will is his counsel, not in regard of imperfection in counsel; for counsel implies somewhat imperfect, as deliberation and consultation. God sees all at once; he doth not deliberate, but in regard of that which is eminent in counsel; what is that? Wisdom. 'By counsel thou shalt be established,' Prov. xix. 18. So whatsoever is God's will, that is counsel. It is wise, it is weighed, it is as 'gold seven times tried,' Ps. xii. 6. Therefore we should stoop to whatsoever is God's will, either in his word or in events. His will is counsel. He is wise, he is not rash. A pattern to all those that would be like God, to do all by counsel and not by will. Those that are put to their will, if there be not answerable wisdom to guide it, to what mischief do they plunge themselves and others!

(1.) God must be served according to *his counsel or will*, as he hath discovered himself in his word; for service is nothing but an action done with an eye to the will of another. For if a man doth an action that one would have him do, if he do it not with respect to his command, it is no obedience nor service. He that hath not some care in the act, it is no obedience. As the civil law saith, *infringit obedientiam*, &c. (e), it breaks from the nature of obedience that hath no cause for it. He must know his reason; at the least there is the command of the superior must be a reason and ground for what he doth in all his obedience and service. Therefore there

is a like necessity of the word of God as of his service, for what master will be served according to the will of his servant? Why doth the Scripture mislike will-worship, worship that is according to our own will? Because therein we make ourselves god; we serve ourselves, and not God. We must not serve God as we would be loath to be served ourselves. We would be loath to have a servant compliment with cap and knee, and then do as he list himself; and so for us to come and compliment with God, to hear his word as if we would be directed by him, to kneel and pray to him for fashion, and then all our life after to do as we list. It is a delusion to say we serve God, unless we serve him according to his *will*.

2. Therefore there must be a rule of our service, *and that rule is the written word of God*. There was a time when the word of God was not written, Heb. i. 1; and then God discovered his will by dreams and visions, and many other ways. But when the world was enlarged, and mankind spread further, traditions from hand to hand was not a fit means and way to deliver truths, because it was subject to corruption. God therefore would deliver his will, how he would be served, in writing; and God sanctified this course, and gave credit to it, by his own example, writing his own law with his own finger. The ten commandments were written by God himself. God was the first preacher and the first writer. He was the first preacher: he preached the gospel to Adam in paradise; and the first writer: the ten commandments being written by God himself. Now, we have the written word of God to be our rule, how God must be served, an exact and perfect rule. I will not speak by way of controversy. I hope we are grounded well enough, but by way of direction for a godly life. God's will is a sufficient rule.

What is requisite in a rule?

(1.) First, *A rule must be clear and open*, that it may be made use of by those that are to be regulated by it. Therefore we say, The secret will of God can be no rule, because it is secret. That which is a rule must be manifest and open. Therefore the revealed will of God, that every one may see, that is our rule. We may cross God's secret will and do well; and we may serve it and yet do ill. A father may pray for his child's life, and may cross the secret will of God, and yet doth well. God allows bowels in fathers. A wicked man may do according to God's secret will, and yet sin. Therefore that was not the rule of David's service, nor cannot be of ours. 'Secret things belong to God; but revealed things to us and our children,' saith blessed Moses, Deut. xxix. 29. The will of God, as it is discovered, must be the rule of our actions. A rule must be open, or else it is no rule.

(2.) Again, *The rule by which we must lead our lives it must be infallible*: not subject to error; for then it cannot be the rule of our service. The word of God is an infallible rule. It cannot deceive, because it is the word of God. Men wrote it, indeed, but it was God that dictated it. The finger writes, but the head dictates. Holy men wrote it according as they were guided by the Holy Ghost. The will of any man cannot be the rule of any man's service, further than it is agreeable to the first rule. Why? Because it is subject to error and mistake. That which must be the constant rule of a man's life, it must not be as popish traditions and the like. It must be infallible. Now, the word of God is so. It is infallible. A man may err, and be a man, and a good man too; but God cannot err, and be God. The word of God cannot be false and be the word of God. Therefore it is an infallible rule.

When this is applied to any creature, it is a grand lie, and the foundation

of misery in that church. This is the first lie in the church of Rome, that the church, consisting of a company of men, cannot err. What a horrible absurdity is this, to make the will of man the rule, that the church cannot err, that popery cannot err! Though they err egregiously, they account rebellion service, and make traitors merit, &c.

But are our tenets subject to such gross things? No. We make the rule of obedience the infallible word of God, that cannot err. To attribute that of that which cannot err to that which can err, it is a horrible absurdity. But I will not enter into controversies.

(3.) Again, That which is a rule *must be perfect in commensuration, in measure*. It must be of equal extent to all things that are to be ruled. Now the things that are to be ruled is our whole carriage and conversation. Therefore that that is the rule for a man, it must rule his thoughts, his speeches, and actions. So the word of God, it rules the whole carriage of a man. There is a proportion between the rule and all things that are to be ruled by it. All things fall under the word of God to be directed and ruled by it. It gives direction to our thoughts, to our speeches, to our actions, in our callings. It gives direction to magistrates, to ministers, to masters, to servants, to all estates and conditions in life, in death. It is exceeding large, as David saith: 'All things come to an end, but thy commandments are exceeding large,' Ps. cxix. 96. It is a rule that extends to all things that are to be ruled whatsoever. No other rule but God's will doth so; for men's laws they have nothing to do with thoughts. Thought is free for them.

(4.) Again, A rule must be *authentic*. What is that? It must be credited for itself. It must have authority of and for itself, and not depend upon another, if it be the first rule. Indeed, there be subordinate rules. There is a rule ruled, and a rule ruling men's laws. The magistrates will it is a rule ruled by a higher rule; and, as long as it is so, it is a good rule. But there must be a rule ruling above all subordinate rules whatsoever. What is that? The word of God. It hath authority from itself, not borrowed of men. It is a rule that rules all, and is ruled of none other's rule but by this rule. This is a rule ruling the very rulers of the world. No man's will is a law further than it is squared by this law of laws.

(5.) It is an *inflexible rule*. It cannot be bent to men's purposes. Man would bring God's will to his will; but it is the measure that measures all, and is measured by none. For we must not judge the word, the word must judge us. You have some presumptuous persons that will judge and murmur at the word, but the word will be too good for them and judge them. He that judgeth the law, and gives sentence on the law, shews himself a fool; the law must judge him, much more the law of God. Therefore it is authentic.

These are the main properties of that that must be a rule to judge our lives by. Now the word of God is both known, and is not subject to error any kind of way, and it is equal to all things that may fall under it, and it is authentic, of credit for itself, let men say what they will. It must rule, and not be ruled. Therefore David, when he ordered his course of life by this will of God, he deserved this commendation, that 'in his generation he served the will of God.'

There be subordinate rules in their kind, as the law of nature, and the laws of men, direct in things of this life, to do them in that manner, according to the rule: a civil law for civil actions; men's laws for men's actions; but when we do anything holily, we must have direction from

God's law, and that must put the respect of service to God upon our actions. For howsoever we do things civilly by the civil law, and do things comely by the law of nature, nature teacheth us to carry ourselves in a decorum, to give every man his due; but it is not a service of God, except it be directed by the rule of God. A man cannot serve God without a higher rule than man can give.

But you will say, How shall we apply and make use of this rule in particular actions? The word is but short, but actions are infinite. The word of God directs me not to this or that action, and saith, You shall do this or that in particular, but gives general rules; how shall we come to carry ourselves in particular actions? Here is the skill, for a rule is not to hang up, a measure is not to be cast aside but to be applied. A rule is a thing in relation to a thing ruled, and a measure to things measured; and if we do not apply it, we lose the use of it. How shall we know how to serve the will of God in every particular action?

1. Besides the general word of God, we have some outward helps and some inward. *The outward helps are:*

(1.) First, The ministry. That is one main outward help. And what is the ministry for but to dig up the treasure, the mine of God; to lay open the will of God in particular; to branch out, and lay open, and anatomise the duties of such and such callings, by their ministerial gifts, which God hath given his servants in a competent measure to give particular directions? They have their callings for this end, 'to speak a word in season.' They have 'the tongue of the learned,' Isa. l. 4. God hath not set up this calling for nought. Therefore, as we go to the learned in the law, in doubts in that kind, so in particular doubts why do we not make use of those that study that way, if it be in such a case as perhaps we have no light in ourselves? It is one end of their calling, because perhaps our callings are such as that we cannot study particulars ourselves; therefore God hath sanctified that calling, that we might have the use of it. That is one.

(2.) Another outward help for particulars: *it is communion with good people*, those that are led with the Spirit of God; for we must know that God oftentimes lays up the practice of one man in the breast of another, because he would knit man to man. We are oftentimes at a loss, the best of us all, in particular directions what to do: Sometimes a meaner man, in some things, than ourselves, can give better directions in particular than ourselves. Shall we storm and swell at this? No. It is God's wisdom that one man should carry that which is for the special use of another, that we might take counsel and ask advice one of another. 'A wise man ordereth his doings by counsel,' saith the wise man, Prov. xii. 15; and oftentimes he that takes advice of himself hath a fool to his counsellor, and he beshrews himself that he would not take the benefit of another man's advice. Therefore, besides the public ministry, this is one help, our Christian friends and acquaintance, and they are reserved for such a time. 'A friend is made for adversity,' for ill times, in perplexed and doubtful cases. This is to make use and benefit of others.

(3.) Again, *The laws of men*. What are the laws, if they be good, but particular determinations of the will of God. We ought to have reverent conceits of the laws, for they do but bring God's generals to particulars, if they be good laws. If they have not their derivation from God's laws, they are naught;* but, if they back† that in anything, they are nothing

* That is, 'naughty,' = wicked.—G.

† That is, 'support.'—G.

but a particular determining of the general rules in God's word, to give every man his due, &c. Therefore in many cases we may know what the will of God is, by the good laws of the kingdom which bind the conscience to obedience. There is no disobedience to men's laws, but where there is disobedience to God's laws first, which hath stablished men's laws.¹

(4.) And then, in some particulars, when it doth not appear what we should do, *the example of good people, of the wisest and best in the rank and place where we live*, till we know the contrary. The best way is to rest in their judgment, to follow the advice of others, the direction of friends, or the laws and customs, and not to be refractory and opposite, except there be reason to the contrary. For man's spirit is a divine thing. It must always be led with some reason, but with this reservation, a man may keep to others till it appear otherwise, till he see other light and direction to take this course. This is the disposition that should be in every peaceable man. These be some outward helps to know the will of God in particular actions.

2. *The inward helps to know what God's will in particular is*, together with the word of God unfolded.

(1.) *The Spirit of God*, which is as a voice behind us, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' Isa. xxx. 21. Wherefore serves the blessed Spirit but to be a counsellor? as Isa. ix. 7. Christ, he is the blessed counsellor. How comes he to be so? Not immediately by himself, but by his Spirit. All things he doth to his church is by his Spirit. He fills his church with his Spirit. Now the children of God, having this Spirit of counsel to advise them in particulars, they are 'led with the Spirit.' This is one inward help, and a main one. And surely, if we would give way to the blessed guidance of God's Spirit, and not grieve, and quench, and resist the Spirit, the Spirit of God would be ready to direct us upon all occasions. We should be guided in particular actions with a better Spirit than our own. And this Spirit we may have by prayer. God will give the Spirit to them that beg him, Luke xi. 13.

(2.) Then another inward help is *particular grace*, which God gives to his children. Particular prudence to speak words and to do actions in season, that everything may be beautiful in its time. There is sapience, wisdom, and prudence: 'I Wisdom dwell with prudence,' Prov. viii. 12. It is the wisdom of a man to understand his way, what to do in particular, or what not to do. It is prudence or discretion to discern of differences. Now that grace of God is in some measure given to all his children. He makes them wise to understand their own way. They are not so wise, perhaps, for other things. It is not their way. God lets some men go with a less measure of discretion to heaven than others; because he hath less work for them to do. But every man hath as much as will bring him to heaven. The less he hath himself, the more he shall have of others. Some men are excellent in gifts of wisdom. They can tell you generals out of the book of God excellent well. But come to directions in particular, and you shall have meaner men of better discretion than they. Either we have it ourselves, or else God will associate us, and by his providence cast us upon other acquaintance that have a greater measure of this grace that he will have us acquainted with. God gives every one of his a spirit to discern what to speak, how to advise, how to comfort, what to do. And the meanest Christian is more in this, for religious actions, than the greatest man in the world that hath not the Spirit of God; for he can tell

in particular how to bear afflictions, and how to enjoy prosperity ; because the Spirit directs him what to do.

(3.) Again, *God hath put into every man a conscience.* Wherefore serves conscience, but especially to direct in particulars. There is a faculty of the soul that we call a treasury, a preserving faculty, that is to lay up general rules out of the word of God, and directions out of good books, and from the counsel of other men. It is a faculty to treasure up rules. Therefore it hath the name of preserving. But there is a conscience under this. That being sanctified by the Spirit of God, and being directed in general by the word of God, it directs in particular. Conscience tells us, This in particular you ought to do ; this you have done ; in this particular you have done well, in this you have done ill. So conscience is put in us to check or direct us in particular. It is God's vicar in every man, together with the Spirit. Conscience, together with the Spirit, is a great help to know God's will in particulars. If men would not be too bold with conscience, conscience, together with God's Spirit, would be faithful to them. Conscience may say, as Reuben said to his brethren when they were in misery, 'Did not I tell you, do no hurt to the lad?' Gen. xlii. 21 ; deal not so hardly with Joseph as to cast him into the pit. So many men do many things amiss. Conscience may say, Did not I tell you this before ? it was naught,* and yet you would needs do it. Yes, certainly ; and when conscience is not hearkened unto as a director, it will scourge as a judge. It hath many offices, and it is good to keep this conscience in its office ; to let conscience do its full duty, let conscience direct us to the full. Certainly, if we would hearken to this vicegerent in our hearts, this little god that God hath placed there in mercy to guide our lives in particular, it would be better with us than it is. We should end our days with more comfort, and give a better reckoning than we can.

(4.) Again, *Experience* may be added as another help. Experience is a great help in particulars, for indeed generals are raised out of experiments† in particular. Therefore those that are wise politicians, statesmen, they are not so out of books altogether, but men of experience that can say, such a case hath been so at such a time. So that out of observation and particular experience they are able to say, upon the like case, it should be now at this time thus and thus. If therefore we would treasure up experience, it would be a good help to know what is to be done in particulars ; to consider how it hath been in former time, and consider the experience of others. You see then what the rule of our service is, God's will ; with these helps subordinate to it, how to direct ourselves in particular actions to serve the will of God. So much for that point.

'He served.'

Now I come to the act of service. God must be served according to his own will. We must search and try what is the good, and holy, and acceptable will of God, Rom. xii. 2. I have shewed how we may search in particular what the good and acceptable will of God is. Now when this is discovered, the next thing is to 'serve' God in the knowledge of his will ; for all the blessings are annexed to service, and not to knowledge. 'If ye know this will.' Is there all ? No. 'Happy are ye if ye do it,' John xiii. 17. If we know the rule and do it, we are happy. What if we do it not ? 'He that knows his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,' Luke xii. 47. It will but aggravate our damnation, to know the rule, to have directions what to do, and not to do them. Then

* That is, 'naughty,' = wicked.—G.

† That is, 'experiences.'—G.

the rule that we have hath another use. If we use it not for direction in what we do, it will be brought against us at the day of judgment, as a direction for God to damn us by: This you knew; this counsel you had; these motions of the Spirit you had; this, conscience told you; this, the ministry and your friends told you. Notwithstanding, you crossed and thwarted all. When it is not a direction for us to obedience, it will be a direction for God to give sentence. Therefore let us make conscience first to know the will of God, which is the rule of all our actions, by all the means we can, and then to give 'service to it.' David served the will of God. His life was not unfruitfully and wickedly spent; but 'he served' the counsel of God that had planted and placed him there in the world for that purpose. Why hath God planted us here in the paradise of the church? That we should not be barren trees, or bring forth ill fruit; but that we should 'serve' him, and be fruitful in our places.

This word 'service' is a harsh word, and such a thing as proud spirits could never digest. Why did the devils fall? They would be in a state independent, and not under others; they would have their own courses; and therefore the Scripture saith, 'They kept not their own standing,' Jude 6. God set them in one course, and they swelled and would not keep it. The particular is not set down in Scripture, but 'they kept not their own standing.' Neither the devil, who is a proud creature, nor men led with the spirit of the devil, can endure service. Every man would be a god to himself, to be guided by his own lewd will and lusts; and God knows, they are blind guides, and we shall know it to our cost if we have not a better guide. When the will of God is revealed, therefore, we must have a care to serve it.

Now, to 'serve,' implies two things especially: an action, and a reference of that action to the will of another. That is service, as I said before, to do a thing, and to do in obedience. For if a man do never so many things, if it be not in obedience to the will of another, it is no 'service.' He serves himself. So to 'serve' God is when we know the will of God, to do accordingly, and to do it because it is the will of God. Then it is service; or else it is a work indeed done, but no service or obedience.

All obedience is with looking to the will and pleasure of another, that hath authority to direct us; and then we 'serve' the revealed will of God, when the whole inward and outward man is fashioned and framed to that; when there is a measuring of both together, as when we obey the directions; when we tremble at the threatenings; when we imitate the examples of holy writ; when we are raised up with the comforts; when answerable to every divine truth there is an answerable disposition of soul; when there is a sweet harmony between God's truth and our inward and outward man. Rom. vi. 17, 'We must be cast into the mould of the word.' As a thing when it is moulded in another frame, it carries the print of the frame or mould, so we 'serve' the will and word of God when we are moulded answerable to that will.

Now, more particularly, this 'service' of the will of God, it is either immediate, inward 'service' of the will of God, or outward service.

(1.) *Inward service* is the obedience of the first commandment, when upon the knowledge of God we set him up in our souls, and cleave to him in our affections of trust, and joy, and love, and delight, to give him the supremacy of all these. Then we serve him with inward worship and service. And this indeed is to set the crown upon God's head, and to make him king and God in our hearts. He must have the prime of our

inward service. When we love God above all, and fear him above all, and delight in him above all, and cleave to him when all things else fail us, this is the immediate 'service' of God in our hearts, when we give God his own in our hearts. Hence comes all other 'service' whatsoever, or else it is but the eye-service, that is not enlivened with the inward worship of God.

(2.) Now, besides this inward, there is a 'service' of God *that comes from this inward service, which is of the outward man*; that is, when we pray to God, and that requires our words, when we praise God in thanksgiving, when we come to hear the word and to receive the sacrament. And so all outward holy actions are the 'service' of God, and are drawn from the inward immediate worship of God that I spake of before.

(3.) Besides these (which come more immediately from a sanctified spirit), there is a service of God *that is the obedience of the second table*, when we do good to men with an eye to serve God, as we say. There is an elicited, proper service of God, and a commanded service of God, *cultus imperatus*. All duties to men are a 'service' of God, when we do them as commanded of God, as because I love God, therefore I honour my parents, and magistrates; and therefore I will not commit adultery: as Joseph, 'Shall I do this, and offend God?' Gen. xxxiv. 9. So the Scripture allegeth reasons out of the first table, when we are tempted to sins against the second table; and then the duties of the second table are a worship and 'service' of God, when they are commanded by the first. And this is the difference between a mere formal man and a Christian in his outward performances. A civil man is altogether for the second table, but he hath not his rise from the first. He gives every man his due, &c., but it is not in obedience to God, because God hath commanded him to do it; but because he sees it is a deformed thing to be unjust. Out of the light of nature he condemns the sin, but not out of religious respects. It is not a service of God all this while. Ay, but when it is from love to God, when that great command, 'Thou shalt love God above all,' sets him upon this, then all the duties he performs to man are a service of the will of God, for God commands them. Even the basest works are a service of God when they are done in obedience to God, as Saint Paul tells them in Col. iii. 22, and Eph. vi. 5, the poor servant 'serves the Lord Christ.' When a poor servant is at his work, employed in the business of man, poor, common things, yet he serves the Lord all the while. For God hath set them that calling, and he doth the second table in obedience to the first; and he serves men, those that are his governors, with an eye to the great Governor and Master that is above all, that will reward them for their poor service, however their master reward them, Eph. vi. 8. This is to serve the will of God then; to yield to him the immediate service of the soul, and the outward expressions of it; and to go through all other duties as they spring from the first. Then we are moulded, as I said before, answerable to the word of God.

To apply this to our blessed man David, and then to make use of it to ourselves.

Thus did David serve the will of God in his time; for you may see what he was. He is anatomised and laid open to our eyes in the Psalms. You may see his care of 'serving' God in his own writings. See how he cleaved to God in his affections in Ps. xviii. 30, *seq.*, how he loved God, and joyed in God, and in the word of God above all things in the world. He esteemed the light of 'God's countenance more than corn, or wine, or

oil,' Ps. iv. 7. I give but a touch, to shew how this description is true of this blessed man, 'that he served the will of God.'

And for the expression of it in praise and prayer, he was 'a man after God's own heart'; especially in this, he was ready upon all occasions to bless and praise God. He kept his communion with God, as we see; though he were a king, yet his main care was to 'serve' God, as we see in Ps. i. 2, 'He meditated in the word of God day and night.' What time had he to rule his kingdom then? The meaning is, that all the spare time that he had it was to think of God; to look to the rule, the word of God, how to guide his life.

And for his outward calling. (There is a double calling wherein we 'serve' God as Christians, our general and our particular calling, wherein we are to deal with men.) What an excellent man was he! 'He served the will of God,' as a governor of a family. We see in Ps. ci. 2, how he carried himself in the midst of his house to all his servants. A liar should not abide in his house. You have a direction there how to guide your families. You see how he served the will of God as a governor. Yet there was a fault to him in that respect, he was too indulgent to Absalom and Adoniah. A man may be a good man, and yet be to blame in some particulars; but when his heart is right, God pardons the rest.

You see how he carried himself as a king. He was an excellent king, the delight of Israel. He carried himself every way as a king should do. He tempered mercy and judgment together: 'I will sing of mercy and judgment,' Ps. ci. 1. So he did in his whole carriage sweetly temper mercy and justice; he dispensed these two. And as a king must not only 'serve' God, so his care was to establish the worship of God, as you find in the story. David, when he saw all in peace and quiet, then he begins to take care for the ark, 2 Sam. vii. 2: 'I dwell in a house of cedar; but the ark of the Lord remains under curtains.' Therefore he took a course for that. So governors should do, when God hath settled them in their government quietly, to begin to think of God's house; for they rule not well, they 'serve not the will of God,' except, besides their own service, they call others to serve him. A magistrate must be the keeper of both tables himself, and cause others to do it; he must lay down his crown at the feet of Christ, as it is in Isaiah xlix. 7. Thus David was a nursing father to the church of God; he served God in his particular calling.

Now, to make use of another division, the will of God it is either in things to be done or to be suffered; and obedience answerable to that is either active or passive; as David 'served' God in doing, so he yielded obedience, and 'served the will of God' in his passive obedience; wherein he did deny himself exceedingly, as much as ever man did, next to Christ. You see how he denied himself in his carriage toward Saul, 1 Sam. xxlv.: in matter of revenge, how he overcame himself, because he knew that revenge was God's, and that God was his, and therefore would right him well enough. And in Shimei, 'God hath bid him rail.' He would not revenge. And other notable examples we have, how he submitted to God's will, as in 1 Sam. xxx. 6, when he was in extremity, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. There he stayed himself in extremity; and in 2 Sam. xv. 25, there is a notable place how he submitted himself to God. 'The king said, Carry back the ark of God: if I have found favour in the eyes of God, he will bring me again; but if God say thus, I have no delight in him, behold here I am, let him do as seems good to him.' Here was a resigna-

tion of himself to the will of himself* in serving of him. So in Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I held my tongue, Lord, because thou didst it.' Thus you see how he 'served' the will of God, in the inward service of God, and in the outward to God and man; in both callings, as a good man, and a good governor, in his family; every way he 'served' the will of God.

Use. And wherefore is all this? Here is a pattern for us that we should serve the will of God: to serve the will of God immediately, to labour to bring our hearts to trust in him; to fear him above all; to delight in him above all; and to express it in our outward service of him, and in doing duties to men from inward respect to God; in conscience of our duty, to serve God when we serve men: to carry ourselves in our general calling, as Christians, and in our particular place, not only to be good men, but good in our callings; good students, good lawyers, &c. Let us shew our religion there, as David did. This is to serve the will of God. That is not religion that is left behind in the church: as Lactantius saith, that is no religion that we leave behind when we come to the church door (*f*). But that is religion when we learn our duty here, and carry it in our breasts to practise it every day in the week; when we shew it in our places. That is the service of God. Therefore let this holy man be an example to us. Wherefore are these particular things recorded of him in the Scriptures, but that we should transform ourselves to this blessed pattern.

The whole life of a Christian we see is a service of God. There is nothing that we do but it may be a 'service' of God. No. Not our particular recreations, if we use them as we should; as whettings to be fitter for our callings, and enjoy them as liberties, with thankfulness to God, that allows us these liberties to refresh ourselves. There is no passage of a man's life, but it may have the respect of a service of God. It is not the matter or stuff, but the stamp, that makes the coin; so it is not the work, but the stamp, that makes it 'a service,' when we do it with an eye to God. Let the king set a stamp but upon brass, upon a token, yet it will go for current if it have the king's authority and stamp upon it. Let it be but an action of our callings, suppose to give counsel in our studies or pleading of the law, &c., if it have God's stamp upon it; if there be prayer upon it to bless it, and it be done in obedience to God, and with justice; not against the rules of piety and charity, and as far as it may displease God, to baulk and avoid all temptations in our callings out of religious respects, it is a 'service' of God. Our whole life, not only in the church, but in our particular places, may be a 'service of God;' as it is said here, 'David served God.'

Oh, if we could think of this wheresoever we are, we would take no liberty to offend God in anything. We would not thrust religion into a corner, into a narrow room, and limit it to some days, and times, and actions, and places, and then take liberty to defraud and dissemble, to abuse ourselves this way and that way. Is this to serve God? To 'serve' God is to carry ourselves as the children of God wheresoever we are: so that our whole life is a service of God.

A Christian is no libertine, no man of freedom. He is a servant. Indeed, we have changed our master. We are set at liberty from the slavery of sin and Satan; but it is not that we should do nothing, to be Belials without yoke; but it is to serve God. We are taken from the service of Satan to be the Lord's freemen; and indeed it is to that end. We are

* Qu. 'God'?—ED.

delivered that we might serve God, Luke i. 74. Therefore all the actions of our life should be a 'service' to God.

Quest. To make this a little clearer: How can this be, will some man think, that every common action should be a service of God?

Ans. I will make it clear by an instance. The beasts and other creatures and we have common actions, such as we do in common, as to eat, and to drink, and to move. The beast doth this, and man doth it. When a man doth them, they are reasonable actions, because they are guided with reason, and moderated by reason; but when the beast doth them, they are the actions of a beast, because he hath no better faculty to guide him. So common actions, they are not a service of God, as they come from common men, that have not grace and the Spirit of God in their hearts; they are mere buying and selling, and going about the actions of their callings, as the actions, of a beast are the actions of a beast. But let a Christian come to do them, he hath a higher life and a higher spirit that makes them spiritual actions that are common in themselves. He raiseth them to a higher order and rank. Therefore a Christian 'serveth God.' In all that he doth he hath an eye to God: that which another man doth with no eye to God, but merely in civil respects. We say of policy, it is an ancient observation, which is good and very fit. The knowledge of a commonwealth, it is a building knowledge, a commanding knowledge; for though a statesman doth not build, he doth not buy and sell and commerce; but he useth all other trades for the good of the state. It is a knowledge commanding all other inferior arts and trades, in a commonwealth, to the last end. They should all be serviceable to the commonwealth, and if they be not, away with them. So religion, and the knowledge of divine things, it is a commanding knowledge; it commands all other services in our callings, &c. It doth not teach a man what he shall do in particular in his calling; but it teacheth him how to direct that calling to 'serve God,' to be advantageous and helpful to his general calling; to further him to heaven, to make everything reductive to his last end, which he sets before him; that is, to honour and serve God in all things, to whom he desires to approve himself in life and death. He hath a principle, the Holy Ghost in him, and he labours to reduce everything to the main end. Oh that we were in this temper!

And as we must labour to imitate holy David in doing, so likewise in suffering. We must be careful that nothing of God's displeasure us, as we are careful, for ourselves, that nothing of ours displease God. In doing, we ought to be careful that nothing of ours displease God; in suffering, that nothing of God's dealing displease us; for there is rebellion in both, in passive obedience as well as active. There is rebellion when we murmur and will not be as God will have us, as if we were wiser than he, to appoint our own condition. Whereas we should resign ourselves, as David, 'Here I am; let the Lord do as it pleaseth him;' and as they said in the Acts, xxi. 14, 'The will of the Lord be done;' and as we pray in the Lord's prayer, 'Thy will be done,' insinuating not our own. We must be content to stoop in our sufferings obediently to God, because he is 'righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,' Ps. cxlv. 17, in all the courses he takes with us. We should be ready to justify God in all things.

Now, how did he 'serve God,' for the manner of his service? The manner of his service was as it should be, and so he was exemplary to us all in that. Amongst others, his service was,

1. First, *Universal*, to God and to men every way.

2. Secondly, *It was uniform.* He was good in all conditions, a good shepherd, a good king, he was good in his family, &c. So the service of the children and servants of God, it must be uniform in all estates, 'to know how to want, and how to abound,' &c.,

3. And then his service was *cheerful*. We see how oft he rouseth up himself in the Psalms: 'Awake; my harp and lute,' &c.,

4. And lastly, His service was *sincere*. It was to God. You may know his sincerity by this:

(1.) *He cared not for scoffings*; he practised duties that were scorned at. That is an evidence of sincerity, when in ill times the children of God stand to God and religion. When Michal mocked him, saith he, 'I will be yet more vile for God,' 2 Sam. vi. 22. When God may have glory, and religion defence, for men to stand for God in ill times, it is a sign of sincerity. An hypocrite will never do so. David did at all times, 'in his generation.'

(2.) And then it was a sign of sincerity, *that he would appeal to God*. 'Try me, Lord, if there be any way of wickedness in me,' Ps. cxxxix. 23. When a soul can go to God, and say, Lord, if there be any way of wickedness in me, any secret lurking corruption in me, that may endanger the state of my soul, that I know not of, discover it to me: that is a sign that a man is in league with no sin, but his service is sincere.

(3.) A man that is not sincere *hath no comfort*. So much sincerity, so much comfort. If a man do not things to God in sincerity, all is lost to God. A man may have commendations of the world, as the Pharisees had, which is nothing but a kind of curse: 'You have your reward,' Mat. vi. 2; that is, you have it here, and shall lose it hereafter. So much concerning the life of David, in those words, 'David in his generation served the counsel or will of God.' Now, to make a perfect discourse of it, we will speak something of his end.

'He fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption.'

'He fell asleep,' that is, he died; for sleep, in Scripture, it is a middle phrase, applicable to good and bad; for wicked men, in Scripture, are said to sleep, and good men are said to 'sleep. Only the difference is, as the persons are; for the sleep of wicked men it is like the sleep of a malefactor before his execution, that is oftentimes tripped in his sleep; or like the sleep of a man in sickness, or in a mad fit. His sleep doth but concoct the malignant humour, and after he wakes, he rageth three times more than he did before. So the sleep, the death of a carnal, wicked man, it is but a preparation to his execution; it is but the sleep of a distempered man that wakes with more horror, and terror, and rage, than ever before. Indeed, properly the death only of the godly is a sleep. But to observe something first briefly in general.

Obs. 1. We see here is a time of dying as well as a time of living.

There is a time to serve God in living, and there is a time to yield our souls to him, as well as a time to serve God in doing the actions and functions of this life.

Use 1. Which would teach us this, *not to fix our thoughts too much on life*. As there is a time for all things to the living, so there is a time to cease to live; and therefore to use the world with moderation, 'as though we used it not, knowing that the fashion of the world passeth away,' 1 Cor. vii. 31. It should teach us to serve God as well in living as in dying.

Use 2. And it should teach us *to do all the good we can while we have*

time. David served God while he lived, and he served God in dying; because his death was in obedience. But, as I said before, after death properly there is no service of God, but a receiving of wages. Therefore let us serve God while we live, while we have time, because there is a time 'when night will come,' the night of sickness and of death, 'and then no man can work,' John ix. 4, if he would never so fain.

'He fell asleep.' Why did he not die before? He served God a great while; he did not die when he was first a good man.

Obs. 2. God will have his children serve out their generation.

(1.) *They must serve out their time.* As soon as ever we believe we have right to heaven, but God will have us bear the burden of the day awhile, *to bring others to heaven with us*, to go before others in the example of a godly life, to gain as many as we can.

(2.) *To try the truth of our graces before we come to heaven*, whether they be true or no, that they may be true, tried graces.

(3.) And he will have us *perfect* before we come to so holy a place. He will have us 'grow in grace,' as Ahasuerus his wives were to be perfumed and prepared before they came to him. It is a holy place that we hope for, a holy condition; therefore he will have us by little and little be fitted by the Spirit of God. Many such reasons there be why God in heavenly wisdom will have us go on here a time before we come to heaven, though as soon as we believe we are in the state of salvation; as Christ said to Zaccheus, '*This day is salvation come to thine house*,' Luke xix. 9.

Use. Therefore let us not repine that God will have us live. Indeed, as soon as a Christian hath faith, he hath life in patience and death in desire; for he is impatient to want his crown. Oh, but here is the time of service; and when he considers the eternity of the reward he shall have after, he will be glad to serve God, and he will be ashamed that he can do it no more. When he knows he shall have an 'eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17, for a little service, then he will deny his lusts and pleasures to serve God in the place he lives in, whether he be magistrate or minister whatsoever, to undergo the burden of a little service.

Again, In that it is said here, '*then he fell asleep*,' not before, till he had served the counsel of God.

Obs. 3. God hath allotted a man a time.

He hath set him a glass that must be run, he hath given him a part to act, and he cannot be taken away till that be done. He can never fall asleep till he have served the counsel of God. As it is said in the gospel concerning our Saviour Christ, '*his hour was not yet come*,' John vii. 30. They have laid wait for him, but his hour was not come. So there may be many snares laid for the children of God by Satan and his instruments, but till their hour be come, all the devils in hell, nor all the devil's instruments on earth, cannot shorten a man's life one minute of an hour; for he shall fall asleep when he hath served the counsel of God, when he hath done all that God will have him to do.

Use. Therefore it is ground of resolution, *let us go on in our places and callings, undauntedly and wisely too*; not to tempt God, to rush into dangers; but, I mean, without base fear and distrust; for we must serve God to-day and to-morrow, and then we shall be sanctified. We must serve God the appointed time that he will have us to live here; and then we shall 'fall asleep,' and not before. No creature hath power over the life of man to shorten his days.

Obs. 4. The next thing we will observe from the nature of sleep is, that

The death of the godly is a sleep, in respect of refreshing.

Sleep doth refresh and repair, and as it were recreate and make a man anew. Sleep and rest it is the blessed ordinance of God, it is an excellent thing to repair men; so after death nature shall be repaired better, we shall rise fresher; as it is Ps. xvii. 15, 'When I arise, I shall be satisfied with thine image.' We shall rise refreshed, better than we lay down. So that as we go to bed then, to sleep, to cut off all cares, so when we rest in death, all cares, and fears, and terrors, all annoyances, are cut off.

(1.) 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: *they rest from their labours*,' Rev. xiv. 13; insinuating that there is no rest before. For to a man that knows that this world is a workhouse, and his life a service to God, he thinks of no rest till he be in his grave. So death it is a sleep in regard of that rest. We rest from the labour of sin, we rest from the wearisome labour of the body; from the labour of afflictions and oppressions, from the molestations of other men among whom we live. Every way this life is tedious, and death rest.

(2.) Again, It is in this respect a sleep; because a man goes to bed *with assured hope of rising again*, and therefore he goes quietly. Though it be a state of darkness for the time, all the senses are bound up, yet he knows that in God's ordinary providence he shall rise again. Therefore men not only quietly, but cheerfully, go to bed. So there is greater ground to know that we shall rise again out of our graves, than that we should rise out of our beds; for many men's beds have been their graves, in some sort; I mean, they have died in their beds. But for the resurrection, we have the word of Almighty God, that is a God of his word, that we shall rise again; and we have it in the pledge of our Saviour's resurrection. There is no doubt of that.

Therefore when we die, if we have faith, we should make no more of death than men do to go to bed; hoping undoubtedly of an assured and joyful resurrection. The want of faith in that kind makes us backward to this. You see in what respect death is said to be a 'sleep.' To speak only of those references and relations that are most pertinent between sleep and death.

(3.) David 'fell asleep,' and very willingly; for he had lived a painful life; he served God both as a private man, as a shepherd, and as a king; Eccles. v. 12, 'To a labouring man sleep is sweet;' so to a man that hath served God carefully in his calling, and kept a good conscience, death is very sweet. We see children that have been playing all day, they are loath to go to bed; but to a man that hath wrought all day, 'sleep is sweet,' as wise Solomon saith, 'to a labouring man.'

Use. Would we, then, have death as a sweet rest? Let us do as David did; that is, be painful, and laborious in our particular place and in our general calling; let us be faithful in them to keep a good conscience, and set all in order as much as we can while we live; to leave no seeds of debate when we are gone. Some men die carelessly this way in disposing the good things that God hath given them. They lay a foundation of perpetual jarring afterward; and so their death is scarcely a 'sleep and rest.' They cannot but be disquieted when they think how they leave things, because they were not wise beforehand. David settled Solomon in his throne, and set all things right before he died; and that made him die, not only in rest but in honour; in 1 Chron. xxix. 28, 'David died in a good old age, full of riches and honour.'*

* That is, 'pains-taking.'—G.

And let us labour to get assurance of a change for the better. David his flesh rested in hope, because he believed in Christ, that Christ's body should see no corruption, Ps. xvi. 10. So if we would have death sweet as a sleep, let us labour to get assurance by faith in Christ, and so our flesh may rest in hope, that as Christ raised his own flesh, so he will raise ours. Good Simeon, when he had seen Christ once, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' &c., Luke ii. 29. So after we have gotten a sight of Christ to be our Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, and have interest in him, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace.' So much for the term seep.

It is added besides, that

'He was gathered to his fathers.'

'He was gathered to his fathers' both in regard of his body, and in regard of his soul; for his body went to the house of the dead, the grave, and his soul went to his fathers, to heaven. As I said before of sleep, so of this. It is a phrase of Scripture that must be understood as the persons are. When a man dies, his body goes to the place or house of all men, the house of darkness, the grave; but for his soul, that goes as the man is, to his fathers, to hell, if he be naught; to the souls of just and perfect men, as the apostle speaks, if he have lived a gracious and a good life; and so it must be understood here, because he speaks of a blessed man.

'He was put to his fathers.' He means not to his immediate fathers, but all believing men before him that were the children of Abraham. His soul went to them; his body to the first mother, the earth, out of which it was taken. So the general is nothing but this, that

Obs. 5. When we die we are put to our fathers.

Therefore this should moderate our fear of death, and our grief for the departure of others. Why? We are not lost when we die. The soul and body is taken asunder, it is taken in pieces, but both remain still. The body goes to the earth from whence it was taken, and the soul goes to God that gave it. And for our comfort, we go to those that we knew before, many of them; to our fathers, not to strangers. Especially in respect of our souls we go to our fathers, to our next forefathers and to our old fathers: to Abraham, Isaac, to Jacob, to David, to blessed Saint Paul and Peter, and all the blessed men that died in the faith. And when we are dead, we go to those that are more perfect than those that we leave behind us. This should moderate our grief. Oh, I leave my friends behind me, my father, and mother, and children! It is to go to better, to greater, and those that love thee better. Thou goest to greater, for they are in their pitch; they have attained their end, they are in heaven; and to better, they are refined from those corruptions that men here are subject unto, and then their love is perfect likewise. Therefore going to our fathers and not to strangers, to those that are better and greater, and love us more perfectly, why should we think much to die? They will be ready to entertain us. Oh the welcome that souls find in heaven! and at the day of the resurrection the sweet embracings, when all the blessed souls that have been from Adam to the last man shall meet together! Seeing therefore we go to our fathers, it should rather make us cheerful. Here, whom do we live with? Take them at the best, our friends. Men, subject to jealousies and weaknesses. Our jealousy makes us suspect them, and their weakness makes us think the meaner of them. So our love is not perfect, nor our graces are not perfect. Therefore we cannot have perfect love and contentment while we are here. But in heaven there shall be no jealousy,

nor fear, nor imperfection, which is the ground of jealousy. We shall perfectly love them because they shall be perfectly good; and they shall perfectly love us because we shall be perfectly good; and one shall stand admiring the graces of God in another, and that will maintain a perpetuity of love. Therefore it is want of faith that makes us unwilling to yield our souls unto God at the point of death. It is a going to our fathers.

But then we must take heed what fathers we imitate here, Heb. xiii. 7. Take heed who are our patterns while we live; for if we do not imitate them here, we cannot live with them in heaven when we are dead. Therefore it is a very necessary item in Heb. xiii. 7, 'Look to them that rule over you, that speak the word; whose faith follow, considering the end of their labour.' Let us look before what kind of men those have been that we desire to live with in heaven, and mark the end of their conversation; for such as we delight in, and frame our carriage to here, such we shall live with hereafter. We must not think to live with Nero, and die with Paul; to live Epicures, and die Christians; to live dissembling and falsely in our places, and to die comfortably, and to go to the blessed souls at the hour of death, and at the resurrection. No. God will gather our souls with wicked men, if we fashion our carriage to wicked men. Such as we delight in, and live with, and set as patterns before us, with such we shall live for ever hereafter. 'He was gathered to his fathers.'

One sign of a man that shall be gathered to believing fathers, to his good forefathers, besides imitation, is this, to delight in the congregations of just men here. A man may know he shall go to the congregation of perfect souls in heaven, if he delight in the congregations of God's saints here; for surely he that hath a confidence to be in the proper heaven, heaven that is so blessed, he will have a care while he lives, as much as he can, to be and delight in the heaven upon earth. Now the chief heaven upon earth is the church of God. 'O how amiable is thy dwelling-place, O Lord,' Ps. lxxxiv. 1, where many souls meet together to join in speaking to God, and in hearing God speak to them. Those therefore that delight not in the congregations, that delight not in the service of God, what hope have they to be gathered to the congregation of the faithful when they are gone. So much for that, 'He was gathered to his fathers.'

'And he saw corruption.'

It is an Hebraism for 'he felt corruption,' 'he had experience of corruption.' All other senses are attributed to sight. That being the principal of all the senses, they have their term from it, because sight is the most excellent, the most capacious and quick sense. Therefore, I say, the actions of all the other senses are attributed to it, as we say, see how he speaks, and so here, 'he saw corruption,' that is, he had experience of it; because sight is a convincing sense. He could not properly see when he was dead: but the meaning is, he had experience of 'corruption.' The truth is this, in a word, that,

Obs. 6. The best and greatest men in the world, when they are gone, they are subject to corruption.

David was a king and a prophet, 'a man after God's own heart.' Yet this could not keep David's body from corruption.

Reason 1. The reason is, *we are but dead men here.* This is not the life that Christ hath purchased for us. We are going to death. Our natural life is but *cursus ad mortem*, a continual going to death. We are alive now, but,

alas ! our life is nothing but a continual dying ; every day cuts off a part of our life. It is a statute that all must die.

Reason 2. And it is our perfection to die. We cannot otherwise see God and enjoy our crown. Death indeed is nothing but misery. But when we die we go to live. The best must ' see corruption.'

Use 1. Therefore this should be an argument to support the soul ; when we think of the rottenness in the grave, and of that place, and time of horror, when we shall be no more here upon earth. It is no otherwise with us than it hath been with the best in the world. They all saw ' corruption' in their time.

Use 2. Again, considering we have but corruptible bodies here, bodies that must see corruption ; let us take care for the better part. He is a mad-man, that having two houses, one free-hold, the other a rotten tenement, ready to fall about his ears, that shall take delight in that and neglect his own inheritance, which is a goodly thing. It is for want of wit ; and it is as much want of grace, when we, having a double life, the life of grace, that ends in glory, the life of the soul, the life of God, as St Paul saith ; and then the life of the body, which is communicated from the soul to the body, which is corruptible ;—our bodies are but ' tabernacles of clay, whose foundation is in the dust,'—for us to take care of this vile body, as the apostle calls it, Philip. iii. 21, ' Who shall change our vile body, and make it like to his glorious body, according to his mighty power ;' to take care of this vile body and to neglect our precious souls. It is the care of most (such is the carnal breeding of men, and they follow those that bred them in this brutishness, as if they had no souls ; as if there were no life after this), their care is, ' what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and put on,' Mat. vi. 25 ; what to commend themselves by in the outward man to the view of others ; all their care is for their outward man. Alas ! what is it but a corruptible vile body ? It is but the case of the soul. They forget the jewel and look all to the casket, which is a base body, take it at the best while we are here.

Use 3. And take heed we be not ensnared with the bodies of others. This is the ' corruption' of men, to gaze in this kind. You see wise Solomon and others were much troubled with temptations in this kind. Consider that body that thou doatest on now, and which is made by the devil a snare to thee, what will it be ere long ? So noisome that thou wilt not endure the presence of it. It is but a flower, and it is fading, fresh in the morning and dead at night. All flesh is but grass. It is a corruptible body. If thou wilt needs love, be acquainted with such as have excellent spirits that shall live eternally. Oh, there is an object of love indeed ! That is the true love and acquaintance that is spiritual. Many things may be lovely in the outward person, but see that there be a heavenly spirit, that is mounting up, that savours of good things ; a spirit that hath life begun in it, that shall be for ever happy in heaven. Unless there be this, there cannot be a fit ground for the love of any wise man.

To end all, you see here a short story of a good life and a blessed death. Let us make this blessed man of God exemplary to us in both. Let our whole life be nothing but a service of God, and let us consider the generation wherein we are to take and do all the good we can in our time. And then consider what death will be. When we come to die, it will be a sweet sleep to us, and our resurrection will be a refreshing. ' Our flesh shall rest in hope,' as David saith, ' we shall be gathered to our fathers ;' we shall ' see corruption,' indeed. But mark what David saith, Ps. xvi. 9, 10,

'My flesh shall rest in hope, *because* thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption.' Then this is the upshot of all. Though we 'see corruption' when we are dead; yet, with the eye of faith, we see a rising again from 'corruption.' We see death but as a pot to refine us in. Even as it is with silver, when there is much corruption and heterogeneous matter mingled with it, the fire refines it, but it is not lost. So the grave refines the body, and fits it for a glorious resurrection. 'The flesh rests in hope' all the while, though the body see corruption. Because our head saw no corruption. If the head be above water, what if the body be down? Our head saw no corruption; that is, Christ, for he rose out of the grave before his body was putrified; for his body had a subsistence, and was gloriously united to the second person in Trinity; and, being united to the Lord of life, it saw no corruption. For that did not lie upon Christ as our Saviour to be corrupt, but to die, 'to be made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13, and then especially, I say, by reason of the near union of it to the God of life.

Well, then, what is David's argument of comfort? In Ps. xvi. 9, 10, 'My flesh shall rest in hope; because thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.' Because Christ rose from the grave himself, the holy one of God, our flesh may rest in hope, though we see corruption. Because the same divine power that raised Christ our head out of the grave, that his body saw no corruption, will raise our bodies to be like his glorious body. Our blessed Saviour, that overcame death in his own person, by his power he will overcome death for all his mystical body, that is, his church. It shall be perfect in heaven, soul and body together, as he himself is glorious now in heaven. That we may say with David, notwithstanding our bodies see corruption, as his did, yet our flesh shall rest in hope, because God's holy one saw no corruption.

NOTES.

(a) P. 490.—'This I observe from the very language or phrase.' The phrase is, ὑπηρέτησας τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ βουλῇ = having served the counsel of God, as Sibbes suggests. Cf. ver. 22.

(b) P. 492.—'David in his generation served the will, or counsel, of God,' as the word is.' See note *a* above.

(c) P. 493.—'Man, take him in his nature, is like a tree. The poet could say to that purpose.' This comparison is frequent in the Classics and in all languages. By the poet is probably intended Homer, and the reference to the famous passage II. ζ 146—

Τυδεΐδῃ μεγάθυμῃ, τίη γενεῇν ἐρεΐνεϊς;
 Οἷη περ φύλλων γενεῇ, τοιῆδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
 Φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνεμὸς χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη
 Τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἕαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη.
 'Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεῇ, ἣ μὲν φύει, ἣ δ' ἀπολήγει.

Thus translated by Cowper:—

'Why asks Diomede of my descent?
 For as the leaves, such is the race of men.
 The wind shakes down the leaves, the budding grove
 Soon teems with others, and in spring they grow.
 So pass mankind. One generation meets
 Its destined period, and a new succeeds.'

The Elizabethan poets furnish many splendid examples of the metaphor; *e.g.*, Ben Jonson, Massinger, and their compeers.

(d) P. 495.—‘ In regard of the ills, we may say with Saint Austin, “ Lord, to what times are we reserved.”’ One of his lamentations during his passionate controversies with the Donatists, and when Hippo was besieged by the Vandals, during which calamity this illustrious father expired.

(e) P. 498.—‘ As the civil law saith, *infringit obedientiam*,’ &c. Still a law-maxim.

(f) P. 507.—‘ As Lactantius saith, “ that is no religion that we leave behind when we come to the church-door.”’ Cf. for the *thought*, his *De Falsa Religione* repeatedly. G.