

A

# FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED UPON THE DEATH OF THE REVEREND AND  
EXCELLENT DIVINE

DR THOMAS MANTON,

WHO DECEASED OCTOBER 18, 1677.

BY

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## FUNERAL SERMON.

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*And so shall we ever be with the Lord.*—1 THESS. iv. 17, the last clause.

THE words are a consolation, brought by the apostle from the third heaven, where he was, by extraordinary privilege, raised, and saw and understood how great an happiness it is to be with Christ. And they are addressed to believers, to moderate and allay their sorrows for the death of those saints, who, by their conjunction in blood or friendship, were most dear to them. Thus he speaks in the thirteenth verse, 'I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope.' The heathens, that were strangers to a future state, and thought that, after a short course through the world, mankind would be lost for ever in the dead sea, might with some pretence abandon themselves to the extremity of their passions; but christians, to whom life and immortality are revealed by the gospel, who believed 'that as Jesus died and rose again, so all that sleep in Jesus,' that persevere in faith and holiness to the end, 'God will bring with him,' are forbid, upon the most weighty reasons, to indulge their grief in excess. The union between Christ and believers is inviolable; and from thence it follows, they shall be partakers with him in his glory. The soul immediately after death shall be with Christ. While the body reposes in the grave, it is in his presence who is life and light, and has a vital, joyful rest in communion with him. And in the appointed time the bodies of the saints, those happy spoils, shall be rescued from the dark prison of the grave, and be sharers with their souls in immortal glory.

This consummate happiness of the saints the apostle assures from highest the authority, 'The word of the Lord;' and describes his glorious appearance so as to make the strongest impression on our minds: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' Then death, the last enemy, so fearful and feared by men, shall be destroyed; and the captive prince of the world, with all the powers of darkness, and all other rebellious sinners that obstinately joined with him, shall be brought in chains before his dreadful tribunal; and after the great act of the universal judgment shall be completed, then all the saints shall make

their triumphant entry with the captain of their salvation into his kingdom, and 'shall ever be with the Lord.'

The general proposition from the words is this: The saints after the resurrection shall be completely and eternally happy in the presence of Christ.

To make this supernatural blessedness more easy and intelligible to us, the scripture describes it by sensible representations; for whilst the soul is clothed with flesh, fancy has such a dominion that we can conceive of nothing but by comparisons and images taken from material things. It is therefore set forth by a feast and a kingdom, to signify the joy and glory of that state. But to prevent all gross conceits, it tells us that the bodies of the saints shall be spiritual; not capable of hunger and thirst, nor consequently of any refreshment that is caused by the satisfaction of those appetites. The objects of the most noble senses, seeing and hearing, the pleasure of which is mixed with reason, and not common to the brutes, are more frequently made use of to reconcile that glorious state to the proportion of our minds. Thus sometimes the blessed are represented placed 'on thrones, with crowns on their heads;' sometimes 'clothed in white, with palms in their hands;' sometimes singing songs of triumph to 'him that sits on the throne,' and to their Saviour. But the reality of this blessedness infinitely exceeds all those faint metaphors. Heaven is lessened by comparisons from earthly things. The apostle who was dignified with the revelation of the successes that shall happen to the church till time shall be no more, tells us, 'it does not appear what we shall be in eternity.' 'The things that God has prepared for those that love him' are far more above the highest ascent of our thoughts than the marriage-feast of a great prince exceeds in splendour and magnificence the imagination of one that has always lived in an obscure village, and never saw any ornaments of state, nor tasted wine in his life. We can think of those things but according to the poverty of our understandings. But so much we know that is able to sweeten all the bitterness, and render insipid all the sweetness of this world.

This will appear by considering, that whatever is requisite to constitute the perfect blessedness of man is fully enjoyed in the divine presence.

First, An exemption from all evils is the first condition of perfect blessedness. The sentence of wise Solon is true in another sense than he intended.

— Dique beatus  
Ante obitum nemo, supremaque funera debet.

No man can be named happy whilst in this valley of tears. But upon the entrance into heaven, all those evils that by their number, variety, or weight disquiet and oppress us, are at an end.

Sin, of all evils the most hateful, shall be abolished, and all temptations that surround us and endanger our innocence will cease. Here the best men lament the weakness of the flesh, and sometimes the violent assaults of spiritual enemies. St Paul himself breaks forth into a mournful complaint, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' And, when harassed with the buffetings

of Satan, renews his most earnest addresses to God to be freed from them. Here our purity is not absolute ; we must be always cleansing ourselves from the relics of that deep defilement that cleaves to our nature. Here our peace is preserved with the sword in our hand, by a continual warfare against Satan and the world. But in heaven no ignorance darkens the mind, no passions rebel against the sanctified will, no inherent pollution remains. The church is 'without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' And all temptations 'that war against the soul' shall then cease. The tempter was cast out of heaven, and none of his poisoned arrows can reach that purified company. Glorious liberty ! here ardently desired, but fully enjoyed by the sons of God above.

And as sin, so all the penal consequences of it are quite taken away. The present life is an incurable disease, and sometimes attended with that sharp sense that death is desired as a remedy and accepted as a benefit. And though the saints have reviving cordials, yet their joys are mixed with sorrows, nay, caused by sorrows. The tears of repentance are their sweetest refreshment. Here the living stones are cut and wounded, and made fit by sufferings for a temple unto God in the new Jerusalem. But as in the building of Solomon's temple the noise of a hammer was not heard, for all the parts were framed before with that exact design and correspondence that they firmly combined together ; they were hewn in another place, and nothing remained but the putting them one upon another in the temple, and then, as sacred, they were inviolable ; so God, the architect, having prepared the saints here by many cutting afflictions, places them in the eternal building, where no voice of sorrow is heard. Of the innumerable company above, is there any eye that weeps, any breast that sighs, any tongue that complains, or appearance of grief ? The heavenly state is called 'life,' as only worthy of that title. There is no infirmity of body, no poverty, no disgrace, treachery of friends, no persecution of enemies : 'There is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain ; for former things are passed away,' Rev. xxi. 4. 'God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people.' Their salvation is complete in all degrees. Pure joy is the privilege of heaven, unmixed sorrows the punishment of hell.

A concurrence of all positive excellences is requisite to blessedness, and these are to be considered with respect to the entire man.

I. The body shall be awaked out of its dead sleep, and quickened into a glorious immortal life. The soul and body are the essential parts of man ; and though the inequality be great in their operations that respect holiness, yet their concurrence is necessary. Good actions are designed by the counsel and resolution of the Spirit, but performed by the ministry of the flesh. Every grace expresses itself in visible actions by the body. In the sorrows of repentance it supplies tears ; in fastings its appetites are restrained ; in thanksgivings the tongue breaks forth into the joyful praises of God. All the victories over sensible pleasure and pain are obtained by the soul in conjunction with the body. Now it is most becoming the divine goodness not to deal so differently that the soul should be everlastingly happy, and the body lost in forgetfulness ; the one glorified in heaven, the other remain in the dust. From

their first setting out in the world to the grave, they ran the same race, and shall enjoy the same reward. Here the body is the comfort of the soul in obedience and sufferings, hereafter in fruition. When the crown of purity or palm of martyrdom shall be given by the great Judge in the view of all, they shall both partake in the honour. Of this we have an earnest in the resurrection of Christ in his true body, who 'is the first-fruits of them that sleep,' 1 Cor. xv. 21; 'He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like to his glorious body, according to the working of his power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself,' Phil. iii. 21. A substantial, unfading glory will shine in them infinitely above the perishing pride of this world, that is but in appearance, like the false colours painted on the feathers of a dove by the reflection of the light, which presently vanish when it changeth its posture, or the light is withdrawn. Indeed, what can be more glorious than to be conformed to the humanity of Christ, the seat of all beauty and perfection? This conformity shall be the work of his own hands. And when omnipotence interposes, nothing is difficult. The raising the body to an unchangeable state of glory is as easy to the divine power as the forming it at first in the womb; as the sun labours no more in the mines in the forming gold and silver, the most precious and durable metals, than in the production of a poor short-lived flower.

II. The soul shall be made perfect in all its faculties.

1. The understanding shall clearly see the most excellent objects: 'Now we know but in part,' 1 Cor. xiii. The naked beauty of divine things is veiled, and of impossible discovery; and the weakness of the mind is not proportionable to their dazzling brightness. But when that which is perfect is come, 'then that which is in part shall be done away.' In that enlightened state the glorious manifestation of the objects shall as much exceed the clearest revealing of them here, as the sun in its full lustre one beam of light strained through a crevice in the wall. And the understanding shall be prepared to take a full view of them. Therefore the apostle compares the several periods of the church, in respect of the degrees of knowledge, to the several ages of this life: 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' In children the organs, either from an excess of moisture or their smallness, are indisposed for the vigorous exercise of the mind; some strictures of reason appear, a presaging sign what will be, but mixed with much obscurity; but when the organs are come to their just proportion and temperament, the soul displays its strength and activity.

All things of a supernatural order shall then be clearly discovered. The contrivance of our salvation, the ways of conducting us to blessedness, which are objects of a sublime nature, will afford an exquisite pleasure to the understanding. All the secrets of our redemption shall be unsealed. The great mystery of godliness, the incarnation of the eternal Son, and his according justice with mercy, shall then be apparent. The divine counsels in governing the world are now only visible in their wonderful effects, either of mercy or justice, and those most dreadful; but the reasons of them are past finding out. But what our Saviour said to Peter, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt

know hereafter,' is applicable to these impenetrable dispensations. All the original fountains of wisdom, as clear as deep, shall then be opened. We shall then see the beauty of providence in disposing temporal things in order to our eternal felicity. We now see, as it were, the rough part and knots of that curious embroidery, but then the whole work shall be unfolded, the sweetness of the colours and proportion of the figures appear. There we shall be able to expound the perplexing riddle, how 'out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong came sweetness;' for 'we shall know as we are known.'

We shall see God. Our Saviour tells us, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' The beginning and perfection of our happiness consists in this knowledge. The Deity is spiritual and invisible to the eye of the body, infinite and incomprehensible to the soul. But we shall then so clearly understand the divine perfections, that our present knowledge, compared to that, is but as the seeing a dark resemblance in a glass to the clear view of a person in the native beauty of his face. God is most gloriously present in heaven; for according to the degrees of excellence in the work, such are the impressions and discoveries of the virtues of the cause. Now all sensible things in the low order of nature are but weak resultances from his perfections in comparison of their illustrious effects in the divine world. The glories of the place and of the inhabitants, the angels and saints, clearly express his majesty, goodness, and power. But in a transcendent manner he exhibits himself in the glorified Mediator. He is styled 'the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person;' not only for his equal perfections in respect of the unity of their nature, but to signify that God in the person of the incarnate Mediator is so fully represented to us, that by the sight of him we see God himself in his unchangeable excellences. This appears by the following words, that 'having purged us from our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;' for they respect the Son of God as united to the human nature, in which he performed the office of the priesthood, and took possession of his glorious kingdom. During his humble state, the divine virtues, wisdom, goodness, holiness, power, were so visible in his person, life, revelations, and miraculous works, that when Philip so longed for the sight of the Father, as the only consummate blessedness, 'Show us the Father, and it suffices,' he told him, 'He that has seen me has seen the Father also.' But how brightly do they appear in his triumphant exaltation! It was his prayer on earth, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' Inestimable felicity! Whether we consider him in the respect of an object that incomparably transcends all the created glory of heaven, or in the relation of our head, on a double account; partly because he was debased into the form of a servant, and suffered all indignities and cruelties of sinners for us, has received the recompense of his meritorious sufferings, the triumph of his victory, 'being glorified with the Father with the glory he had before the world was;' and partly because every member shall be conformed to him in his glory: 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' And all felicity and glory is comprised in that promise. The sight of the face of Moses when radiant had no

transforming efficacy, for the light of it was not in him as its source but by derivation. But God is light essentially, and the sight of his perfections will be productive of his likeness in us, so far as it may be in a restrained subject. When our Saviour was upon the holy mount, and one vanishing beam of glory appeared in his transfiguration, Peter was so transported at the sight that he forgot the world and himself. How ravishing, then, will the sight of him be in his triumphant majesty, when we shall be transfigured ourselves!

2 As we shall behold God's face, know his most amiable excellences, so they shall love him as perfectly as they know him. To the illustrations of the mind there are correspondent impressions on the heart. In the present state our love is imperfect, and as fire out of its sphere, dies away by our neglect to feed it with proper materials, enamouring considerations of God. But it is not so in heaven; there the divine sun attracts every eye with the light of its beauty, and inflames every heart with the heat of his love. The continual presence of God is in different respects the cause and effect of our love to him; for there is no more powerful attractive to love him than to see him; and love keeps the thoughts undivided from him. 'God is love,' and will kindle in us a pure affection that eternity shall never lessen.

Our affections, that are now scattered on many things, wherein some small reflections of his goodness appear, shall join in one full current in heaven, where God is all in all. We shall then understand the riches of his love, that God, who is infinitely happy in himself, should make man for such a glory, and such a glory for man; and that when for his rebellion he was justly expelled from paradise, and under a sentence of eternal death, God should please to restore him to his favour, and to give him a better state than was forfeited. We shall then understand our infinite obligations to the Son of God who descended from the heaven of heavens to our earth, and, which is more, from the majesty wherein he there reigned, from the glory wherein he was visible to the angelical minds, and became man for men, redemption for the lost, to purchase immortal life for those who were dead to that blessed life. In short, then God will express his love to us in the highest degrees that a finite creature is capable to receive from love itself, and we shall love him with all the strength of our glorified powers.

3. Complete satisfaction flows from union with God by knowledge and love: 'In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for ever.' The causes and excellences of the heavenly life are in those words expressed. The causes are the influxive presence of God, the revelation of his attractive perfections, the beholding his face, the declaration of his peculiar favour. This our blessed Lord himself had a respect to, as the complete reward of his sufferings: 'Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.' And his right hand his bounty, that dispenses, and his power that secures, that felicity. The excellences of this state are fulness of joy, and that without diminution or end.

When the soul opens its eyes to the clear discoveries of the first truth, and its breast to the dear and intimate embraces of the supreme good, beyond which nothing remains to be known, nothing to be enjoyed, what a deluge of the purest pleasures will overflow it! We

cannot ascend in our thoughts so high as to conceive the excess of joy that attends those operations of the glorified soul upon its proper object. But something we may conjecture.

[1.] Those who are possessed with a noble passion for knowledge, how do they despise all lower pleasures in comparison of it! how do they forget themselves, neglect the body, and retire into the mind, the highest part of man, and nearest to God! The bare apprehension of such things that by their internal nature have no attractive influence upon the affections is pleasant to the understanding. As the appearance of light, though not attended with any other visible beauties, refreshes the eye after long darkness; so the clear discovery of truths, how abstract soever, that were before unknown, is grateful to the intellectual faculty. Thus some have been strangely transported with the pleasures of a mathematical demonstration, when the evidence, not the importance of the thing, was so ravishing; for what is more dry and barren of delight than the speculation of figures and numbers? Solon, when near his end, and some of his friends that visited him were speaking softly of a point of philosophy, by a sound of wisdom was awakened from the sleep of death that was just seizing on him, and opening his eyes, and raising his head to give attention, being asked the reason of it, answered, That when I understand what you are discoursing of, I may die.<sup>1</sup> Such was his delight in knowledge, that a little of it made his agony insensible. But here are many imperfections that lessen this intellectual pleasure, which shall cease in heaven. Here the acquisition of knowledge is often with the expense of health; the flower of the spirits, necessary for natural operations, is wasted by intense thoughts. How often are the learned sickly! As the flint when it is struck gives not a spark without consuming itself, so knowledge is obtained by studies that waste our faint, sensitive faculties. But then our knowledge shall be a free emanation from the spring of truth, without our labour and pains. Here we learn by circuit, and discern by comparing things; our ignorance is dispelled by a gradual succession of light; but then universal knowledge shall be infused in a moment. Here, after all our labour and toil, how little knowledge do we gain! Every question is a labyrinth, out of which the nimblest and most searching minds cannot extricate themselves. How many specious errors impose upon our understandings! We look on things by false lights, through deceiving spectacles. But then our knowledge shall be certain and complete. There is no forbidden tree in the celestial paradise, as no inordinate affection. But suppose that all things in the compass of the world were known, yet still there would be emptiness and anguish in the mind; for the most comprehensive knowledge of things that are insufficient to make us happy cannot afford true satisfaction. But then we shall see God in all his excellences, the supreme object and end, the only felicity of the soul. How will the sight of his glory, personally shining in our Redeemer, in the first moment quench our extreme thirst, and fill us with joy and admiration! It is not as the naked conception of treasures, that only makes rich in ideas; but that divine sight gives a real interest in him.

<sup>1</sup> Ut cum istud quicquid est de quo disputatis percepero, moriar.—VAL. MAX.



The angels are so ravished with the beauties and wonders of his face that they never divert a moment from the contemplation of it.

[2.] 'The pure love of the saints to God is then fully satisfied. Love, considered as an affection of friendship, is always attended with two desires—to be assured of reciprocal love, and to enjoy the conversation of the person beloved, the testimony of his esteem and good-will. This kind of affection<sup>1</sup> seems to be inconsistent with that infinite distance that is between God and the creature. But though it is disproportionable to the divine majesty, it is proportionable to his goodness. Accordingly our Saviour promises, 'He that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.' And to confirm our belief of this astonishing condescension, repeats it, 'If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.' In the present state, the signs of God's special favour are exhibited to his friends. Now he bestows on them the honour of being his sons, the graces and comforts of his Spirit, the precious earnest of his love, and 'seal of their redemption.' But in eminency of degrees, the effects of his love are incomparably more glorious in heaven. Here the saints are adopted, there crowned. There he opens all the bright treasure of his wisdom, the riches of his goodness, the beauties of his holiness, the glories of his power, and by the intimate application of his presence, makes his love most sensible to them. Oh the mutual delights between God and glorified souls! God looks on them with an engaged eye, as his own by many dear titles, and is well-pleased in his own goodness to them, and ravished with the reflex of his own excellences shining in them: 'As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride' (it is the language of divine love), 'so their God rejoices over them.' And what a blessed rest do they find in the complete fruition of their beloved! All their desires quietly expire in his bosom. What triumphs of joy follow! Can we frame a fuller conception of happiness than to be perfectly loved by infinite goodness, and perfectly to love him?

The supreme joy of the saints is for the felicity and glory of God himself; for as the holy soul feels no more powerful motive to love God than because he is most worthy of it, as he is God, a being of infinite excellences, and therefore to be loved above the dearest persons and things, even itself, so the highest joy it partakes of is from this consideration, that God is infinitely blessed and glorious. For in this the supreme desire of love is accomplished, that the most beloved object is perfectly honoured and pleased. In heaven the love of the saints to God is in its highest perfection, and they see his glory in the most perfect manner, which causes a transcendent joy to them. And this is one reason why the saints, though shining with unequal degrees of glory, are equally content. For their most ardent love being set on God, that he is pleased to glorify himself by such various communications of his goodness, is full satisfaction to their desires. Besides, in those different degrees of glory every one is so content with his own<sup>2</sup> that there is no possible desire of being but what he is.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle.

<sup>2</sup> Sic itaque habebit donum aliud alio minus, ut hic quoque donum habeat ne velit amplius.—*Aug.*

4. The full joy of heaven shall continue without diminution or end.

First, The number of possessors cannot lessen it. The divine presence is an unwasted spring of pleasure, equally full and open to all, and abundantly sufficient to satisfy the immensity of their desires. Envy reigns in this world, because earthly things are so imperfect in their nature, and so peculiar in their possession, that they cannot suffice, nor be enjoyed by all. But in heaven none is touched with that low, base passion; for God contains all that is precious and desirable in the highest degrees of perfection, and all partake of the influence of his universal goodness without intercepting one another. In the kingdom above there is no cause for the elder brother to repine at the Father's bounty to the younger, nor for the younger to supplant the elder to obtain the birthright. The heirs of God are all raised to sovereign glory. Every one enjoys him as entirely and fully as if solely his felicity. God is a good, as indivisible as infinite, and not diminished by the most liberal communications of himself. We may illustrate this by comparing the price of our redemption and the reward. The death of Christ is an universal benefit to all the saints, yet it is so applied to every believer for his perfect redemption, as if our Saviour in all his agonies and sufferings had no other in his eye and heart; as if all his prayers, his tears, his blood, were offered up to his Father only for that person. The common respect of it the apostle declares in those admirable words, that signify such an excess of God's love to us, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' But to imagine that<sup>1</sup> the propriety of every believer is thereby prejudiced, is not only false, but extremely injurious to the merit and dignity, and to the infinite love of Christ. Therefore the same apostle tells us, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;' as if he were the sole object of Christ's love, the end and reward of his sufferings. And this appropriating of it to himself is no prejudice to the rights of all others. St John describes himself by that truly glorious title, 'The disciple whom Jesus loved.' Could he speak this of himself without the injury and indignation of the other disciples? Certainly he might; for if we consider that incomprehensible love of Christ, expressed to them all at his last supper, after Judas was gone forth, 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,' we may easily understand that every one of them might justly believe that he was singularly beloved of Christ. They were all received in the heart, though (with John) they did not all lean on the breast of their divine master. Thus in heaven God is the universal treasure of all the saints, and the peculiar portion of every one. <sup>2</sup>As by his essence he equally fills the whole world, and every part of it, and by his providence equally regards all and every particular creature; so in heaven he dispenses the riches of his love to all, that they cannot desire more, if every one of them were (if

<sup>1</sup> Et totum se dedit universis et totum singulis. Ac per hoc quicquid passione sua Salvator præstitit, sicut totum ei debent universi, sic singuli; nisi quod prope hoc plus singuli quam universi, quod totum acceperunt singuli quantum universi.—SALVIAN.

<sup>2</sup> Si audiat multitudo silens, non inter se particulatim comminunt sonos, tanquam cibos: sed omne quod sonat et omnibus totum est et singulis totum.—AUGUST. in Epist. ad Volusian.

I may so express it) the only-begotten of the Only-begotten himself, the sole heir of all the merits of his Son. Every saint may, with the inflamed spouse, break forth in that triumph of love, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Nay, the great number of the glorified saints is so far from lessening their joy, that it unspeakably increases it: 'The innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly of the church of the First-born,' next to the happiness of enjoying God, are a chief part of heaven. An unfeigned ardent affection unites that pure society. Our love is now kindled, either from a relation in nature, or some visible excellences that render a person worthy of our choice and friendship; but in heaven the reasons are greater, and the degrees of love incomparably more fervent. All carnal alliances and respects cease in that supernatural state. The apostle tells us, 'If I have known Christ after the flesh, I know him so no more.' By the resurrection and ascension of Christ he was transported into another world, and had communion with him as an heavenly king, without low regards to the temporal privilege of conversing with him on earth. The spiritual relation is more near and permanent than the strictest band of nature. The saints have all relation to the same heavenly Father, and to Jesus Christ the Prince of peace, and head of that happy fraternity. The principal motive of love here is for the inherent excellences of a person. Wisdom, goodness, holiness, are mighty attractives, and produce a more worthy affection, a more intimate confederacy of souls, than propinquity in nature. David declares that 'all his delight was in the excellent.' But there are allays of this noble love here. For—

[1.] There are relics of frailty in the best men on earth, some blemishes that render them less amiable when discovered. Here their graces are mixed infirmities, and but ascending to glory. Accordingly our love to them must be regular and serene; not clouded with error, mistaking defects for amiable qualities. But in heaven the image of God is complete, by the union of all the glorious virtues requisite to its perfection. Every saint there exactly agrees with the first exemplar, is transformed according to the primitive beauty of holiness. No spot or wrinkle remains, or any such thing, that may cast the least aspect of deformity upon them.

[2.] In the present state, the least part of the saint's worth is visible; as the earth is fruitful in plants and flowers, but its riches are in the mines of precious metals, the veins of marble hidden in its bosom. True grace appears in sensible actions, but its glory is within. The sincerity of aims, the purity of affections, the impresses of the Spirit on the heart, the interior beauties of holiness, are only seen by God. Besides, such is the humility of eminent saints, that the more they abound in spiritual treasures, the less they show; as the heavenly bodies, when in nearest conjunction with the sun, and fullest of light, make the least appearance to our sight. But all their excellences shall then be in view: 'The glory of God shall be revealed in them.' And how attractive is the divine likeness to an holy eye! How will it ravish the saints to behold an immortal loveliness shining in one another! Their love is mutual and reflexive, proportionable to the cause of it. An equal, constant flame is preserved by pure materials.

Every one is perfectly amiable, and perfectly enamoured with all. Now can we frame a fuller conception of happiness than such a state of love, wherein whatever is pleasant in friendship is in perfection, and whatever is distasteful by men's folly and weakness is abolished. The psalmist breaks out in a rapture, 'Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Love is the beauty and strength of societies, the pleasure of life. How excellent is the joy of the blessed, when the prayer of Christ shall be accomplished, that they all may be one! 'As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' God is absolutely one in his glorious nature and will, and therefore unalterably happy; and their inviolable union in love is a ray of the essential unity between the sacred persons. There are no divisions of heart and tongues, as in this Babel, but the most perfect and sweetest concord, an eternal agreement in tempers and inclinations. There are no envious comparisons; for love, that affectively transforms one into another, causes the glory of every saint to redound to the joy of all. Every one takes his share in the felicity of all, and adds to it. Such is the power of that celestial fire wherein they all burn, that it melts, and mixes souls in such an entire union, that, by complaisance and an intimate joy, the blessedness of all is, as it were, proper to every one; as if every one were placed in the hearts of all, and all in the heart of every one. If in the church of the first-born christians, in the earthly Jerusalem, the band of charity was so strict that it is said, 'the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul;' how much more intimate and inseparable is the union of the saints in Jerusalem above, where every one loves another as himself!

It is recorded of Alexander, that entering with Hephæstion, his favourite, into the pavilion of Darius' mother, then his prisoner, she bowed to the favourite, as having a greater appearance of majesty, thinking him to be Alexander; but advised of her error, she humbly begged his pardon; to whom the generous king replied,<sup>1</sup> 'You did not err, mother, for this is also Alexander.' Such was their affection, that whoever was taken of them, the other was taken in him; the less ascending in the greater, without degrading the greater in the less. This is a copy of the holy love of the blessed; but with the same difference as between the description of a star with a coal and its beauty in its proper aspect. And where all is love, all is delight. Oh, how do they enjoy and triumph in the happiness of one another! With what an unimaginable tenderness do they embrace! What reciprocations of endearments are between them! Oh their ravishing conversation and sweet intercourse! for their presence together in heaven is not a silent show. In the transfiguration Moses and Elias talked with Christ. With what excellent discourses do they entertain one another! If David felt such inward pleasure from the sense of God's favours that he could not restrain the expression of it, but invites the saints, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul;' certainly in heaven, the blessed with overflowing affections recount the divine benefits, the admirable methods

<sup>1</sup> Non errasti, mater, nam hic Alexander est.—CURT. l. 3.

whereby the life of grace was begun, preserved, and carried on in the midst of temptations; the continual succession of mercies in the time of their hopes, and the consummation of all in the time of their enjoyment. How joyfully do they concur in their thanksgivings to God for the goodness of creation, in making them reasonable creatures, capable to know, love, and enjoy him when they might have been of the lowest order in the whole sphere of beings; for his compassionate care and providence over them in this world. But especially for his sovereign mercy in electing them to be vessels of honour; for his powerful grace in rescuing them from the cruel and ignominious bondage of sin; for his most free love, that justified them from all their guilt by the death of his only Son, and glorified them with himself. They are never weary in this delightful exercise, but continually bless him for his mercy that endures for ever. We may judge by the saints here, when they are in a fit disposition to praise God, what fervours they feel in their united praises of him in heaven. The psalmist in an ecstasy calls to all the parts of the world to join with him: 'The Lord reigns, let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad: let the sea roar, let the fields be joyful, and all that dwell therein.' He desires that nature should be elevated above itself, that the dead parts be inspired with life, the insensible feel motions of joy, and those that want a voice break forth in praises to adorn the divine triumph. With what life and alacrity will the saints in their blessed communion celebrate the object of their love and praises! The seraphims about the throne cried to one another, to express their zeal and joy in celebrating his eternal purity and power, and the glory of his goodness. Oh the unspeakable pleasure of this concert, when every soul is harmonious, and contributes his part to the full music of heaven! Oh, could we hear but some echo of those songs wherewith the heaven of heavens resounds, some remains of those voices wherewith the saints above triumph in the praises, in the solemn adoration of the King of spirits, how would it inflame our desires to be joined with them! 'Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee.'

[3.] The fulness of joy in heaven is undecaying, for the causes of it are always equal; and those are, the beatific object revealed, and the uninterrupted contemplation of it.

Whilst we are here below, the sun of righteousness, as to our perception and sense, has ascensions and declinations, accesses and recesses; and our earth is not so purified but some vapours arise that intercept his cheerful, refreshing light. From hence there are alternate successions of spiritual comforts and sorrows, of doubts and filial confidence in the saints. It is a rare favour of heaven when an humble believer in his whole course is so circumspect as not to provoke God to appear displeased against him; when a christian (as those tutelar angels spoken of in the gospel) always beholds the face of his heavenly Father, and converses with him with an holy liberty. And what a torment the hiding of God's face is to a deserted soul, only they know who feel it. External troubles are many times attended with more consolations to the spirit than afflictions to sense; but to love God with a transcendent affection, and to fear he is our enemy, no punishment exceeds or is equal to it. As his loving-kindness in their esteem

is better than life, so his displeasure is worse than death. How do they wrestle with God by prayers and tears, and offer, as it were, a holy violence to the king of heaven, to recover their first serenity of mind, the lost peace of heart! How passionately do they cry out, with Job in the book of his patience, Job xxix. 2-4 'Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me: when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness: as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.' And sometimes God delays the revealing himself even to his dearest children; not that he does not see their necessities and hear their prayers, or is so hard that till their extremities he is not moved with compassion, but for wise and holy reasons; either that they may not return to folly, if by any presumptuous sin they forfeited their peace; or if they have been careful to please him, yet he may deprive them of spiritual comforts for a time, to keep them humble, and that with an obedient resignation to his sovereign pleasure they may wait for his reviving presence. And then joy returns greater than before. For thus God usually renders with interest what he suspended only for trial. But the saints above are for ever enlightened with the vital splendour and dear regards of his countenance, always enjoy his beamy smiles. A continual effusion of glory illustrates heaven and all its blessed inhabitants.

And their contemplation of God is fixed. If the object, though extraordinary glorious, were transient, or the eye so weak that it could only see it but by glances, the height of joy would not be perpetual; but the mind is prepared with supernatural vigour to see the brightness of God's face, and by the most attentive application always converses with that blessed object, so that the joy of heaven is never intermitted for a moment. They always see, and love, and rejoice, and praise him.

It is possible a carnal suspicion may arise in some, as if the uniform perpetual vision of the same glory might lose its perfect delightfulness; for those who seek for happiness in the vanity of the creatures are always desirous of change, and have their judgments so corrupted, that while they languish with a secret desire after an unchangeable good, yet they conceive no good as desirable that is not changed.

But to correct this gross error of fancy, let us a little inquire into the causes of dissatisfaction, that make the constant fruition of the same thing here to be tedious.

(1.) Sensible things are of such a limited goodness, that not any of them can supply all our present wants, so that it is necessary to leave one for another. And the most of them are remedies of our diseased appetites, and, if not temperately used, are destructive evils. Eating and drinking are to extinguish hunger and thirst, but continued beyond just measure become nauseous.

Besides the insufficiency of their objects, the senses themselves cannot be satisfied all at once. The ear cannot attend to delightful sounds, and the eye cannot be intent on beautiful colours at the same time. The satisfaction of one sense defeats another of enjoying its proper good; therefore the same object is not constantly pleasant, but the heart is distempered from as many causes as there are desires unaccomplished.

Add further, all things under the sun afford only a superficial delight, and miserably deceive the expectations raised of them; and many times there is a mixture of some evil in them that is more offensive than the good is delightful. The honey is attended with a sting, so that often those things we sigh after through vehement desire, when they are obtained, we sigh for grief. Now all these causes of dissatisfaction cease in heaven; for<sup>1</sup> God is an infinite good, and whatever is truly desirable and precious is in him in all degrees of perfection. And in his presence all the powers of the soul are drawn out in their most pleasant exercise, and always enjoy their entire happiness. The fruition of him exceeds our most raised hopes, as much as he is more glorious in himself than in any borrowed representations. God will be to us incomparably above what we can ask or think. The compass of our thoughts, the depth of our desires, are imperfect measures of his perfections. As he is a pure good in himself, so he is prevalent over all evil. It is evident, therefore, that nothing can allay the joys of saints when they are in God's presence.

(2.) Novelty is not requisite to ingratiate every good, and make it perfectly delightful. <sup>2</sup>God is infinitely happy, to whom no good was ever new. It is indeed the sauce that gives a delicious taste to inferior things; for men relish only what is eminent, and the good things of this world are so truly mean, that they are fain to borrow a show of greatness by comparison with a worse estate preceding. But an infinite good produces always the same pure, equal, complete joy, because it arises from its intrinsic perfection, that wants no foil to commend it. The psalmist breaks forth, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' This is no vanishing rapture, but a constant joyful height of affection. God, the essential happiness of the saints, is always perfectly lovely and delightfully to them.

(3.) The glorified saints, in every period of their happy state, have as lively a perception of it as in the beginning. To make this evident, we must consider that the pleasure of novelty springs from a quick sense of the opposite terms between our condition in the want of some desired good and after our obtaining it. Now the mind is more intense on the advantage, and more strongly affected at first. One newly freed from the torments of a sharp disease feels a greater pleasure than from a constant tenor of health. Those who are raised from a low state to an eminent dignity are transported with their first change; but in tract of time the remembrance of their mean condition is so weakened and spent, that it is like the shadow of a dream, and proportionably their joy is lessened. Honours, like perfumes, by custom are less sensible to those that carry them. But the saints above always consider and feel the excellent difference between their suffering and triumphant state. They never lose that ravishing part of felicity, the vivid sense of past evils. Their reflections are always as strong on the misery from whence

<sup>1</sup> Vitæ nos tædium tenet, timor mortis natat omne consilium, nec implere nos ulla felicitas potest. Causa autem est, quod non pervenimus ad illud bonum immensum et insuperabile, ubi necesse est consistat nobis voluntas nostra, quia ultra summum non est locus.—SEN. Ep. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Εὐὴ ἡ φύσις ἀπλή ἐστὶν ἢ αὐτὴ πράξις ἡδίστη ἐστὶν. Λιὸ ὁ Θεὸς αἰεὶ μίαν καὶ ἀπλήν χαίρει ἡδονῆν.—ARIST. ETH. lib. vii. c. ult.



they were raised to the pitch of happiness as in their first glorious translation. In what an ecstasy of wonder and pleasure will they be, from the fresh memory of what they were, and the joyful sense of what they are! I was (says the admiring soul) poor, blind, and naked; but, O miraculous and happy alteration! I am full of light, enriched with the treasures of heaven, adorned with divine glory. I was under the tyrannous power of Satan, but he is bruised under my feet. I was sentenced to an everlasting separation from the presence of God, my only life and joy; but now am possessed of my supreme good. Oh, how transporting is the comparison of these wide and contrary extremes! How beautiful and pleasant is the day of eternity after such a dark, tempestuous night! How does the remembrance of such evils produce a more lively and feeling fruition of such happiness! How strangely and mightily does salvation with eternal glory affect the soul! This gives a sprightly accent to their everlasting hallelujahs. This preserves an affectionate heat in their thanksgiving to their victorious deliverer. And thus their happiness is always the same, and always new. Their pleasure is continued in its perfection.

Lastly, The blessedness of the saints is without end; this makes heaven to be itself. There is no satiety of the present, no solicitude for the future. Were there a possibility or the least suspicion of losing that happy state, it would cast an aspersion of bitterness upon all their delights; they could not enjoy one moment's repose. But the more excellent their happiness is, the more stinging would their fear be of parting with it. But 'the inheritance reserved in heaven is immortal, undefiled, and fades not away;' and the tenure of their possession is infinitely firm by the divine power, the true support of their everlasting duration: 'With God is the fountain of life.' They enjoy a better immortality than the tree of life could have preserved in Adam. The revolutions of the heavens and ages are under their feet, and cannot in the least alter or determine their happiness. After the passing of millions of years, still an entire eternity remains of their enjoying God. O most desirable state! where blessedness and eternity are inseparably united. O joyful harmony! when the full chorus of heaven shall sing, 'This God is our God for ever and ever.' This adds an infinite weight to their glory. This redoubles their unspeakable joys with infinite sweetness and security. They repose themselves in the complete fruition of their happiness. God reigns in the saints, and they live in him for ever.

From what has been discoursed we should—

I. Consider the woful folly of men in refusing such an happiness, that, by the admirable favour of God, is offered to their choice. Can there be an expectation or desire or capacity in man of enjoying an happiness beyond what is infinite and eternal? O blind and wretched world! so careless of everlasting felicity! Who can behold without compassion and indignation men vainly seeking for happiness where it is not to be found, and after innumerable disappointments, fly to an impossibility, and neglect their sovereign and final blessedness? Astonishing madness, that God and heaven should be despised in comparison of painted trifles! This adds the greatest contumely to their impiety. What powerful charm obstructs their true judging of things?



What spirit of error possesses them? Alas! eternal 'things are unseen,' not of conspicuous moment, and therefore in the carnal balance are esteemed light against temporal things present to the sense: 'It does not appear what we shall be.' The veil of the visible heavens covers the sanctuary, where Jesus, our high priest, is entered, and stops the inquiring eye.

But have we not assurance by the most infallible principles of faith that the Son of God came down from heaven to live with us and die for us, and that he rose again to confirm our belief in his 'exceeding great and precious promises' concerning this happiness in the future state? And do not the most evident principles of reason and universal experience prove that this world cannot afford true happiness to us? How wretchedly do we forfeit the prerogative of the reasonable nature by neglecting our last and blessed end! If the mind be darkened that it does not see the amiable excellences of God, and the will so depraved that it does not feel their ravishing power, the man ceases to be a man, and becomes like the beasts that perish; as a blind eye is no longer an eye, being absolutely useless to that end for which it was made. And though in this present state men are stupid and unconcerned, yet hereafter their misery will awaken them, discover what is that supreme good wherein their perfection and felicity consists. When their folly shall be exposed before God, angels, and saints, in what extreme confusion will they appear before that glorious and immense theatre! Our Saviour told the unbelieving Jews, 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves turned out.' They shall be tortured with the desire of happiness without possible satisfaction. It is most just that those who err without excuse should repent without remedy.

2. Let us be excited seriously to apply ourselves in the use of effectual means for the obtaining this happiness. Indeed the original cause of it is the pure, rich mercy of God; the meritorious is the most precious obedience of our Saviour, by whom we obtain plenteous redemption. His abasement is the cause of our exaltation. The wounds he received in his body, the character of ignominy, and footsteps of death, are the fountains of our glory: 'Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' But the gospel declares, 'that without holiness no man shall see God.' An holy change of our natures, and perseverance in the course of universal obedience, are indispensably requisite in order to our obtaining heaven: 'Those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall partake of eternal life.' Now, were there no other reason of this constitution but the sovereign will of God, it were sufficient. But the foundation of it is laid in the nature of the things themselves. Therefore our Saviour does not simply declare that an unregenerate person shall not see the kingdom of God, but with the greatest emphasis, *cannot*, to signify an absolute impossibility of it. Beside the legal bar that excludes unsanctified persons from the beatific vision of God, there is a moral incapacity. Suppose that justice should allow omnipotence to translate such a sinner to heaven, would the place make him happy? Can two incongruous natures

delight in one another? The happiness of sense is by an impression of pleasure from a suitable object. The happiness of intellectual beings arises from an entire conformity of dispositions. So that unless God recede from his holiness, which is absolutely impossible, or man be purified and changed into his likeness, there can be no sweet communion between them. Our Saviour assigns this reason of the necessity of regeneration in order to our admission into heaven: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' According to the quality of the principle, such is what proceeds from it. The flesh is a corrupt principle, and accordingly the natural man is wholly carnal in his propensions, operations, and end. The disease is turned into his constitution. He is dead to the spiritual life, to the actions and enjoyments that are proper to it. Nay, there is in him a surviving principle of enmity to that life; not only a mortal coldness to God, but a stiff aversion from him, a perpetual resistance and impatience of the divine presence that would disturb his voluptuous enjoyments. The exercises of heaven would be as the torments of hell to him, while in the midst of those pure joys his inward inclinations vehemently run into the lowest lees of sensuality. And therefore till this contrariety, so deep and predominant in an unholy person, be removed, it is utterly impossible he should enjoy God with satisfaction. Holiness alone prepares men for the possession of celestial happiness that is against the corruption and above the perfection of mere nature.

'Let us then, having such a joy set before us, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Methinks the sight of worldly men, so active and vigilant to prosecute their low designs, should quicken us to seek with the greater diligence and alacrity 'the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof.' A carnal wretch, urged by the sting of a brutish desire, with what impatience does he pursue 'the pleasure of sin, which is but for a season!' An ambitious person, with what an intemperate height of passion does he chase a feather! A covetous man, how greedily does he prosecute the advantages of the present world that pass away, and the lusts thereof! Ah! how do they upbraid our indifferent desires, or dull delays, and cold endeavours, when such an high prize is set before us! Who is able to conceive the excess of pleasure the soul feels when it first enters through the beautiful gate of paradise, and sees before it that incomprehensible glory, and hears a voice from him that sits upon the throne, 'Enter into thy Master's joy,' for ever to be happy with him? The serious belief of this will draw forth all our active powers in the service of God. The feeding by lively thoughts on this supernatural food will add new vigour and lustre to our graces, and make our victory easy over the world. If we believe indeed that our bodies shall be spiritual, and our souls divine in their perfections, it will make us resolute to subdue the rebel flesh and rescue the captivated spirit from all entanglements of iniquity: 'Having the promise of such an excellent reward, let us always abound in the work of the Lord.'

3. The lively hope of this blessedness is powerful to support us under the greatest troubles can befall us in this our mortal condition.

Here we are tossed upon the alternate waves of time, but hereafter we shall arrive at the port, the blessed bosom of our Saviour, and enjoy a peaceful calm: 'And so we shall ever be with the Lord.' Words of infinite sweetness! This is the song of our prosperity and charm of our adversity: 'We shall ever be with the Lord.' Well might the apostle add immediately after, 'Therefore comfort one another with these words.'

More particularly, they are a lenitive to moderate our sorrows upon the departure of our dearest friends who die in the Lord; for they ascend from this valley of tears to the happy land of the living. What father is so deserted of reason as to bear impatiently the parting with his son, that goes over a narrow part of the sea to a rich and pleasant country, and receives the investiture and peaceable possession of a kingdom? Nay, by how much the stronger his love is, so much the more transporting is his joy; especially if he expects shortly to be with him, to see him on the throne, in the state of a king, and to partake of his happiness. If, then, it be impossible to nature to be grieved at the felicity of one that is loved, according to what principle of nature or faith do believers so uncomfortably lament the death of friends, of whom they have assurance that, after their leaving our earth, they enter into an everlasting kingdom, to receive a crown of glory from Christ himself? Our Saviour tells the disciples, 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said I go to my Father,' to sit down at his right hand in majesty. A pure affection directly terminates in the happiness and exaltation of the person that is loved. I am not speaking against the exercise of tender affections on the loss of our dear friends, and the pensive feeling of God's hand in it, which is a natural and necessary duty. There is a great difference between stupidity and patience; but violent passion or unremitting sorrow is most unbecoming the blessed hope assured to us in the gospel.

Chrysostom, treating of this argument, and reflecting upon the custom of those times, wherein at funeral solemnities a train of mourning women attended the corpse, tearing their hair and face, and crying out with all the expressions of desperate sorrow, breaks forth, 'Ah, christian faith and religion! that was triumphant over thine enemies in so many battles and victories by the blood and death of the martyrs, how art thou contradicted by the practice of these who profess thee in words! Is this not to be sorrowful as those that have no hope? Are these the affections, the expressions of one that believes the blessedness of immortal life? What will the heathens say? How will they be induced to believe the promises of Christ to his servants of a glorious kingdom, when those who are so in title, behave themselves as if they had no steadfast faith in them?'

4. The hopes of this blessed state is able to free us from the fear of death. This last enemy gives a hot alarm to mankind, both as it deprives them of all that is pleasant here, and for the terrible consequences that attend it. To the eye of sense, a dead body is a spectacle of fearful appearance. He that a little before heard and discoursed, and with a cheerful air conversed and enjoyed the world, now is dead, and all his senses in him; the eyes are dead to light, and the ears to sounds, the tongue to words, the heart to feel any affections, and the

countenance to discover them ; nothing remains but silence, horror, and corruption. Besides, 'after death comes judgment,' and a state of unrelenting torments to the wicked. But a true believer, that has been obedient to his Saviour, sees things by another light than that of sense, and has living hopes in his dying agonies. He knows that death to the saints is but a sleep ; and while the body rests in the grave, the soul is, as it were, all act, continually exercising its most noble faculties on the best objects. Does the soul sleep in that all-enlightened world, that sees with open face the infinite beauty of God ? that hears and bears a part in the hymns of the angels and saints encircling his throne ? that drinks of the rivers of pleasure that flow from his presence ? that freely and joyfully converses with all the celestial courtiers, the princes of that kingdom, the favourites of God ? Then it truly lives. This reconciles death to a christian, who has nothing more in his wishes than to be with Christ, and knows that diseases and pains, the forerunners of it, are but as breaking down the walls of this earthly dark prison, that the soul may take its flight to the happy region, and for ever enjoy the liberty of the sons of God. And for his body, that shall be reunited to the soul in glory. Methinks God speaks to a dying believer as he did to Jacob when he was to descend to Egypt, 'Fear not to go down into the grave ; I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again.' The same almighty voice that gave being to the world shall awake those who sleep in the dust, and reform them according to the example of Christ's glorified body. Oh, how should we long for that triumphant day, and with most ardent aspirings pray, 'Thy kingdom come in its full power and glory ?'

I shall now come to speak of the mournful subject, the cause of my appearing here at this time, the deceased reverend and excellent divine, Dr Thomas Manton, a name worthy of precious and eternal memory. And I shall consider him both in the quality of his office, as he was an ambassador of Christ, declaring his mind and representing his authority, and in the holiness of his person, showing forth the graces and virtues of his divine Master.

God had furnished him with a rare union of those parts that are requisite to form an excellent minister of his word. A clear judgment, rich fancy, strong memory, and happy elocution met in him, and were excellently improved by his diligent study.

The preaching of the word is the principal part of the minister's duty, most essential to his calling, and most necessary to the church. For this end chiefly the several orders in the ministerial office were instituted (Eph. iv.) ; and upon our Saviour's triumphant ascent and reception into heaven, an abundant effusion of the Spirit in graces and abilities descended upon men. Now, in the performing this work he was of that conspicuous eminence that none could detract from him but from ignorance or envy.

He was endowed with extraordinary knowledge in the scriptures, those holy oracles from whence all spiritual light is derived ; and in his preaching gave such a perspicuous account of the order and dependence of divine truths, and with that felicity applied the scriptures to confirm them, that every subject by his management was cultivated

and improved. His discourses were so clear and convincing, that none, without offering voluntary violence to conscience, could resist their evidence. And from hence they were effectual, not only to inspire a sudden shame, and raise a short commotion in the affections, but to make a lasting change in the life. For in the human soul, such is the composition of its faculties, that till the understanding be rectified in its apprehensions and estimations, the will is never induced to make an entire, firm choice of what is necessary for the obtaining perfect happiness. A sincere, persevering conversion is effected by weighty reasons, that sink and settle in the heart.

His doctrine was uncorrupt and pure, 'The truth according to godliness.' He was far from a guilty, vile intention to prostitute that sacred ordinance for the acquiring any private secular advantage. Neither did he entertain his hearers with impertinent subtleties, empty notions, intricate disputes, dry and barren without productive virtue; but as one that always had before his eyes the great end of the ministry, the glory of God and the salvation of men, his sermons were directed to open their eyes, that they might see their wretched condition as sinners, to hasten their flight from the wrath to come, to make them humbly, thankfully, and entirely receive Christ as their prince and all-sufficient saviour, and to 'build up the converted in their most holy faith, and more excellent love,' that is 'the fulfilling of the law.' In short, to make true christians eminent in knowledge and universal obedience.

As the matter of his sermons was designed for the good of souls, so his way of expression was proper to that end. Words are the vehicle of the heavenly light. As the divine wisdom was incarnate to reveal the eternal counsels of God to the world, so spiritual wisdom in the mind must be clothed with words to make it sensible to others. And in this he had a singular talent. His style was not exquisitely studied, not consisting of harmonious periods, but far distant from vulgar meanness. His expression was natural and free, clear and eloquent, quick and powerful, without any spice of folly, and always suitable to the simplicity and majesty of divine truths. His sermons afforded substantial food with delight, so that a fastidious mind could not disrelish them. He abhorred a vain ostentation of wit in handling sacred things, so venerable and grave, and of eternal consequence. Indeed, what is more unbecoming a minister of Christ than to waste the spirits of his brain, as a spider does his bowels, to spin a web only to catch flies, to get vain applause by foolishly pleasing the ignorant? And what cruelty is it to the souls of men! It is recorded as an instance of Nero's savage temper (Suetonius), that in a general famine, when many perished by hunger, he ordered a ship should come from Egypt (the granary of Italy) laden with sand for the use of wrestlers. In such extremity to provide only for delight, that there might be spectacles on the theatre, when the city of Rome was a spectacle of such misery as to melt the heart of any but a Nero, was most barbarous cruelty. But it is cruelty of a heavier imputation for a minister to prepare his sermons to please the foolish curiosity of fancy with flashy conceits; nay, such light vanities that would scarce be endured in a scene, whiles hungry souls languish for want of solid nourishment.

His fervour and earnestness in preaching was such as might soften and make pliant the most stubborn, obdurate spirits. I am not speaking of one whose talent was only in voice, that labours in the pulpit as if the end of preaching were for the exercise of the body, and not for the profit of souls;<sup>1</sup> but this man of God was inflamed with an holy zeal, and from thence such ardent expressions broke forth as were capable to procure attention and consent in his hearers. He spake as one that had a living faith within him of divine truths. From this union of zeal with his knowledge he was excellently qualified to convince and convert souls. The sound of words only strikes the ear, but the mind reasons with the mind, and the heart speaks to the heart.

His unparalleled assiduity in preaching declared him very sensible of those dear and strong obligations that lie upon ministers to be very diligent in that blessed work. What a powerful motive our Saviour urged upon St Peter! John xxi. 'As thou lovest me, feed my sheep, feed my lambs.' And can any feed too much when none can love enough? Can any pains be sufficient for the salvation of souls, for which the Son of God did not esteem his blood too costly a price? Is not incessant, unwearied industry requisite to advance the work of grace in them to perfection? In this the work of a minister has its peculiar disadvantage. That whereas an artificer, how curious and difficult soever his work be, yet has this encouragement, that what is begun with art and care he finds in the same state wherein it was left; a painter, that designs an exact piece, draws many lines, often touches it with his pencil to give it life and beauty, and though unfinished, it is not spoiled by his intermission; a sculptor, that carves a statue, though his labour be hard from the resistance of the matter, yet his work remains firm and durable; but the heart of man is of a strange temper, hard as marble, not easily receptive of heavenly impressions, yet fluid as water. Those impressions are easily defaced in it; it is exposed to so many temptations that induce an oblivion of eternal things, that without frequent excitations to quicken and confirm its holy purposes, it grows careless, and all the labour is lost that was spent on it. This faithful minister 'abounded in the work of the Lord;' and, which is truly admirable, though so frequent in preaching, yet was always superior to others, and equal to himself. In his last time, when declining to death, yet he would not leave his beloved work, the vigour of his mind supporting the weakness of his body. I remember when, oppressed with an obstinate hoarseness, a friend desiring him to spare himself, he rejected the advice with indignation.

He was no fomenter of faction, but studious of the public tranquillity. He knew what a blessing peace is, and wisely foresaw the pernicious consequences that attend divisions. By peace, the bond of mutual harmony, the weakest things are preserved and prosper; but where discord reigns, the strongest are near to ruin. The heavenly consent in the primitive church was a principal cause of its miraculous increase and flourishing; but after dissensions prevailed amongst christians, that was destroyed in a short time which was built by the divine union and heroic patience of the primitive christians, and the glorious begin-

<sup>1</sup> Si sudare aliter non potes, est aliud.

nings that promised the reformation of all Europe were more obstructed by the dissensions of some employed in that blessed work, than by all the power and subtlety, the arms and artifices of Rome itself. How afflictive is the consideration of our divided church! Sweet peace! whither art thou fled? Blessed Saviour! who didst by thy precious blood reconcile heaven and earth, sent down thy Spirit to inspire us with that wisdom that is pure and peaceable, that those who agree in the same principles of faith, in the same substantial parts of worship, in asserting the same indispensable necessity of holiness, may receive one another in love. I am affectionately engaged in a matter that so nearly touches all those that value the Protestant interest.

Briefly, Consider him as a christian; his life was answerable to his doctrine. It is applicable to some ministers, what is observed of the carbuncle, by its colour, lustre, and fiery sparklings, it seems to be actually a fire, but it has only the name and appearance of it. Thus some in the pulpit seem to be all on fire with zeal, yet their hearts are as cold as a stone, without holy affections, and their lives are unworthy their divine ministration. But this servant of God was like a fruitful tree, that produces in its branches what it contains in the root; his inward grace was made visible in a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ.

His resolute contempt of the world secured him from being wrought on by those motives that tempt low spirits from their duty. He would not rashly throw himself into troubles, nor, *spretâ conscientia*, avoid them. His generous constancy of mind in resisting the current of popular humour declared his loyalty to his divine Master. His charity was eminent in procuring supplies for others when in mean circumstances himself. But he had great experience of God's fatherly provision, to which his filial confidence was correspondent.

His conversation in his family was holy and exemplary, every day instructing them from the scriptures in their duty.

I shall finish my character of him with observing his humility. He was deeply affected with the sense of his frailties and unworthiness. He considered the infinite purity of God, the perfection of his law, the rule of our duty, and by that humbling light discovered his manifold defects. He expressed his thoughts to me a little before his death: If the holy prophets were under strong impressions of fear upon the extraordinary discovery of the divine presence, how shall we poor creatures appear before that holy and dread majesty? Isaiah, after his glorious vision of God, reflecting upon himself, as not retired from the commerce and corruption of the world, breaks forth, 'Woe is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' It is infinitely terrible to appear 'before God, the judge of all,' without the protection of 'the blood of the sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.' This alone relieved him, and supported his hopes. Though his labours were abundant, yet he knew that the work of God, passing through our hands, is so blemished, that, without an appeal to pardoning mercy and grace, we cannot stand in judgment. This was the subject of his last public sermon.



He languished many months, but presuming he should be too strong for his infirmity, neglected it, till at last it became insuperable and mortal. Many pathological aggravations heighten our great and dear loss; that such a faithful minister of Christ should be taken away, whose preaching was so powerful to repair the woful ruins of godliness and virtue in a degenerate age; whose prudent, pacific spirit rendered him so useful in these divided times, when professors of the same religion are alienated from one another, as if they had been baptized with the waters of strife; that before our tears had dried up for the loss of other worthy ministers, the fountain of sorrow should be opened again by this afflicting stroke. But it becomes us to receive the dispensations of heaven with humble and quiet submission, to reflect upon our sins with an holy grief, that provoke God to remove such an excellent instrument of his glory from us. Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth faithful labourers into it. Oh that surviving ministers might be animated with a zeal more pure and fervent in their divine work, and that people would be wise, while a price is put it into their hands to improve it for their eternal advantage! The neglected gospel will at last be a terrible witness against the disobedient, to justify and aggravate their condemnation.