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60.

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## The Faithful Minister, &c.

VI. 21.

But I have written unto you *all* my State, and how I do ;  
Tychicus shall declare unto you *all* Things, and a faithful Minister  
in the Lord.

**T**HIS is the Name, which the inspired Apostle Paul gave him, when he was sent by this Apostle to the Ephesians. Mention made of his Name, *Tychicus*, and by his Name, *Tychicus*, is added the endearing Epithet, *faithful*, which shews the Apostle's affection to him : And he is styled, *a faithful Minister in, or of the Lord*, which is a Title, in this Title is emphatically ascribed, to denote that *which God hath set upon his holy Hill of Zion, and hath given to the Church, and the universal King and Judge of the World*, this excellent Person was not only a Christian Brother, but also a Minister of the Lord CHRIST, which is a Name and Title of Office in the Christian Church : He seems to have been an Evangelist, or one employed in travelling with the Apostle, in spreading the Gospel in the unchristianized World, and in going on his Errands in the public Affairs of the Churches \* ; for the Ministry of the Evangelists was subordinate and subservient to that of the Apostles, by whom therefore they were directed in the Discharge of their Office. And to his sacred Character is added this honourable Epithet, *Faithful* ; He is stiled, *a faithful Minister of the Lord* ; and this is mentioned of him to his high and lasting Honour, and just Commendation : And this Commendation, the Apostle did not rashly or overhastily give him ; for we find, that having Occasion to mention him again in another Epistle, he uses the same Language, and applies to him the same honourable Character ; *All my State shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved Brother, and a faithful Minister, and Fellow-Servant in the Lord* †. So that this Honour he had, to be acknowledged by the inspired Apostle, *a faithful Minister of Christ* : Whence we may observe this Doctrine,

DOCT. That it is to a Man's true Honour, just and great Commendation to be a faithful Minister of the Lord JESUS CHRIST ; or to be truly faithful in the Discharge of the Gospel Ministry, and Performance of the Duties thereof, to be a faithful Minister of Christ, is a truly honourable Character.---This entitles a Man to true Honour, even that which comes from God only, who is the alone Fountain of all true Honour. Here I shall endeavour to shew,

I. WHAT

\* Col. iv. 7. Tit. iii. 12.

† Col. iv. 7.





of Motive, much less his primary Intention and last Design, to provide himself with earthly Accommodations, and get a Livelihood in the World; as, remembering the solemn Charge of the Apostle, *to take the Oversight of the Flock (or Church) of God, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind* \*. Neither may he be actuated herein from a View to his own Honour and Applause among Men: He must *not love the Praise of Men* †, or be desirous thereof ‡, nor seek Glory from them §; but the Honour that comes from God only ||: He must not be influenced by selfish, ambitious, and carnal Designs, or pursue worldly Gain, and vain Applause in the Discharge of his holy Office; but therein always have the Glory of God in Christ, and the spiritual Good and eternal Happiness of Men in his Heart. The Glory of God is the grand Design and last End of all Things, and in particular of the Gospel Ministry, which directly tends to advance and promote it, by recovering Men (naturally alienated from the *divine Life*) to the true Knowledge and Love of God, thro' Faith in Christ, and reducing them to a sincere Obedience to his revealed Will; and in *this Way* bringing them unto everlasting Salvation, and heavenly Happiness, wherein God will be eternally glorified by the brightest Display and fullest Manifestion of all his infinite and adorable Perfections: And with a pious View unto this great and holy End, the faithful Minister will attend to the whole Discharge of his Duty; then he will also have a religious and affectionate Regard unto the Honour and Interest of his great Lord; for the Advancement whereof the Gospel Ministry was instituted, and is well adapted: He will make his great Design to advance the Name, enlarge the Kingdom, and spread the Fame of Christ among Men, and more and more extend the blessed Empire of his Grace in the World; *To him to live is Christ*: And with sacred Solitude he will endeavour, *that Christ may be magnified* \*\* by him in the universal Discharge of his Duty: He will *not preach himself, but Christ the Lord* ††; and studiously endeavour to promote his Interest in the World; he will not seek his own Glory, but *the Glory of him that sent him* ‡‡, according to the Example of his holy Master. In a Word, a faithful Minister will perform every Part, and all the Duties of his sacred Function, with *this View*, that God may be thereby glorified thro' Jesus Christ §§. And in Subordination hereunto, he will seek and endeavour the spiritual Good and immortal Welfare of the Souls of Men. This is the next and immediate Design of the Gospel Ministry.---Christ sends his Ministers *to open Men's Eyes and turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are sanctified* |||. They are appointed (and, when it pleaseth God, by him used) to be Instruments of Men's Regeneration \*†, spiritual Edification ‡‡, and eternal Salvation ||‡, by the sacred Means of Gospel Ministrations; and therefore in performing them, Christ's faithful Ministers will have their Eye always fixed on this blessed and important Design of all their Ministerial Transactions, and Gospel Administrations.

3. Ministerial Fidelity requires, that the Servants of Christ take Heed to their Ministry to fulfil it, and discharge the various and many Parts and Duties of their Office, and not leave any of them unperformed §\*.

Various

\* 1 Pet. v. 3. † John xii. 43. ‡ Gal. v. 26. § 1 Thess. ii. 6. || John v. 44. \*\* Phil. i. 20, 21. †† 2 Cor. iv. 5. ‡‡ John vii. 18. §§ 1 Pet. iv. 11. ||| Acts xxvi. 18. \*† 1 Cor. vi. 15. Jam. i. 18. ‡‡ Ephe. iv. 12. ||‡ 1 Cor. i. 21. §\* Col. iv. 17.

Various and many are the Parts and Duties of the ministerial Work : It is indispensibly required, that Christ's Ministers attend diligently unto the publick Ministrations of the Gospel : It is no little Part of their Duty to preach the Gospel of Peace to the rebel Children of Men, *and in CHRIST's Name and Stead, as his Ambassadors, to beseech them to be reconciled to God, thro' the Death of his Son \**. They are solemnly charged *to preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and Doctrine †*. And hereunto they must attend with sedulous and faithful Diligence, as they would not be found and dealt with as idle Shepherds, unfaithful Stewards, and slothful Servants, by their great and holy Lord at his coming and Kingdom. And they are under the sacred Bonds of Office, as well as a divine and solemn Charge, *to give themselves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word ‡*. And herein they must study to approve themselves unto God, *Workmen that need not be ashamed, by rightly dividing the Word of Truth §, and giving unto every one of Christ's Household their Portion of Meat in due Season ||*. Christ's Ministers are Stewards in his House, and it is required of them to give unto every one therein, Provision suited to their respective Necessities, various Occasions and Exigencies ; and this is to be done by a skilful dispensing the divine Oracles, and rightly dividing the Word of Truth unto them. From the vast Stores of divine Truth in the holy Scriptures, a Portion thereof is to be distributed in the stewardly Dispensation of God's Word, to every one of Christ's Family, suitable to their various Conditions, and spiritual Circumstances. Herein greatly consists ministerial Skill and Fidelity. A dispensing the Word of Truth, in the Neglect hereof, without a proper distinguishing of Persons and Characters, Conditions and Cases, is shameful Management in preaching the Word of God ; And unto a Minister's rightly dividing the Word, and skilful dispensing divine Mysteries unto his People, is required some Acquaintance with, and a well-grounded Judgment concerning their spiritual Circumstances : For, should not a Shepherd endeavour to know the State of his Flock ? And how should Christ's Stewards give to every one of their Charge, a Portion accommodated to their various Cases and Exigencies, and warn and teach every one as their spiritual Circumstances require (agreeable to the Apostolic Example \*\*) without some Acquaintance with them ? or unless they are able to form a suitable Judgment concerning them, what their Attainments in Christian Knowledge are, whether they need *Milk or strong Meat ††* ; whether they are to be look'd upon as savingly converted to God, or as yet destitute of regenerating Grace ; what is their Proficiency or Declension in Religion ; and what are their Difficulties and Discouragements, in the Ways of God ? Hereunto is also necessary, a due Acquaintance with the usual Methods of the saving Operations of God's Spirit, on the Hearts of Men, in the happy Beginnings, and sacred Progress of the same, that the Dispensation of the Word may be suited to promote the blessed Design of God's Grace in its whole Work on the Souls of Men : Want of suitable Acquaintance with these and the like Things, will make Men unskilful, and therefore unfaithful, in preaching the Word, and dispensing the *Mysteries of God* unto the Children of Men.----It is moreover by Office incumbent on Christ's Stewards, to administer the sacramental Ordinances of the Gospel, explain and declare the holy Ends, Use, and Benefits

of

\* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. † 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. ‡ Acts vi. 4. § 2 Tim. ii. 15. || Luk. xii. 42, 43. \*\* Col. i. 28. †† Heb. v. 14.



of them, and endeavour the regular Dispensation of the *sacred Rites* of the Christian Institution, *Baptism, and the Lord's-Supper*, unto proper Subjects, and in that Manner which is prescribed in the Word of God.----It likewise belongs to them in the Discharge of their Office, to inspect, govern, and order Christ's Household, as well as to dispense the Word and Sacraments to them ; they are authorized to administer the spiritual Government and Gospel Discipline, which our Lord Redeemer has ordained to be exercised in his Church, and observed among professing Christians.----A Christian Church is a Society of a Nature distinct from all other Societies of Men, and hath a Government appointed for it in the Gospel, suitable to the spiritual Constitution thereof ; And the Dispensation of this sacred Discipline is committed by Christ to his Ministers : The Key of Government, as well as of Doctrine, is by him given unto them \* ; and they cannot be faithful in the Discharge of their Office, unless they carefully endeavour to execute all the Laws, Orders, Censures, and holy Appointments of Christ's House, according to his holy Will revealed in his Word.

4. It belongs to the Character of a Faithful Minister of Christ, *That he be furnished with such a Measure of divine Knowledge, and of ministerial Gifts and Abilities, as is necessary for the universal faithful Discharge of his Office ; His Mind must be richly stocked with scriptural Knowledge, and with such a Measure of Acquaintance with divine Truths, Gospel Mysteries, and Christian Doctrines revealed in God's Word, as bears a due Proportion to the Greatness and Difficulty of his Work ; and be accomplish'd with such Ability of imparting the same to others, as renders him apt to teach † ; which is required of those to whom the Gospel Ministry is to be committed.*

He that is employed in winning Souls to God, must be wise ‡ ; Divine Wisdom (or a due Knowledge of the Gospel) is necessary to direct him in his whole ministerial Duty and Conduct : The Want hereof is of pernicious Tendency. The wise Man observes, that *He that sendeth a Message by the Hand of a Fool, cutteth off the Feet, and drinketh Damage §* ; as was moit sadly exemplified in the Case of the Spies sent to view the Land of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 31, 32, 33. compared with the following Chapter. And if the Want of Wisdom in one employed about the common Affairs of this Life, be of such ill Consequence ; what will it be in a Messenger employed in the great Affairs of Christ's Kingdom and Interest in the World, and of the precious Souls of Men, who ought to be one of a Thousand || ! He that would approve himself faithful in the ministerial Work, before he enters upon it, must be in a superior Degree, *skilful in the Word of Righteousness*, and be furnished with suitable Attainments in Christian Knowledge, and considerable Acquaintance with the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God ; and he must use earnest Diligence to make good Proficiency therein ; and to this End, *give himself to Reading, Meditation, and Prayer, that his profiting may appear to all \*\**. He will incur the Guilt of horrid *Unfaithfulness* if he be slothful and negligent in his Studies : It requires much Study and painful Diligence to obtain such a Measure of divine Knowledge and ministerial Furniture, as is proportionable to the Greatness and Difficulty of his Work, which is such as would be equal to the Capacities of the bright Angels of Light, were they employed therein.----It is no small Measure of Knowledge and spiritual Endowments, that is sufficient

\* Matt. xvi. 19. † 2 Tim. ii. 2, and 24. 1 Tim. iii. 2, ‡ Prov. xi. 30.  
§ Prov. xxvi. 6. || Job xxxiii. 23. \*\* 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

ficient to qualify a Man for the right and faithful Discharge of the ministerial Office: He must not only have some Acquaintance with the learned Languages, and liberal Arts, (which will be useful to him in the Discharge of his Office) but also be richly furnish'd with Knowledge and Skill in Divinity: He must be well acquainted with the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, in their proper Order and Connexion, with the whole System of Gospel Doctrines, and Scheme and Design of the Christian Revelation, as exhibited to us in the divine Oracles; and have such a distinct clear View thereof, as may enable him to declare all the Council of God, and make known to Men the Gospel Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ; and instruct them in their whole Duty to God and Man: For he must hold fast, *and hold forth*, the *Form of sound Words in Faith and Love in Christ Jesus* \*. Neither may he be unacquainted with the Controversies which have so much troubled the Church of Christ, even from its early Ages; or be unskilful in defending the Truths of the Gospel; for he must be able by sound Doctrine both to exhort and convince Gain-sayers †. But especially and above all it is necessary, that he be well versed in textual Divinity, and *have the Word of Christ dwell in him richly in all Wisdom* ‡; that he be much acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and cultivate a sacred Familiarity with them; that his Sermons may be embellish'd with the Language of the inspired Writings, and with such Passages thereof as are proper to well-illustrate and confirm the Subjects of them, which is their real Beauty, true Excellency, and best Ornament; and is commended to us by Apostolic Example §, which is our Pattern. He must be furnished with such Knowledge of the divine Oracles, as may enable him to rightly expound and *give the true Sense of them* ||, and lead his Hearers into a due Understanding thereof: For he must endeavour to teach Men *all* whatsoever is revealed or commanded by Christ in his Word \*\*, and speak as *the Oracles of God* ††, and confirm his Doctrines *by the Law and the Testimony* ‡‡; and therefore it is especially the Duty of Christ's Ministers, *to give Attendance to reading the Word of God* §§, and *meditate therein Day and Night* |||; and *to daily search* §\*, and be abundantly conversant in the holy Scriptures, as knowing *they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, and not only able to make him wise for his own Salvation by Faith in Christ, but also thoroughly furnished unto all good Works belonging to his holy Office, and necessary unto the faithful Discharge thereof* †§. It does moreover, require no small Degree of holy Knowledge and divine Skill in a Christian Minister, to make personal, suitable, and reasonable Applications and Addresses to the People of his Charge in private, with respect to their spiritual Affairs and Interests; and to instruct, reprove, exhort, and comfort them as Occasion requires and Opportunity offers. And this may by no Means be neglected by those that would approve themselves faithful in their ministerial Duty: *You know* (saith the Apostle) *how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a Father doth his Children* ‡‡. And this Part of the ministerial Work when performed (in Imitation of the Apostle's Example) with parental Tenderneis, affectionate Gentleness, and Christian Meekness, is of happy Tendency to promote and carry on the holy Ends and great Design,

\* 2 Tim. i. 13. † Tit. i. 9. ‡ Col. iii. 16. § Acts ii. 16, to 35. Acts xiii. 33, and 40, 41. || Neh. viii. 8. \*\* Matt. xxviii. 20. †† 1 Pet. iv. 11. ‡‡ Isa. viii. 20. §§ 1 Tim. iv. 13. ||| Psal. i. 2. §\* Acts xvii. 11. †§ 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. ‡‡ 1 Thessa. ii. 11.



*Design of the Gospel Ministry*; neither can a Minister's Care for the spiritual Good of his People, *in the Sight of God* duly appear, in \* the Neglect of this Duty. And therefore how greatly to be lamented is the two frequent and common Neglect thereof. It does also require not a little spiritual Skill and *divine Learning*, to speak a Word in Season to those that are wary †, and deal wisely, safely, and faithfully with awakened and distressed Consciences; and to shun the dangerous Extremes of Soul-destroying Flattery on the one Hand, and a Soul-discouraging Severity on the other; both which every faithful Minister will endeavour carefully to avoid. In fine, a good Measure of spiritual Gifts and ministerial Abilities is necessary in Christ's Ministers, that they may be able to carry the Cases and Necessities of their People before the Throne of Grace, in proper and suitable Addresses to Heaven on their Behalf, both in public Worship, and on more private Occasions and Emergencies. From all which it is clearly evident, that no small Attainments in divine Knowledge and ministerial Gifts, are requisite to constitute and adorn the Character of a faithful Servant of CHRIST.

5. A faithful Minister of Christ will make it his great Design, earnest Care, and constant Endeavour to please his holy Lord and divine Master, in the Discharge of his Office, and whole ministerial Conduct.

He that is allowed of God to be put in Trust with the Gospel (and is faithful therein) will speak, preach and perform all Gospel Ministrations not as pleasing Men, but God, who trieth his Heart †. He will not seek to please Men, by accommodating his Ministry to their corrupt Dispositions; but by the Manifestation of the Truth, commend himself to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God §. He will not corrupt, or adulterate, the Word of God, disguise Truth, varnish over Errors, or endeavour to suit his Doctrines to the Lusts of Men, and preach smooth Things to them; but feed them with the sincere Milk of the Word, declare the Truth as it is in JESUS, and with sacred Sincerity speak as in the Sight of God ||. He will not neglect to preach and inculcate Gospel Truths and Duties, because they are distasteful to the erring Minds, and depraved Inclinations of his Hearers; nor conceal divine Truths, or abate from the Strictness of Gospel Commands to gain their Favour, or secure their Friendship; but endeavour to declare all the Council of God, and keep back nothing that is profitable for them \*\*. He will not flatter Men in their Sins and Unregeneracy with vain Hopes of Impunity and Safety, saying, Peace to them, when there is no Peace ††, but Danger of their sudden Destruction ††: But on the Contrary, will faithfully shew them their Sins and Liableness to Ruin §§, and warn them from the Word of God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear |||; that he may approve himself a faithful Watchman, and deliver his own Soul, even tho' obstinate Sinners die in their Iniquities †§. Briefly, a faithful Servant of Christ will, in the Discharge of his Office, acknowledge no Master on Earth, as knowing he hath one only Master in Heaven, even CHRIST THE LORD †||, to whom he must stand or fall in the great eternal Judgment: And in the constant Prospect hereof, by Faith; he will shew all good Fidelity in a form'd unshaken Purpose, and in earnest unfainting Endeavours to please his divine Master in all Things, by con-

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forming:

\* 2 Cor. vii. 12. † Isa. l. 4. †|| Thessa. ii. 4. § 2 Cor. iv. 2.  
 || 1 Pet. ii. 2. Eph. iv. 21. 2 Cor. ii. 17. \*\* Acts xx. 20. †† Eze. xiii.  
 10. †† 1 Thess. v. 3. §§ Isa. lviii. 1. ||| Eze. ii. 7. †§ Eze. iii. 17.  
 18, 19. †|| Matth. xxiii. 10.

forming all his ministerial Transactions and Conduct to the Will of Christ revealed in his Word ; without which he cannot justly expect the blessed Smiles of his high and heavenly Judge, nor to hear from his sacred Lips in the great reckoning Day, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant \** ; but to be disown'd and rejected by him with *Shame and everlasting Contempt*.

6. *Utmost Diligence, and constant Application, are necessary to the faithful Discharge of the ministerial Office and Work.*

The Station of Christ's Ministers is a Stage of Action ; various and many are the Duties thereof, and cannot be faithfully performed without greatest Activity, and unwearied Industry---With sacred Solemnity it is enjoined upon them by the inspired Apostle, to use utmost Diligence in *preaching the Word*. The Apostle *chargeth* Timothy to *preach the Word in Season and out of Season †* ; which seems to imply great Assiduity and Constancy. With no less Authority this is recommended to them by the sacred Examples of Christ and his Apostles. How diligent and unwearied our *Blessed Lord* was in preaching the Gospel of his Kingdom, appears from the sacred History thereof on divine Record : Herein he hath set his Ministers an Example, and they are bound to follow his Steps ; as we find his active and zealous Apostles did, *daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased not to teach and preach JESUS CHRIST ‡*. And how great and difficult is the Work of a Minister in this Part of it ? Herein he must endeavour clearly to open, well explain, and faithfully declare unto the People of his Charge, all the *great Articles* of the *Christian Faith*, and Duties of an holy, christian Life, and make due Application thereof to them, according to their various Conditions : He must endeavour to *inform and convince* the Ignorant and Erroneous, *awaken* the Secure, *rouse up* sleepy Consciences, *detect* Self-deceivers, *reprove* the Willful, *rebuke* the Obstinate, *warn* the Unruly, *comfort* the Feeble-minded, *support* the Weak § *encourage* the Fearful, *declare the Consolations of the Gospel* to Mourners in Zion ||, *confirm* the Wavering, *reduce* the Straying, and *exhort every one with all Long-suffering and Doctrine \*\**. We need not Wonder to find the Labours of Ministers compared in holy Scripture, to the Toils of Men in *Harvest ††*, and to the Fatigues of *Soldiers ‡‡*. Briefly : What a vast Variety, and great Abundance of Labour and Duty, are to be performed by them ? How many sublime Truths and Gospel Mysteries, have they to study and preach ? How many Wiles of Satan, and Deceits of the Hearts of Men, to detect ? How many Cases of Conscience to resolve ? They cannot therefore approve themselves Christ's faithful Servants, unless they always abide in the unfailling Exercise of an indefatigable Spirit in the Discharge of their Duty. And hence 'tis evident, that for them to indulge themselves in secular Avocations, and unnecessary Diversions from their ministerial Work, is very sinful in the Sight of God, as being plainly repugnant to the Directions and Precepts of his holy Word ; which forbids them to entangle themselves with the Affairs of this Life §§, and requires them to give themselves wholly to the Business of their sacred Calling ||||.

7. Ministerial Fidelity requires, that the Servant of Christ *do attend unto the whole Discharge of his Work and Duty, with godly Zeal and sacred Fervour of Spirit.*

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\* Matt. xxv. 21. † 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. ‡ Acts v. 42. § 1 Thessa. v. 14.  
|| Isa. xl. 1. \*\* 2 Tim. iv. 2. †† Matt. ix. 38. ‡‡ 2 Tim. ii. 3.  
§§ 2 Tim. ii. 4. |||| 1 Tim. iv. 15.

He must not only be diligent in the Business and Duties of his Office, (as before observed) but also therein *be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord* \*. Holy fervent Zeal in the Ways and Things of God, is indispensibly required of all Christians †; how much more of a Christian Minister: He must be a *burning* as well as a *shining Light* ‡; he must like *Phineas, be zealous for his God* §; zealous for the Glory of God in Man's Salvation; zealous for the Honour and Interest of his great Lord and blessed Saviour; zealous for the spiritual and immortal Welfare of precious Souls; All which are nearly concerned in the faithful Performance of his Work and Duty.----The Strength and Vigour of his Affections and Endeavours, must be exerted and employed in advancing the Kingdom of Christ among Men, by the Conversion of Sinners and Edification of Saints, and in doing Good to the Souls of Men, and endeavouring to promote their spiritual Weal and eternal Happiness. *Earnest Desires* || whereof, springing from holy Zeal for the Glory of God in Christ, a real Compassion for immortal Souls, and from a sacred Regard unto his Office, in respect to its Nature, awful Trust, and final Reward; must enliven all his Administrations and ministerial Transactions: Whatever his Hand finds to do in the Discharge of his Office, he must do it with his Might \*\*; therein he must exert himself with unlanguishing Vigour, and unceasing Ardour of Soul; an inward sacred Warmth of Spirit, must continually animate his Breast, and invigorate him in all the Duties of his Ministry, publick and private; and engage him to well-husband his Time, and employ all his Talents in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men; as knowing he serves a great and good Master, and *watches for Souls as One that must give Account* †† *to him that is ready to judge quick and dead*. If he indulge a sluggish indolent Spirit, and be perfunctory and slothful in his Duty, he performs the *Work of the Lord deceitfully* §§, and reflects great Dishonour upon his divine and glorious Master, casts high Contempt on his Service, and exposes himself to his awful Resentments; and must expect from him that tremendous Reprimand, *Thou slothful Servant* ††, at the final Judgment.

8. *Ministerial Fidelity requires a strict and exact Impartiality in all Gospel Administrations*.----The Ministers of Christ must imitate the sacred Example he hath set them in his own personal Ministry when here on Earth, which is their most perfect Pattern. They must reprove the Sins and Faults of the Rich and Honourable, as well as those of a lower Character, as their divine and holy Master did, *John v. 38. And ye have not his Word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. And again in Verses 42, 43, 44. But I know you, that ye have not the Love of God in you. I am come in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not: If another shall come in his own Name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only.* Now it is justly supposed that the holy Self-Defence of our Lord, contained in this Context, was made before the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, or high Court of Judicature, composed, no Doubt, of the Rich and Honourable of that Nation.

They must reprehend the Sins and Follies of Friends and Benefactors, as well as of those that are unfriendly and disaffected; an Instance of which Impartiality in our Saviour's Practice, is recorded *Luke vii. 40,---46.* They may

\* Rom. xii. 11.

† Tit. ii. 14.

Gal. iv. 18.

‡ John v. 35.

§ Numb. xxv. 13.

|| Heb. vi. 11.

\*\* Eccle. ix. 10.

†† Heb. xiii. 17.

†† Jer. xlviii. 10.

§§ Matt. xxv. 26.



may not, in any Part of their ministerial Conduct, be influenced by personal Kindness or Prejudice, nor sway'd by the Smiles or Frowns of Men; nor be byass'd by Favour and Affection, or by Hopes of Advantage, or Fears of Disadvantage; but therein maintain an universal unspotted Impartiality. *All Souls are God's, and are of equal Value in his Sight* \*, and a divine Equity and sacred Impartiality appears in *all his Ways*; And the Ministers of Religion ought to imitate this perfect Pattern in ministerial Transactions: They receive their Ministry from, and must be finally accountable unto CHRIST JESUS their Lord, *with whom there is no Respect of Persons* †; and therefore as Partiality in the Discharge of their Duty, will reflect high Dishonour on him, so it will expose them to his just and awful Resentments. How solemnly is Timothy charged and warned against this Iniquity, 1 Tim. v. 21.

9. *Faithfulness in Christ's Ministers will discover itself, and appear in their attending to the whole Discharge of their Office and Duty, with utmost Care and Caution, much Heed, and constant Watchfulness.*

It belongs to the solemn Charge given by the Apostle to his Son Timothy, that *he should watch in all Things*; without which he could not make full Proof of his Ministry ‡, or be faithful therein. It concerns a Minister of Christ, even above ordinary Christians, to maintain a personal christian Watch, which is greatly inculcated, and strongly enforced by our blessed Lord in his Holy Gospel §. ) But besides this he must also exercise a constant Care and ministerial Watch over the People of his Charge, vigilantly observe them, diligently inspect into their spiritual Affairs and moral Conduct; and endeavour so to know their State and Circumstances, as to be able duely to accommodate his ministerial Administrations both publick and private thereunto; How else does *he take the Over-sight of the Flock of God committed to him* ||, according to apostolic Injunction? Unless he be *watchful, his Works* (in the Discharge of his Office) *will not be found perfect* (or compleat) *before God* \*\*. He must prosecute his whole Duty with great Attention of Mind, to all the Parts of it, that he may discharge it in the fittest Time and Manner; and carefully watch and guard against whatever tends to defeat the good Success of his Works.---A sleepy unwatchful Spirit and Practice in Christ's Ministers, are of pernicious and very dangerous Tendency; for *whilst the Labourers slept the Enemies sow'd Tares* ††.

10. To constitute and adorn the true Character of a faithful Minister, it is indispensibly necessary, that he preserve his Christian Profession unblemish'd, and the Honour of his ministerial Character unsullied.

He must be blameless and harmless without Rebuke, in the midst of a perverse Generation, and shine as a Light in the World, that by his godly Conversation in Christ, he may glorify his Father which is in Heaven ‡‡. He must give none Offence in any Thing, that the Ministry be not blamed, but in all Things approve himself as the Minister of God, being exemplary in all holy Conversation and Godliness §§. He must be an Example of the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity |||.---He must be an Example to his People in Word, or common Discourse, and therein endeavour to introduce, and be careful to promote profitable and pious Converse; not that which is light and airy, trivial and worthless, not at all adapted to make Men wiser or better;

\* Eze. xviii. 4, and 5. † Epa. vi. 9. Col. iii. 24, 25. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 1 and 5. § Matt. xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 34, 35, 36, 37. || 1 Pet. v. 2. Acts xx. 28. \*\* Rev. iii. 23. †† Matt. xiii. 25. ‡‡ Phil. ii. 15. Matt. v. 16. §§ 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4. 2 Pet. iii. 11. ||| 1 Tim. iv. 12.

better ; nor that *only* which relates to the Affairs of this Life, much less that which is defamatory to any one, or injurious to his real Character and just Reputation : But his Converse must be such as is suitable to the Gravity of his *Christian*, and becoming the *Dignity* and *Sacredness* of his *ministerial Character* ; and evidence his Mind to be always impressed with the divine Omniscience, and his own Accountableness for every Part of his Conduct : He may not at any Time, nor on any Occasion, suffer any *corrupt* or vain *Communication* to proceed out of his Mouth ; but that which is good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers \* ; and his Conversation also must be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ †. Therein he must exhibit the Beauties of Holiness to all Observers ; and always so deport himself that Men may be *Witnesses*, and God also, *how justly, holily, and unblameably he behaves himself* ‡. If a Minister of Christ lives a careless, loose, godless Life, and behaves himself unworthy his Christian Profession, and unbecoming his dignified Station and sacred Character, he does most wickedly betray the Honour of God, and Interest of Christ ; does infinite Mischief to the Souls of Men, exposes *Christianity* itself, and the *sacred Office* of the *Gospel Ministry*, to Contempt and Reproach ; stumbles the Weak, grieves the Godly, hardens the Wicked, and gives great Occasion to the Enemies of the Lord, to blaspheme that worthy Name by which we are called ; exposes himself to the most dire Frowns, and revenging Animadversions of his holy Lord and righteous Judge, and may expect a most tremendous Catastrophe ; for his Lord will come in a Day when he looked not for him, and in an Hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him asunder and appoint him his Portion with the Hypocrites, where is weeping and gnashing of Teeth §.

Finally : A Minister of Christ, that would approve himself Faithful in the Discharge of his Office, must continue and persevere therein with unshaken Resolution, and unfainting Constancy.

No Discouragements or Difficulties, no Hardships or Dangers may take him off from a fervent Prosecution of his Work and Duty ; neither the Want of Success, nor Reproaches, neither any worldly Hopes or Fears, nor any Sufferings of this present Time, must move him from, or abate his Diligence and Zeal in his holy Employment ; but he must immoveably continue therein, against all Opposition from Earth and Hell ||. Whatever Afflictions or Dangers do encounter him, he must resolve and be able to say with the faithful Apostle, *That none of these Things shall move me ; neither count I my Life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God* \*\*.

Thus I have endeavoured to give some View of the true scriptural Character of a faithful Minister of JESUS CHRIST. And shall proceed,

Secondly, To shew briefly, that it is truly Honourable ; and that faithfully to discharge the Office and Duties of the Gospel Ministry, entitles a Man to true Honour. And here,

1. To this Purpose, I might insist upon the Relation which a Gospel Minister stands in unto our enthroned Saviour CHRIST JESUS the LORD, and shew that upon the Account hereof his Character is truly Honourable. He is Christ's Servant, and

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\* Eph. iv. 29. † Phil. i. 27. ‡ 1 Thessa. ii. 10. § Matt. xxiv. 50, 51.  
|| 1 Tim. iv. 16. \*\* Acts xx. 24.

and the glorious and exalted Jesus the Son of God, is his Lord and heavenly Master, not only by the Profession of Christianity, common to him with other Christians, but by peculiar solemn Separation and sacred Dedication unto the special Service of Christ, in performing Gospel Ministrations unto the Children of Men, and officiating in the important Affairs of his visible Kingdom and Worship in the World. Whence it appears, that his Station is high and sacred, his Work honourable, and his Character truly venerable; how much soever it be despised, insulted, and treated with Neglect and Contempt by Men of dissolute Lives and abandon'd Morals; And it will be found another Day, that our great and holy Lord reflects all Indignities and Injuries done to his *faithful Servants*, as done to himself; and will accordingly animadvert upon them, agreeable to the Word which he hath spoken, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and him that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me* \*. I will further add, and take Leave to say, that one great Reason of the sad and awful Unsuccessfulness of a preached Gospel in the present Day, is, that not only loose Christians and formal Professors, have no due Reverence at all for the Office, Work, and Administrations of the Gospel Ministry; but even those that are more serious, have too little Sense of the divine Original, gracious and holy Ends, high Importance, and sacred Excellency thereof. But I shall not further enlarge on this Head; for it is not so much the Excellency of the ministerial Office, as Fidelity and Faithfulness therein, that does ennoble and exalt the Character of Christ's Ministers, and render it truly honourable: For the Character of an *unfaithful Minister* of Christ, is as vile and despicable, notwithstanding the Excellency and Dignity of the Office, as his who is *Faithful* therein, is honourable; and will one Day so appear in the Eyes of all the World, when he shall be rejected by his holy Lord and heavenly Judge, with Shame and everlasting Contempt. Yet is not the Office the less noble or excellent, and truly venerable, because of the Unfaithfulness of any of those invested with it; but reflects true Glory on the Character of such as faithfully discharge their sacred Betrustment. But the real Honour hereof wholly depends upon their Fidelity in their Duty; and it will appear, that the faithful Performance of the Work of the Gospel Ministry, entitles a Man to true Honour; if we consider,

2. *That Faithfulness herein is represented in the unerring Word of God, as truly Honourable.*

*God's Word is the Truth* †, the sacred Standard and true Measure of Things, by which we are to judge what is truly Honourable and Praise-worthy; and *therein Fidelity* in any important publick Trust, especially in that which hath respect unto the sacred Affairs of God's House, Church, and Kingdom in the World, is pronounced Praise-worthy, and commended to us with special Marks of Honour. Thus it is represented as holy *David's* true and great Honour, that he faithfully discharged his regal Trust, and executed *Judgment and Justice* unto all his People ‡, and *fed them according to the Integrity of his Heart* §; that is, honestly and faithfully. What high Honour is done in holy Scripture to the Name and Memory of *Moses* the Man of God? With how much Respect is he often mentioned in the sacred Pages? What great Commendation is therein given him? The Sum and Substance whereof consists in his Fidelity to the holy Trust reposed in him; for *he was Faithful in all God's House* ||, and pronounced so by the Testimony of God himself. He declared

and

\* Luke x. 16. † Psalm cxix. 142. John xvii. 17. ‡ 2 Sam. viii. 15.  
§ Psalm lxxviii. 72. || Numb. xii. 7.



and *did*; or *acted* all Things according to the holy Will and Appointment of God, and did not with-hold any Thing God revealed to him, nor neglect the least Thing commanded him, nor did he add any Thing thereunto; in which consisted his Faithfulness. I might add, that it is mentioned to the just and high Honour, even of our blessed Lord himself, *that he was Faithful to him that appointed him* \*. Thus it appears, that Faithfulness in God's House, is truly Honourable, according to the unerring Verdict of his own holy Word. And it will further appear, that Fidelity in the Discharge of the Gospel Ministry, does entitle a Man to true Honour; if we consider,

3. *That herein he is approved by God, and accepted of him, in and thro' Jesus CHRIST.*

The faithful Minister is unto God, a sweet Saviour of Christ, as well in them that perish from under his Ministry, as in them that are saved thereby †. Tho' Sinners are disobedient and gain-saying all the Day long ‡, of divine Patience towards them under his Ministry; tho' they are not thereby gathered or returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls §, but obstinately persist in the Neglect of Christ, and his great Salvation ||, and die in their Sins \*\*; Yet by his Fidelity he hath delivered his Soul ††, and shall also be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord ††, and accepted with his God, who will not despise or reject him, for the Unsuccessfulness of his faithful Endeavours, and holy Labours in the Ministry; but honour and smile upon him in the Face of the whole World, when assembled before the Judgment Seat of Christ; who will then say unto him, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord* §§. Faithful Ministers, who have turn'd many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars |||, yea as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father &†; and those who are saved by their Ministry, shall be their Joy and Glory, and Crown of rejoycing in the Presence of our Lord Jesus CHRIST at his coming †||: For those that honour God by faithful Discharge of their Duty, he will honour ††, and advance them unto immortal Glory, and bestow upon them a Crown of Life that fadeth not away †§; And then it will openly and fully appear, that Christ's faithful Ministers are entitled unto true Honour, and unperishing Glory and Happiness.---Thus I have endeavoured to shew what is implied in the faithful Discharge of the Gospel Ministry; and that the Character of a faithful Minister of Christ, is truly Honourable: And shall proceed to the Improvement of this Subject.

USE I. This Doctrine sets before Ministers of the Gospel, powerful Incentives unto unwearied Activity, faithful Diligence, and zealous Industry in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men, notwithstanding all the earthly Discouragements that attend them therein; because they hereby will assuredly obtain that Honour which comes from God only. Hereby they are secure, not only of a present Acceptance with their holy and blessed Lord; but also of that immortal Honour, heavenly Bliss, and the unfading Crown of Glory which he hath promised to his faithful Servants: Christ hath said, *Where I am there shall also my Servant be* †††. And the believing Prospect hereof shall not only support faithful Ministers under all their present Difficulties; but

\* Heb. iii. 2. † 2 Cor. ii. 15. ‡ Rom. x. 31. § 1 Pet. ii. 25 || Heb. ii. 3. \*\* John viii. 24. †† Eze. iii. 19. †† Isa. xlix. 5. §§ Matt. xxv. 21, 23. ||| Dan. xii. 3. &† Matt. xiii. 43. †|| 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. †† Sam. ii. 30. †§ Rev. ii. 10. ††† John xii. 26.

but also animate them unto unfainting Resolution, fervent Zeal, and faithful Diligence in their Work. Christ's Ministers, if faithful, are wont to have little on this Side the Grave to support and encourage them in their Duty : There is the great Difficulty of the Work itself, and less or more unsuccessfulness therein, and oft Times also perverse ungrateful Treatment from too many of whom they might justly expect better Usage. But under all they have a blessed Prospect beyond this Life ; they are graciously assured by Christ, that if they overcome their Difficulties and Discouragements, and are faithful to the Death, *He will give them a Crown of Life \**, and that they *shall sit with him in his Throne †* : Than which what greater Glory, Honour, and Felicity, can enter into the Heart of mortal Man to conceive of. How unworthy a Part therefore do those in the sacred Function act, that are perfunctory and slothful in discharging the Duties of it !

USE II. From what has been discoursed, it is evident, *That Christ's most tender Love, and compassionate Care of the Souls of Men, is signally discovered in his instituting the Gospel Ministry, and requiring of those intrusted with it, such Faithful Diligence therein.* For the immediate Design hereof is to promote and secure the spiritual Weal, highest and eternal Interests of Men, that hereby they may be turn'd from the Evil and Error of their Ways to the Wisdom of the Just ‡, and be made free from the Law of Sin and Death §, by the Son of God, made free from their spiritual Bondage thro' the Knowledge of the Truth ; that they may be free indeed ||, and delivered into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God \*\*, and made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light ††. All which being the End and Use of sacred Ministrations, it gives us a delightful and endearing View of the adorable Love, and divine tender Compassion of our blessed Lord towards the Sons of Men, thereby manifested ; and shews us the base and horrid Ingratitude of all those by whom the Administrations and Ministers of the Gospel are despised and treated with Contempt and Neglect ?

USE III. Hence it appears, *what a great and difficult Work that of a Gospel Minister is ; and that to perform it faithfully, is a Thing of no easy Attainment.* The Consideration hereof may well cause us to exclaim in the Apostle's Language, *Who is sufficient for these Things †† ?* The Ministers of Christ are not sufficient of themselves to think any Thing aright in the Discharge of their holy Office, as of themselves, or to rightly perform the least Act of Duty therein ; but all their Sufficiency for it is of God §§, by his Communication of the Gifts, Graces, and blessed Influences of the holy Spirit unto them, whereby they are made able Ministers of the New-Testament ; and capable to perform sacred Ministrations to the Glory of God, and the spiritual Advantage of the Souls of Men. Such is the Greatness and Difficulty of their Work, that without a constant and liberal Supply of the Spirit of Christ |||, and continual renewed Succour and Assistance of his Grace, they would certainly faint in their Duty ; and therefore they should well accept, and comply with the Exhortation, *to be strong in the Grace that is in CHRIST JESUS ††.* For it is not any Grace that is in themselves, but that only which is in Christ, that can enable them unto the faithful Performance of their Duty ; They must therefore live a Life of Faith on the never failing Promise of Grace, by which they

\* Rev. ii. 10. † Rev. iii. 21. ‡ Luke i. 17. § Rom. viii. 2. || John viii. 32, and 36. \*\* Rom. viii. 21. †† Col. i. 12. †† 2 Cor. ii. 16. §§ 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. ||| Phil. i. 19. †† 2 Tim. ii. 1.

they are assured, that Christ will be *always with them* \*, by his Spirit to enable them to be *faithful unto the Death* †. How full of Support, Comfort, and Encouragement, is this blessed Promise of Christ to his faithful Ministers?

USE IV. Since the Work and Duty of Christ's Ministers is such as has been described, and Fidelity therein of such difficult Attainment, and they of themselves utterly insufficient for it; hence it is apparent they ought most earnestly to seek to God and look to Christ, implore, and believingly wait for the rich Communications of his sufficient Grace to enable them to Faithfulness in their Duty: They must bow their Knees unto the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST ‡, the Father of Mercies §, and God of all Grace ||, and ardently avise with him for larger Measures of Fineness for this Work, and for needful Assistance unto their Duty, Acceptance, and Success therein. They must be assiduous and fervent in retired Addresses unto Heaven, for personal Mercies, and with unceasing Ardours of secret Devotion, ply the Throne of Grace for all needful Supplies of divine Help, as knowing God is able to make all Grace abound toward them, that they always *having all Sufficiency in all Things* relating to their Office, *may abound unto every good Work* \*\*, necessary to the faithful Discharge thereof. And they must also pray exceedingly Night and Day †† for the People of their Charge, that Sinners may, under a divine Agency, sensibly and effectually discern their last Necessity of Christ in his All-Fulness, and so receive him by a true Heart-purifying-Faith, *as to walk in him* ††; and that what is *lacking in the Faith*, and other Graces of Saints, *may be perfected*; that God would fulfil all the good Pleasure of his Goodness in them, and the Work of Faith with Power §§; that they may stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God |||. It is worth observing, that the devout Apostle in all his Epistles to the Churches (*the Care of which came daily upon him* ††) praying to God in their Behalf, which is a good Pattern worthy of Imitation by all Christ's Ministers toward the People of their Charge, and doubtless will be imitated by all such as imitate him in his holy Zeal for the Christian Interest, and Salvation of immortal Souls:---And it is no less the Duty, and also the Interest of the People, to be abundantly prayerful to God in Behalf of such as minister to them in holy Things, and have the Care and Charge of their Souls. How do we find the inspired Apostle (who had so liberal an Allowance of the extraordinary Gifts, Graces, and Assistances of God's Spirit) asking the Prayers of Christian People to whom he wrote? In what most pathetic Terms does he beseech the Christians of Rome, that for the Lord JESUS CHRIST's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, they would strive together with him in their Prayers to God for him §†. And indeed the Nature and Design of a Minister's Work, afford unto his People most powerful Persuasives hereunto. Neither can they express any due Regard to the Honour and Interest of Christ, or holy Love of the Spirit, any suitable Compassion and Care for precious Souls, their own, and others, or Christian Tenderness for their Ministers, in the Neglect of this important Duty. Let me further add, that Ministers had need not only be themselves very prayerful to God, and also have the Help of their People's Prayers; but also apply themselves very closely, wholly, and indefatigably unto the great Business and important Duties of their Office, and not suffer themselves by any Means, to be diverted or clogg'd therein, if they desire and hope to give up their

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Account

\* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Rev. ii. 10. ‡ Eph. viii. 14. § 2 Cor. i. 3.  
 || 1 Pet. v. 10. \*\* 2 Cor. ix. 8. †† 1 Thessa. iii. 10. †† Col. ii. 6.  
 §§ 2 Thessa. i. 11. ||| Col. iv. 12. †† 2 Cor. xi. 28. §† Rom. xv. 30.



Account with Joy : For the Labours and Duties of the Gospel Ministry, are more than a full Employment for the most accomplish'd and laborious of the Sons of Men ; They are sufficient to employ all our Powers, Time and Talents, had we the Capacities, Agility, and Indefatigableness of those seraphic Spirits, that encompass the Throne of God above.

And, Oh ! therefore, my reverend Brethren, let us who have the Honour to be put in Trust with the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, give all possible Diligence, and spare no Pains to approve our selves faithful in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men : Let us most solemnly consider of what infinite Importance it is thus to do ; Let us lay deeply to Heart how much the Glory of God, the Honour and Interest of Christ, and the spiritual Welfare and immortal Happiness of Men, are concern'd in our Fidelity : Let us earnestly wrestle with God, and constantly rely on Christ for his All-sufficient Help and Grace, to enable us to be faithful to him, who will render to us according to our Works : Let us with godly Remorse consider, and be duly humbled for all our past Defects and Short-comings in our Work. Alas ! how little have we done therein for God, and the Souls of Man : Let us form and vigorously prosecute an unfailing Resolution of more close, earnest, and faithful Diligence in our Duty : Let us always be very mindful of our solemn Charge, sacred Vows, and final Account which we shall be call'd unto before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, *at the great Day of his appearing and Kingdom* : Let us remember we are *Stewards*, and most seriously consider, that it is indispensably *required of such to be faithful\** ; and that it is but a little uncertain Time, before our great and holy Lord will come by Death, and say to us, *you may no longer be Stewards, give Account of your Stewardship † ; we cannot continue by Reason of Death ‡*. We have the most solemn and awful Warning given us hereof, by the Death of our beloved Brother and Fellow-Servant in the Lord, whose Obsequies we are now attending : His Removal from us, is a very humbling Dispensation of Heaven to the whole Ministry, and more especially to us in these Parts ; Hereby very much of our Strength and Glory is gone and departed from us ; and on the Account hereof, we have great Cause to adopt that moving Lamentation of the mournful Prophet, *Lam. v. 15, 16, 17. The Joy of our Heart is ceased, our Dance is turned into Mourning, the Crown is fallen from our Heads, woe unto us that we have sinned ; for this our Heart is faint, for this our Eyes are dim*. Does not the holy God, by this heavy Blow of his provok'd Hand, *lift up his awful Voice to us like a Trumpet §, and say to us hereby, be ye faithful to the Death ||, be ye also ready \*\**.

USE V. Hence we may infer, *it is a rich and great Blessing, for a People to enjoy the Gospel Ministrations, and holy Labours of a faithful Minister of Christ ; and that, when such a One is by Death removed from them, it is to be esteem'd a great Loss, and a terrible Rebuke of divine Providence*. The Enjoyment of these, how lighty soever esteem'd by the Godless and Prophane, is wont to be highly valued by such as know how to set a due Estimate on spiritual Privileges : The Ministry, and faithful Ministers of the Gospel, are the Purchase of the Death and Humiliation of Jesus the Son of God, *who descended into the lower Parts of the Earth ††*, to procure them for his People ; the Bestowment hereof is a great Donation of the glorified Saviour, an eminent Fruit of Christ's Exaltation.

\* 1 Cor. iv. 2. † Luke xvi. 2. ‡ Heb. vii. 23. § Isa. lviii. 1.  
|| Rev. ii. x. \*\* Luke xii. 40. †† Eph. iv. 9.

altation, an illustrious Effect of his mediatorial Power and Administration, and signal Evidence of his continued Love and Care toward his Church on Earth; *for he that descended is the same that also ascended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill all Things,* (that is, his Church with Officers, and his Officers with Gifts, as a great Author expounds it) *and gave Pastors and Teachers for the Work of the Ministry, and clothing the Body of Christ* \*: These are Means and Instruments of delivering sinful Men from the Power of Darkness, and translating them into the Kingdom of God's dear Son †, and of building up Saints, and giving them an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified ‡. On all which Accounts, such as have any serious Sense of Religion, and Concern for their best and immortal Interest, will very highly esteem them; and the Loss being proportionably great, when God takes away these from a People, it is to be look'd upon as a special Instance, and open Evidence, of his holy Displeasure against them, and should be suitably repented by them, and laid to Heart. This directly leads me to the present sorrowful Occasion, to take some Notice of the awful Frown of Heaven upon the whole Land, particularly on us in these Parts, more especially on this Congregation, in the Death of that eminent faithful Minister of Christ, who has been for a long Time, a burning and shining Light in this Candlestick, and a distinguishing Ornament to this Place. I have been considering, and endeavoured to give you some little View of the *true Scripture Character* of a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ; therein I had an Eye to, and designed to represent something of the Character of that dear and worthy Servant of the Lord, who is lately taken from us, to the Joys and Glories of the blessed World above. And now is it not highly proper and justly expected from us, that we acknowledge to the Glory of God, the Honour and Praise of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, (the alone Fountain of all Excellencies both of Nature and Grace) that *in him* the honourable and amiable Character of a faithful Minister of Christ, was openly exemplified, and the sacred Beauties thereof eminently exhibited? None, unless the *Ignorant* or *Envious* will deny him this Honour. But I shall not pretend to assay his finish'd Character, being conscious to myself of my utter Inability to do Justice to it; and that I am wholly unequal to such a Province; And indeed, who can pretend to be equal to it, but he who is equal to him in his uncommon superior Accomplishments. I shall therefore only observe to you, a few Things (among the many that might be truly spoken) concerning him, which may help to affect all our Hearts, with some just and suitable Sense of this humbling Providence toward us in our great and heavy Bereavement. To this Purpose let us duly consider how great, publick, and general a Loss is sustained in his Death; an unspeakable Loss not only to this Congregation, but which extends to all the Land; *for his Praise in the Gospel* was throughout all the Churches therein. ----- Now, this is easily to be apprehended from a little Consideration of his eminent and uncommon Capacities, Improvements, and Usefulness in the World: He was conspicuously possessed of those natural and acquired, moral and spiritual Endowments, which constitute and adorn the Character of a truly excellent and valuable Man, an uncommon Scholar, an eminent Divine, and a serious devout Christian. The great Author of Nature was very bountiful to him, in bestowing upon him with a liberal Hand, those intellectual Powers that were far above the common Level: He was bless'd with

\* Eph. iv. 10, 11, 12. † Col. i. 13. ‡ Acts xx. 32.

with a very superior and elevated Genius : His Apprehension was quick and penetrating ; His Thought ready and deep ; His Judgment solid ; His Memory attentive and faithful : He had a wonderful Capacity, on a sudden, to form a due sagacious Judgment of Things ; and hence was a ready, wise, and able Counsellor ; and his natural Endowments were greatly enrich'd and adorn'd by large Improvements : His Attainments in valuable Learning, and useful Knowledge, were great and distinguishing : He made no ordinary Figure in the learned World, and was no Stranger to the most celebrated Authors therein : But Divinity was his favourite Study, to which he more peculiarly applied himself ; and in the Knowledge thereof, he excelled to no common Degree ; and was particularly and distinguishingly acquainted with the more abstruse and difficult Parts of that divine and sacred Science ; a Specimen whereof, he has given us in his accurate Writings on some of them : He had uncommonly clear Views of the Scripture System of Gospel Doctrine, and glorious Scheme and Design of divine Revelation ; had a Body of Divinity treasured up in his Mind, and was very careful to hold fast the Form of sound Words in the present dark Day, in which many corrupt Opinions, and Soul destroying Errors, do so much prevail and abound in the Protestant World, and even in this Land ; And he shewed a warm Zeal in the Cause of Truth : He was very communicative of his Knowledge to others, and peculiarly happy and skilful in imparting his Thoughts : His Style and Diction was correct, masculine, and nervous : He had a remarkable Capacity to treat of Things with a comprehensive Succinctness, and perspicuous Brevity, and to confirm Truths by irrefragable Arguments, and set them in a clear and advantageous Light. In Controversy his Dexterity was of such remarkable Efficacy ; his Strength and Courage so peculiar and distinguishing, as to be observed and acknowledged by all ; therein he was Second to few or none : And his his great and happy Talent he has often seasonably employed to good Purposes, in refuting pernicious Errors, (boldly vented and plausibly civilised) and in defending and establishing important labouring Truths of the Gospel ; for the Defence whereof, he was well qualified by a clear cool Thought, and unwavering Principle ; and has frequently put Gain-sayers to Confusion and Silence : And yet he was not of a litigious Disposition, but a truly pacific Temper, and could sacrifice any Thing but Truth and Duty for Peace : He much excelled in textual Divinity ; *was mighty* in the holy Scriptures, well furnish'd with such Knowledge of them as enabled him to clearly give the right and true Sense of them, and adorn his Discourses with the sacred Language, and illustrate and confirm his Doctrines by the Authority of God's Word : His deep and ready Penetration into difficult and perplexed Cases, and Dexterity in judiciously and safely resolving them, gave him a just Claim to the Character of a good Casuist. By these his excellent Accomplishments he was render'd very capable to direct and assist younger Ministers, and was often repaired to by them, who always found him their faithful Friend and Counsellor, able and ready to do them Service ; and he ever appeared affectionate to their Persons, and tender of their Reputations ; and they will doubtless find their great Loss in his Removal. Such were his eminent Attainments in useful Literature, that he was well furnished for the liberal Education of Youth, and preparing young Persons for the Service of the Sanctuary ; and herein Death found him employed, in Conjunction with his ministerial Work ; and on this Account, our Loss therein is the more to be lamented.



And as he was eminently adorn'd with the Gifts, so likewise with the Graces of God's Spirit; and hereby his Gifts appeared the brighter, and became the more useful. In him was conspicuously exhibited, the amiable Character given us by the Apostle, *of a Steward of God who must be blameless, not self-will'd, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre, a Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good Men, sober, just, holy, temperate, bolding fast the faithful Word, as he has been taught, and able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince Gain-sayers \**. He was very careful to give *no Offence in any Thing, that the Ministry might not be blamed †*. He excelled in Self-Government, *was slow to Anger, knew how to rule his Spirit ‡*; had a great Command of his Appetites and Passions; was exemplary in Self-denial, Separation from the World, and Contempt of it; did not pursue the Delights or Splendors thereof, nor seek great Things for himself §: He bore Reproaches from Men, and their unreasonable Censures and injurious Treatment, with Christian Meekness; *was not overcome of Evil, but endeavoured to overcome their Evil with Good ||*: He was of a very generous Disposition, *much given to Hospitality \*\*, willing to communicate ††, and ready to every good Work ‡‡*. He embraced all Opportunities to do good to Men, in regard to their Souls and Bodies, their spiritual and temporal Interests: His Christian Equanimity of Mind was remarkable; Under all his heavy Afflictions from the holy Hand of a wise sovereign God, and many Difficulties of his weary Pilgrimage, he ever appeared in a quiet *Subjection to the Father of Spirits §§*, and in his *Patience possess'd his Soul |||*: In a Day of Prosperity he rejoiced with trembling; and in a Day of Adversity, he wisely consider'd §†, and did not faint therein, because his Strength was not small ||†. He was in Behaviour as becometh Holiness ‡‡, and thereby no small Ornament to his Profession. He went before his Flock in a blameless exemplary Life, as became a good Shepherd §||. Thus by a happy Concurrence of ministerial Gifts and Christian Graces, he was eminently qualified for the right Discharge of his holy Office; and with what Prudence, Skillfulness, and faithful Diligence he attended unto the Duties of his pastoral Care, you have been Witnesses. In his Ministry he shewed an holy Zeal for the Honour and Interest of his great and blessed Master, and a serious Concern for the Welfare of immortal Souls: A religious Solemnity, and peculiar sacred Gravity, always appeared in his holy Ministrations: The favourite Subjects of his public Discourses, were the weightier and more important Matters of Religion, and they were well calculated to be useful to the Souls of Men, and make them wiser and better: He greatly inculcated the absolute Necessity of a saving Interest in Christ, by a true Heart-purifying Faith in him, wrought in the Souls of Men, by the renewing Influencies of God's Spirit; and of that Holiness of Heart and Life without which none can see God †\*.----And as he obtained Mercy of the Lord to be faithful ||\*, so likewise in some Degree successful: How many have been led to Heaven and Happiness by his Ministry, God best knows, and also how many now in this Assembly have been savingly converted to God thereby; who will be his Rejoycing in the Day of Christ: He had a great and kind Regard for this

\* Tit. i. 7, 8, 9. † 2 Cor. vi. 4. ‡ Prov. xvi. 32. § Jer. xlv. 5.  
 || Rom. xii. 21. \*\* 1 Tim. iii. 2. †† 1 Tim. vi. 18. ‡‡ Tit. iii. 1.  
 §§ Heb. xii. 9. ||| Luke xxi. 19. §† Ecclesi. vii. 14. ||† Prov. xxiv. 10.  
 ||\* Tit. ii. 3. §|| John x. iv. †\* Heb. xii. 14. Matt. v. 8. ||\* 1 Cor. vii. 25.

this Flock of God ; so that, being affectionately desirous of you, he was willing to have imparted to you, not only the Gospel of God, but also his own Soul, because you were dear unto him \* ; And he was diligent in feeding you with Knowledge and Understanding, as became a Pastor according to God's own Heart †, and he guided you by the Skilfulness of his Hands ‡, and defended you on every Side, and now is gone to receive the Reward of all his holy Labours, from the liberal and gracious Hand of the great and chief Shephard, who at his appearing and Kingdom, will undoubtedly bestow upon him, a Crown of Life and Glory, which fades not away §. And should you not, most seriously consider this bereaving Operation of God's holy Hands towards you || : This Removal is indeed an awful Frown upon a sinning Generation in the Land, to which he was many Ways a great Blessing ; but in a peculiar Manner is this heavy Blow from Heaven to be duly repented by this Congregation, and improved to awaken you to a serious, timely deep, and godly Repentance ; to search and try your Ways, and unfeignedly turn unto him, who has thus terribly smitten you ; and seek the Lord of Hosts while he is to be found, that his Anger may be turned away from you, and his awful Hand not be stretched out still \*\*, lest God stir up against you all his Wrath ††, and take his Kingdom (or a preached Gospel) from you ‡‡, and remove your Candlestick out of his Place, except you repent §§. Repent therefore, and turn yourselves from all your Transgressions, that Iniquity may not be your Ruin |||. In this awful Providence toward you, God's Voice cries §† aloud to deaf dead-hearted Sinners among you, who are going on still in your Trespases †||, and continue quiet and easy in their Soul-destroying Unregeneracy of Heart, and are not reform'd in Life, nor alarm'd out of their carnal Security, by all the solemn Admonitions given them by this faithful Servant of God, who was a Son of Thunder to harden careless Sinners, and skilful in setting the Terrors of the Lord before them, and has often warned you to flee from the Wrath to come. And do you still persist in your Sins, and careless Neglect of the great Salvation ; remain at Ease in Zion ‡‡, and cry Peace and Safety to yourselves, when sudden Destruction is ready to come upon you †§ ? Oh ! awake out of Sleep, arise from the Dead, that Christ may give you Light ||‡, lest the holy God, who hath already called away from you his Ambassador, swear in his Wrath against you, that his Spirit shall no longer strive with you \*§ ; and leave you sealed up under Hardness of Heart, unto the Judgment of the great Day.

And let careless slothful Professors be roused up by this awakening Dispensation of Heaven, to seek in earnest the Oyl of Grace in your Hearts, and no longer content yourselves with Lamps of lifeless, lazy, barren Profession ; lest, when our great Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom of the Church, high and eternal Judge of the World, shall come, your Lamps go out in obscure Darkness †\*. And let all God's People see to it, that you be not slothful, but Followers of them who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises \*†, and lay aside every weight, and the Sin that easily besets you, and run with Patience the Race that is set before us, still looking to the great Author and Finisher of our Faith ||\* : take heed to yourselves that your Hearts be not overcharged with the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares ||\*|| ; but watch and pray always, that

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\* 1 Thess. ii. 8. † Jer. iii. 15. ‡ Psal. lxxviii. 72. § 1 Pet. v. iv.  
 || Psal. xxviii. 4. \*\* Isa. ix. 13, 17. †† Psal. lxxviii. 38. ‡‡ Matt. xxi. 43.  
 §§ Rev. ii. 5. ||| Ezek. xviii. 30. §† Mic. vi. 9. †|| Psal. lxxviii. 21.  
 †† Amos vi. 1. †§ 1 Thessa. v. 3. ||‡ Eph. v. 14. \*§ Gen. vi. 3.  
 †\* Prov. xx. 20. \*† Heb. vi. 12. ||\* Heb. xii. 1, 2. ||\* Luke xxi. 34.

that you escape all the dire Destructions that are hastning on a secure infidel World, and stand before the Sun of Man with Joy and Triumph, when he shall come in the Glory of his Father, with his holy Angels, and reward every Man according to his Works \*.

USE VI. The present Doctrine affords Matter of strong Consolation to us under our Bereavement of Christ's faithful Ministers by their Death. Therein it is true our Loss is exceeding great, and thereby the divine Anger is awfully manifested against us; It will therefore bring us under the just Censure and severe Rebuke of God's holy Word, if we do not lay it deeply to Heart †, and are not suitably grieved when we are thus stricken by him ‡; but we are not to weep for them, but for ourselves and for our Children §: for to them to live was Christ, and therefore to die was infinite Gain ||; They have finished their Course and their Ministry \*\*, and are entered into the Joy of their Lord ††; And why should we weep or grieve for them? they have overcome, and are admitted to sit with Christ in his Throne ††; and shall we mourn for their heavenly Honour and glorious Advancement?

Let then the believing Consideration of the State of future Glory and Happiness, which Christ's faithful Ministers are received into at Death, mitigate our Sorrow for the Death of this deceased Servant of the Lord. Let it relieve and support our grieved Spirits, that now he is absent from the Body he is present with the Lord §§ to behold his Glory; and partake in his Joy; that he is gone to be with Christ, which is far better ||| for him, than being with us in this World of Sin and Sorrow, where we ourselves groan within ourselves §||, being burthened while in this Tabernacle, desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven †§. Let this Word of Comfort be applied in particular to the mournful Relict, and Children of the deceased Servant of God. Let the realizing Thoughts of the happy State he is gone to, give some Allay to your Grief, and support your Spirits under this heavy Stroke of your heavenly Father's Hand. Let your Sorrow be turn'd into, and run in the right Channel: Take heed that it be not the Sorrow of the World that works Death, but that godly Sorrow which worketh Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of †||, that you may receive no Damage to your spiritual Interests hereby; but on the Contrary that you may happily find, that even this great Affliction works for your best Good, that you may hereby have fresh and fuller Evidence that you love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose ||†. May the God of all Grace and Consolation, support and comfort his Handmaid in her afflictive Widow-hood! May the everlasting Arms be undermath her \*†, and the eternal God her Refuge in this Day of Affliction §†, and the Strength of her Heart and her Portion for ever §\*. May the Children have their Father's God, for their God and Father in Christ, and their Guide to Death \*†: May the Lord their Redeemer, and their God, teach them to spiritually profit by this Providence, and lead them in the Way (of humble, quiet, penitent Submission) wherein they should go \*|| under it. And may we all be prepared and duly preparing for Death and Eternity, unto which we are hastning every Moment! Let

\* Matt. xvi. 27. † Isa. xlii. 25. ‡ Jer. v. 3. § Luke xxiii. 28. || Phil. i. 21. \*\* Acts xxviii. 24. †† Mat. xxv. 21. †† Rev. iii. 21. §§ 2 Cor. v. 8. ||| Phil. i. 23. §|| Rom. viii. 23. †§ 2 Cor. iv. 2, 4. †|| 2 Cor. vii. 9. 10. ||† Rom. viii. 28. \*† Deut. xxxiii. 27. §† Jer. xvi. 19. §\* Psa. lxxiii. 26. \*† Psa. xlviii. 14. \*|| Isa. xlviii. 17.



Let us endeavour thro' Grace to follow this Servant of God, *wherein he follow'd Christ*, until we also come to inherit the *Promises which are exceeding great and precious* \*.

Let us give all Diligence to be found of our Lord in Peace, *without Spot, and blameless*, accounting that his Long-suffering toward us, is Salvation †, that when he shall appear we may have Confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his Coming ‡: Unto him be Glory in the Church throughout all Ages, World without End. Amen §.

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\* 2 Pet. i. 4. † 2 Pet. iii. 14, 15. ‡ 1 John ii. 28. § Eph. iii. 21.

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