



REV. JOSEPH PRINCE

Aged 68. 1791.

THE DILIGENT SERVANT EXCITED.

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A

S E R M O



PREACHED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN

N E W B U R Y P O R T,

JANUARY 23, 1791,

THE DAY PRECEDING THE FUNERAL OF THE

Rev. J O S E P H P R I N C E.

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 15TH OF
THAT MONTH, ETAT. 68.

Published by Request of the Ministers.

BY J O H N M U R R A Y, A. M.

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE THEE A
CROWN OF LIFE. JESUS.

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N E W B U R Y P O R T.

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1791



A S E R M O N, &c.



J O H N IX. 4.

**I MUST WORK THE WORK OF HIM
THAT SENT ME, WHILE IT IS
DAY ; THE NIGHT COM-
ETH, WHEN NO
MAN CAN
WORK.**

THE existence of a created world clearly proves the omnipotence of its Maker. The display of his wisdom and goodness, however, is not less admirable here than the illustration of his power. This hath assigned to every thing its proper place ; this has exactly fitted it to fill it. Perfect beauty shines in the great whole : nor is it less bright in the adjustment even of its minutest parts. Nothing is made in vain. Nothing superfluous—nothing lacking. Is all this true of the material world ? Then, surely, it is not

less true of the morai, which is the higher part of the system. And if it is not, we must believe that every intelligent creature is stationed to its post, and peculiarly qualified to occupy it. Each has his portion of work to perform on the stage of existence; and in proportion to that work is the time allotted for its execution. Herein, too, the nicety of the divine plan appears conspicuous—that the length of human life is admeasured to the business of it. His day is just sufficient for its purpose: but it contains not an hour to be allowed for wastage. Moment urges moment on, as drop presses drop in the descending stream. They approach—they depart—they appear, they vanish—they come and are gone almost as soon as seen: and when gone, are gone for ever: the precious opportunity which they afforded is over, and no repetition of it is to be expected—the golden season once elapsed can never smile on man again: whatever part of his work remains unfinished then, must so remain for ever. Man's wisdom, then, must lie in husbanding this all-important period well—no less than in discharging the duties allotted to it. Of this wisdom the conduct of our blessed LORD afforded an example perfect in itself, and highly deserving the imitation of all who are called by his name. Behold the man: constant as the rising sun, and unwearied as the planets in their course—engaged all the day in preaching the gospel to the poor—and all the night incessant in pressing heaven with warm intreaties on their behalf! Now we see him busied in the temple—and now on the mountain—here employed in healing the sick—there in liberating the prisoner of the tomb: but never idle—never losing a single opportunity of doing good!—Lovely pattern! Winning and instructive example!

Replete with instances of industry thus indefatigable, the gospel before us has exhibited this trait of the character of Jesus in most amiable colours, in the

chapter from which my text is taken. Passing on from one place of service to another, he finds on his way a poor man, blind from the birth, presented before him. To the disciples in his train, this ministered occasion for posing their Master with a speculative question, concerning the Pythagorean fiction of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls. But the compassionate Redeemer, far from over-looking the case of the distressed object before him, and unwilling to consume a moment in the business of gratifying impertinent curiosity even in his own disciples, embraced the occasion, now offered him, of working a most benevolent miracle in opening to the light those eyes which had never, till then, enjoyed the pleasure of beholding the sweet face of day. Conscious of that omnipotence to which all he wills is equally easy—he felt no difficulty, in the work in hand, which the mere fiat of his will could not have instantly removed. Yet, intent on setting an example to all, even when employed in doing good to one—he chooses to perform the miracle in such a way as might convince us, that divine power will not be exerted to supercede the dutiful use of the means which have been divinely appointed. Hence the Lord himself stoops to use means, that his creature-man might not dare to neglect them.—But the means he uses are wisely selected. The application of moistened clay, to the human eye, which cannot bear a single mote, was a method less likely to relieve an eye diseased, than to destroy one that is sound. The choice of this mean, however, was worthy of this great physician: as it clearly proved that no part of the efficacy could be ascribed to the medicine, and convinced every beholder that the excellency of the power was all in the hand which applied it.

STRUCK with his condescension to this distressed creature, and reprovèd by his unwearied assiduity in his work, the disciples stood and gazed in silent ad-

miration. But their gracious Master improved this circumstance, as an opening to give them such an account of the reasons of his conduct, as might, at the same time, suggest a directory for their own. “ *I must work, says he, the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work:*” as if he had said, “ I came into this world “ on a mission from the Father : a certain definite “ work is assigned as the object of that mission : a “ short period is allotted me for the performance of “ that work : this is spending with every breath I “ draw : Nothing can be done in that business after it “ is elapsed ; therefore, I consider myself obliged, by “ designation—by my voluntary undertaking, and by “ the eternal covenant mutually stipulated between my “ Father and myself, to finish it completely before that “ period arrives.”

Nothing in all this was peculiar to the Saviour : If these are truths, when applied to the green tree, they are not falsehoods when predicated of the dry ;—nor are they less applicable to all the sons of men, than to the great Captain of salvation himself ; and in the use he made of them, he hath set them an example that they might follow his steps ; and to imitate it, they are called at once by reason—by duty—by gratitude—by their own best interest—and by every particular providence with which they are concerned.

To consider the matter in this general reference to mankind, and to enquire whether each of these observations may not justly be applied to them all, shall be the business of the sequel of this discourse.—The object of this enquiry may be fully answered by a brief attention to the five plain propositions which follow in their order, *viz.*

PROP. I. *Every man comes into this world on a mission from God.*

THIS is an event of time ; it must not then be supposed to take place without a cause. This cause could not be

the man himself, because he could not act before he existed.—Nor could this effect be produced by any other creature ; for none of these could produce itself—nor even sustain its own existence, after it had received it ; who, then, can expect it will discharge this office for its neighbor—being itself not less dependent on the first cause than he ? This must, therefore, be the work of God—and one in which no creature could lend him any aid.

BUT this God is a being of consummate wisdom ; such a being never acts without design : It follows, then, that when he sent man into the world, some very important end must have been in view : He could not be sent for nothing, but on some mission worthy of so wise a sender. Analogous to this reasoning is the decision of divine revelation on this matter : If we consult that infallible oracle of truth, it will plainly answer, that man was introduced on the theatre of life to do, not his own will, but that of him that sent him ; and then to return—to give an account of his embassy, and take an immutable station in an endless future life according to the final award of the author of his being.

BUT to prepare the way for this, it must be added, that

PROP. II. *To every man sent into this world, a certain work is assigned as his errand.*

THIS must be granted, unless we would assert, either that he was sent here to do nothing—or to cut out his own business, and dispose of himself at his own pleasure. But then, in either case, we must consent to be reckoned advocates for palpable absurdities. If we pretend that man was sent here to do nothing, we cannot but allow that his coming into this world was in vain ; to have remained a mere non-entity would have been equally profitable to the universe, and far more honorable for himself : This idea reduces the noblest

creature in this lower world to the abject rank of a supernumerary in creation—a mere excrescence on the face of the moral world—and nothing better than a hanger-on in the scale of existence. In vain, too, on this supposition, were all the rational, and all the active powers of his nature. Why were these exalted capacities bestowed, if they must ever remain of no use? And must they not remain such, if they are never to act? But why should they act, if they have nothing to do?

If, to escape these absurdities of the first, we embrace the second side of this dilemma—and frankly own, that every man had his errand in coming into life; but contend, at the same time, that it was left to himself to appoint it; we shall only exchange one absurdity for another. From the nature of a creature, nothing is more inseparable than absolute dependence on its Creator: To make an independent creature is a contradiction; omnipotence itself could not produce such an effect. But just such a work must be found in a man thus left to fix what shall be his errand into being; for then none but himself must claim a right to give him law—he alone may decide what shall be duty, and what would be sin—he can stand at the judgment-seat of no other being—he is his own master—and by his own award alone he must stand or fall. In a word, if this were indeed the footing on which man exists in life, it were impossible that his Maker should pretend to give him a law—or call him to any future account of his conduct—or reward or punish him for any thing he had done, or in any respect presume to treat him as a subject of his government.

FROM a supposition thus contradictory, and fraught with such consequences, reason turns away with horror. Granting then, that every man has some errand into life, it cannot but conclude, that the appointment of it is the prerogative of God alone. And scripture

assures that, as such, God has used it. The work assigned to man is there found to be divinely prescribed, both as to its nature and extent: This is not less true as it respects his general calling as a man, than as it relates to his particular calling as a christian: Nor does it less properly apply to his special department in life, and to every relation belonging to it; whether he is considered as a master or a servant—a parent, an husband or a child—a ruler or a subject—a preacher or an hearer.

As a man, the work assigned him is obedience, or conformity of heart and life to God's perfect law:— But of the same man, considered as a sinner, and a sinner under a dispensation of the covenant of grace in the gospel, it is required, as the work of God, that he believe in his Son whom he hath sent. This is the only term of his justification, or acceptance with God; and upon it depend that love by which faith worketh—that repentance which mourns for sin, as the abominable thing which the LORD hates; and the murderous enemy which pierced that Saviour to whom faith has been looking—and that obedience too which flows from love to God, for all his perfections, as seen in the face of JESUS CHRIST—and besides which no obedience can be acceptable with him.

To secure the possession of this faith, then, ought to be the chief business of every sinner under the gospel. But faith is the act of an heart entirely renewed by the spirit of God in regeneration: It never was exercised by one in the state of its natural, unconquered depravity. If, then, it be necessary to obtain faith, it is not less so to obtain regeneration as indispensable to it; and hence the sinner is bound to seek for every thing which God has thought proper to appoint, as a step leading to this change of heart; for the reasonable pursuit of any end implies due attention to all the means in the way to it. The man who sincerely aims at regenera-

tion, then, will earnestly seek for that humiliation, by the application of the law to his heart, which usually precedes it---and which is necessary to cut the sinner off from all hopes arising from his own righteousness: but humiliation is the result of real conviction of sin, danger, and impotency---this arises from knowledge of the law as holy, spiritual and perfect. To communicate this knowledge God has commanded it to be written and preached. It is, therefore, the duty of every sinner to read that writing, and hear that preaching, as much as to seek after that faith which, if ever it cometh, cometh in that way. Thus we see what is the one thing needful for the sinner.

BUT has the regenerate and sanctified man no business assigned to him also? Yes. True grace is a living principle: if living, then active; if active, it is so only in a course of obedience: and that obedience is the issue of love. Love to God, then, with all its attendant graces and fruits, in a life of holiness, ever aiming at God's glory as the ultimate end it would pursue; this is the work of every day divinely prescribed to the christian in his general calling: A work in every part of which he must labor for constant growth, and in the whole of it persevere to the end of his days.

It is not, however, to be forgotten, that the particular calling of the christian implies peculiar duties, as well as the general; and his attention to these is not less requisite than to those. If to this object we apply the descriptive words in the text, they will inform us that the works to be done in it are not *our own works*---not the pleasing our own appetites or fancies---not *the works of vanity and folly*---not the achievements of wit and humor---not the manœuvres of diversion or amusement---much less can this consist in *the works of the flesh*---those dead works which are not improperly branded as the works of the devil---works which CHRIST and his grace were never design-

ed to encourage, but destroy. Nor, finally, are these duties allied to *the works of the world*—to the learning its arts, or acquiring its advantages—to the copying its fashions, or imbibing its sentiments—to the heaping up its riches, or climbing to the highest pinnacle of its honors. No! neither this—nor that, nor all the works, in this fruitless groupe, can claim a place among those which are assigned to the christian's particular calling. These, as we are instructed by the text, are none other than “The works of him that sent us into life.” That is, the *works* which God has commanded—*works* with which he never fails to co-operate—*works* by which his cause is served, and his religion honored; by which his name is glorified—his moral perfections imitated—and the bright example of his dear Son heartily and universally followed. Such, and such only, are the works which furnish the christian's business in life, and constitute the special errand on which he continues in it, from the day of his conversion to that of his death. In these he persists with growing ardor to the end; and when his Master cometh, he will find him so doing.

AND if this is the character of the true christian, as such, it will not fail to mould that of the man, in every relative department of life into its own likeness. This will display in him all that, in a state of imperfection, is, or can be, included in the idea of a faithful father, or an obedient child—of a tender husband, or a sincere friend—of a master whose justice is tempered with kindness—or a servant whose fidelity is proof against corruption—of a wise ruler, or a loyal subject—of a fruitful hearer, or a painful preacher of the word of God.

BUT the importance of the character last mentioned—its near relation to the heavenly Preacher speaking in the text—and especially the occasion which calls us to attend to it at this time, all concur to persuade

me to wave the consideration of the other particular callings assigned to christians ; and here to pause and enquire what is that work which heaven has marked out for the Preacher of the word ; and in the execution of which he may be said to be working the work of him that sent him ?

AND here we cannot fail to be struck with horror at the sight of indolence and lazy inactivity—of pamperings and idleness in men clothed with this sacred character. Indulging to these enormities the Preacher must have forgotten that the errand upon which he was sent into the church, was *work*, and not play.—Nor will it, perhaps, be much more easy to reconcile with the requisition of this text a gospel-minister's employing himself in the concerns of the world, and spending his time and talents in studies which reach no higher than the earth : Poetry, painting and music—Geometry and architecture—History and geography ; with all the other arts and sciences, may laudably be pursued by a genius adapted to them : and for the discoveries made by such pursuits, the world should never forget its obligations to the great men who have made them. These fields are wide and unenclosed. To the walks they open, all are welcome—nay, all are invited, who are not called to an higher, and more important work, which requires all their abilities and all their time.

BUT when any man is so called—has accepted the appointment—and voluntarily devoted himself to that high and arduous employment, it may be queried whether he has not then bid farewell to every other : and, rightly concluding that the Father of spirits both can and will raise up among the other ranks of literary men, a number sufficient to cultivate every one of the interests of the republic of letters, whether the pious divine, when tempted to engage in these studies, will not say to the solicitor, “ *I am pre-engaged, and*

must be excused. I am doing a great work and I can not come down. How can I answer for letting the great work cease while I descend to parley with thee? With bended knees, and hands uplifted towards heaven, I have consecrated all my time—my talents, and my labors to the service of the sanctuary. The law of God is upon me; and I have left myself no power to draw back. All I am is dedicated, as Corban, to the work of the temple; to alienate a part to a foreign service, then, would be sacrilege; not only as it would defecate the thing thus rendered profane, but especially as it would rob God of that to which he had a right by consecration, super-added to every other possible claim. Not less extensive and arduous is the work of the gospel-minister, than it is honorable and august! So arduous that an angel might tremble to undertake it—so extensive that the prince of prophets did once plead to be excused from it, and the prince of apostles cried out, under a sense of its weight, who is sufficient for these things? It is to preach the law, so as to rouse sinners from their security, and convince them of both their danger and their sin. It is, more especially, to unfold the gospel in all its glories; and to exhibit the Saviour in all his fulness; in all his beauty. It is to blow the silver trumpet in Zion, and call the convicted sinner, by faith, to come to CHRIST for life—to come, though conscious of an entire want of every good—though without money and without price. It is to urge on men a constant attendance on every mean of grace; and, by removing their objections, to open their way to the refuge CHRIST. It is to shew the method of grace in the conversion of sinners—to explain the nature and use of conviction—to point out the views and exercises included in true humiliation, and the degree to which it must come—to unfold the manner of that illumination in which the spirit of God

opens to the sinner the door of hope, and sets CHRIST, and the plan of recovery by him, full in view—the charms by which he draws the soul to CHRIST, and brings it to consent to choose him and be his for ever. It is to point out the benefits of that union with CHRIST which commences with this closing act of faith—from justification, by the free imputation of his righteousness—to adoption into the rank of children of God, with all its privileges—especially that of his spirit to dwell within them, and there to perform all the works of a spirit of adoption—to sanctification—to growth in every grace—to joy unspeakable—to assurance of hope—to perseverance therein to the end of life—to perfection in the end, and entrance upon the inheritance then, which is incorruptible, and fadeth not away.

—THIS is the work in which the preacher is required to feed CHRIST's sheep and lambs—to strengthen the weak—to heal the wounded—to encourage the doubting, and reclaim the backslider—The bonds of the Lord are upon him to refute errors—to confound gain-sayers—yea, to open and defend every revealed truth.

If these things are not enough to represent this office as momentous in itself, and tremendous in its consequences—let us look yet further into it, and see the minister called to reprove the offender—to succour the tempted—to confront the pleas and baffle the attempts of the grand adversary—to comfort the sad heart—to instruct the ignorant and settle the wavering soul. Let us follow him into his various walks, and behold him now dispensing the seals of the covenant—and now visiting the sick and the dying—and now governing the church, or engaged in its offices of public devotion—at one time addressing the consciences of his hearers for God—at another addressing the throne of grace for them—here disputing against ene-

mies—there catechizing the youth—by day intent on his public labors—by night immersed in meditation and absorbed in prayer.

AFTER an attentive consideration of the real minister in all these attitudes, what shall we say of the sphere in which he moves? Must we not own that this is a task which embraces, at once, every thing necessary as a mean for convincing and converting sinners—for comforting and edifying saints—for building up the church of CHRIST—and, in a word, for presenting all their people without spot to God at last—or at least for keeping their own garments clean from the blood of all that perish? And if it does, who can avoid trembling for the earthen vessel to which all this treasure is committed? Who would not bless God for the man who is enabled to be faithful in it, and continues to the end, thus working the work of him that sent him?

BUT this thought calls up our attention to

PROP. III. *That for the discharge of the task required, Providence has allotted to every man his day.*

THIS allowance was equally to be expected from the wisdom and the goodness of him that sent him into life. To assign the work and yet refuse time enough for its performance, would be like withholding the straw, and still demanding the bricks in full tale. The immortal creature, full of the prospects of an everlasting existence—in a world where all is perfection, possesses the present life, as a season in which he must prepare for it. That is a state of retribution according to the moral fitness of things; this is, therefore, a state of probation designed to give such a display of the real character of men, as shall fully justify the final settlement of their fate in that. Human life, then, in a general view, may be considered as the day intended in the text: nothing beyond its line can be called man's accepted time—not a moment

further can he reasonably look for his day of salvation. But even in this period all parts are not equally advantageous for the discharge of the important offices confined to it—there are special seasons of grace in it when all means are enjoyed—and every power of body and mind possessed in their vigor to enable us to improve them; and especially when the Holy Spirit is striving with men—these may emphatically be denominated their DAY: but so also in general, as well as to these parts, this name may be applied with the strictest propriety, because; 1. *Like a natural day, its length is fixed, and its bound impassable.* 2. *Because it is one of the least divisions of time: in this point men love to deceive themselves; ever presuming on their long to-morrow—they spin out an eternal scheme for their little day: they treat their time as if it was never less for spending: they feel their day no nearer to its close than when it first began.* With infinite kindness heaven has confronted this delusion in the Bible. To convince us that our time is short, terms are ever used which might finish procrastination.—Hence it is not called an age—a cycle—or a year—nay, it will not bear the name of a month, or a week—it is often called a dream—a shadow—a tale—and the best and highest denomination of it is, a *day*. 3. *This is given it to intimate that it is ever slipping away—it never standeth still—no, not for a moment; the night cometh—it is ever coming nearer, and soon may be expected actually to arrive—no wing is more unwearied—and none so rapid in its flight, as the wing of this our fleeting day.* But it deserves our particular attention here, that this little period admits no plural number—it is not called *days*; as if a man might expect more than one season to be granted him for probation: it is *day* in the singular; because no man ever saw, none ever shall see it return upon him when it has once passed away—not need it be repeated

since it was just long enough, and no more, for answering all its ends, by one revolution.

We may therefore proceed with confidence in affirming, in

PROP. IV. *That nothing in the great business of life can be done when this little period has elapsed.*

Thus are we taught, even by our text, whenever that moment is come, then *no man can work*. Whatever powers might once have been used, they are now fled—whatever opportunities were once enjoyed, they are now gone—whatever means of grace were once afforded, they now are far out of reach, as if they had never been. For now *it is night*, nor does it bear this name without a reason: By it is manifestly meant the state on which we enter at the solemn hour of death. This is indeed a state of most exquisite sensibility, and unceasing exertion—a state in which no moment's slumber can ever light on the mental eye-lid—and the wakeful subjects rest not day nor night inactive. It is nevertheless to be acknowledged, that the word which tells us that there is neither knowledge, nor wisdom, nor repentance, nor device in the grave, conveys a meaning not less important than it is true. It refers not only to the state of the lifeless corpse which lies mouldering in the dust—it also speaks of the whole man considered in relation to his moral agency in a state of trial; this it declares to be now finished as really as his day of life: so entirely finished, that not one act can now be added to the list of those deeds done in the body for which the great tribunal will reckon with him: then can no man mend an ill condition, or undo one sinful deed: in that state no past mistakes in conduct can be rectified—nor one neglect of duty there supplied. In this view it is compared to night that steals on at the close of day: Nor can we say the figure is either forced, or fetched from afar—if we expect that death, like night, is a

time of darkness when men cannot see to work the works of the day—like night it is the season, not of working, but of sleep—when no power is left for doing the business unfinished in the day time; and this sleep is but a preface to a most sure awaking when the night is past, and the morning of the resurrection come; it holds its prisoners in chains 'till then: and then will release them from its jurisdiction, and deliver them up to their final Judge. Nor did it exempt its prisoners from all preludes of their future doom. It opened on the conscience of each, an infallible presentment of his own portion: it began the retribution which the last judgment will but complete. At the moment when the spirit, dislodged of its clay-tenement, was called to return to God who gave it—that all-important transaction passed between him and it in secret, which shall be ratified at the great day, before the eyes of assembled worlds. Its state was then unalterably fixed—fixed for eternity. That was found to be a state unmixed—and whether it was weal or woe, each lot was perfect. This perfect lot was fixed in congruity with the temper found prevailing then, and with the steps that had prepared the subject for it: death makes no change of nature or of state—what it finds it confirms—it removes from every opposite—it completes for a duration never to be ended. He that is filthy then must be filthy still; and he that is holy at that moment shall remain so still.

Nothing, then, can be more evident than that which now comes as the conclusion of the whole matter, viz.

PROP. V. Every man is obliged to have all his work done, before that period arrive.

SUCH was the reasoning of the blessed Jesus on this subject, even when applied to himself. “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day.” And is not this obligation equally strong on man, whose

eternal all depends on his inch of time? Some of the things which have already been spoken will suffice to shew the justice of this inference. This day was all the space allowed to man for the business on which he was sent into life. If this business is not finished before that day is over, it never can; if one hour might have completed the work, it cannot be allowed: if another sermon might have sufficed to accomplish this great end, not all the gold of Ophir can purchase it: if one Sabbath more would have secured all, no entreaties of his own can avail to procure it, and no mediators can obtain it for him. If any part is found then not done, it must remain so forever: and if it must, the man himself is undone too. His errand into life is lost, and he must answer for it to him that sent him: all his talents have been squandered away, and he must soon pass a solemn reckoning for them all. This must be done at a judgment-seat, where truth fills the bench, and justice holds the balance. There sentence will pass upon every misimprovement according to its guilt, and, if it will, we may be assured, then, that to the man found in the unhappy case here considered, every talent given—every year, month and day indulged him—nay, life itself will become a curse—for, at that bar, every privilege abused—every opportunity slighted will be an article of the indictment against the sinner sifted there. The talent buried will destroy no less surely than the talent squandered—and neglects of duty will condemn as well as the most overt crimes.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

LET us all then, consider, with most serious attention, what is the footing on which we stand. Sent into life on an errand all-important—indulged with various talents fitting for its execution—limited to a short and definite season for accomplishing it—uncer-

rain how soon it may expire—but well assured that the moment that puts a period to it shall list us at the bar of him that sent us ; and there bring us to account for the business of our mission ; to account, at our peril ; our fate for eternity depending on the single question, *is this errand done, or not ?*

2. PLACED on a footing thus hazardous, ought we not solemnly to examine whose works are these which have hitherto employed us ? Go to, ye impious and prophane ; ye deists and infidels, how long shall it be, ere you cease to do the works of the devil ? From the lip of infallibility dropped this maxim of incontestible truth, *his servants ye are to whom ye obey*. Is it not then high time for you to sit down and count the cost ? Busied in the works of darkness, ye have chosen to be recognized as servants of the prince of darkness : But have ye also come to a resolution to sit down content with his wages ? No ! contentment with damnation is a figment too stupid to be espoused—and too gross to be taught even by infidels. What remains, then, but to quit the service, if you are not willing to receive the reward ? Between this work and its wages, the connexion is natural. But this is not all ; the servants of satan are pronounced his children too ; ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do, was once said to servants of this class, by that mild and gracious teacher that spake as never man spake. And, shielded by an authority so august as this, an apostle applied this character to an eminent sinner, in this cutting sarcasm, O ! thou full of all subtilty and wickedness—thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, how long wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord ?

SIMILAR to this, in its general nature and final doom, is the character of those sinners who are employed in the works of the flesh. Inspiration allows the hope of no harvest, but corruption, to be reaped from the seed

they are thus busied in sowing. Nor will the issue be more desirable which is to be expected from serving the world. This is an occupation inconsistent with the service of God: from it, therefore, is to be received no higher reward than the world can give.

HAS it not been already proved that no work was our errand into life, save the work of God who sent us? How far, then, has this work been our business? Whether is it yet accomplished? Or how much of it remains undone? These are enquiries which merit the serious attention of every mortal: and with them my subject binds me this day to pose the conscience of every hearer. Speak, then, thou heaven-commissioned monitor within! I charge thee, in the name of that awful Judge, who retains thee as the witness of what passes in the human breast, hold not thy peace on this occasion: declare the whole truth—suffer not the man to be deceived: nor dare to slumber whilst he is tottering down to endless woe! Is he about the work of God, or not? Is that work now finished? If not, what means this crying *peace, peace*? This giddy dance after vanities? This indolence and ease? This idle sauntering through life, as if nothing were to do? Surely the heart of such a trifler may meditate terror; his day is closing: his night is coming; his reckoning is at the door: and no preparation made to meet it!

WHERE, then, is the secure sinner, that we may fall upon his neck and weep over him? Where is the poor man that has, 'till now, mistaken or forgotten his errand into life, that we may pray him, in CHRIST'S stead, to rouse to thought! Fellow-mortal! awake! The night cometh! Thy great work is all before thee. Thy time expires! Every moment is precious! What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon God thy Maker, that thou perish not! Life is on the wing: thy eternal fate hangs suspended on the breath now in thy nostrils: O be wise to day: Attend the

means of grace now—lest thy wailings for neglecting them should begin to-morrow, and never see an end: Flee to the open arms of Jesus now, and so escape the horrors of a soul chained to the rock of everlasting despair, while boiling billows of Almighty vengeance are rolling over it for ever and ever!

3. WHAT saith this solemn theme to the believer loitering out his working day? Speaks it no reproof to the professor who, wearied in the race, stands still—nor hastens to the goal to grasp the crown? Where is the happy man who has not cause to be deeply humbled before the Lord, that so little of his day has been employed in his Master's work? Was your day but just sufficient for your errand? How, then, can ye afford to lose so great a part of it as runs to waste? O! have ye not reason to mourn your murdered hours? Hours, nay, years, murdered by slumbering—by trifling—by standing idle—or by toiling in a foreign service! Rouse, then, gird up your loins; be in earnest about your Father's business. Remember, your day is short: with many of you it is far spent already! It hastens to its end: you have not another hour to spare: Is it not the eleventh with some, at this very moment? May we not see how the shadows of the evening lengthen apace? Our sun is setting, and our day for working for the glory of God, or good of men, when once gone, never, never can return. O! then let us all pick up the fragments of our remaining time—improve them all for God: Weary not, nor wish a reprieve from your work while it is day. Eternity is long enough to rest. The night will come more welcome, if the day was spent in its proper business.—Sweet is the sleep of that long night which seals the eyelids of the saint, who made ready for it by the faithful labors of his day: Joyful the waking that awaits him at the blest morning of the resurrection: Rich the recompence of all his pains, which must be found in

the plaudit of the final Judge ; and glorious the harvest of eternal joy reaped from that precious seed that was once steeped in penitential tears when sowing here below !

4. Do all these considerations seem too distant to affect—and therefore too feeble to rouse us to our work ? Let us then attend to one which brings its object near. Let us unstop our ears to the voice of heaven, which now calls to us more loudly than it has been wont. Let us uncloseth our eyes to the affecting works of Providence done all around us, to engage our attention to our proper business. What mean the various instances of death which our eyes have lately seen—and some of which our hearts have keenly felt ? Does not each beckon to us from the dark and silent mansion of the night ? Do not all accost us in these stimulating accents, “ Arise, ye mortals : formed to
“ think & reason, how can ye pass on through life heed-
“ less and unthinking ; as the ox goeth to the slaugh-
“ ter, or the fool to the correction of the stocks ? Con-
“ scious that an important errand brought you into
“ the world, why do ye consent to run the risk of dy-
“ ing before you have it done—yes, before many of
“ you have seriously considered what it is ? To day,
“ if you expect ever to hear the voice of God with
“ pleasure, to day harden not your hearts. Haste,
“ make ready your accounts—the Judge is at the door.”*

5. AMID calls thus serious, it is no small comfort to the serious mind, to find, in a world full of such sinful mortals, any examples formed on the maxim of our text. Nor is it less ground of sorrow when such, among men,

* The author had been called in the course of a few weeks to bury a venerable father, *Ætat.* 91, and a beloved son, *Ætat.* 9, besides several near friends, some of whom were members of this church : and one a member of this Presbytery, viz. the Rev. WILLIAM DAVIDSON, of Londonderry, *Ætat.* 77.

especially among ministers, are snatched away from the earth.

BUT, sorrowful as it is, we often find it used as the monitory dealing of a wise Providence : And wisdom will teach mankind to profit by it. Do not all such dispensations shew, that Heaven needs not the instruments it uses ? That it can do its work without them ? Should we not learn from them to cease from all dependence on man—to trust God alone in every case—to give glory, not to the means, but only to God, when any good is done, by word or ordinances, to ourselves or others ? Shall it not prevail with us, more than ever, to live on God, where all is reality : and to be more weaned from the world, where the best enjoyments, and the dearest friends are comforters fugitive and uncertain ? Might it not set us on tip-toe for heaven ; and excite us now to rise—to trim our lamps and be ready to go out and meet our bridegroom ? But, especially, ought such providences to make every man, and every minister more diligent in his work. By such deaths the number of working hands is lessened, and the work, of course, grows heavier on them that remain ; and why should it not also stir us all up to look to and wait on him, with whom the residue of the Spirit is, for a new supply of laborers in his vineyard ; of laborers who will not work the work of the LORD deceitfully—nor loiter life away in sloth—nor waste it out in foreign service—but faithfully attend the work of him that sent them, and be found so doing when their LORD shall come.

By this time, I trust, you have anticipated the particular application of the maxim in my text, which was the design of handling it on this occasion. For all who knew the life of that venerable servant of JESUS CHRIST, whose remains we expect, on the morrow, to commit to the silent tomb, over which I now stand ; will confess that this text was the motto of his

Every day. It is the worthy and reverend JOSEPH PAINCE: that dear and excellent man, who had the world his last adieu; and winged his way from us to his Master's joy, on Saturday the 15th instant. For this his widow and children are now bathed in tears: for this the tide of grief swells my own bosom: for this the briny drops are seen to trickle adown many a cheek to day; and for this the whole assembly is in mourning. I doubly feel the stroke. He was my brother and my friend—and for more than twenty years, an important member of the venerable Presbytery to which this church belongs. I could not do justice to this affecting occasion—to my own feelings, or to yours, did I suppress the mention of him in this place to-day. Little aid is needed from me to embalm a memory which of itself will remain fragrant when all our heads are hid in the dust. It shall, therefore, be my aim to say as little, not as much as I can, on a subject so nearly touching my heart.

THIS beloved man was born of reputable parents, in the town of *Boston*, on the 12th day of April, 1723. Early marks of genius encouraged them to place him under the means of the best education—and his uncommon proficiency there suggested the most flattering hopes to the family and friends. Thus he advanced in rapid improvements, far above his years, until he had completed the seventh of his age—when, by a Providence deep and mysterious, his morning sun shut in—a sudden accident destroyed the sight of one of his eyes, and obliged him to be recalled from the school in the country, to his father's house in town! Pained as he was by this sad disaster, and enfeebled by the means used to remove it, he was constrained to intermit his course of study for a season. No sooner, however, had the inflammation subsided, than he returned to it in a school in town, with redoubled thirst of knowledge. Here he soon acquired considerable skill in

Writing, in arithmetick and the Latin Classics; and did fair, very soon, to have been numbered among the sons of *Harvard University*: When, alas! at the age of fourteen years, another accidental stroke deprived him of the remaining eye—and, at an unsuspecting moment, nipped the buds of his own fair prospects—and withered the blossoms of his father's hopes!

No longer could he prosecute his favorite studies: nor indulge any more the hope of shining in a literary line. The tedious illness, occasioned by this sad event, and the unheard of severities of the surgeons who attended him in it, debilitated his constitution, depressed his spirits and brought on a melancholy; which, for four months, wrapt his mind in a darkness still more gloomy than that which had drawn the curtain of perpetual night around his body. During this gloomy period, he confined himself to a dark closet, and chose to live alone.

This, however, was the season which the spirit of God had chosen for opening up, to the view of his mind, the guilt, the depravity and the danger in which he came into the world. Sinai thundered in his ears. The perfection of the law which he had broken—and the rectitude of the Judge who, with inflexible severity, demanded full satisfaction both to its precept and its penalty, appeared before him arrayed in all their terrors. Hope fainted away. His heart confessed the justice of his doom; and he died to all further expectation of help from himself. Convinced that no ability remained in him, either to will, or do what might conduce in the least degree to his salvation; he fell at the feet of a Sovereign whom nothing could hinder to save, or to destroy. Disabled to read the scriptures, he was all eagerness to hear them read and talked of. A monitor within still bad him pray; and, with many groans and cries, he daily did besiege the throne of grace, until, at length, it

pleased him that lies upon it to appear for his relief. In that dark closet the divine light shone into his astonished mind. The doors of hope and heaven were flung open to the wall. The gospel-plan was unfolded before him. It appeared all-perfect and glorious : and his heart was ravished at the view. A divine Redeemer, who could, without robbery, claim equality with the Father God—yet willingly becoming man—obeying—suffering—bleeding—dying as a vicarious substitute instead of his own criminal creatures—bearing their sins in his own body on the accursed tree ! This, O ! This was the sight which at once cleared his clouds, and healed his wounds—and gave his bleeding conscience peace ! He gazed—he believed—he loved—he grasped the lovely object in his arms, and gave his heart away. Then was his darkness changed into day : then was he drawn from the horrid pit, established on the Rock of ages as his only trust—and the new song filled his mouth. Now did he begin to live indeed—The love of CHRIST overwhelmed his soul, and he called all around him to praise that Sovereign grace which took away external light from the eyes of his body, and poured light, heavenly and divine, on the eyes of his mind.

His heaven, however, was not brass, and its aspects often changed. Dejection of spirit naturally grew out of his affliction. He mourned the loss of all his hopes of usefulness in the world : he had, from his earliest years, aspired to be a Preacher ; and to be cut off from that favorite design made the loss of his eyes a double trial. The mournful hymn composed by him on that occasion, will shew how deeply it * afflicted him.

NOR was this melancholy frame unprofitable to him : from the temptations of youth, that age of dan-

* See Appendix No. 1

ger, he was happily preserved; and his attention entirely fixed on serious concerns. He made religion his business; and his profiting in it was soon apparent to all. His memory was strong in a degree peculiar to himself: it seemed scarcely capable of forgetting any thing worthy of notice, which he once had heard. By the readings which, he ever anxiously solicited where he could, it was quickly stored with a treasure of both doctrinal and practical divinity; this, animated by his own experience, soon rendered him an able counsellor to such as were engaged in pursuit of vital religion.

THE sermons of the best divines, once heard, or read, were made so much his own, that he could repeat them with great exactness: and for this service he was often sent for, both to private societies, and public assemblies—From this exercise he rose to be frequently called to exhort and pray; in places where the general effusion of divine influence, which prevailed at that time, led the people to flock together for devotional purposes almost every day. His labors in this way were so acceptable, that his audience soon grew too numerous for a private house—and thus, to satisfy the earnest demands of the people, he was carried up to the pulpit, and began to preach, in the 19th year of his age.

IN this important undertaking he met with much opposition, both at home and abroad.(1) But his blessed Master was eminently with him; awakened sinners flocked after him—the hearts of warm christians were opened to encourage and protect him, and the best ministers of his time took him by the hand.

IN the sacred desk he shone in many respects unrivalled. The brilliancy of his fancy was a source of eloquence which few of his contemporaries could ex-

ceed. The grammatical correctness of his language—the natural ease of his style—the beauty of his similes—the aptness of his allusions—the instructive chain of important and well connected truths—the vein of exalted piety and spiritual devotion which ran through his compositions, and especially the pathos and vivacity with which he delivered them, soon made his sermons to be listened to with uncommon eagerness, by admiring multitudes.

As the use of his talents was called for every where around, he travelled and labored in the vineyard, through all the New-England governments, with such unwearied assiduity, that he might almost be said to preach and pray without ceasing. By the help of his travelling companions and other friends, he kept a diary of his labors : it is now in my hands : I have been able to read only so much of it as related to the travels of three years. (b) In that period, I think, he seldom passed two days together with journeying, and his sermons average nearly at ten for every week. He then preached usually thrice on every Lord's day, and very often closes his remarks with this Epiphonema, “ O how good is the Lord to so poor a creature !
 “ Blessed be his name for so much of his gracious
 “ presence as enabled me to-day to speak with free-
 “ dom, and hope with some effect ; O how sweet is
 “ his house ! Verily I can testify that one day *there*, is
 “ better than a thousand elsewhere : and how glorious
 “ is his day ! ”

“ *These are my preparation-days*
 “ *When all my soul is dress'd :*
 “ *These Sabbaths shall deliver me*
 “ *To mine eternal rest(c).”*

(b) 1745, 1746, and 1747, in which he records with great exactness all his texts, the times and places where he preached upon them.

(c) Sometimes he composed an hymn to be sung before or after sermon : for a specimen see Appendix, No. III.

STORMS of persecution in those days did often bear upon his house—but it fell not. Encouraged by many marvellous interpositions of heaven on his behalf (*d*) he pursued his Master's work undaunted—He triumphed over all his enemies. Like the palm-tree he flourished in the house of the LORD—and by how much the more severely he was oppressed, by so much the more rapidly he grew. Heavenly showers fell on the mown grass in the church, wherever he went. The awakenings—the conversions, and the special comforts of many were dated from seasons of their attendance on his ministry: and the blessing of numbers ready to perish came upon him.

His experimental acquaintance with religion—with God and his own heart, increased apace. To a tenacious memory he added a judgment correct and mature. By the aids of his readers he made familiar to him the principal writers of all parties in divinity, and could quote them with surprising exactness and ease. He was an acute casuist, and a great Textuary. His BIBLE was the compass by which his course was steered. Few understood “that *book of books*” so well; and none remembered it better. The *Westminster confession and catechisms* he esteemed the best summary-system of divinity of human composition, and the doctrines there taught he often explained and defended, like a workman that needed not to be ashamed.—When I have considered the peculiar disadvantages of his situation, I have sat with admiration to hear him deliver sermons so correct in style—so methodically arranged—so close in the connection of their parts—so clear and judicious in their distinctions—so sound and consistent as a beautiful whole—that the fourest critics could hardly censure, and the ablest divines could scarcely exceed them.

How often have we all seen him melted in tears of compassion for sinners, while he brandished the two-edged sword of the spirit before them, or shot the legal arrow at their hearts ! Hell seemed to be open before him, and destruction had no covering—He brought the audience to the mount which might be touched, and which burned with fire—all its lightnings were flashed in the startled sinner's face, and its awful thunder seemed to roar in his ears.

BUT how extatic were his joys when he fetched from Gilead the all-healing balm; poured it into the rankling wound of the convinced conscience, and, with it, bound up the bleeding or the broken heart ! As a kind angel then he seemed to preach the glad news of peace on earth, and good will to men : and as a faithful prophet he would often pray and wrestle for the effectual application of them.

THE form of Presbyterian church-government was that on which he settled after long deliberation : he was a Presbyterian, not from education, but principle. But, far from straining at gnats, or contending for the rye of mint and cummin, his enlarged soul was easy in circumstantialities, though in essentials none was more strict. He was no bigot to a party—his arms embraced, and his heart loved all that appeared to love his dearest LORD.

As his travels were great, and his dangers many, so in all his changes he appears to have been the peculiar care of Providence : He made conscience of noticing its various steps towards him : and it would be easy to fill a volume with the accounts he has given of them. *(d)* But among them all, none appeared to him more worthy of grateful remembrance than that which bestowed on him a pious, prudent and affectionate partner. He married Mrs. *Sarah Carpenter*, daugh-

(d) For a specimen see Appendix No. IV.

ter of Captain *Ezekiel Carpenter*, at Attleborough, on the 30th of July, 1747, by whom he had twelve sons and one daughter, of whom only seven sons are yet living.

AFTER various changes of place he was persuaded for three years to fix his residence at Durham, as assistant to the Rev. Mr. Gilman: from thence he was removed to Madbury, where he labored for five years: at the expiration of which he was regularly ordained Pastor of the church at Barrington; in which relation he continued 16 years: but, on account of divisions among that people, and the failure of his support, he was, in the year 1765, dismissed from that charge at his own desire, and honorably recommended, by a large and Venerable Council, to the esteem and improvement of all ministers and churches of CHRIST, wherever it should please Divine Providence to order his lot.

Soon after this he removed to the Eastward, and labored in the North Parish in Pownalborough, until the year 1779, when the public calamities made it necessary for him to seek a settlement in some place more remote from danger. He then settled as Pastor of the church at Candia, for seven years; at the end of which he concluded, from the growing infirmities of age, it was not his Master's pleasure that he should enter into the pastoral relation any more.

HE never ceased, however, to labor in the vineyard at large. Early in the spring 1787 he made a visit to his only brother, in the city of New-York. There, and in New-Jersey, he was received as an angel, respected by ministers, and followed by the people of every denomination and every rank. In that journey he preached almost every day; and returned from it glorifying God. Constant to his purpose, he proceeded preaching the gospel occasionally in vacant churches—at other times in assisting his brethren in

the ministry—or in attending the meetings of the Presbytery, where his seat was never empty, unless some extraordinary event obliged it to be so.

Thus he persevered in the work of him that sent him, until the twenty-fourth of November last. That was a day of intense cold; but as it was the LORD's day, no severity of the weather could deter Mr. PRINCE from visiting the LORD's house. He was then engaged to preach at Manchester—and on his way to the church he received a shock of the palsy in one side. This did not prevent his going through the labors of the desk for that day: But it forbade his ever returning to it again. Not willing, however, to outlive his usefulness, he preached twice in private while under the disease. He was removed to this town on December 13th. A meeting with his friends here seemed to revive him—his animal spirits remained good—and his faculties unimpaired—he visited a number of his friends, and dined abroad several times. At length a strangury, which had sat down upon him from the time of his paralytic shock, grew so heavy as to bring on a fever and confine him to his bed. It was then his desire to send for his dear wife—adding as a reason that he never expected to go to Candia again. Soon after this he made his will. Then he said his mind was easy—he had nothing more to do with this world. While I was with him he seemed to enjoy a sweet frame of spirit: his reflexions on the ways of Providence towards him were instructive and animating: but his records of the rich experience he had of the power and sweetness of sovereign grace exceeded them all: One of these, which he enjoyed on his death-bed, he spoke of as one of the most clear and satisfying instances he had ever felt.

My affairs made it necessary for me to make a journey to Boston on the Monday preceding his death: he then felt better; and I flattered myself he might

have lived through the winter : But the next night his fever put on a more alarming appearance—it raged with increasing violence, until nine in the morning of Saturday the fifteenth of January; when he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, and entered into the joy of his LORD.

It was my misfortune to be deprived of his conversation the last week of his pilgrimage. But from the report of such as were about him, it appears he had a præsentiment of his approaching dissolution, and was fixed in the expectation of it before the Sabbath. On the preceding LORD's day he told his friends that he had kept that Sabbath with them, but should celebrate the next with his beloved LORD JESUS. Often afterwards did he express his earnest longings for that day, and his firm assurance that it would free him from all evil, and put him in full possession of all he wished. He would frequently enquire how near it was—and on being once told it was Friday, he blessed God that then his time was at hand : Solemn and affecting was the leave-taking of his family.—All-important the lessons which then dropped from his lips ! When this was concluded, he sent a most tender farewell to me, couched in terms which are enough to animate me under all my troubles.

I SHALL not attempt to do justice to his character ; that work is devolved on a better hand—from whom, I trust, you will, on the morrow, see a draught which will exhibit this man to God in his true colors. Then, I doubt not, you will behold with delight, all that is amiable in a man, or respectable in a gentleman—all that could be expected from a real saint in a state of imperfection—and all the qualities which compose the judicious divine—the animated preacher, and the faithful pastor of CHRIST's sheep and lambs. His country then will be taught to revere him as a patriot—his acquaintance will lament him as a faithful counsellor,

a tender comforter, and an instructive and chearful companion: His sympathy with the distressed, and his eagerness to relieve them, will then be made apparent to all: The modesty and temperance—the strict veracity and honest integrity—the candor and benevolence which marked his own moral character, while it shielded those of his friends from the shafts of slander, will then demand the veneration of every friend to virtue undisguised. His wounded household will then be joined, at once, by the public orator, and the public opinion, while their own feelings recognize him as the tender husband, the loving and careful father, and the inflexible friend.—To that orator, and that occasion, I resign the subject.—But to none, except his own family, will my heart permit me to resign the place of chief mourner: For no others loved him more when living—and none have received a deeper wound in his death. Through a period of more than twenty-five years, have I loved his acquaintance—our friendship was close and cordial; our intimacy unbounded. Early he won my heart, and thenceforth he ever grew on my esteem; and, were I at liberty this day to speak my feelings, my lamentations would imitate the strains of DAVID mourning for his JONATHAN.

BUT I must forbear. I suffer not alone.—In his death the whole church has received a stroke, which thousands will feel—and which all within its pale should mourn. A man of no ordinary degree of greatness, is fallen in Israel—is fallen at a time when errors spread, and dangers surround the camp: Fallen, while as capable as ever of distinguished usefulness to the cause of truth—while busied in the work of him that sent him—and ardent in lifting up his Master's standard against every error on the one hand, and every immorality on the other.

His brethren of the venerable Presbytery, to which he belonged, will mourn with me the loss of an en-

deared member of that body—who was ever punctual to its appointments, and made conscience of giving his attendance on all its diets; one whose judgment was never given until after mature deliberation—whose motions were seasonable and important, and his arguments clear and convincing—whose counsels were faithful—his opinions orthodox, and his whole spirit breathed order, charity and peace.

MINISTERS of the gospel, where he was known, generally loved and respected him—and will feel their hands weakened, and their hearts touched by his fall. Let us all join in praying that a double portion of his spirit may rest on every young Elisha that may be raised up to wear his mantle.

BUT, among all the thousands who enjoyed and valued the labors of the dear deceased, none have more cause for lamentation than the church and congregation usually worshipping in this place. Ah, how often have we rejoiced to ascend to mount Zion hand in hand with him—and delighted to go to the house of God in his company! How often have we been delighted to see him standing in this sacred desk, or seated at that sacred table—melted under divine truths—overcome with the love of God—and breathing after fuller conformity to his image, and more compleat enjoyment of himself! How often have our hearts burned within us while he unfolded the mysteries of redeeming love from the spot where now I stand—and the whole house rang with the glad sound of the silver trumpet of salvation!

BUT, alas, these hallowed seasons are over, and can return no more! There he must lie—silent as the tomb he inhabits! These lips, sealed in death, and cold as the clay with which they mingle, shall never accost you more with the words of life! No more shall they warm the hearts of saints, and comfort the sorrowful soul no more! No more shall they detect the vain pre-

sumer, nor unravel to the tempted the devices of Satan ! Nor shall they uncover the darkness of the horrid pit before the sinner again—nor warn the secure who is nodding on its brink !

There he lies—his work done—his treaty with you closed—and his account of it received in the court above ! Who among you remains still in the gall of bitterness ? He found you in full career to death and hell : He often labored—called, and wooed you to CHRIST and life. He often sweated and wept—and wasted strength and life to persuade you—and, after all, has he left you as he found you ? Has the fire melted, and the hammer broken others, while ye have obstinately withstood—and all his efforts for you were in vain ?—Now he is gone—to tell his Master the dismal tale !—O ! Let me ask the unawakened wretch, how wilt thou bear to see this venerable monitor at that day stand forth, at yonder dreadful bar, and relate, before the awful Judge, and the assembled universe, the story of every warning he has given you—of every offer made—of every menace thundered in your ears.—Yes, and rehearse in your hearing, every alluring promise—every rational motive with which he pressed you in his Master's name ? Sirs ! What can ye, then, expect ?—Surely your hearts may meditate terror, when you realize that every sermon he preached to you—every tear he shed over you—every groan he uttered—every drop of sweat—yea, and every bit of dust shaken from his feet, on this errand, will then rise and witness against you ; and the dreadful doom of Capernaum, Mat. xi. 23, shall be pronounced from that bench from which lies no appeal ! !

BUT, on the other hand, may I not comfortably hope that he shall then find some among you reserved for jewels in his eternal crown ? If your hearts have glowed while he fetched the live coal from the heavenly altar—if you have been awakened, or converted, or confirmed, or comforted under his ministry—you will

meet him, at that day, with joy unpeakable and full of glory. Let your eyes and ears be open now, to improve the present providence—and his death will preach to you as loudly as his lips have ever done.—These clay-cold hands will never more be stretched out to gather the lambs of the flock in his bosom—but, methinks, they now beckon to us. Speechless is that tongue which was wont to charm us here; yet it seems, in reason's ears, still to call us from the coffin and the shroud. Hark! 'Tis a voice from the tombs! It is the voice of our departed friend! He calls us to consider now the concluding proof of his religion. It stood the test of death. It seems to say “Behold the
 “ religion which I have preached: it is that by which
 “ I lived: It is that in which I died. It supported
 “ me in Jordan: And I can recommend it now, as
 “ the only sure way to these heavenly mansions. O
 “ my fellow-men, receive it and be blest! Hasten
 “ your habitual preparation to meet me here. I will
 “ run to meet and embrace you with joy unpeakable,
 “ and help to dry up all your tears in the sun-beams
 “ of eternal day.” “ But, if the unhappy sinners,
 “ with whom I have so often pleaded in my Master's
 “ name in vain, will still refuse to hearken and re-
 “ pent; I testify to them that all my pity for them, all
 “ my love to their immortal souls will not prevent my
 “ every sermon—and my every prayer—yes, and eve-
 “ ry particle of my entombed dust to rise and bear that
 “ witness against them, at the Sovereign's bar, the
 “ force of which they will neither be able to sustain
 “ nor evade.”

BUT time requires me now to close this service with a brief address, first to the mournful Relict, and secondly to the beloved children of the dear deceased, here present.

M A D A M,

YOUR years, your experience and your established character forbid me to treat with you as one under no

better dictates than those of nature, and mourning without hope. My own acquaintance with you assures me, that, far from seeking leave for the indulgence of animal passions, you are now kissing the rod you feel, and humbly adoring the hand which holds it. That all-gracious hand, I trust, will heal with Gilead's balsam, the wound its rod has made. I shall therefore suppose myself called now, rather to re-echo than to dictate the considerations by which heaven supports you. Your earthly husband, 'tis true, was one of the best, and now the tie of your temporal connexion with him is dissolved, and can never be renewed more. For this you mourn. But you mourn not for your departed friend. No. That cannot be. You believe, and with good reason too, that he is gone to his advancement—to his crown. It is for yourself and for your children we now see you mourn: But even here there are many considerations which ought to lay restraint on immoderate sorrow. Your long enjoyment of the most intimate converse with this holy man was your privilege and your honour.—This was continued in your possession every moment it was intended by your heavenly Father—that is, every moment it could be afforded you without breaking heaven's designs. Your piety forbids the wish to hold it a moment longer. Considering, then, that the high will of him, who is the Arbiter of all things—is now done—you will lay your hand upon your mouth, and be still. Following him as he did CHRIST, you know the separation which death has made between you will not last long. You will soon meet again—meet, with other joys than those which earth affords—and meet to part no more for ever. 'Till then, you will trust him who condescends to style himself the widow's God. Rely on him, who, though your Maker, vouchsafes to be your husband. This God will be sufficient for you, will make all your fiery trials, and

even this forest of bereavements to work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

SECONDLY, when I speak a word to the dear offspring of my departed Brother, I with the absent may consider themselves included with their present brethren; when they shall hear of the mournful transaction of this day.

My dear Friends,

I AM sure no words of mine are needed now to persuade you to consider the terms on which you this day stand. In giving you such a Father, heaven bestowed an honor reserved but for very few children in this declining age. The holy precepts which he delivered to you—the wholesome instructions which every day were gently distilling on you from his lips—the thousands of arguments he suggested to win your hearts to his Master and his religion—and the ten thousand prayers with which he besieged heaven for their success—and especially the heavenly example which he ever set you—all—all—will now rise up to your review, and rush on your remembrance.—Immersed in serious reflexions on these your advantages, you will not turn away the ear when your friend, and your dear and honored Father's friend would call you to enquire, this day, Why are all these privileges so soon cut off and ended? Whither are all these peculiar favors fled? But to help you to an answer here, let it also be asked, are they all lost? Have these pearls been trampled under foot—or cast behind your backs? Have no profitable impressions been made by them on your hearts—and no suitable fruits from them produced in your lives? I tremble for you! And in your honored Father's name—nay, rather in the name of your Father's God, I conjure you this day, to fall at the feet of sovereign grace, and, without a moment's longer delay, to surrender yourselves to CHRIST JESUS, not dare to be found

another day among the wretched ranks to whole damnation your own Father must heartily say amen : dare not to appear on the left hand of the Judge, while your loving parent takes the place of an accuser with him. Let not the ashes of your buried Father rise to attest your guilt : Can you bear to meet him on terms like these ? Can you support to see him stand forth then to remind you of all the tender admonitions—the melting tears—the ardent prayers he has spent upon you ? If not, then fly, O fly without delay, to the open arms of the once crucified, now reigning Saviour of sinners !

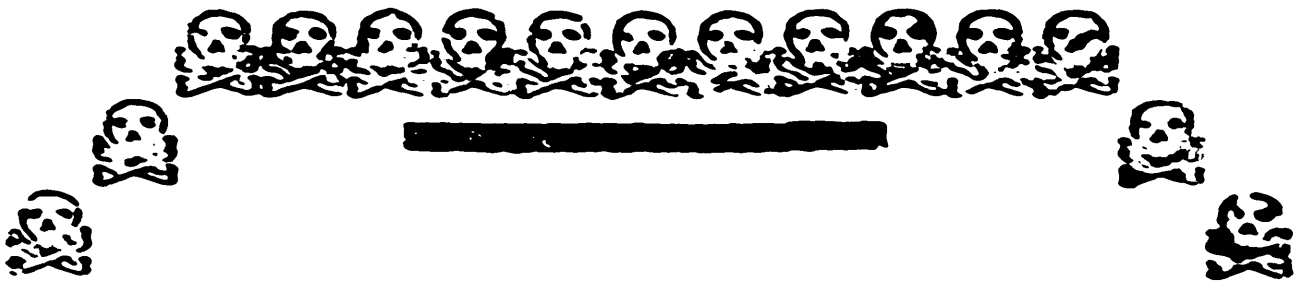
“ Believe, and take the promis’d rest ;

“ Obey, and be for ever blest.”

BUT if any of you have already learnt your father’s religion, you will suffer me to exhort you, especially, now to pick up the falling mantle he has dropt, and follow him. Look up with filial confidence to the great Father of the fatherless, who cannot die.—Draw nearer to him in obedience, and to each other in brotherly love. Endeavor to honor and prove your religion by conformity to the pattern set by its great Author ; and especially by every dutiful regard to your bereaved mother. Be zealous for the cause your Father pled—never desert it—you saw him seal its truth in death. Thus God will be a father to you : as such he will not fail to prove your comfort now, and portion for ever. This prospect may turn sorrow this day to rejoicing—to rejoicing on your own account—and even in the Providence that covers you with so many mournful marks this day : for, O ! the contrast in your beloved Father’s case. Here he was blind—there he sees face to face—here he was led about by the hand—there he flies on the wings of immortal joy—here he oft complained of felt-imperfection—there he is mature in the stature of the perfect man in CHRIST JESUS—here he frequently sat

mingling all alone—there he mingles with an innumerable company of angels—here he often found hardships from the wickedness of men—there he is surrounded by patriarchs and prophets, by apostles and evangelists—by all departed godly ministers—and all the spirits of just men made perfect! See how the heavenly throng clustered around him, when the everlasting doors were lifted up, and the heir of glory was ushered in! How did his beloved WHITEFIELD and PARSONS, with whom he takes up his lodging here in the silent mansion of the tomb—how did all his old acquaintance fall upon his neck! O what embraces! what mutual congratulations had him welcome, with ten thousand voices, to the realms of everlasting day! What songs of triumph, attuned to the occasion, made all the heavenly arches ring with “*blest*—“*sing and glory, and honor and power, to him that*—“*sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and*—“*ever!*”

BUT to trace him as escorted through the streets of the new Jerusalem—to soar with him to the top of yonder sacred mount, and see him clasped in the embraces of his loved Redeemer, and presented, by him, as the purchase of his blood, to his Father and *his* Father—to his God and *his* God—my strength is insufficient—my pinions fail—I drop the flight; and, with it, drop the subject, until the long-wished day shall come, when we shall see no more through a glass darkly, but behold, face to face, the unspeakable glories already possessed by saints departed, and reserved for all the rest—glories which no mortal eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor tongue told, nor heart conceived. But the day hastens on that shall declare it all. Let us all, then, hasten towards it, and meet it with becoming joy—And what is necessary to prepare us for it? What but to work the works of him that sent us while it is day—knowing that the night cometh when no man can work? A M E N.



A P P E N D I X.

THE things which follow, could not so conveniently be brought into the Sermon, and being thought by many who have seen them, worthy of a place in the public eye, they are here inserted in detached numbers ; but the reader may turn to them at the places where these numbers are referred to.

No I.

LINES COMPOSED BY THE
REV. JOSEPH PRINCE,

on the loss of his sight.

at 14 years of age.

GOOD Lord, restore to me my sight ;
That I may clearly see
The sun, in all its burning beams,
Which brightly shines on me.

A F F E N D I X.

O how shall I in darkness live,
Who once the light did see?
But, now from me it is conceal'd
Contented I must be.

Ah, now I never shall again
Behold the shining sun;
Which sends its beams all round the world,
Before its shining's done!

The sight, it is a precious thing,
And pleasant for the eyes;
To see the sun sending its beams
Down from the lofty skies.

Shall I in darkness live, who once,
Those glitt'ring stars did see?
Ah! now the clouds surround my soul;
In darkness I must be!

Well, since the Lord doth take away
The sight of both mine eyes;
O may I now contented be,
And not the red despise.

Afflictions may seem very hard,
When first God doth them lay.
But they are working for the best,
And will not last away.

Well, since the darkness is without;
Let me have light within:

A P P E N D I X.

That I may see, 'tis good for me
Afflicted I have been.

Though clouds all round me low'ring stand
Lord grant that I may say,
When sinners take the narrow path,
“ They're in the rightous way.”

As I can plainly testify
That narrow path's the best;
Lord, give me grace therein to walk,
Until I be at rest.

Within the paradise above,
Where christians happy be ;
Though here I am, in darkness, Lord,
There bid me hope to see.

Now unto the one God above,
(In persons there are three)
Be blessing, glory, and renown,
Amen, so let it be.

A P P E N D I X.

No. II.

IT appears from some parts of his Journal, as well as from some sheets handed in by his Son since his death, that Mr. Prince had no sooner commenced preacher, than opposition met him both at home and abroad. This began in Connecticut: where, at that time, the laws were not a little severe against itinerant preachers; and the magistrates no less officious in putting them in execution. These did repeatedly make him their prisoner; at their courts he was often arraigned for the atrocious crime of preaching the gospel: he was always found guilty; and, among other punishments, he was usually banished the government: and carried from constable to constable, 'till he was brought to its utmost limit. Divine Providence, however, overruled all these obstacles to the furtherance of the gospel. Mr. Prince's blindness never hindered him to appoint a number of times for preaching at divers places on his way: to fulfil these appointments, he needed both a horse and a guide: but, destitute of money to purchase the one, or hire the other, he was often reduced to straits on the account of both. It was a standing maxim with him to follow the cloud of providence, but never to out-run it. Confident that his Master was never at a loss for expedients to carry on his own work, he waited calm and patient 'till he should point out the way in which he must go. And, in his record of these events, he remarks with grateful admiration, that in the officers that

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confined him, the LORD furnished him both with horse and guide at the expence of government; and without their knowledge or design, always conducted him with great exactness, to the very places, and at the very time in which he had appointed to preach.

IT was a very grievous circumstance to him, on his return from these hostile campaigns, to find his honored Father had taken so great offence at his attempting to preach, as to make him an unwelcome guest at home. Oppressed with sorrow on hearing this, he retired to his chamber: and, on his knees, implored his heavenly Father to open the heart and house of somebody for his reception, while he should stay in town, now that he felt himself exiled from his earthly father's house. He had not finished his prayer, when a knocking was heard at the door: he soon opened it himself, and was addressed by the brother of a worthy minister of the town, in terms to this effect: Mr. Prince, my brother is bound on a journey for three weeks, and desires you to supply his pulpit and make his house your home until he return; if you consent, you must now go with me—he instantly replied, I will go, for I know the LORD has sent you. It was not long after, that his Father stole into an evening meeting unknown; and hearing his son preach, was so affected, that he came to him, saying, Joseph, I was angry with you—I thought you had no right to preach: now I am convinced that I was wrong—you may live and preach at my house henceforth whenever you please.

A P P E N D I X.

No. III.

An Hymn composed to be sung on New-year's Day.

GLORY to the eternal God,
Who hath proclaim'd his name,
To be the Lord most gracious
And merciful to men.

Glory to the eternal God,
For sparing me so long,
When others in their bloom of youth
By death have been cut down!

How many thousands the last year
By death were snatch'd away!
And yet the Lord hath spar'd me to
Another new-year's day.

O! Come, my soul, Jehovah praise,
'Till time shall be quite o'er;
And then thy God will take thee home,
To praise forever more.

But since this day begins the year,
O! May I now begin,
To serve the Lord with all my heart,
And to detest all sin.

A P P E N D I X.

in HYMN to be sung after Sermon.

REACH down O! Lord, thine arm of grace,
And cause me to ascend;
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end.

My stay below is wearisome,
Lord Jesus! fetch me home;
Where I may sit and sing thy praise
For wonders thou hast done.

G

A P P E N D I X.

No. IV.

AMONG the remarkable deliverances which he has recorded, and which it might be both pleasant and profitable to rehearse, the limits to which I must confine this appendix, oblige me to content myself with selecting one or two, viz.

BEING called to preach in Durham, he travelled with a guide from Boston, in a season of intense cold, in February. At Ipswich a young man joined them; and the guide stopping to do some business at a shop, committed Mr. Prince to the care of his fellow traveller. This man soon led him out of the public road—and, as if by design, persisted in it, notwithstanding frequent remonstrances from Mr. Prince: until a man, who casually met them, assured him he was gone astray several miles—then the treacherous pilot forsook his trust, and Mr. Prince wandered about alone, calling as he went, sometimes on his LORD and sometimes on men for help: in this his dark and dismal situation one distress was heaped on another; the keenness of the cold was greatly aggravated by the violent gale of wind, then blowing: by this means his hat was carried off; but prudently following the course of the wind, he was fortunate enough to find it. Hunger and thirst soon after impelled his horse to slip from his bridle and desert his master: this almost discouraged him—but after lifting up his cries to him who had ever been his Sun and Shield, he resolved, by feeling for the tracks in the snow,

A P P E N D I X.

to pursue his fugitive: and ~~was~~ directed right to the spot where he had ~~gone~~ in quest of drink, and there he found and secured him: at length he discovered a fence in his way. This he followed till he found himself surrounded by woods, and sinking in a morass; here he thought of nothing less than spending one night at least, and expected no resource for an escape from perishing at once by hunger and cold, unless he should save his own life at the expence of that of his horse. The throne of grace, his ancient refuge, was now his resort anew: here he received fresh encouragement, and keeping his left hand on the fence instead of the right, by which he had held it till then, he turned his course towards the open country, and so proceeded, weary with walking, and faint with incessant cries for help, until at last he met a man who knew him, and conducted him back to a Minister's house in Ipswich, after wandering from ten in the morning till a little before the setting of the sun! There he was comfortably refreshed, and the next day his own guide returned, and took him under convoy to the place he had designed. But, mark the divine *Nemesis*: The traitor who led him astray, soon after, going a voyage to sea, was put ashore on a desolate island, to search for water: in the mean time a gale of wind sprung up, which obliged the ship to put to sea without him, and he was never heard of afterwards!

AFTER settling with an increasing family, in New-Hampshire, he was often reduced to great

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straits for means to support them : On some occasions, special exigencies bro't him to extremity ; and, if relief did not very speedily appear, it must come too late. But in the mount of difficulty, the LORD always appeared for him : On one of these occasions, a rigid quaker, utterly a stranger, took him and his family into his house, and bountifully maintained them all, *gratis*, for four months, and yet never heard him preach before nor afterwards.---On another, walking the street in Portsmouth, not knowing how to obtain a supply, that was then indispensable, a person unknown, stopped him, and put a sum of money into his hand just sufficient for procuring what he wanted, and went off, without choosing to tell who he was : And sometime after, being in great want of sugar, for a season of peculiar distress--he went to Boston, and applied to some near relatives---but applied in vain ; and, while he was conversing with his sister on the subject, a Captain, just arrived from the West-Indies, came into the house, and told him he had brought him a present of sugar from a certain negro in the island, with whom Mr. PRINCE had no acquaintance.

A GREAT number of such surprising providences he has noticed, in which he said his ~~reliefs~~ "seemed to come right down from heaven"---but I must forbear, closing all with a remark very usual in his mouth---"he that is disposed gratefully to notice the ways of Providence, will never want something to notice."

F I N I S.