Dr. Colman's

SERMON

on the Death

of the very Reverend

Mr. Peter Thacher

of BOSTON.
Faithful Pastors
Angels of the Churches.

A Sermon
Preached to the Bereaved Flock,
March 4, 1739.
On the Lord's-Day after the Funeral of the Reverend Mr. Peter Thacher of Boston. Ærat. 62.
And now printed at their Desire.

By Benjamin Colman, D. D.

Revel. ii. 1. Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, Write these things, saith He that hath the seven Stars in his right Hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks.

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Faithful Pastors

The

Angels of the Churches.

Revel. I. 20.

The Mystery of the seven Stars which thou sawest in my right Hand, and the seven golden Candlesticks: The seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches, and the seven Candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches.

He beloved Disciple John, who had lain in the Bosom of Jesus in the Days of his Flesh, was honour’d by Him to out-live the other Apostles, and to receive his last Revelations to the Church.

From Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness and first begotten of the Dead, he wrote to the seven Churches which were in Asia by Name; and calls himself their Brother and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ.
He writes to 'em of His Eternal Power and God-head, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, faith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty! He writes to 'em of his second coming in Glory;" Behold, He cometh with Clouds, and every Eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him: Even so, Amen.

St. John was now in the Isle called Patmos, an Exile there and Prisoner for the Testimony of Jesus Christ his Lord; and there on the Lord's-Day he was in the Spirit, in a spiritual Trance, Extasy or Rapture; and heard behind him a great Voice as as of a Trumpet; and turning to see the Voice that spake to him, he saw seven golden Candle-sticks, and in the midst of them One like the Son of Man, his dear Lord and Saviour himself;— but O how chang'd and more than transfigured, in an ineffable Glory! so that instead of flying into his blessed Arms again, as in the Days of old, he fell at his Feet as dead! For his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire, and his Feet as if they had burnt in a Furnace, and his Voice was as the Sound of many Waters; and He had in his right Hand seven Stars, and out of his Mouth went a sharp two-edged Sword, and his Countenance was as the Sun shining in its strength. — No wonder then if the holy and most favoured Disciple was dazzled and struck dead before the surprising Glory! but the Lord laid his Hand of Power and Love upon him, which sustain'd and reviv'd him; saying to him, —— "Fear not, I am the First and the Last! I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore; Amen, and have the Key of Hades. Reviving Word, which
is Life from the Dead to You this Day, bereaved of your Elder Pastor! the Lives of all his faithful Ministers, and of all his Saints, thro' all his Churches, are in the right Hand of the risen and living Jesus.

And now my Text brings us to the Mystery of the seven Stars, and of the seven golden Candlesticks; the Candlesticks are the Churches, and the Stars are the shining and burning Lights set up in them; Ministers in the Spirit of the Baptist, as he came in the Spirit of Elias, to give Witness unto Christ the Sun of Righteousness: We preach Him the true Light; and his Word which is the Light that shineth in a dark World.

Now these Stars, these Ministers of the Word, are called Angels, the Angels of the Churches; which is to say, the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts unto them, bringing his Word of Truth and Life, the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. This Light of God in 'em and on 'em, which makes them shine on and give Light to others, both makes 'em Stars, and (what is more than Stars) it makes 'em Angels.

It is this last Word only that I shall now attempt to explain and illustrate to You, and so the Mystery and Doctrine before us is,

**DOCTRINE.**

"That the qualified faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and Pastors of the Churches of our Lord Jesus, are in his Sight, and ought to be esteemed by us, as his Angels to them;"
You will say, This is a high Style indeed! and
sounds much too high, if the Lord Himself had
not given it, for any of the sinful mortal Sons
of Men. For what a Solecism were it to speak
of an infirm imperfect Angel! of a dying or
dead Angel!—But it is the Soul that is the
Angel, in the Body or out of the Body! And
as it is easy to the Grace of God to make some
Persons Angelical in this mortal State, so if He
please to call them Angels in Flesh, who shall
presume to disallow the Style? No Angel in
Heaven will find fault with it, and no Man on
Earth may.

Man in his first and best State was made lower
than Angels, and but a little lower; which is a
Crown of Glory and Honour put on him, Psalm viii.
5: but how far is he sunk below it by his Sin?
Who shall put him again as among the Celestial
Spirits? The best of Saints that ever have been
in the Church of God, (Abraham, Moses, Elias,
Daniel or the Baptist) what a poor kind of An-
gels were the Holy Men while in the Body? in
Bodies of Sin and Death! of like Infirmities and
Passions as other Men! weak and weary Angels!
distemper’d, diseased and in Deaths often! sick,
and in Pain, and under Spiritual Disorders and
Maladies! Angels that were subject to Grief
and Shame and Fear! with Flesh about ’em
lusting against the Spirit! Paul himself was but such
an Angel! Angels approv’d in Patience, Afflictions,
Necessities and Distresses! || hungry and thirsty
and naked Angels!

17. 2 Cor. xii 27. Matth. viii. 20.
But was not the Lord Himself, the Lord of all Angels, once in like Circumstances in our Nature; Sin only excepted? The Angel of the Covenant Himself! the Angel of Intercession, now before the Golden Altar, in the Holy of, presenting our Prayers, Revel. viii. 3, 4. — Why then may not Those for whom He died, and is making Intercession, be called by Him his Angels in his Church on Earth? tho' they live here repenting and dying daily, wrestling with Flesh and Blood and spiritual Wickednesses, and thro' Death passing to Incorruption.

Yea, that which puts the Crown of Angels on them is their dying well! the crowning Victory is over the last Enemy! as the Beggar died, and Angels carried him to Abraham's Bosom, to their own Paradise! and so they buried the Body of Moses, after (as the Jews have been pleas'd to say ) they had kis'd away his Soul: — for He had been an Angel of a Man, both in the Sight of God and of his People, long before.

Yet far would it have been from Moses, or any of the following Prophets, Apostles or Evangelists, to have taken to Themselves this Heavenly Style, if Christ had not put it on them. He is the Fountain of spiritual Honour, † "Head over all things to the Church, and makes whom he will Kings and Priests and Angels unto God: Nay this Honour have all the Saints! praise ye the Lord.

It is not to elate or puff up; God forbid it! but to admonish us of our Duty, which ever rises

† Eph. i. 22. Revel. i. 6.
with Dignity; what manner of Persons we may and ought to be, in Heavenly Temper and Conversation, as Citizens of the Sion above. Philip. iii. 20. And if we can but think and speak and live as Angels in the Church on Earth, we may leave our going Spirits at Death to the Care of real Angels, and the Remains of a Stephen to devout Men to take up (as they lately did your Thacher's) and carry to its Grave as Angel's-dust! the Dust of Gold, from the Candlestick in which it once glitter'd.

And so I return to the MINISTER and PASTOR in special, as my Text requires, and also the sad Occasion of my visiting You, at your Desire, this mournful Day, which my Text would turn into a joyous one.

I. Ministers are the Messengers of Christ unto his People, and therefore Angels of the Churches. For what is the plain English of the Word Angel, but a Messenger, or One sent? Angels are Messengers from Heaven to Earth, and so are Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. ii. 7. The Baptist was such an Angel of God, of whom we read, * Behold I send my Messenger! Angels desire to go on such Missions, even Gabriel Himself; and he flew swiftly to Daniel and Zechariah and the blessed Virgin, with the glad Tydings of Salvation. ||. God's Mission makes an Angel of Light, whomsoever He sends; and the Messenger is to be received even as Gabriel from the Presence of

* Mal. iii. 1. iv. 5. Mark i. 2. Luke i. 76. vii. 27.
God. An Eglon himself will own this, who arose out of his Seat, when Ebud said to him, "I have a Message from God unto thee," Judges iii. 20.

How much more will the Churches of Christ reverently own his Ministers as his Angels to them? Gal. iv. 14. Ye received me as an Angel of God, even as Jesus Christ.

And have not You had your Messengers, my Brethren, Men of a thousand! was not your deceased Pastor such a Messenger from God unto You? did He not bring you the Lord's Messages in a solemn manner? with the Gravity and Authority of an Angel! used he any Lightness? Spake he not as the Oracles or the Great God? that was the glorious and fearful Name in his Lips, as often as you heard him from the Pulpit; the Great God! the Great God! and how greatly did he pronounce it! striking every One that heard Him with a sacred Reverence and Fear! and this was his Manner from his Youth, from his very first publick sacred Exercises: I think that I never heard the Name of God pronounced Great, more than in his praying and preaching. Accordingly he commanded the Ears and Consciences of his Hearers more than many a divine Teacher. He was bold, and took on him Authority, in his Master's Name, Worship, Truth and Laws. He could reprove, rebuke and exhort for his Will and Glory, in a vehement manner, pathetick and striking. Joshua was such an Angel to Israel, under the Conscience of the Charge given him; "Only be thou strong and very courageous! and after his Death came the Lord himself, in the Form of an Angel, reproving the People at Bochim: Judges ii. 2. But ye have not obeyed my Voice, why have ye done this? Such a Witness, Leader and Commend.
der under Christ, such a Messenger from Heaven, was your Thatcher to You.

II. Ministers are yet with greater Propriety the Angels of the Churches, because sent to minister unto the Heirs of Salvation. This is an eminent Character of the Angels of God, Heb. i. 14. Are they not ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation? And what, more or less than this, is the Office and Work of Ministers? Acts xvi. 17. They are the Servants of the Most High God, who shew us the Way of Salvation.

Abraham was visited by the Lord and his Angels as an Heir of Salvation. He sojourn'd on Earth as in a strange Land, looking for a better Country, which is the Heavenly. The Lord therefore came down from Heaven to his humble Tent. He sent his Angels that Day to single out Lot in Sodom, and save his House. Afterward they attended Jacob out and home, for he inherited the Promis; He saw 'em on the Ladder as he went out, and Hopts of 'em about him on his Return. And all the little Ones of Christ to this Day have their Angels that behold his Face on High, and are on the Wing to serve them for Jesus' sake.

Now, like Love and Care for the precious Souls committed to them, is the bounden Duty and natural Temper (tho' Grace) of a faithful Pastor. Such an Angel was Timothy, of whom said the Apostle, Philip. ii. 20. I have no Man like-minded, who will naturally care for your Souls.
So natural was the Care of yours become, thro' Grace, to your dear Pastor *. He travel'd in Birth to see Christ formed in You, and you born to God. As a Nurse cherisheth her Children, he was gentle among You. Because you were dear to him, and being affectionately desirous of you, he was willing to have imparted his own Soul with the Gospel. Was it not his visible Concern that he might both save Himself and them that heard him? And as there is Joy in Heaven among the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth, so was his Joy herein fulfilled, if he might save a Soul from Death, and cover a multitude of Sins. Had the Lord put it to your Peter, as he did to the great Apostle of his Name; "Lovest thou me? and wilt thou feed my Sheep and Lambs? he would have answered with his Truth, Fear and Fervency; "Tea Lord! Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love Thee and them; to minister unto Thee for their Salvation:

III. Ministers should be as Angels for Light and Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom; more especially in the Mystery of the Father and of Christ.

"Wise as an Angel of God, and Angels of Light, is the known Language of Scripture †. The Fear of the Lord is their Wisdom as well as ours; a good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments. The Knowledge of Angels is obedi-

† 2 Sam. xiv. 20. 2 Cor. xi. 14. Psal. ciii. ult. Dan. ix. 22.
ential & practical, like that of Saints; they excel in hearkning to the Voice of God's Word. "Wiser than Daniel, was a Proverb among the Nations, while he lived & presided over them, and after his Death; but the Man Gabriel was wiser than he; for he came down to give him Skill and Understanding; and he left some more Rays of Heavenly Light upon his Mind and Heart.

Ministers are Angels in being apt to teach *; the Law is to be sought from their Lips; they need the Tongues of Angels, the Tongue of the Learned, to speak in Season to weary Souls: Angels have such Tongues, as Hagar found, and answer'd — "Thou Lord see'st me!" — The Urim always belonged to the Priesthood, and it shines more and more under the Gospel, toward the perfect Day. Heavenly Knowledge is the requisite Ornament, and the necessary Furniture of a Gospel Minister: Ignorance is Darkness when we speak of Souls.

But the Knowledge that eminently becomes the Ministers of Christ, and makes 'em like the Angels, is a clear Understanding in the Mysteries and Doctrines of Salvation by Him. As we read of the Cherubims of Glory over the Mercy-Seat, with their Faces bowed and Eyes fixed down upon it: Exod. xxv. 17. The Gospel of which we have, 1. Pet. i. 12. "Which things the Angels desire to look into: Scil. the manifold Wisdom and marvelous Grace of God, in Christ's taking our Nature and not theirs. — The Minister who has well studied and preach'd the unspeakable Riches

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of Christ, shines as an Angel in the Churches. Blessed Paul was such a Cherub of Glory in the Christian Church: "I desire, said he, to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified: "And to make all Men know what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, that hath been hid in God from the Beginning of the World: and again, "that your Hearts may be comforted with the Riches of the full Assurance of Understanding, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father and Christ; in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.

So Angels above, and those below, study and proclaim the Glories of free Grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. And thus did our Mr Thacher; You are Witnesses and God also. The Wisdom of God was in Him, he was wise to Salvation, and to win Souls: A Scribe instructed, and instructing others, to the Kingdom of God: a judicious Divine and strong in the Doctrines of Grace; able and ready to advise and direct Souls in the Way of Life. He could as feelingly as any Man adore the distinguishing Mercy of God in putting him into the Ministry, and counting him faithful: "That to me, the least of all Saints, this Grace should be given, to preach among you the unsearchable Riches of Christ! Eph. iii. 8. He is gone to join the Multitude of the Heavenly Host in that Doxology, Luke ii. 14. "Glory unto God in the Highest, on Earth Peace, Goodwill towards Men.

IV. Ministers should be Angels for Purity, Sanctity and Holiness; and for Zeal in the Cause of
God and Godliness; for his Truths and Laws, Kingdom and Interest on Earth.

Holiness shows the Angel more than all Knowledge, and so it doth the Minister and Pastor in the Church. Without this, has our Saviour said, the Light that is in you is Darkness, and how great is that Darkness? Matth. vi 23. Holiness is most of all the Light of Heaven; God is infinitely Holy, Christ is the Holy One of God, and Angels are in his Likeness holy, in all their Worship and Obedience. Their Purity is without a Stain, in high Perfection, and gives 'em their Glory and Bliss for evermore.

The Style of the Angels of God is taken from their Sanctity; and so is that of Ministers on Earth †. Even the Court of Nebuchadnezzar knew this before the Instructions of Daniel: “I saw a Holy One come down from Heaven,” said the King, relating his Visions on his Bed. But our Lord Jesus has confirmed the Style unto us, in that gracious Promise, “The Son of Man shall come in his Glory, with all his holy Angels.” An unholy Angel is a Devil. Angels and Saints are represented in white Robes, and such were of old those of the Priesthood; to signify a Profession of and Obligation unto singular Purity and Holiness. St. Paul teaches the Minister how to become an Angel in the Church; 1 Tim. vi. 11. “Thou O Man of God, follow after Righteousness, Godliness, &c. And again, “Be thou an Example of the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.

Such was your Teacher among You, thro' the Grace given him from on High. Much of the Holiness of Christ, and of Angelical Sanctity was in Him. He was a Watcher and a holy One among us in his Measure; which was an Abundance of the Gift of Righteousness; like Phineas zealous for his God, and as Elias jealous for the Lord of Hosts. Like the Angel of the Lord, he could have withstood Balaam in his Way; valiant for the Truth, and resolute in the Cause of Piety.

Angels are called Seraphims from their burning with holy Zeal. Your Teacher was such a Spirit and Flame of Fire, in the Service of his God, and in acting for his Glory. || The Baptist was such a Burning Light, a flaming Minister; “O Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come? bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance. Peter was another; He drew and smote in the Cause of Christ, till he was bid to put up his Sword. Stephen spake to the Council with the Face and Ardor of an Angel; and Epaphras had a great Zeal for the Colossians, labouring fervently in Prayer for them. But He was more than an Angel, of Whom we read, “the Zeal of thy House hath eaten me up:

Light and Heat go together in the Kingdom of Nature and of Grace. Fervour in the Soul of Man produces Activity in his Life, and that again cherishes and increases Fervour.

V. Ministers should be like Angels for Spirituality and a heavenly Mind. Such their Temper, and
perpetual pleasure: their Heart and Work, their Imploy and Joys, all spiritual. Heaven is therefore their Dwelling-place. They rest not Day or Night, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! which art and wait and art to come, Rev. iv. 8.

So Ministers are to lead and continue in the Worship of God with sacred Pleasure; the Mouth of others to God, and of God to them, out of the Abundance of their Heart to both. St. Paul was such an Angel to the Churches, incessant in Prayers for them, and in his high Devotions; and as a singular Reward hereof, he was caught up to Heaven *; whether in the Body, or out of it, he could not tell. Appollos was like him, "mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in Spirit, and teaching diligently the Things of God.

The Heavenly Minister lives like Moses in the Mount, has Bread there which the World knows not of, his Diet is on the Manna of Angels, Bread from Heaven; and his Meat and Drink should be (in Conformity to Christ his Master) to do the Will of God, and finish his Work. His Interest is in Heaven, his Acquaintance there, his Heart and Treasure there and his Life is hid with Christ in God within the Vail. He would be accurate in his Devotions and Obedience, as are the Angels; "doing the Will of God on Earth as it is done above. He would be reverend and earnest in Duty and Service; would find Wings to fly, as well as Feet to run; "run and return as the Flash of Lightning!

so the Angels are represented, and from their Agility are called Cherubim.

Angels in Flesh can’t attain this; it is too wonderful and high for them; they soon flag and tire in their Work; even the Youths faint and are weary, how much more the Aged in their Decays? tho’ not weary of it: Yet is there a Promise of Angelical Strength and Vigour to all that wait on the Lord; “They shall renew their Strength, mount up with Wings as Eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint.

How spiritual and rais'd was Mr. Thacher in his publick Devotions? more especially in the Duty of Prayer! that was his Gift and Element! then he breath’d his native Air! then his Asthma left him! he soar’d up as on Eagles Wings, and with its Eye he could look into the Light of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens! He came near unto his Seat, and fill’d his Mouth with Adorations: The nearer his Access was unto God, the more awful was his godly Fear, and profound his Reverence! like that of the Celestial Spirits, Revel. xv. 4. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name? for Thou only art holy.

I say again, He was a heavenly Man in Prayer! He excell’d in this; in a great Copiousness and Solemnity; whether in Adoration, Confession, Supplication, Thanksgiving, Intercession, Profession and Pleadings before the Throne. He could wrestle like an Israel, and as a Principality in the heavenly Places, having Power with God and from Him. How often have you seen him in this Desk, as it were cover his Face and cry Holy, Holy, Holy, before the Lord of Hosts! many a time making
ing your Hearts to move, and filling them with a Smoke of fragrant Incense, Isai. vi. 4.

VI. Ministers as Angels of the Churches are to preside, rule and govern, with Meekness, Equity, Tenderness; Benevolence, Humility and Patience; Wisdom and Integrity; by the Rules of the Kingdom; for the Glory of Christ and the Good of Souls.

Angels are "Thrones and Dominions and Powers under God, and us’d by Him, in the Grand Affairs of Nations and Empires, States and Provinces, as we are led to think from the Prophecies of Daniel †; and more especially must we suppose their Ministry in those of the Visible Church.

But least of all would the true Ministers of Christ affect a Resemblance of the Heavenly Hierarchy, in respect of Preeminence, Authority or Dominion! for "we have not Dominion over your Faith, but are the Helpers of your Joy.

Yet Power is committed to the Pastors of the Churches for their Order, Peace, Edification and Purity, for which they can show an ample Commission, needless to produce before You, who have not so learned Christ, as not to remember Them that have the Rule over You, and watch for your Souls and admonish you; to submit yourselves and obey them in the Lord; that they may give their Account with Joy & not with Grief! Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

He is the Angel of a Minister in the Church of Christ, Who in the Love and Gentleness of his Lord,
the Meekness of Wisdom, behaves gravely, humbly and affectionately in the House of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Who like the Watcher from on High is intent on his Mission and particular Charge, watching in all things to make full Proof of his Ministry; to prevent Evil and Sin all he can, and promote all he can what is good and holy.

If St. Paul were again in the Flesh just so would he rule and manage; exercise no other Jurisdiction nor affect any other Preeminence, than the holy Ends of his Ministry, in the saving Effects of it, make necessary to the Souls of Men; their own and those in Fellowship with them. And if He were again to take Leave of the Flocks to which he had ministered, it would be still in the same humble and endearing Words, with which he melted the Elders at Ephesus: Acts xx. 18, &c. “Ye know how I have been among you at all Seasons, serving the Lord with all Humility of Mind, and have kept back nothing that is profitable to you; but have shewed you publickly and from House to House, testifying unto all Repentance toward God and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ: And now that you are to see my Face no more, I take you to Record this Day that I am pure from the Blood of all Men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole Council of God. Take heed therefore unto your Selves, and unto all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops; to feed the Church of God which He hath bought with his own Blood. And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and
and to give you an Inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

This is the true Evangelical, Chrift-like, Aposto-

This is the true Evangelical, Christ-like, Aposto-
lical and Angelical Spirit of Rufe and Govern-
ment in the Churches; the true Christian Pastor-

And now you may be ready to fall upon his

picture as I hold it before you, and kiss it in your
depth Sorrow, "that you must see his Face no more:
But if this Face of an Angel that I have shewn
You, and you see that it is He himself, will not
dry up your Tears for Him, and turn your Sor-
row into Joy on his Account; tho' it open new
Sluices for your Selves and for your Children;
you would seem Insensible indeed, and to have no
spiritual Sensation of things joyous or grievous:---
But this is far from you: You are true Mourn-
ers, and many of you I doubt not spiritually so,
amidst abundant Consolation before the Lord.---
I have accordingly express'd my hearty Sympathy
with you on both Accounts; that we may be edi-
fied together by a mutual Faith; as with respect
unto the Doctrines of Grace in general, so in the
Application of them, on the present Bereavement
from God upon you.

And now to go into a more enlarged Application of the Subject, than the Circumstances of a particular Congregation led me to, I would say,

"
1. Let the Churches of Christ and his Ministers be admonished of that special regard and respect which they owe unto the blessed Angels. There is a mutual relation between us and Them, which obliges us to honour them as the Sons of God, we know not how far before us, both in Order of Nature and Time. We should highly reverence 'em for all the Graces of God to 'em and in 'em. Let us realize their presence with us in our holy Studies, secret Devotions, private Discourses with Persons on the Service of their Souls, and in our publick Assemblies; and let it be an argument with us to be serious and solemn in all, "because of the Angels." Let us desire to commend our Selves to their Love and Assistance, in our Meditations, Prayers and Administrations; and also in our Temptations, Afflictions and dying Hours. But however good they are in our sight, yea though they were to bring us even the Revelations of God, yet may we not worship 'em, for they are our Brethren and Fellow-Servants, that keep the Commandments of God and the Testimony of Jesus; Rev. xxii. 9.

2. Our Doctrine should comfort, animate and invigorate Ministers in their Work, and at the same time greatly humble and abase 'em before God and Man.

On the one hand let us magnify our Office, and take Pleasure in our high and Heavenly Calling; as when the Hand of the Angel touched Daniel, it set him on his Feet. What a Name is this within God's House and Walls? called to be Angels! a Name meet to be written in Heaven! And what a good God do we serve, who raises the poor out of the Dust, to set them among the Principalities and Powers
Powers above, and make them inherit the Throne of Glory.

It is to encourage us in our Work, and at the same Time lead us to reflect, how little meet we are to wear this Name, and how ashamed the bless'd Angels may well be to own us, were they not Good like Christ their Lord and ours. — Compare their Accomplishments and Ministrations with ours, and how do we indeed walk as Men, and below Angels! yet "be bold we take upon us to speak to the most High God, who are but Dust and Ashes!" as Abraham said before the Lord, in the Day and Hour that his Angels had visited him. The best of Prophets must fall before the Mercy- Seat, as Isaiah did, when he had seen the Seraphims worshipping with cover'd Faces: Isaiah vi. 5. "Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a Man of unclean Lips, and I dwell among a People of unclean Lips." Lord Jesus, send "some heavenly Seraph, with a Coal from thy Altar, to touch my Heart and Lips; that my Iniquity may be taken away and my Sin purged.

Ah! were we but thus humbled, we should be also thereby greatly quickened and excited, to approve our Selves unto God and his People, as Angels in his Church. Let us feel this sacred heavenly Ambition, since God calls us to it. Aspire to walk worthy of the Vocation. Let the Character of the Christian Bishop make us emulate that of Angels themselves: Titus i. 7, 8, 9. For a Bishop must be blameless, as a Steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre; but a lover of Hospitality, a lover of good Men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful Word, &c. 2. Tim. ii. 24. And the Servant
Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, &c. What but the Idea of Michael, the Arch-Angel, arises in our Minds, upon our reading these Words? in his "Contending with the Devil about the Body of Moses, not daring or inclining to bring a railing Accusation against him.

O that we could be in any manner as the Angels of God for Knowledge, Sanctity, Devotion, Charity, Humility, in every Excellency! whatsoever things are just, pure, lovely and of good Report; every Virtue and Praise! more especially in holy Zeal and Activity in serving and praising God. Let us in Spirit be daily ascending to the Son of Man in Heaven. Let us be in the Mount with God often, preparing for the Presence and Vision of God for evermore. Let us be pleasant and joyful in our Lord’s Work. Let us be glad to serve the poor Members of Jesus Christ in their bodily Needs, Sicknesses and Sorrows, but much more in their spiritual Wants, Griefs, Fears, Temptations and Distresses.

Thus Ministers have been chagr'd before God and his Eeal Angels, to be like 'em here, that they may be with them for ever. And could we realize the Charge coming from the Mouth of the Son of Man, in the Midst of the Golden Candlesticks, in that tremendous Glory wherein John saw Him in our Context, it would strike us dead at his Feet. But at least let us be struck with Jacob’s holy Dread; on his seeing the Ladder from Heaven to Earth, with the Angels of God upon it; “How dreadful is this Place! it is no other than the House of God, and the Gate of Heaven.
3. As here is great Honour put upon the faithful Ministers of Christ, and on his holy Churches; or rather only on the Free Grace of God to 'em and in 'em; so what Condemnation and Confusion belongs to wicked and ungodly Ministers, and unto like Professors in all the Churches of the Saints; who are earthly, sensual, devilish; Enemies to the Cross of Christ, and as contrary to Him and his Angels as Darkness to Light, as Belial to the Heavenly Host. So, as the Apostle teaches us, "Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light; therefore it is no great thing if his Ministers also be transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness; whose End shall be according to their Works, 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.

4. Here is a singular Direction, with a mighty Motive, to the Candidates for the Evangelical Ministry; with what Aims and Hopes, with what Humility, Fear and Prayer, they ly at the Foot of Grace for the requisite Gifts and Graces, and Endowments from on High, to their shining one Day among the Angels of the Churches. Of the Fulness that is in Christ they must seek and Grace for Grace! and "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth, who hast set thy Glory above the Heavens; and out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings ordainest Strength! Psal. viii. 1, 2.

5. Here is special Direction unto Churches in their Election of Persons into the Pastoral Office over them. May God direct them always unto Such, as they truly hope will most shine in the Gifts and Graces of Angels among them; and ever behave toward them with Angelical Holiness, Wisdom, Benevolence and Care for their Souls.

6. And
6. And let the People so favoured of God see how they ought to receive and entertain the Messages brought them from God by their Ministers: Even as the Asian Churches did, and those of Galatia, who notwithstanding the Temptations in their Teachers' Flesh (whatever they were) despised them not, but accounted of them and submitted themselves as unto the Angels of God. Or if the Angel visit you in your Tent or Field, as sometimes Abraham, Gideon, Manoah and Mary were graciously visited, receive Him gladly as the Heavenly Visitors of old were welcomed, and hearkned to.

7. But what must we say then unto those who have sat long under the Ministry of an Angel, and their Hearts have not been touched, affected, enlightened and set a burning within them! "Neither would they be persuaded (they should fear) tho' one came from the dead! altho' a Lazarus were sent down to them from the Bosom of Abraham.*

Your Pastors, as they have received Mercy, have not fainted; but by Manifestation of the Truth have commended themselves to your Consciences in the Sight of God! a far more proper Means, ordained by God, for your Conversion and Salvation, than any Angels Descent from the Skies in a luminous Form. But if our Gospel be hid (as we are awfully admonished from God) it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World (Satan, the fallen Angel, the Angel of the bottomless Pit) has blinded their Minds, left the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of the Invisible God should shine into them!]

* Luke xvi. 31, || 2 Cor. iv. 2, 3, 4.
Faithful Pastors

To draw unto a Close,

8. We learn from all that has been said, what a sorrowful Sense we ought to have of the Decease of faithful Ministers and Pastors, who have been Angels of Men among us.—And therefore learn your present Duty, O Flock of Christ bereaved of such a Pastor.

Drop now all the Dust, and bury every Infirmitie in the Grave, and look only upwards after the ascended Angel! All that was Angelical in Him and in his Ministry, let that live with you, and abide in a pleasing, thankful, profitable and perpetual Remembrance.

The Angel is gone; the Soul was that! gone to God, who made and remade it! to Whom it has liv’d devoted thro’ his Power and Grace. It is gone to the innumerable Company of holy Angels, and is as one of them among the Spirits of just Men made perfect. It is gone to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God; gone to be with Christ in Paradise, to behold his Glory and see Him as He is! and to come again with Him, when he shall return in the Glories of the Father, with all his holy Angels. He is gone, whither you cannot follow Him now, but we hope many of You will soon hereafter.

His Going is to quicken you in a diligent Preparation, by following him in holy Living, to meet him in the Joys of his Lord for ever. — O what an Angel will you see Him then, and he You; his Joy and Crown of rejoicing! Are not even You to be this, in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his Coming! for Ye are his Glory and Joy!

When
When Christ Himself shall present You and Him together, saying, or give him leave to say, "Behold I, and the Children whom thou hast given me".

Then the Soul of the now desolate Widow, trusting in God, shall see the Angel of a Husband that once was, for pious Affection and strong Endearment! but O how much more holy and lovely, in the Image of Christ perfected on him! to be therefore embrac'd again with a joy unknown in our present State.

Then the weeping Relatives, such as Mary and Martha were to Lazarus, the Family of Faith and Piety which Jesus loved, shall see their Brother alive again, and all Tears shall be wip'd from their Eyes.

Then the Friends, that were as his own Soul, and the dear Colleague-Pastors, who were knit together in Spirit, as Jonathan to David, in Angelic Bonds; having united their Endeavours to turn many unto Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars together in the Firmament of Glory.

And then all You that have shown the Kindnesses of God unto the Deceased for his Works sake, and shall do it still from Love to Christ unto the Half of Him left below, shall hear the Lord of Glory take it to Himself; "Ye did it unto Me.

And finally, Then all the Elect of God among You, and sanctified in Jesus Christ, shall at length meet in an everlasting Sabbath of Rest from Sin

† 1 Thess. ii. 15, Hebrews ii. 13.
and Sorrow, in the General Assembly and Church of the First born, whose Names are written in Heaven; a glorious Church indeed, not having Spot or Wrinkle or any such thing; to serve Him day and night in his Temple above, and to sing the New Song for ever and ever:

"Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue and People and Nation! Wherefore Blessing and Honour and Glory and Power be unto Him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

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Faithful Pastors, &c.