No. 28.

The character & reward of faithful servants.
Matth. XXV. 21. — "He said to him, well done, thou good and faithful servant: for thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The parable, from which this animating verse is selected, gives us an admirable representation of the duty of improvement & the recompence of fidelity. From the circumstances of the time when it was spoken, it should seem, that this parable, as well as that which precedes it, had a peculiar reference to the situation & prospects of our Lord's disciples. It was near Jerusalem for the last time before his crucifixion. The scene was to close his ministry & bring him to the cross, which was rapidly approaching; that die of passion, of peace, of mercy, & hope, which had diffused so far its bounties & its blessings on earth, was now to be entrusted to other hands, & to more multiplied exertions. At this
time out. I explained to his followers as the sun set around them, the prophet's answer from his mind was full of glories. He told them of the destruction of the temple of that temple whose fame was a Jewish heart unregretted to amount, such was the solemn

of the nation amidst calamity of distance. He argued before them in the name of another language of reducing the distress of Jerusalem, not to mutter the beauty I learned the story of Judah. In the midst of this fortifying command do we want to go forth, as the herald of their Master with instructions of heaven to man. It was in "those days when the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light, and the stars should fall from heaven;" the powers of heaven be shaken. I thought they were to show around the beams of the sun, which the avenger of temporal hopes was round them to announce those hopes, which were lasting as the sun, from whom the sun came. With such a flash of the performed amongst signs, the astronomer, when warned them, to be vigilant, to be faithful to their trust, must have come to them with peculiar force, to warn their duty to be vigilant. I thus their Master taught them by the parable of the two talents. It was then the duty to be faithful to their sacred trust, if they be taught them by the parable of the talents.

But this lesson is one, my physician may not be confused by any age or any peculiarity of circumstances. It is a lesson for the world. 3 years cannot dim the brightness of its truth; it is a lesson for mankind.

If no difference of country or condition can weaken its power, all men must be faithful to the trust of Heaven; all who are faithful will be rewarded. This is a plain and simple statement, yet plain as it is, have we thought of it? Its bearings? Has it settled deep in our minds? We are taught by the lesson, especially by the passage selected for our text, to examine ourselves, as in truth the questions of life are furnished with talents to endow us with advantages for which we shall be days of full reward. Have we rewarded over us, we shall be summoned to account. I say, indeed, a man's wages is his own work; yet we know the tremendous days of his recompense will come, if then the faithless man will not be welcomed to the applause of his
It is my intention to consider the character of the household of faithful servants.
1. The character of faithful servants: what is it that constitutes this character? What traits is it marked by?

1. Our fidelity is to be estimated not from the number of our talents, but from the use of our talents. There may be equal fidelity, where there are equal advantages. One receives five talents, and the other two; yet each by doubling his respective talents, receive the character and the recompense of faithful servants. This remark, though extremely trivial, is not sufficiently heeded. The tenors of humble pleasures are sometimes unnecessarily disturbed by comparing ourselves with those to whom Heaven has been more liberal in the gifts of its fortune. It is injustice to themselves, for God requires of them not what they cannot do, but all that they can. It is as far from being the part of wisdom or virtue, to require that fortune bestow on us more bennings, or that Heaven has bestowed on us more blessings, or that Heaven has not condescended to us with nobler endowments as it has not condescended to us with lesser endowments, as it is for us to qualifications for honor or eminence. It is ours to
use, & to use well, what we have, & to waste
our strength on errors that we have more.
It needs but a glance at life to convince us that
the question with which we are mainly concerned is not,
how much we have, but how well we do. - When we
some, those opportunities of rendering social service
to mankind are constantly opening. From a higher
station they can shed the influence of their moral
example through a wider circle, than we are
able to the lot of ordinary men. There is nothing so
elegant as the magic of whose power, may
often every heart & bind every soul. - But in
vain is this elevated station, if it be not what
is given to the cause of benevolence, as the cause
of its existence must be not employed to
give ensign to the truth & have blessed its aims. - They
are as many as their wish, & to whom these proud privileges
are denied, & the thought animated by an
equal zeal for the moral and welfare of mankind, can yet do little more than feel in secret for
the progress of truth & virtue. Yet if their small
contribution be made in the spirit of sincerity,
God will approve & reward them. They have used
well what they have, & he requires no more.
Some can do much by their wealth or their genius,
and some by the judgment of the wise & the affective
thoughts with bread; they can spread broad the
shadow of protection & scatter blessings through a
wider circle of mankind. They can guide the souls of the happy
in the paths of virtue, & can all the resources of happiness
in this life, & in the other. If the use such powers, & endeave
more at large. If the use such powers, & endeavour
such opportunities in that the short or lower
life be given to man; not be when there
the world. That peace must he when there
be so abundant for all mankind, have not equal
rights with every man, & have no power of expressing it, who have little else than
power to express it, who have little else than
the means of expressing it. - They are industriously the means of God
had given them; however small. Their names are
though unknown, perhaps, but the spirit of their
village is not seen, though not enriched by the
gratitude of ages, & the admiration of nations,
are yet legible in the book of God. He heightened
by the testimony of his parents. The mind of man has been expanded & enriched by education,
& his has always been where the light of the mind
his love & clear when he is, while another has
be once & never when he is, while another has
been married & checked by its powers. One is
assisted by the judgment of the wise & the affective
of the friendly; another is left to struggle suc-
cceed as he may, by the solitary exertion of his own for-
cors. One is surrounded by a happy circle of connec-
tions & honored by their virtues; another is wretchedly
by those of his own household. In man there
stance to show that even equal
fidelity may be exacted. A preeminence of charac-
ter is required in the character of faithful servants, not that
they have the same powers & advantages, but that
their activity & diligence be in proportion to their
powers & advantages.

2. But we must do something more than use
the talents we already have; we must strive
to add to them. They must not only be preserved,
but increased. This is another characteristic of
the faithful servant; it is here thathumility
has so presented this character in opposition to
that of the unprofitable servant. The guilt of
this man was not in the abuse or misappropriation
of his talent, but in the neglect of it. He did not
lose it; he did not corrupt it; but he hid it
in the earth. He suffered it to rest in uselessness, instead of increasing its lustre & enhancing its
glory. And when the day of account came, he had just
as much to return to his Master, as he had re-
ceived. So more. But the good of faithful
servant is not thus destroyed, heartless in his service,
he feels that God has given him these means of
his good work it is his sacred duty to increase it
thrice, he goes forth to the business of the trials
of life, resolved to employ every capacity, en-
dowment, every gift of Providence, every blessing
of the God, to the glory of God; he confides, there
is the salvation of himself, & the salvation
of others; & to the salvation
of his own soul. If he has reason, he
cultivates, braces, & strengthens it, that it may rule every
lower power, & quench every unholy desire. If he
has genius, he moulds its powers & guides its
might in the path of improvement & utility.
If he is not passive, he teaches them to bow before
that Lord, who commanded even the stormy waters
into silence, & they knew their end. If he has be-
care, it is not wasted on the trifles of vanity,
in the servitude of dissipation; but filled up
with those wise & virtuous employments, wher
he may look back upon without a blush. Has
he a soul capable of infinite improvement, & en-
joyment, beyond the limits of sense? & the mind
of earth? He strives to cherish the love of that y
for whose service that soul was prepared, to breathe
something of that spirit which moves the angels, as they encircle the throne of Jehovah. Has he the rich
privileges of the lost? The means of grace, the hope
of glory enlighten his warm heart? - He desires
to live for heaven forever, to keep my eye
ever fixed on that scene of peace whose brightness
no cloud of this world can obscure. In short, he
is the servant of his in that service he finds his
strength. - He has in his possession the resources
of good, & he strives to increase those resources, that
he may do more good. - Of the day he has strengthened
his virtuous principles, settled deeply in his heart
the resolutions of holy obedience, tomorrow he will
aim to give them a stronger hold, a more powerful
sway. - If this year he has done much & endeavor, he
will not suffer himself to repose in the satisfaction
of this year's work, but tomorrow he will
do better & improve more. "The faith of the just
says Solomon with great beauty, "is like the shin-
ing lights which shine more & more unto the perfect
day." - Its beams may be fruit at first; but as
it ascends, they grow warmer, & rich, & full, till
they pour abroad the delights of noon day.
The faithful servant of God may, we may believe,
multiphies his existence, he lives more in the
same time, than the sluggish servant, for he is
"present in spirit, serving God," nothing the world
can do him to hinder him. We may know, if it is day, knowing that
there is a mighty coming, when the hand that gives
easy, will unroll to the view of the heart,
now rising & generous, will flow in the heart,
now observable the course of the stream, that
at first is but a small & moving current, making its course only by the shocks of violence without
it is bordered, but gradually conditions its path,
& deepening its waters, till it swells into the deep
majestic river, pouring fertility along its shores
& giving beauty to the scenery, through which flows.
So it is with the life of the faithful servant.
At first perhaps, his opportunities are few, & his
talents small, & these he improves with peculiar
diligence; - but every day adds something to his
means of usefulness, & his opportunities for serv-
ing his Maker, till at last he becomes the
generous benefactor of man & the possessing
infinite followers of his Savior.

In the principal traits in the character of
the faithful servant.

II. We proceed to consider the recompense of
faithful servants. - This is in the order of the
next consists of three parts; honor, advancement,
Happiness.

1. Honour is a part of the reward. "Well done, than good and faithful servant." There is a force, energy in the original word (ταλαντόν) from which language beauteously furnishes an expression. It assumed by the auditors or spectators in any public or private, to express the warmest applause, when any part had been performed with uncommon excellence. Here every word is expression of approbation, that the excellence of the character commendeth. Honour is not only given, but given in the fullest manner, with the emphasis of comprehensive exulting encomium. "Well done, then good and faithful servant." Send abroad your imaginatons, my first tell me, can you conceive of an Honour comparable to this? The approbation of God, the Judge of the world, the impartial judge of character. Announced in the name of by the authority of the Supreme God and Father of all, declared before the grand assembly of angels and men, announced from that awful tribunal before he shall appear in his own glory, in the glory of the angels, in the glory of his Father, how few insignificant does all that the world can furnish appear, when the voice of commendation is heard from the bosom of the world? What's the sentence or adjudged a crown to the conquerors in the Green games compared to this? The applause of the wise and good, conferred on real excellence, falls far below this. The commendation of men is the commendation of those who have passions like our own; it is the commendation of weak, incompetent, serving judges, sometimes the decision of prejudice, frequently the breath of unmeaning flattery, always fleeting, shortlived as the mortals who pronounce it. But the applause of the Son of God, ours or cannot neither, who cannot deceive. Its dignity is like the glory of him who awards it, pure as the source of light, & its worth unmeasured, as his duration is unexchangeable. Do you still marrow motive to diligence and activity? Think how your heart would soon be hearken your fidelity thus acknowledged? "Well done they good and faithful servant." What must do, why is there in these words? And how will it fill the soul with a sense of propriety, while the ages of eternity are rolling on their course?
9. As a part of his reward, the faithful servant will be advanced: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." The talents that were entrusted, were for. The reward in ample measure. He, who had been a steward, is recalled to the rank of a ruler. Such is the manifestation of the Heavenly Judge. The virtues of saints, however pure, the labors of good men however arduous, the sufferings and apostles however deep, with the glory to all, they will be advanced in the kingdom of their Lord. It is not for us to know exactly in what order the righteous and good will move through eternity; but Scripture teaches us this, that by present improvement they will become prepared to rise to higher stations, to receive higher communications of honor and power. The word of God is silent as to the peculiarities of a future life, yet given as minute a description of that condition of being to which we shall succeed in the unseen world, as here as in every other part of this teaching, we see that we shall receive all from above. But though we know not particularly what may be the different stations of faithful servants in the kingdom of their Lord, yet it seems reasonable to conclude that they will be as various as the capacities. There is majesty in the sun, and the glory of the moon, and stars differs from star in glory; so will it be in the resurrection of the dead. Every good servant will doubtless rise in proportion to his activity, diligence, in that as one of the glories of comparison at the passing of eternity. The superior will not raise the eye of others to those who have left them behind nor will the superior from their elevation look with disdain on the humble followers of Christ.

Our ideas on this subject must necessarily be general, yet this we know, that the advanced servants of God will become like the angels, enter in possession of an eternal inheritance. They will be the crown, that shall crown the their brows, the crown of righteousness, of life, of glory. God has brought the Redeemer with whom He shall clothe them, when the mortal shall put on immortality, this immortal will be put on incorruptibility, a new body shall be raised in power. "For it is not yet as when we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
The recollection of the faithful servant will consist in happiness and unmingled joy. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." This is the sentence which the string of felicity and peace will end on the heart of the faithful. In this world, satisfaction is by no means the certain attendant on high rank. 8. He who enters the race of ambition must soon find how poor are the treasures of felicity which it boasts to offer, 8 how many of its most splendid rewards are dissolved in the fatigues of its pursuit and its consequences. 8 The crown is planted with its thorny cares. But there is a peace lasting as eternity, unchangeable as the throne of God, that peace shall be the reward of the faithful servants. There is happiness pure as the well spring of heavenly waters, bright as that light which illumines the city of our God, that happiness the faithful servant shall possess forever. The claim of this reward is increased, its new glory thrown around it by the circumstance that its possessor is the man himself possessed. "Hereafter with the joy of thy Lord," he takes a part in the joy of the heathen who have advanced. The picture which adapts the good into a fellow work with him who came to redeem men from that threshold of all others most intolerable—the threshold of hell. He said to his disciples, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." The Apostle triumphs in the hope that if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. And it is in that a triumphant hope, or that it life would be sometimes but the cold endurance of existence. The promise of salvation tells us that we shall be associated with in his kingdom, as a garland whose sorrows can mingle—provides a security where no danger can threaten—spreads a peace where calamity can distress. 8 "The humble, poverty stricken, has told us, that no lion shall be there, no roaring, no devouring beast; but the redeemed shall walk there, the ransomed of the Lord shall return, 8 come to Zion, and sing of everlasting joy on their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Thus, my brethren, I have spoken of character, recognition of faithful servants.

Let us think secondly of the solemn responsibility of that character, and the new duties. We are the servants of God, whose have we rejected him? Let us not be too tender to ourselves, for fear it may be a fatal tenderness. Let us ask ourselves
withcontinuinganxiety,whathavewedone?
whathasbeenourease?whatobjecthasonly
ourthought?Hasthisworldbeenbetterthan
wehaveknownit?HasthecauseoftheRever
eeenstrengthenedbyourhand?Hastherejo
iceofthegospeldweltinourhearts?Forgive
thattheanswers to thesequestionsmaynotbe
such asto fill us withdamaging that why the
voice of theangel shall announce thehom
ingofonein whom we may be able to look up with joy
to a Master whom we have served with effecti
work, who comes with words of grace on his
lips & a corner of glass in his hand—whowillfirst
no work of faith, no labour of love, who will
discharge to the faithful the rewards of eternity
& open to them the vision of this glory—Then
rejoicing in the many of God disclaiming with
conscious humiliation all merit, the many are un
able to bear that sentence which will be the mas
ter of happiness to the faithful—well done.
then grow of faithful servants, then hast been
faithful overa few things. I will make the
rules overmany things; enter them into thejoy
of thy lord.

July, 1819.
Others, who are our everlasting support, than
qur love, the source of our peace, helps
we thank thee for all that hast done to give
us strength for our duty, encouragement on our
work. We pray O God, that we may aspire to the
character of Joseph, and gain that innocence, that
we may serve well the highest and the best committed
to us, and that we may live up to the opportunities
given of human excellence and character.

In the midst of the storms of life, may we
see the promise of God, and the wisdom of God,
and remember that for all our failures, there have
been advantages there to form a day of account in which
will render unto every man according to his
works. May our hearts be moved by the greatness
of that decision, and the feelings of that truth.

Take care in this as well, of those who serve under
you. As we are concerned about our
work, so be it. Seeing we are encompassed about with
the enemy, let us lay aside every
so great a will of worldliness, lest we be
overgrown with the works of the evil that is set before us,
lest we lose sight of the uses of our faith, in the
work of the Master and our faith in the
work of the cross, for the joy that was set before us
and endured the cross,

in His name so.