

**A SERMON, DELIVERED AT  
THE FUNERAL OF THE  
HON. THOMAS FITCH, ESQ**

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A Sermon, Delivered at the Funeral of the Hon. Thomas Fitch, Esq by Moses Dickinson

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**MOSES DICKINSON**

**A SERMON, DELIVERED AT  
THE FUNERAL OF THE  
HON. THOMAS FITCH, ESQ**



The "Brethren in Unity"  
with the respects of John Fitch  
A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE

*W. Nicholas Hall*  
*184*  
FUNERAL

OF THE

HON. THOMAS FITCH, ESQ.,

LATE GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY OF CONNECTICUT,

By MOSES DICKINSON, A.M.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN NORWALK.

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PSALM CXII. 6.—The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

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## A FUNERAL SERMON.

ACTS XIII, 26.

*For David after he had served his generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.*

THE Christian religion is founded upon the resurrection of Christ. For if Christ is raised from the dead, then all the doctrines of our holy religion, are divinely true; but if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins. That our Saviour put the proof of his divine mission, upon this event, was publicly known; so that the chief priests, and pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, sir, we remember, that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. And accordingly, with Pilate's consent, they made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. But it was not possible, that he should be holden by the pains of death: for him hath God raised up, and exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and Saviour; for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. The Apostles therefore everywhere insist upon the importance of this Revelation on which so much depends. And particularly in our text, and context, the Apostle Paul undertakes to prove, that David did not speak of himself; but in the person of Christ; when he says in the 16th Psalm, *Thou wilt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption. For he whom God raised again, saw no corruption. But David after he had served his generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.*

But from these words we may observe:

I. That men can never obtain a better, and a more hor-

orable character, than by serving their generation by the will of God.

II. That good men must die as well as others.

III. That they who serve their generation, by the will of God, will when they die, sleep in Jesus, and rest from their labors.

I. That men can never obtain a better, and a more honorable character, than by serving their generation, by the will of God.

I shall here,

1. I shall endeavor to shew what is implied, by serving our generation by the will of God.

2. Shew the evidences of this truth.

1. I shall endeavour to shew what is implied, by serving our generation by the will of God.

And,

1. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies, that we have a gracious respect to God, in every business of life, that we are employed in. His glory must be the governing end of our lives. *Whether, therefore, (says the Apostle), ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do; do all to the glory of God.* But men cannot sincerely aim at the glory of God, in any one thing that they do, unless they are renewed by divine grace. Mankind are in such a state of depravity, *that all the world are become guilty before God.* Not only abandoned sinners, *whose sins go before hand to judgment;* such as are mentioned I. Cor. 9, 10. *Fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, and extortioners;* but those who are more sober, and civilized, while unregenerate, are continually exposed to the wrath of God, *who is a consuming fire.* All the descendants of Adam, *are children of wrath by nature,* one as well as another. We may all say of ourselves, what David said of himself, Psal. 51, 5, *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*



Hence it follows, that there is an absolute necessity, *that we should be created in Christ Jesus, unto good works*; and that our hearts should be circumcised, *that we may love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and with all our souls*, and act from an higher principle than mere self love. *For none of us should live to himself, and no man should die to himself. For whether we live, we should live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we should die, unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we may be the Lord's.* But,

2. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies that we are employed in some proper business, whereby we may provide for our own comfort, and be useful to others. Idleness is a sin, that is testified against in the holy scriptures, and discountenanced in all civilized states. It contradicts the end of our creation, makes men become a burden to the world, and makes them become a prey, to every vile lust and temptation. All creatures in heaven and earth, are employed in the service of God, mankind only excepted; and they are generally useful, and serviceable to us. The blessed angels, and glorified saints, rest without rest, day and night, sounding forth the praises of their great Creator. What good offices departed saints do for us, we know not; tho' we know that they are concerned for our welfare. But the angels are all *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister, to them that shall be heirs of salvation.* The sun, moon and stars, continually praise God; and minister to our support and comfort; and the air, earth, and sea, and all that in them is, contribute to promote the same end. Surely then we should not be idle, when all the world around us, is at work. But, however, we had better be idle, and do nothing at all, than to be employed, in doing mischief. And, therefore, the business that we should be engaged in, should be a lawful employment. *They that will be rich, by following an unlawful occupation, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into any foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruc-*

*tion and perdition.* But the employment that we are occupied in, should not only be lawful, but it should be what we are fitted for. Men have different inclinations, different capacities, and different advantages, arising from bodily strength or from the strength of a natural genius, or from the manner of their education. But there is different business enough in the world, for every individual of the human race, let their inclinations, abilities, and advantages, be what they will. But,

3. To serve our generation by the will of God implies, that we abstain from every thing that is contrary to the will of God. God has made known his will to us, partly by the light of nature: *for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shews the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, either accusing or excusing one another.* But God has discovered his will to us, more clearly, by an express revelation from heaven. *For holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy ghost.* Whatsoever therefore is contrary to the will of God, revealed either by the light of nature, or by his written word, should be carefully avoided by us. *For how can we do such great wickedness as to sin against God? Tho' it is true, that some sins are more heinous, and aggravated, than some others, yet every sin deserves eternal damnation.* For when men commit sin, they transgress the law of God, and thereby trample under foot, the authority of the law-giver, and implicitly say, *let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us. He that offends then in one point, is guilty of all.* We must therefore, *cleanse our selves from all filthiness, of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. For this is the will of God, even our sanctification. What I say unto you, (says our Saviour,) I say unto all, watch.* We must watch over our hearts, that we may keep

*our hearts, with all diligence, because out of them are the issues of life. We must watch over our tongues, that we may refrain our tongues from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile. And we must watch over our lives, that we may exercise ourselves, in keeping consciences, void of offence, toward God and toward men. For it is a truth, that will remain more firm, and unshaken than the pillars of Heaven, or the foundation of the earth; that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. I add,*

4. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies that we diligently, and faithfully, discharge every duty of life. Christianity is a practical science; we are required not only to eschew evil, but to do good. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly; that they which have believed in God, might be careful, to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.* The duties which we owe more immediately unto God, to our neighbors, and to ourselves, must be faithfully discharged by us. We owe all possible love, and obedience to God, as our creator, preserver, and redeemer. We must therefore love him, fear him, trust him, delight in him, as our portion and happiness; be thankful for his mercies, humbled under his frowns, and devote our bodies, and souls to his service. And the external duties of his worship, should be faithfully discharged by us. Can any man be said to serve his generation by the will of God, who neglects to pray to God in secret? or neglects family prayer, or makes no conscience of absenting from God's publick worship?

There are duties likewise, that we ought to perform to our fellow men. *We should do to others as we would that they should do unto us; and love our neighbors as ourselves. And accordingly, we should put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* And it is our duty