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REV. DR. BEECHER'S  
ELECTION SERMON.

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A

**SERMON,**

ADDRESSED TO THE

**LEGISLATURE OF CONNECTICUT;**

AT

**NEW-HAVEN,**

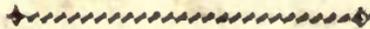
ON THE DAY OF THE

**Anniversary Election,**

**MAY 2d, 1826.**



BY LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.



**NEW-HAVEN:**

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE LEGISLATURE.

I. Bunce, Printer.

1826.

W. H. H. W.

ART OF GRASSHOG

RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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W. H. H. W.

*At a General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, holden at New-Haven in said State, on the first Wednesday of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty six :*

**RESOLVED**, That the Hon *Samuel Church* and *Morris Woodruff*, be directed to wait on the Rev. **LYMAN BEECHER**, and present him the thanks of the General Assembly, for the Sermon delivered by him this day, and request a copy of the same, that it may be printed.

A true Copy of Record,

Examined by

1826

**THOMAS DAY**, Secretary.

W. H. H. W.

W. H. H. W.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ART OF GRASSHOG

W. H. H. W.

# SERMON.



REVELATION—XXI. 5.

*“And He that sat upon the throne said Behold, I make all things new.”*



**T**HE history of the world is the history of human nature in ruins. No state of society has been permanent and universal which corresponds with the capacities of enjoyments possessed by man, or with his conceptions and desires. Small portions only of the human family have, at the same time, enjoyed a state of society, in any considerable degree desirable: while much the greatest part of mankind have, in all ages, endured the evils of barbarism and despotism.

It is equally manifest, that this unhappy condition of our race has not been the result of physical necessity, but of moral causes. The earth is as capable of sustaining a happy as a miserable population, and it is the perversion only of her resources and of the human faculties, which has darkened the earth and made the misery of man so great. The human intellect has given proof of vigour and ingenuity sufficient to bless the world; and powerful efforts have been made in every age, by afflicted humanity, to escape from this downward bias, and rise to elevated and permanent enjoyment. Egypt, in her monumental ruins, affords evidence of a high state of the arts, which arose and passed away at a period beyond the reach of history. In Greece, a vigorous intellect and favouring clime thrust up, from the dead level around her, a state of society comparatively cultivated and happy; but the sun of her prosperity blazed upon the surrounding darkness

to set speedily in the night of ages. Rome fought her way to dominion and civilization, and furnished specimens of mental vigour and finished culture. But the superstructure of her greatness rested upon oppressed humanity, and was reared by the plunder of a devastated world. Commerce, which has given to cities a temporary eminence, has elevated but a little the moral condition of the multitude; and science, which was restored to modern Europe at the Reformation, and commerce and the arts, which have followed in her train, have not, to this day, disenthralled the nations.

From experiments so long and so hopelessly made, it would seem to result that, in the conflict between the heart and the intellect of man, victory has always declared on the side of the heart; which has led many to conclude that the condition of man is hopeless in respect to any universal abiding melioration of his condition. The text throws light upon this dark destiny of man. It is a voice from heaven announcing the approach of help from above. "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, behold I make all things new."

The renovation here announced is a moral renovation, which shall change the character and condition of men. The renovation will not be partial in its influence, like the sun shining through clouds on favoured spots, but co-extensive with the ruin. Nor shall its results be that national glory, which gilds only the palace, and cheers only the dwellings of the noble. It shall bring down the mountains and exalt the valleys. It shall send liberty and equality to all the dwellings of men. Nor shall it stop at the fire-side, or exhaust its blessings in temporal mercies. It shall enter the hidden man of the heart, and there destroy the power which has blasted human hopes and baffled human efforts. Nor will the change be transient. It is the last dispensation of heaven for the relief of this miserable world, and shall bring glory to God in the highest, to the earth peace, and good will to men.

Many have doubted whether such a renovation of the world will ever be accomplished; but, He that sat upon the throne, said, It is done:—It is as certain as if it were come to pass.

I shall submit to your consideration, at this time, some of the reasons which justify the hope, that our nation has been raised up by Providence to exert an efficient instrumentality in this moral renovation of the world.

I observe then, that, to this renovation, great changes are required in the civil and religious condition of nations.

The monopoly of the soil must be abolished. Hitherto the majority of mankind, who have tilled the earth, have

been slaves or tenants. The soil has been owned by kings, and military chieftains, and nobles, and by them rented to landlords, and, by these, to still smaller dealers, and by these again it has been divided and rented, until the majority, who paid the rent, have sustained, in the sweat of their brow, not only their own families, but three or four orders of society above them, and have been themselves crushed beneath the weight, or have lived on the borders of starvation. The sickness of a week and often of a single day makes them paupers.

This same monopoly of the soil sends another large class of the community into manufacturing establishments, to wear out their days in ignorance and hopeless poverty, and another to the camp and navy,—where honor and wealth await the few, and ignorance, and an early grave the many.

The consequence of excluding so many from the possession and healthful cultivation of the soil, is ignorance, and improvidence, and reckless indifference, and vice, and turbulence. Tortured by their oppressions, and unrestrained by moral principle, they are prepared for desperate deeds. Such a state of society cannot be made happy: the evil is radical, and can only be remedied by giving a new direction to the physical moral and intellectual energies of men. We may as well band with iron the trees of the forest, and expect their expansion; and throw upon them, in stinted measure, the light and the rain of heaven, and expect their luxuriant growth, as to cramp the human mind by unequal institutions, and expect the developement of its resources, in a happy state of society. Room for action must be provided, and light must be poured upon the understanding, and motive must be pressed upon the heart. Man must be unshackled, enlightened, and stimulated. But to accomplish this, the earth must be owned by those who till it. This will give action to industry, vigour to the body, and tone to the mind, and, by the attendant blessing of heaven, religion to the heart. From agriculture, stimulated by personal rights, will result commerce, science, arts, liberty and independence.

The attraction of gravity is the great principle of motion in the material world, and the possession of the earth by its inhabitants in fee simple is the great principle of motion in the moral world. Nearly all the political evils which have afflicted mankind, have resulted from the unrighteous monopoly of the earth; and the predicted renovation can never be accomplished, until, to some extent, this monopoly has passed away, and the earth is extensively tilled by the independent owners of the soil.

To the moral renovation of the world, a change is required in the prevailing forms of government.

The monopoly of power must be superseded by the suffrages of freemen. While the great body of the people are excluded from all voice and influence in legislation, it is impossible to constitute a state of society such as the faculties of man allow and the benevolence of God desires. While the few govern without responsibility, they will seek their own elevation and depress the multitude. To elevate society, and bring out the human energies in a well ordered state of things, the mass of the nations must be enlightened, and qualified for self-government, and must yield obedience to delegated power.

The rights of conscience, also, must be restored to man, before the moral renovation of the world can be expected.

Few of the millions that have peopled the earth, have been qualified by knowledge, or permitted by the government under which they lived, to examine the Bible and judge for themselves. The nominal religions of this world have been supported by governments, who, of course, have prescribed the creed, and modelled the worship, and controled the priesthood. From such a state of things, what better results could be expected, than that ambitious men should be exalted to the sacred office while religion itself was despised and persecuted? Governments and ecclesiastics must cease then to dictate what men shall believe, and in what manner they shall worship God. The Church must be emancipated from worldly dominion, and enjoy that liberty wherewith Jesus Christ has made her free.

Is it to be expected, then, that kingly governments shall cease, and the republican form become universal? I shall not stop now to discuss this question. I would only ask whether monarchical governments can be sustained without a nobility and an established religion, and whether these privileged orders can exist without that monopoly of the soil, and of political influence, and of the right of conscience which are destructive to a religious and happy state of society. That governments will change their name, or all their ancient forms, I will not say. But that that they will, under some form, become so far popular in their spirit, as that the political power shall be in the hands of the people, I cannot doubt.

It has been contended, that Christianity cannot exist in this world without the aid of religious establishments. But, with more truth, it may be said, that, from the beginning to this day, it has existed in spite of them. It took possession of the earth in the face of them, and has survived their deadly embrace, and now bursting from their alliance, finds in them the most formidable opposition to evangelical doctrine and vital godliness.

To accomplish these great changes in the civil and religious

condition of the world, instruction alone will not avail. A great example is needed, of which the world may take knowledge, which shall inspire hope, and rouse and concentrate the energies of man. But where shall such an experiment be made? Africa requires for herself the commiseration of the world, and in Europe and Asia, it would require ages to dig up the foundations of despotism and remove the rubbish only to prepare the way for such a state of society as we have described: This too must be done in opposition to proscription and organized resistance. There is also such a mass of uninformed mind, accustomed to crouch under burdens, and so much is required to prepare it for civil liberty, that little hope remains that the old world, undirected, and unstimulated by example, will ever disenthral itself. Some nation, itself free, must blow the trumpet, and hold up the light. England enjoys to some extent the blessings of civil liberty. But in England there is so great a monopoly of the soil and of power, and so much overturning feared and needed, that it is only in stinted measures, and with circumspect policy, she deals out her sympathy and holds up her light. A more vigorous ally is needed, which shall push on the work with a fearless heart and powerful hand. But where can that nation be found? Look now at the history of our fathers and behold what God has wrought. They were such a race of men as never before laid the foundations of an empire; athletic, intelligent and pious. But how should this portion of a nation's population be uprooted and driven into exile? They could not remain at home. In that age of darkness and land of bondage, they had formed some just conceptions of civil and religious liberty, and would fain have modified the civil government and the church of God according to the pattern which we have described. But the reformation from popery, superintended by government and regulated by policy, stopped short of what the pious expected and desired. The Puritans could not in all things conform to the church, and the church would not suffer them to dissent; and thus they were driven into exile. And now behold their institutions, such as the world needs, and, attended as they have been by the power of God, able to elevate and renovate the world. They recognize the equal rights of man—give the soil to the cultivator, and self-government and the rights of conscience to the people. They enlighten the intellect, and form the conscience, and bring the entire influence of the divine government to bear upon the heart. It was the great object of our fathers to govern men by the fear of the Lord; to exhibit the precepts, apply the motives, and realize the dispositions, which the word of God inculcates and his Spirit inspires; to im-

due families and schools and towns and states with this wisdom from above. They had no projects of human device, no theories of untried efficacy. They hung all their hopes of civil and religious liberty upon the word of God, and the efficacy of his Spirit. Nor was theirs the presumptuous hope of grace without effort. It was by training men for self-government, that they expected to make freemen, and, by becoming fellow workers with God, that they expected his aid in forming christians; while, by intellectual culture, and moral influence, and divine power, they prepared men to enjoy and perpetuate civil liberty.

The Law, with sleepless vigilance, watched over the family, the Church and the State; and a vigorous and united public opinion rendered its execution certain and effectual. Every family was required to possess a bible; every district a school, and every town a pastor. The law protected the Sabbath, and sustained the public worship of God, and punished immorality; and with mild but effectual energy, ruled over all. The great excellence of these institutions is, that they are practical and powerful. The people are not free in name and form merely, but in deed and in truth. Were all forms blotted out, the people would be free. The governments are free governments from the foundation to the top stone, and of such practical efficacy as to make free men.

The family, embodying instruction and government, was itself an embryo Empire.

In the school district, the people were called upon to exercise their own discretion and rights, and, in the ecclesiastical society, to rear their place of worship, elect their pastor and provide for his support, and all under the protection and guidance of Law.

The towns, in their popular assemblies, discussed their local interests and administered their own concerns. In these, originated the Legislature, and from the Legislature emanated the Courts of Justice.

In the States, all, which is local and peculiar, is superintended with a minuteness and efficacy, which no consolidated government could possibly accomplish. The people have only to ascertain from experience what their convenience or interest demands, and their wish becomes a law. And still in the national government there is all the comprehension of plan, and power of resource and unity of action which are required for the highest degree of national prosperity.

It has been doubted whether a republic so extensive as ours can be held together and efficiently governed. But where there is this intellectual and moral influence, the habitual exercise of civil and religious liberty, from the family upward, we see not

why a republic may not be extended indefinitely and be still the strongest and most effective government in the world.

The history of our nation is indicative of some great design to be accomplished by it. It is a history of perils and deliverances and of strength ordained out of weakness. The wars with the savage tribes, and with the French, and at last with the English, protracted expense and toil and blood, through a period of one hundred and fifty years. No nation, out of such weakness, ever became so strong, or was guided through such perils to such safety. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quickly, when their wrath was kindled against us." These deliverances the enemy beheld often with wonder, and our fathers, always, with thanksgiving and praise. But, in the whole history of the world, God has not been accustomed to grant signal interpositions without ends of corresponding magnitude to be answered by them. Indeed, if it had been the design of Heaven to establish a powerful nation, in the full enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, where all the energies of man might find scope and excitement or purpose to shew the world by experiment, of what man is capable, and to shed light on the darkness which should awake the slumbering eye, and rouse the torpid mind, and nerve the palsied arm of millions,—where could such an experiment have been made but in this country, and by whom more auspiciously than by our fathers, and by what means so well adapted to the end as their institutions?

The course which is now adopted by Christians of all denominations, to support and to extend at home and abroad, religious and moral influence, would seem to indicate the purpose of God to render us, extensively, the almoners of his mercy to this world.

For two hundred years the religious institutions of our land were secured by law. But as our numbers increased, and liberty of conscience resulted in many denominations of Christians, it became impossible to secure by law the universal application of religious and moral influence. And yet, without this mighty energy the whole system must fail. We might as well rely on the harvests which our fathers reared for bread, as to rely on the external forms of liberty which they established, without the application of that vital energy, by which the body politic was animated and moved. But, at the very time when the civil law had waxed old and was passing away, God began to pour out his Spirit upon the Churches, and voluntary associations of christians arose to apply and extend that influence, which the law could no longer apply. And now we are blessed with so-

cieties to aid in the support of the Gospel at home, and to extend it to the new settlements. We have Bible Societies, and Tract Societies, and associations of individuals, who, instead of the Select-Men, make it their business to see that every family has a Bible, and every Church a pastor, and every child a catechism. And to these succeeded Education Societies, that our nation may not outgrow the means of grace. And while these means of moral culture are supplied, this great nation begins to look down from her eminence, with compassion, upon a world in darkness, and put forth her mighty arm to disenthral and elevate the human family.

Let it be remembered that the means now relied on are precisely those, which our fathers applied, and which have secured our prosperity. And when we contemplate the unexampled resources of this country; its men; its soil, climate, sea-coast, rivers, lakes, and canals; its agriculture, commerce, arts and wealth, and all in connexion with the influence of republican and religious institutions, is it too much to be hoped that God will accept our instrumentality, and render it effectual, extensively, for the renovation of the human family?

The revivals of religion which prevail in our land among christians of all denominations, furnish cheering evidence of the presence of evangelical doctrine, and of the power of that Spirit by which the truth is to be made efficacious in the renovation of the world. These revivals are distinguished by their continuance through a period of thirty years; by their extent, pervading the nation; by their increasing frequency in the same places; by their rapidity and power, in a few weeks changing the character of towns and cities, and even of whole districts and countries,—an earnest of that glorious time, when a nation shall be born in a day, purifying our literary institutions, and multiplying pastors and missionaries to cheer our own land and enlighten distant nations.

The revivals of religion in this country are without a parallel in the history of the world, and are constituting an era of moral power entirely new. Already the churches look chiefly to them for their members and pastors, and for that power upon public opinion, which retards declension, gives energy to law, and voluntary support to religious institutions.

These revivals then, falling in with all these antecedent indications, seem to declare the purpose of God to employ this nation in the glorious work of renovating the world.

If we look at our Missionaries abroad, and witness the smiles of Heaven upon their efforts, our confidence will be increased, that it is the purpose of God to render our nation a blessing to the world. In talents, and piety, and learning, and doctrine,

and civil policy, they are the legitimate descendants of the Puritans. Every where they command high respect, and have been distinguished by their judicious and successful efforts. In Ceylon and Hawaii, and among the natives of this country, they are fast supplanting idolatry by christian institutions. Revivals of religion cheer and bless them, and churches and all the elements of christian civilization are multiplying around them.

Let this nation go on, then, and multiply its millions and its resources, and bring the whole under the influence of our civil and religious institutions, and with the energies of its concentrated benevolence send out evangelical instruction; and who can calculate what our blessed instrumentality shall have accomplished, when He who sitteth upon the throne shall have made all things new.

If Swartz and Buchanan, and Vanderkemp, and Carey, and Martyn, and Brainard, could each alone accomplish so much, what may not be expected from the energies of such a nation as this?

If we consider also our friendly relations with the South American States, and the close imitation they are disposed to make of our civil and literary institutions, who can doubt that the spark which our forefathers struck will yet enlighten this entire continent? But when the light of such a hemisphere shall go up to heaven, it will throw its beams beyond the waves—it will shine into the darkness there, and be comprehended; it will awaken desire, and hope, and effort, and produce revolutions and overturnings, until the world is free.

From our revolutionary struggle proceeded the revolution in France, and all which has followed in Naples, Portugal, Spain, and Greece; and though the bolt of every chain has been driven again, they can no more hold the heaving mass than the chains of Xerxes could hold the Hellespont vexed with storms. Floods have been poured upon the rising flame, but they can no more extinguish it than showers of rain can extinguish the fires of *Ætna*. Still it burns, and still the mountain heaves and murmurs; and soon it will explode with voices and thunderings, and great earthquakes. Then will the trumpet of jubilee sound, and earth's debased millions will leap from the dust, and shake off their chains, and cry Hosanna to the Son of David.

Before we conclude this discourse, let us attend to some of the duties to which we are called by our high providential destiny.

And most evidently we are called upon

1. To cherish with high veneration and grateful recollections the memory of our fathers. Both the ties of nature and the dictates of policy demand this. And surely no nation ever had less occasion to be ashamed of its ancestry: for while most na-

tions trace their origin to barbarians, the foundations of our nation were laid by civilized men—by christians. Many of them were men of distinguished families, of powerful talents, of great learning, of pre-eminent wisdom, of decided character, and of most inflexible integrity. And yet, not unfrequently, they have been treated as if they had no virtues; while their sins and follies have been sedulously immortalized in satirical anecdote. The influence of such treatment of the fathers is too manifest. It creates and lets loose upon their invaluable institute the Vandal spirit of innovation and overthrow: for after the memory of our fathers shall have been rendered contemptible, who will appreciate and sustain their institutions?

The precious memory of our fathers should be the watch-word of liberty throughout the land;—for, imperfect as they were, the world before had not seen their like, nor will it soon, we fear, behold their like again.

Such models of moral excellence; such apostles of civil and religious liberty; such shades of the illustrious dead, standing in high antiquity, and looking down upon their descendants with approbation or reproof, according as they follow or depart from the good way, constitute a censorship inferior only to the eye of God;—and to ridicule them is national suicide.

The doctrines of our fathers have been represented as of a licentious tendency. But when other systems shall have produced a piety as devoted, a morality as pure, a patriotism as disinterested, and a state of society as happy, as have prevailed where their doctrines have been most prevalent; it may be in season to seek an answer to this objection.

The same doctrines have been charged with inspiring a spirit of dogmatism and religious domination. But in all the struggles of man with despotic power for civil liberty, the doctrines of our fathers have been found on the side of liberty as their opposite have been found usually in the ranks of arbitrary power.

The persecutions instituted by our fathers, have been the occasion of ceaseless obloquy upon their fair fame. And truly it was a fault of no ordinary magnitude that they did persecute. But let him whose ancestors were not ten times more guilty, cast the first stone, and the ashes of our fathers will no more be disturbed. More exclamation and invective has been called forth by the few instances of persecution by the fathers of New-England, than by all the fires which lighted the realm of Old England for centuries, and drove into exile thousands of her most valuable subjects.

The superstition and bigotry of our fathers are themes on which some of their descendants, far enough themselves from superstition, if not from bigotry, have delighted to dwell. But

when we look abroad and behold the condition of the world, compared with the condition of New-England, we may justly exclaim, Would to God that the ancestors of all the nations had been not only almost, but altogether such bigots as our fathers were!

Their strictness in the family, and in church and state, has been complained of as too rigid. But they were laying the foundation of a nation, and applying a moral power whose impulse should extend through ages; and who that beholds the rapid and appalling moral relaxation of the present day, can believe that they put the system in motion with too much rigour? In proportion as their discipline had been less strict, our present condition had been more alarming, and our future prospects more desperate.

Our fathers have been ridiculed as an uncouth and uncourtly generation. And truly, it must be admitted that they were not as expert in the graces of dress, and the etiquette of the drawing-room, as some of their descendants. But neither could these have felled the trees, nor guided the plough, nor spread the sail which they did; nor braved the dangers of Indian warfare, nor displayed the wisdom in counsel which our fathers displayed. And had none stepped upon the Plymouth rock but such effeminate critics as these, the poor natives never would have mourned the wilderness lost, but would have brushed them from the land as they would brush the puny insect from their face; the Pequods would have slept in safety that night which was their last, and no intrepid Mason had hung upon their rear, and driven into exile the panic-struck fugitives.

2. We are called upon to cherish and extend our religious institutions.

Religion was the power on which our fathers relied—the power which has made us what we are, and which must guarantee the perpetuity of our blessings. Every other influence has been tried and has failed; this has been tried with ample promise of success. The application of religious and moral influence is therefore the great duty to which as a nation we are called. This is the article of our rise or fall—of our glorious immortality or our hasty dissolution. Every thing but this may be safely left to the operation of existing causes. Ambition will secure the interests of education and science; the love of gold will push agriculture and commerce and arts; and the pride of liberty will arm the nation, and render it invincible. All these things the nations who have preceded us have been able to do. But there was a sickness of the heart which they could neither endure nor heal;—and with this same disease this nation is sick, and intellectual culture, and civil liberty, and national wealth

will not heal it. There is but one remedy ; and that is the preaching of the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from on high. But to render the gospel effectual, the religious education of the family, and the moral culture of our schools and colleges must be secured ; and the Sabbath must be rescued from profanation. The Sabbath is the great organ of the divine administration—the only means provided by God to give ubiquity and power to His moral government. The intellectual culture of a nation requires schools and literary institutions ; and that the subjects of instruction shall be brought under their influence. Let the fascinations of pleasure, or the demands of labour withdraw the children and youth from the power of intellectual culture ; and ignorance will ensue. So let the stream of pleasure and of worldly cares bear away the population of the land from the house of God, and from the duties of devotion on the Sabbath ; and ignorance of God, and of His laws will with equal certainty ensue ; irreligion will prevail, and immorality and dissoluteness, to an extent utterly inconsistent with the permanence of republican institutions. Europe can never enjoy civil liberty until she shall do more homage to the Sabbath of God ; and we shall enjoy it but a short space after we have ceased to render to God his right in that sacred day : for all the millions who violate the Sabbath will draw themselves from the moral power of the divine government, deprive their families of a religious education, and abandon them to the power of their evil hearts and their own bad example.

In the mean time the secular interests of men are so indissolubly connected, that the stream of business put in motion by the wicked on the Sabbath day, not only pains the eye of the virtuous, but, as it deepens and roars and rolls onward its turbid waters, it draws into itself by the associations of business, a large and still larger portion of the community, until it spreads unresisted over the land, obliterates the government of God, and substitutes covetousness and pleasure and dissoluteness, instead of godliness and the morality of the gospel.

The present undoubtedly is the generation which is to decide the fate of this great empire, by deciding whether the Sabbath of God shall be preserved or blotted out ; for the temptations of the seaboard and of canals are immense, and are increasing most fearfully ; and unless public sentiment and law shall make a stand soon, we may as well attempt to stop the rolling of the ocean or the current of our mighty rivers.

The universal extension of our religious institutions is the only means then of reconciling our unparalleled prosperity with national purity and immortality. Without the preserving power of religious and moral influence, our rapid increase in wealth will

be the occasion of our swift destruction. The rank vegetation of unsanctified enterprise thrown into one capacious reservoir of putrefaction, will send up over the land desolation and death. No nation so short lived as ours, unless we can balance our prosperity by moral power. Our sun has moved onward from his morning to his meridian, with a rapidity and glory which has amazed the world. But unless we can extend the power of religious institutions through the land, dark clouds will soon obscure his glory, and his descent to a night of ages will be more rapid than his rising.

When we were colonies or unallied states, the law could make provision for the creation and application of moral powers. The law could compel men to desist from secular employments and vain amusements on the Sabbath. The law could compel men to support the gospel and attend the public worship of God—and the Select-men could see to it that every town should in due time settle a minister, and that every family should possess a Bible and an orthodox catechism. But these means of moral influence the law can no longer apply; and there is no substitute but the voluntary energies of the nation itself, in associations for charitable contributions and efforts, patronized by all denominations of christians, and by all classes of the community who love their country. We may boast of our civil and religious liberty, but they are the fruit of other men's labours into which we have entered, and the effect of institutions whose impulse has been felt long after the hands that reared them have mouldered in the grave. It is an impulse, too, that is fast failing, and becoming yearly more and more disproportioned to the mass that is to be moved by it. Our religious institutions must be invigorated, or we are undone. They must move onward with our flowing emigration to the Mississippi—must ascend the Iron Mountains, and pour their waters of life into the Ocean beyond; and from the North to the South they must bear salvation on their waves. In this way the nation can save itself: but unless it can be roused to the mighty work, it will, like the man among the tombs, become exceeding fierce, and turn upon itself its infuriated energies, and pour out its life blood by self-inflicted wounds.

3. We are called upon to give a quickened and extended impulse to our charitable insitutions.

These are the providential substitutes for the legal provisions of our fathers, now inapplicable by change of circumstances. In these the nation must enroll itself spontaneously, and the spirit of the Puritans be revived for the preservation of their insitutions. And now is the time. With our growing prosperity

grow also the fascinations of pleasure, and the means and temptations to voluptuousness. Now, unless the salt of the earth contained in christian institutions, can be diffused through the land, the mass will putrify. The tide of business and pleasure, bursting from our cities, rolling on our sea-coast, and flowing in our canals, will soon sweep away the Sabbath, unless a vigorous public sentiment can be arrayed for its preservation by the preaching of the gospel and the power of the Spirit. Let the Sabbath schools, then, and Bible classes of our land be multiplied, and let Societies for domestic missions rise in every State and District, and collect and pour out the energies of the nation for its moral preservation; while bibles, and pastors and teachers are multiplied, till the knowledge of the Lord covers the land, and his saving health is extended to all the people.

4. All christian denominations are called upon to co-operate for the preservation of religion.

It is idle to expect, and folly to desire, the amalgamation of all denominations into one. The papal effort at universal comprehension has shown what a vast unstimulated, stagnant uniformity will accomplish; and God, no doubt, has permitted some variant winds of opinion to move upon the face of the deep, to maintain motion and purity and life.

We may say, however, that jealousies and ambitious collisions between religious denominations should give place to christian courtesy and the magnanimity of an hearty co-operation for the glory of God, and the salvation of the world.

It is in vain to expect, and it would be sinful to desire the extinction of any one denomination of christians. There is room for all—and work for all; and there is ample reason why each should hail the other as an auxiliary in the work of the Lord. The religious principle must be applied throughout the nation, and no *one* denomination can do it. The work demands the ceaseless action of each in its own peculiar way, and the magnanimous co-operation of all for the preservation of the great principles of our common christianity. Nor will such concert of action be in vain. It will form extensively a public opinion which shall accord with the morality of the gospel—whose sanctions, expressed in the votes of virtuous freemen, shall elevate to influence and power men of pure morality, and consign the irreligious, immoral, and dissolute to merited contempt—a law which the wicked cannot repeal, and whose penalty they cannot evade. All denominations, united and directing their suffrages to that end, can check the violation of the Sabbath; can arrest the contagion of intemperance; can punish duellists in high places, who set at defiance, with shameless notoriety, the laws of

God and their country, bringing upon us the contempt of the world, and the just judgments of Heaven.

5. In this great work of national preservation and universal good will, our civil rulers are particularly called upon to co-operate.

Not, as once, in convoking synods, and approving and recommending creeds ; and not in coercing by law attendance upon public worship, or the support of religious institutions. The days have gone by in which such interposition is required or can avail. The God of our fathers having given to us a practical illustration of the efficacy of religious institutions, sustained by law during our minority ;—now, in our manhood, puts the price into our hands, to be preserved or abandoned on our own responsibility. Nor are the Church and the State to be so identified, as that the qualifications for civil office must be the same as for membership in that kingdom which is not of this world. Still our civil rulers owe to God and their country now, the same illustrious piety, the same estimation of the doctrines of God's word, the same attendance upon the ordinances of the gospel and co-operation for their support, and the same strict and pure morality, which rendered the civil fathers of our land so illustrious in their character, and so benign in the power of their example upon their own and upon other generations. The example of men in official stations is among the most powerful moral causes which afflict or bless a community. If it be good, it descends with cheering power, like the gentle rain upon the earth ; but if it be evil, from its bad eminence, it comes down upon the community, like the mountain torrent, sweeping away landmarks. The righteous mourn under their sway, and the wicked creep from their hiding-places, and walk on every side, setting their mouth against the heavens, and their foot upon all that is sacred and holy. The time has come, when the experiment is to be made, whether the world is to be emancipated and rendered happy, or whether the whole creation shall groan and travail together in pain until the final consummation : and the example of the rulers of our nation will throw decisive weights into the scales, for or against the world's last hope. If they pour contempt upon the Bible, its doctrines and institutions—if they take in vain the name of God, or profane wantonly his holy day—if they concentrate in the capitol and spread abroad through the land the infection of their bad example ; the whole nation will feel it, and the nation die under it, unless the indignant virtue of an insulted community shall throw off the body of death, and by a well directed suffrage call to its aid men of talents and of pure morality.

6. To perpetuate our national prosperity and hold up our light to the world, our citizens must banish party spirit, and regulate the suffrage of the nation with reference to the preservation of its moral purity.

The temporary collisions of local interest and of ambition can never be excluded from such a nation as this, and are not to be feared. It is those deep-rooted and permanent divisions, extending through the land, rousing the feelings and arraying the energies of one part of the nation in keen collision with the other, and perpetuating prejudice and strife, from generation to generation, which threaten the existence of our republican institutions. Through one such fiery trial we have passed undestroyed, though by no means uninjured; and no patriot of the present generation would willingly, I trust, behold our country placed in such jeopardy again. Despotic governments may pass in safety through popular commotions such as would shake down the pillars of a republic. The mobs of England, which, in the presence of the military power, are but the gambols of a kid within the scope of the lion's paws, would be, in this country, as the letting out of waters. There is no possibility of freedom in this bad world, without so much intelligence and moral principle as shall create an efficient public sentiment in favour of law and good order.

But party spirit prostrates every thing which is venerable and sacred within the sphere of its commotion. It directs the attention of the people from their own common interests to the means of gaining ends to which prejudice and passion may direct them; and the attention of the government from the public good to the means of its own political ascendancy. It renders a wise and comprehensive policy impossible; for party spirit has no magnanimity, no conscience, no consistency, to withhold it from resisting as readily what is wise as what is unwise, and its victories are too transient to admit of much prospective wisdom. It is eminently hostile to the laws which watch over the morals of the nation;—for who will execute them when partizans on both sides fear that they may feel the consequences of fidelity at the very next election. Too often, from the nearly balanced state of parties, the most worthless portion of the community actually hold the sway in the elections, even in a state of society comparatively virtuous,—occasioning impunity in the violation of law, and clothing with political consequence, and too often surrounding with adulation, men whom our fathers would have expelled from good society, and sent to the workhouse or the pillory. It tends to destroy in society all distinctions of talent, and learning, and moral character, as qualifications

for office ; while it reconciles the people, upon the plea of necessity, to such preposterous sacrifices of conscience and common sense as they would never consent to, unstimulated by its madness. Indeed, in all but the name, it rears beneath the forms of freedom, a real and most terrific despotism. For every party has a soul,—some master spirit who, without a crown and sceptre, governs with absolute sway. He is surrounded by a nobility, each of whom is commissioned to govern the public opinion within his sphere, and bring his retainers to the polls, to subserve implicitly the interests of the king and of the aristocracy. It needs only to kindle the watch-fire, and every clansman is at his post ; and argument might as well avail against bullets in the day of battle, as in these determined contests of parties. There is no remedy for this state of things, but that intelligence which qualifies the people to understand their rights, interests, and duties ; and that calmness of feeling to which the public mind, undisturbed by partizan efforts, will not fail to come ; and that deep conviction of the importance of moral purity, which shall turn the expectations of the people from party men and party measures, to the application of moral power, by the institutions of religion, and the interposition of the Holy Spirit.

Multitudes of christians and patriots have long since abandoned party politics, and, not knowing what to do, have abandoned almost the exercise of suffrage. This is wrong. An enlightened and virtuous suffrage may, by system and concentration, become one of the most powerful means of promoting national purity and morality ;—as the suffrage from which the influence of conscience and virtue is withdrawn, cannot fail to be disastrous. While then, as freemen, we remove one temptation to hypocrisy, by dispensing with a profession of religion as a qualification for office, and exclude all occasions of jealousy, by bestowing our votes without reference to christian denominations ; let all christians and all patriots exercise their rights as electors with an inflexible regard to moral character ; and let the duellist and the sabbath-breaker, and the drunkard, and the licentious, find the doors of honour barred, and the heights of ambition defended against them by hosts of determined freemen ; and the moral effect will be great. The discrimination by suffrage will exert upon the youth of our country a most salutary restraint, and upon dissolute ambitious men a powerful reforming influence. Let every freeman, then, who would perpetuate the liberty and happiness of his country, and transmit to his descendants of distant generations the precious legacy which our fathers have sent down to us, enquire concerning the candidate for whom he is solicited to vote,—is he an enemy to the Bible, or to the doc-

times and institutions of the Gospel ;—is he a duellist, or an intemperate man, or a Sabbath-breaker, or dissolute, or dishonest?—and if in any of these respects, he be disqualified, withhold his vote, and give it to a better man—and it will go far to retrieve the declensions which have taken place, and to render righteousness and peace the stability of our times.

And now, what shall we say to these things? Are they the dreams of a fervid imagination, or are they the words of truth and soberness? Will our blessings be perpetuated, or shall ours be added to the ruined republics that have been? Are we assembled to-day to bestow funeral honours upon our departed glory, or with united counsels and hearts to strengthen the things that remain? Weak indeed must be the faith that wavers now, and sinks amid waves less terrific, and prospects more cheering, than any which our fathers ever saw. Were it dark even as midnight, and did the waves run high, and dash loud and angry around us, still our faith would not be dismayed: still with our fathers we would believe, "*Qui transtulit sustinet*;" and still would we rejoice in the annunciation of Him that sitteth upon the throne, "Behold I create all things new." Our anchor will not fail—our bark will not founder; for the means of preservation will be used, and the God of our fathers will make them effectual. The memory of our fathers is becoming more precious. Their institutions are commanding a higher estimation. Deeper convictions are felt of the importance of religious institutions; and more extended and vigorous exertions are made to balance the temptations of prosperity by moral powers. Christians are ceasing from their jealousies and concentrating their energies. The nation is moved, and beginning to enrol itself in various forms of charitable association, for the extension of religion at home and abroad. Philosophers and patriots, statesmen and men of wealth, are beginning to feel that it is righteousness only which exalteth a nation, and to give to the work of moral renovation their arguments, the power of their example, and the impulse of their charity. And the people, weary of political collision, are disposed at length to build again those institutions which in times of contention, they had either neglected or trodden down. Such an array of moral influence as is now comprehended in the great plan of charitable operations, was never before brought to bear upon the nation. It moves onward, attended by fervent supplications, and followed by glorious and unceasing effusions of the Holy Spirit. The god of this world feels the shock of the onset, and has commenced his retreat. Jesus Christ is going on from conquering and to conquer; nor will he turn from His purpose, or cease from His work, until He hath made all things new.





THE PRESUMPTION OF SKEPTICAL AND CARELESS CONTEMNERS OF RELIGION.

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A

# SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE MEETING HOUSE OF THE SOUTH PARISH,—ANDOVER,

ON THE

LAST SABBATH IN NOV. 1828.

**BY EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.**

President of the Theol. Sem. Andover.

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Published by request of the hearers.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT.

Whatever of peculiarity, intelligent readers of this sermon may perceive, in its subject and course of thought, may perhaps be explained by the following simple statement. It was written while the author was on a journey, in a distant part of the country; and was designedly adapted to a class of hearers, who were accustomed to parry all the solemn appeals of religion, by alleging, not their certainty that it is false, but their doubts of its truth. Probably there are men, in all times and places, to whom the admonitions of the sermon may be appropriate. In this view it was, in the customary interchange of labors on the sabbath, preached to the respected congregation, many of whom have united in requesting that it should be published.

## S E R M O N .

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### 2 PETER III. 4.

Where is the promise of his coming? For, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation.

THE Apostle Peter wrote his two pastoral letters, to comfort and establish the Christians, who had been widely dispersed, by the violence of persecution. He warned these Christians not to expect that the trials of the godly will cease, while hatred to truth and holiness is so predominant in the world. But he informed them that this hostility will assume a form of opposition, to which good men had not been accustomed, and of which they needed to be forewarned.

What then is this opposition?—Not chains, and dungeons, and gibbets. Over these, faith and patience had won a thousand triumphs. Not arguments. From these, truth had nothing to fear. Reasoning is not the armour in which these opposers of the gospel would array themselves, but *scoffing*. “There shall come scoffers.”

The language of these men corresponds with the bold licentiousness of their character. “Where is the promise of his coming?” This is an expression of profane incredulity, respecting the doctrine of a final judgment, and an eternal retribution. The phrase “his coming,” denoted the general belief of the church respecting this subject. The Apostle explains and limits its meaning, when he adds the dreadfully sublime declaration; “But the day of the Lord shall come, as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a

great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."

Jesting, so far as it is indulged by reasonable men, is always confined to subjects of little importance. The plague, that depopulates cities; the hurricane, that heaves the ocean into mountain billows; the volcano, that pours out its rivers of flame,—are regarded, by the pious and the profane, with impressions, not of levity, but of majesty and awe. He that could feel the concussion of an earthquake, and hear the crash of falling domes and towers;—or he that could look at the blazing crater of Etna,—and feel merry, would not be thought a sane man;—certainly not a man of good sense. What then must be thought of that man's understanding and heart, who can make the last judgment a topic of ridicule!

These cavilling unbelievers make the demand of Christians, "Where is the promise of his coming?—for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation." The sun rises and sets, the sea ebbs and flows, the seasons perform their circuits, as in ages past. How do we *know* that the end of the world, and the retribution of which you warn us, will ever prove a reality? Here it is assumed, as a practical principle, that our doubts concerning a revealed truth, authorise us to treat it with indifference; a principle that is utterly unreasonable, and that has proved the ruin of thousands. For he who merely doubts, or coldly admits the truth of Christianity, and yet acts as if he knew it to be false, is chargeable with extreme presumption; because, in a case of such everlasting moment, a thousand doubts are not to be laid in the balance against a single *possibility* that it is true.

Such is the subject before us. In the present discussion of it, observe, my hearers, I do not mean to say, or to intimate that there is any room for rational doubt concerning a state of eternal retribution. To affirm the *probability* of such a state, would be saying no more than most skeptical minds admit, and

to others, it would be using very feeble language ; because its absolute *certainty* may be proved, and has a thousand times been proved, by evidence that is perfectly conclusive.

But I wish, for once, to place this subject on a foundation that precludes all dispute. Admitting the utmost that cavilling or careless men can allege, still it is *possible* that an endless state of happiness or misery awaits us all, beyond the grave. And on the ground of this *possibility*, I maintain the charge of daring and blind presumption, against those who treat the gospel with indifference. To make this conduct reasonable, they must be *certain* that this life will not be followed by an eternal state of rewards and punishments ? *Can* they be certain of this ?

Let us examine this question.

Is there any *absurdity*, in the doctrine of an eternal retribution, as it has commonly been believed by Christians ? Is it inconsistent with any established truths that come within the province of our understandings ?

In the **FIRST** place, is it inconsistent with the *perfections of God* ?

With *which* of his perfections is it inconsistent ? Not with his *power* ; for the same power that could *give* men existence, can certainly *uphold* that existence ; and can render them happy or miserable, according to their character.

Not with his *wisdom* ; for there is no conceivable motive that could induce an all wise God to create rational beings, barely to live, and act, and suffer, a few days, on this earth, and then sink into eternal oblivion.

Not with his *justice* ; for who can doubt the equity of his appointing “ a day in which he will judge the world in *righteousness* ; a day when “ all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

The present distributions of Providence, are by no means

according to the characters of men. The wicked are often seen in great prosperity, and the righteous in poverty and sorrow. These unequal allotments have always been viewed, by reflecting men, as suggesting an argument in favour of a perfect and unalterable retribution hereafter.

In the SECOND place, is this doctrine inconsistent with the *constitution of the human mind*?

The soul of man is distinct from every thing which we know to be perishable. Matter, however combined or modified, has no intelligence. The clock, with its curious and useful mechanism, is as void of reason, memory, or consciousness, as any other portion of brass or wood. That thought is distinct from matter, is indeed so plain a point, that it may seem needless to assert it gravely from the pulpit. But from this plain principle, an important conclusion follows. If the soul is something entirely distinct from the body, then it did not derive its thinking properties from its union to the body; and the *ceasing* of that union can have no tendency to destroy the existence or faculties of the soul. The body has no superiority to common dust, except that it is the temporary residence of an immortal spirit. When this spirit departs, the tenement of clay falls. But there is no reason whatever to conclude that the soul becomes extinct with the dissolution of the body.

Besides, the powers of the soul, when not obstructed by its connexion with the body, increase in strength. As man advances from infancy to maturity, his mental faculties expand, and become more and more vigorous. And there is no evidence that the decay and decrepitude of age result at all from the constitution of the mind, aside from its connexion with a decaying body. This suggests the sublime thought of an endless progress in the powers of the soul, when it is released from the clogs which here impede its advances. Who can tell to what extent these narrow faculties may be enlarged, at some unknown period hereafter?—and consequently what a capacious

vessel every human soul will become, to be filled with happiness or misery ?

In the THIRD place, is this doctrine inconsistent with the stated *operations of Providence, or the analogy of the world ?*

From this source certainly, we derive no positive evidence of annihilation. We know of nothing, which has ever existed, and has absolutely *ceased* to exist. Animals and vegetables die continually, to give life to others. The grass springs from the dust,—the ox feeds upon the grass,—man feeds upon the ox,—worms feed upon the man, and these turn to dust again. The oak derives its nourishment from the ground, till it decays where it stood, and mingles with the dust again ; or perhaps becomes part of a ship, and mingles with the dust of a distant continent. In this wonderful system of operation, the same matter changes its qualities, its mode of existence, its place, its appearance, but does not cease to be. Doubtless omnipotence may annihilate, as well as create ; but the analogy of the external world furnishes no proof of annihilation. We see material bodies lose their forms, but not their *existence*. The death of plants in the winter, is succeeded by a sort of resurrection in the spring.

These remarks are not offered to *demonstrate* the doctrine of immortality, but to show that this doctrine cannot be proved to be *impossible* or *improbable*, by any arguments drawn from the general system of Providence. On the contrary, without any aid from the poet's fancy, the analogy of the world strongly intimates, that the human body, in some unknown but renovated form, will awake from the tomb, and be reunited to the soul, in a state of endless joy or suffering.

In the FOURTH place, is this doctrine repugnant to the best *feelings* of men, or the dictates of sound *reason ?*

Sin may indeed render it the sad interest of some, not to survive the grave. But to all men, immortality is, in itself, desirable, and annihilation dreadful. This strong and universal propensity, is proof, at least, that there is nothing in the doctrine of a future

life, repugnant to our *feelings*. Nor is it repugnant to *reason*; —for it has in fact been generally believed, among all nations, barbarous as well as refined. Distinct traces of it are seen, mingled indeed with much absurdity, in their funeral rites; and in their systems of philosophy, and poetry, and legislation. That the worst of men have not been able to divest themselves of this common apprehension, is evident from their trepidation in disastrous events, and at the hour of death. Why was Belshazzar terrified at the sight of a *man's hand*, that came forth, and wrote upon the wall of his palace? The monarch of Babylon, encompassed with guards, and ramparts, surely did not fear injury from men; nor could he read a word that was written. Why then did he tremble? Why did his face turn pale, and his knees smite together? It was the secret testimony of his own bosom, that a message from the invisible world, could import no good to a man of his character. It was *conscience*, stirring within him, and anticipating the award of a more dread tribunal. For the same reason did the Roman Governor tremble, as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Some of the greatest philosophers and moralists among the ancient heathen, expressed very noble sentiments concerning the doctrine of immortality, by saying that, “flesh, and blood, and limbs, are only tools for the soul to work with, and no more a part of a man, than an axe or a plane, is a part of a carpenter.\*

A distinguished writer says; “Of all the heathen worthies, Socrates was the most guarded, dispassionate, and composed. Yet this great master of temper was angry,—and angry at his

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\* Xenophon represents Cyrus, surrounded by his family, in his last moments, as saying, “Think not, my beloved children, when I am gone from your sight, that I have ceased to exist; for even now, you *see* not my soul, yet you know, from its *operations*, that it does exist. I can never believe that the soul, which in a dying body *did live*, on its leaving that body, either dies, or loses its intelligence.”

last hour,—and angry at his friend,—and angry for what deserved acknowledgement;—angry for a right and tender instance of true friendship towards him.—What could be the cause? It was for his honour. It was truly a noble, though perhaps a too punctilious regard for immortality. For when his friend asked him, with such an affectionate regard as became a friend, *where shall we deposit your remains?*—it was resented by Socrates, as implying the dishonorable supposition, that he could be so mean, as to have regard for any thing, even in himself, that was not immortal.”

The doctrine of an eternal hereafter then, cannot be shown to be impossible by any arguments drawn from the character of God, the constitution of the human mind, the analogies of providence, nor from the feelings, and reason of men, for these bear a concurrent testimony in its favour.

Is there any *other* source of argument, from which it can be proved that the truth of this doctrine is impossible? Clearly none. Indeed, that all men do regard an eternal state of retribution as being possible, is beyond question; because no one ever attempted seriously to prove that it is *not* possible.

Let me repeat the remark here, that I have designedly foreborne to take the high ground, which I am authorised to take on this subject. The appeal might have been made at once to the Bible, where “life and immortality are brought to light;”—where all questions of this sort are settled forever, by an overwhelming flood of evidence. But I have chosen at this time, to arraign careless men, at the threshold of their own system, and to show that, on principles which they *must* admit, and *do* admit they are beside themselves, in neglecting for a moment, “the great salvation.”

On this ground, I stand, my hearers, as an ambassador of Christ, and invite your attention to this subject. No one, in his right mind, will deny, that an endless state of happiness or mis-

ery hereafter, is a *possible* thing. How then ought we to conduct?—What manner of persons ought we to be, when the present hour, that we devote to consider this subject, may be to us the final hour of probation. There is but one alternative. Reason and conscience decide, that we must either embrace the gospel, as Christians and prudent men;—or close our eyes in blind and bold presumption, and rush on our doom!

The reasoning adopted in this discourse, leads to results, which are especially interesting to two classes of men.

1st, To those, who treat the gospel with indifference, because they entertain doubts of its truth. I say *doubts*, for this term is applicable to all that variety of opinion, that is found betwixt confirmed infidelity, and the transient scruples of occasional skepticism. Among all those who have openly opposed the gospel, no one probably was ever found who could pretend to have studied it, with that impartiality and seriousness, which the subject demands. Few such men, indeed, can pretend to have studied it at all. And hence, at the approach of death, their scheme gives way under them. Conscience wakes from its slumber, at that honest hour, and from the same lips that ridiculed the faith of Christians, extorts a reluctant confession of its truth. Follow the man that trifled with religion, and ask him on his dying bed,—did he *know*, in the season of profane levity, did he *know* that Christianity is a fiction? Had he *certainty* of this? What has become of that certainty? Why does he tremble now, at the thoughts of an hereafter? Ah, he deluded himself with the show of argument, that will not bear the review of his own mind, in a season like this. He rejected the foundation, which God hath laid in Zion; and laid one for himself, that crumbles to atoms, the moment he looks into the grave.

The boldest infidelity is at bottom, I say again, if it can be called a system at all, only a system of *uncertainty* and *dark-*

*ness*. It rejects the gospel, but provides no substitute. It leaves the dying man without one ray of light, to console his heart, without one solid spot, in the universe, on which to set his foot, or to rest his hopes.

Hence those dread misgivings, to which skeptical minds are subject, in moments of solemn reflection, which they cannot altogether escape. Byron, in all the loftiness of his pride, and all the hardihood of his unbelief, had many a secret apprehension that the Bible, after all, is true. Hence his faith in omens, and the vacillations of his mind, from its admixture of credulity with infidelity. The cloud that hung over his hereafter, rolled back upon him, with its dreary forebodings, as he stood, and looked down the dark and fathomless abyss before him.

The Christian stands on firm ground. His faith rests immovably on the testimony of Him that cannot lie. What prudent man would forsake such ground, to stand on the basis of contingency and hypothesis, every vestige of which is swept from under him, by one short argument of a great writer; "Place infinite happiness in one scale, against infinite misery in the other. If the *worst* that can happen to the believer, should be mistake, be the *best* that can happen to the unbeliever, should he be right; who without madness, would run the venture? Who would choose to place himself within the *possibility* of infinite misery?"\*

But what shall we say of those, who doubt on a lower scale; and treat religion with indifference, on account of occasional scruples concerning its truth? What shall we say of those, who balance probabilities, on this subject, according to what they

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\* Would it not be madness" says Bishop Butler, "for a man to forsake a safe road, and prefer one in which he knows there is an even chance he should lose his life, though there were an even chance likewise, of his getting safe through it? Yet there are people absurd enough, to take the supposed *doubtfulness* of religion, for the same thing as a proof of its falsehood. This shows how infinitely unreasonable skeptical men are, with respect to religion, and that they as really lay aside their *reason*, upon this subject, as the most extravagant enthusiasts."

may happen to hear, for or against religion, or according to the numbers of those who embrace or reject it? We may say, they disregard the plainest principles of common prudence. In any concern of temporal magnitude, they would act more wisely. Perhaps there is some passage in the Bible, which they have never seen explained, to their satisfaction. Perhaps some preacher has advanced a sentiment, which they do not comprehend, or do not believe. Perhaps some professor of religion has acted unworthily. What then! What if a thousand things of this sort, could be alleged? Is Christianity therefore untrue, or unimportant? What if the majority of the world have neglected this religion? What if its professors and its ministers, have been imperfect? What if scoffing tongues and scoffing pens have made light of it? In all this, is there any thing like demonstration of its falsehood? Yet, here immortal beings stand; stand, doubting, trifling slumbering over this great subject; stand, perhaps, searching for objections, on the last, trembling verge of a dread hereafter;—while, according to the conviction of their own understandings, and the confession of their own lips, *all is at stake for eternity!*

What would you say of him, who should build his house on the sandy brink of a river, which had been overflowed, for fifty successive years? Suppose he is not *certain* that it will be overflowed again;—yet his house would be safer in another place.—What would you say of him, who should lie down to sleep, on the margin of the sea, where the tide has risen, every day, for centuries? Suppose he is not *certain* that it will rise there again; yet he would be safer to sleep in another place. Noah, being warned of God, built an ark, to the saving of his house. Surely he had good reason to believe God; but what if there had been no flood? Would not the condition of Noah and his family have been as good as that of other men? Lot, being told by an angel that Sodom would be destroyed, fled from the city. Surely he had good reason to believe that an

angel had spoken the truth ; but what if there had been no storm of fire ? Would he not have been as safe as his neighbors ? Joseph, apprized of a seven years' famine, laid up vast stores of corn. What if there had been no famine ? Would he not have fared as well as they who had no store ? The Christian, warned of the wrath to come, has fled to the Saviour, and made the Judge his friend. He has acted wisely. Revelation decides that he has acted wisely. Reason decides that he has acted wisely. Eternity will decide that he has acted wisely ; and that he could not have acted otherwise without madness. Beware, then, ye who stigmatize his faith, as blind credulity, beware, lest that came upon you which was spoken by the prophets ; "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."

2. This subject offers a solemn admonition to those, who profess to admit, without doubting, that the gospel is *true*, and yet treat it with indifference.

Probably this class, in all Christian communities, is very numerous. Perhaps it includes every impenitent hearer in this assembly. It has been shown, by a train of reasoning, satisfactory I trust to every mind, that they who admit an eternal state of retribution to be *barely possible*, are guilty of great presumption, in treating the gospel with indifference.

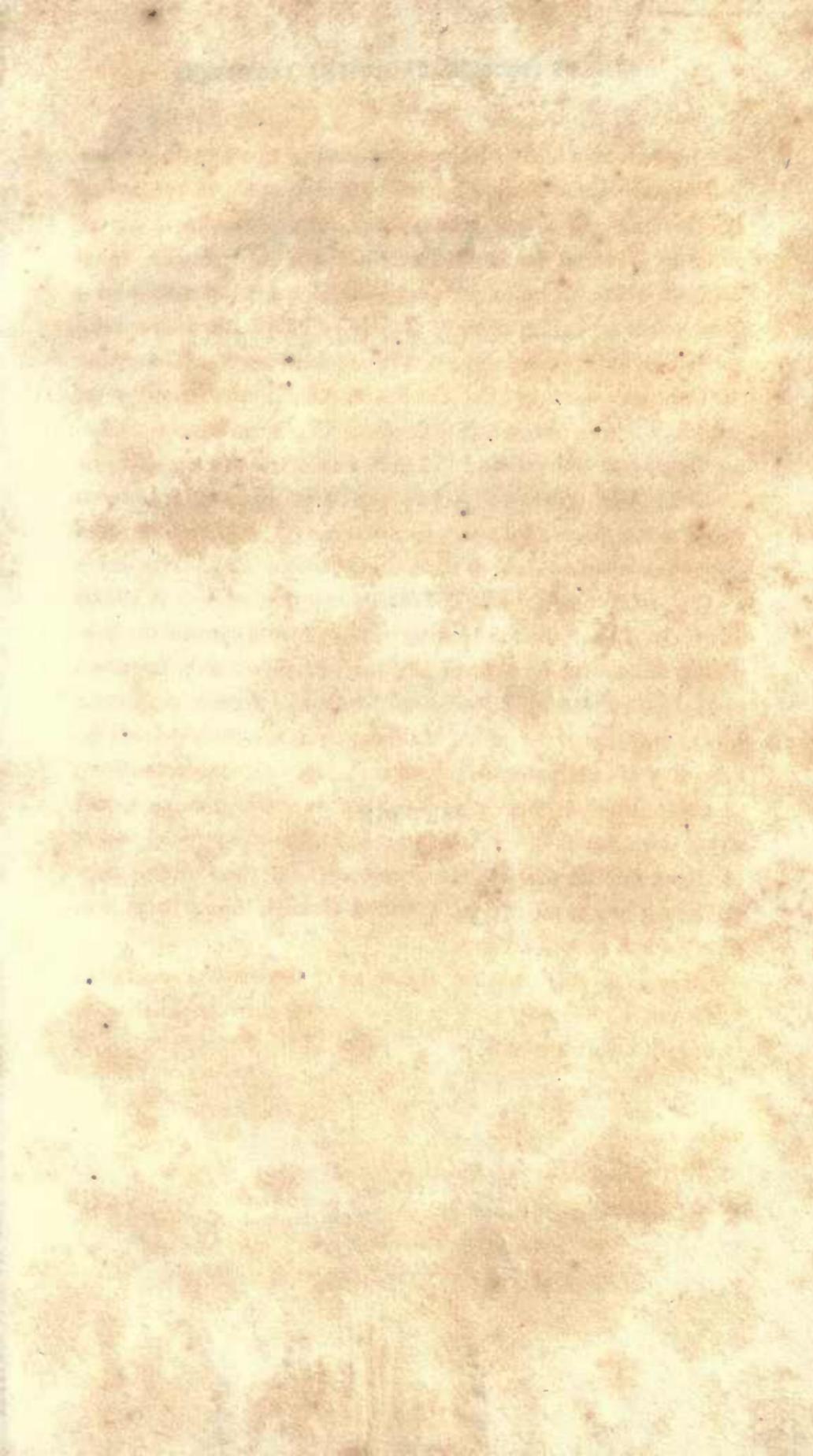
What then ought we to think,—what must we think, when we see immortal beings admit the *certainty* of such a state, with the same cold insensibility, as they assent to any customary and momentary trifle ? To admit this certainty, is only yielding to overwhelming evidence ; it is the part of rational beings. But to admit it with *insensibility*, is the part of madmen.

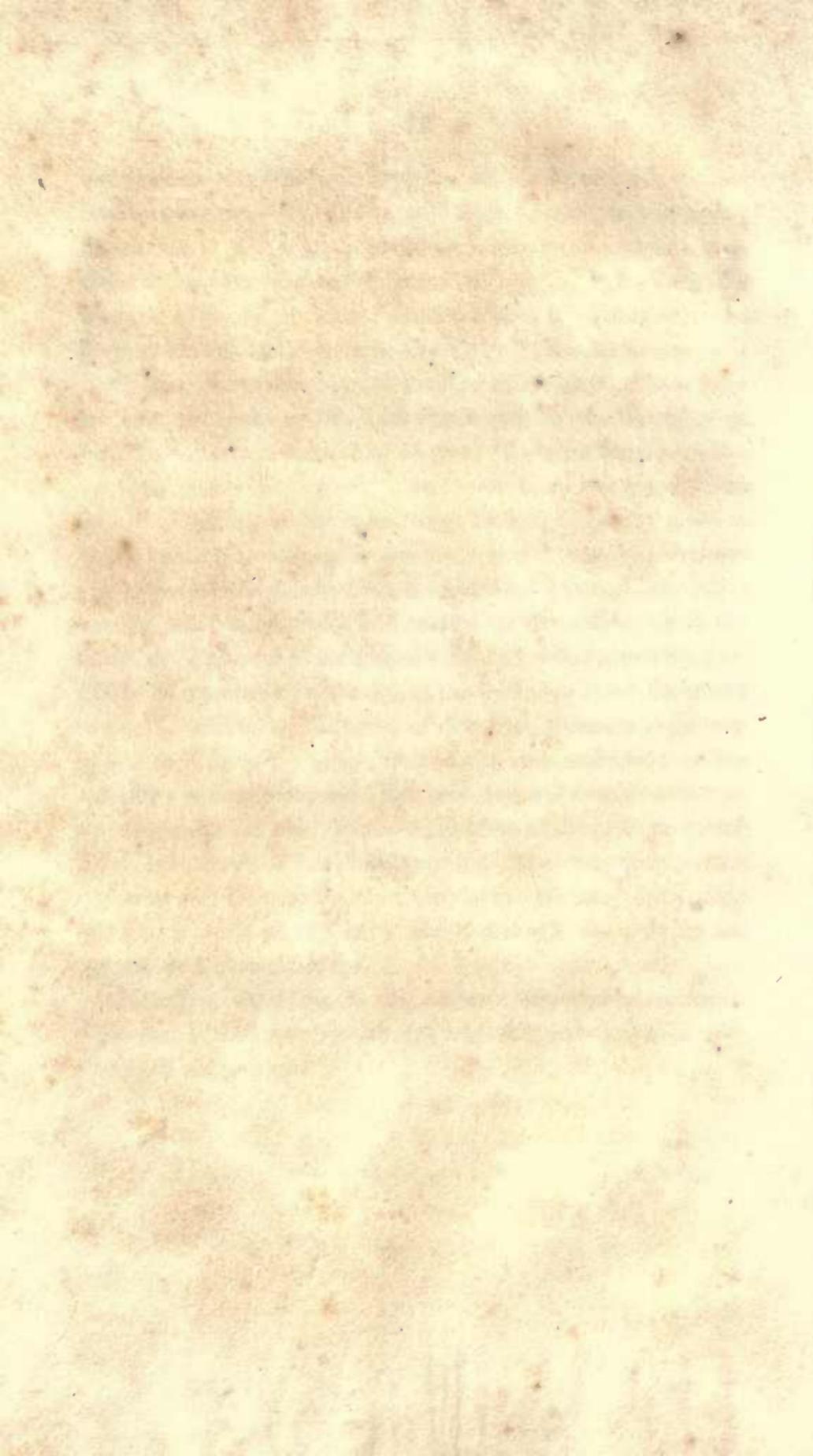
"Surely in vain is the net spread in the *sight* of any bird." The inferior animals, guided only by instinct, where they *suspect* danger, take the alarm and fly. But man, immortal man, will not consider. Though the gospel remonstrates,—though heaven invites, though his conscience twinges at every step,

and his ears ring with warnings, he rushes downward, without fear or foresight,—downward, with his eyes open, to everlasting destruction! O dread preeminence, that puts him in a condition to provoke the fiercest wrath of the Almighty! Awful pinnacle of mercy, on which God his Maker has placed him, and from which he madly plunges himself into a deeper damnation!

My dear impenitent hearers, think on this subject. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise,—listen to the call of heaven. Live no longer “without hope, and without God.” Did you *know* the gospel to be false, then might you find some refuge for indifference. But you do *not* know this,—you will *never* know this. And besides, I tell you in this solemn place, in the name of God I tell you, the day is coming when not a doubt will remain on this subject, in all the universe. The truth of the gospel will be proved, beyond the possibility of question by the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God;—proved by the noise of dissolving elements;—proved by the majesty of the judge, descending and enthroned in the splendors of omnipotence. Yes, that day will furnish evidence that the gospel is true, which will wither scoffing tongues, and wring even hearts of stone with agony. Then wo to despisers of Christ and his gospel; wo to careless neglecters of the great salvation; wo to all that have trifled through time; they must tremble and mourn forever.

Hearken, therefore, to the voice of heavenly admonition; “He that findeth me, findeth life: but he that despiseth me, wrongeth his own soul.”





Objections against the Gospel refuted.

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED MARCH 4, 1829, AT THE INSTALLATION

OF THE

REV. JOHN BROWN, D. D.

AS PASTOR OF

PINE STREET CHURCH,

BOSTON.

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1829.



## SERMON.



Romans, i. 15, 16.

SO, AS MUCH AS IN ME IS, I AM READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOU THAT ARE AT ROME ALSO. FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

THE great apostle had traversed sea and land, to spread the gospel of his adored Redeemer. Many a desolate region, and many a populous city had witnessed his unparalleled exertions in the holy cause. But as yet, he had never visited imperial Rome. Not that he overlooked that splendid, and populous, and guilty city. Not that he would treat it with neglect. He had repeatedly purposed to pay it a personal visit. Nor had repeated disappointments damped the ardor of his wishes. "I long to see you," says the good man, "that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established." "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So," he adds, "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

The apostle had proclaimed the messages of heaven among the untaught and uncivilized; and encountered the fierceness of their opposition. But it was among the polished inhabitants of Athens, among learned civilians and philosophers, that he had met the keenest shafts of ridicule and scorn. He well knew, that amidst the highest cultivation of intellect, and refinement of manners, the heart, still unsubdued

to the love of truth, might only be stimulated and armed to new hostility against it. Such hostility he might naturally expect in the city of Rome. There were the great, the opulent, the luxurious, the learned, the philosophic, and the proud, who, if they agreed in nothing else, would too probably agree in despising and rejecting the gospel of Christ. But, says he, I am not ashamed of this gospel. I know that it is the power of God to salvation. I know that those who despise it, need it not less than others, and must perish without it. I know that there is a power which can bring even them to see its beauty, and taste its blessedness. And I know that the very things which provoke their contempt, constitute its chief excellence and glory. I will therefore preach it wherever I have access. I will preach it boldly, and plainly, and faithfully. I will preach it without softening any of its most offensive features. It was a noble resolution; worthy of an apostle, and worthy of every Christian minister.

The passage, viewed in this light, calls our attention to the leading objections which have been raised, in every age, against the gospel; particularly those objections which it has encountered in regions of learning and refinement; and which have frequently proved repulsive to cultivated and reflecting minds. To suggest and refute some of these objections, is the design of the present discourse.

The first objection of this character which I shall state, is the *unparalleled simplicity* of the gospel. Here is a book, professing to come from God, and to give information of the highest possible moment to man; information such as the profoundest sages and philosophers never could impart. Here is a scheme of salvation, claiming to have emanated from eternal wisdom; and to solve all the doubts, to remove all the difficulties, and provide for all the exigencies, of the case. We open the volume; we examine the scheme; and what do we find? No parade of philosophy; no investiga-

tions of science ; no labored discussion of abstract principles ; no formal distribution of topics ; nothing, in short, remotely resembling a system of theology, or ethics, framed by man. All is plain, artless, unstudied, unadorned. A few simple points may be said to comprise the whole system. The incarnation of the Son of God ; our redemption by his blood ; our sanctification by his Spirit ; our becoming interested in these stupendous blessings by faith ; the unfailing connexion of this faith with universal holiness, with all pious affections, and all virtuous conduct—these principles, as obvious as they are important, constitute the essence of the grand scheme of our salvation. He who rightly understands them, possesses the key to the whole gospel, and to the whole system of its religion.

These principles, so simple in themselves, are conveyed to us with the utmost plainness of manner. The God of heaven, in his word, has mercifully adapted himself to the feebleness of our capacities, and to this infancy of our existence. Like a kind father, lispng with his children, he has given us heavenly truths in earthly language. Listening to his instructions with a childlike docility, we may be assured of finding the path to heaven. We need not fear a mistake in any essential point, either of truth or duty.

Shall this simplicity of the gospel offend and disgust us ; or shall it fill us with admiration and gratitude ? Shall it be viewed as a *defect*, or an *excellency* of the highest order ? Does it not instamp on the gospel the character of divinity ? Does it not proclaim that the Author of the universe is the Author of the Bible too ?—In the works of man, an expensive and complicated machinery is frequently employed to accomplish a few inconsiderable results. While in the works of God, the most stupendous and diversified effects are frequently seen to spring from the operation of a single cause. It is in a few simple laws which govern matter and motion, that all the amazing and endless phenomena of this fair uni-

verse originate. Thus the Author of nature retires behind his own work, and permits himself to be seen only in the astonishing and ever varying *results* of his secret and silent operation.—In contemplating the wonderful law of *attraction*, which pervades the natural world, we are struck with nothing so much as the simplicity of the principle, combined with the immense extent and variety of its effects. How signally, in these respects, does it resemble that principle of *heavenly love* which pervades every department of the plan of our redemption, and which binds together the universe of holy souls.

One thing is most evident. Had the gospel come to us in an abstract and philosophic form ; had it abounded with those investigations and abstrusities which please men of speculative minds ; it would have been wholly unadapted to the generality of the race. Its grand object would have been lost. Most men want the talents, or the leisure, or the inclination, for subtle and laborious investigations. But they have minds to be informed. They have consciences and hearts to be addressed. And they have souls to be saved. Almost all the ancient religions mocked the great mass of their votaries with senseless fables, and reserved their secrets for philosophers. Christianity knows no such odious distinctions. It looks with equal eye on all. But it delights to descend to the lowest forms of humanity ; to adapt itself to all their weaknesses and wants. The meek and lowly Saviour reveals the choicest secrets of his religion to *babes* ; that is, to the docile and humble, however feeble their capacities, however unfurnished their minds.

But while we confess the unparalleled simplicity of the gospel, and glory in it, we deny that it is a meagre, uninstructional system. It is rich in truths equally profound and sublime. Each of its great principles, simple as it is in itself, opens boundless sources of thought, and leads the inquiring mind into a world of wonders. “ We account the Scriptures of God,” says the great Newton, “ the most sublime philosophy.”

Christianity, we admit, has its *mysteries*. And this has been a topic of complaint, even with those who, in the same breath, have complained of its simplicity. Let us attend, for a moment, to this objection.

That the gospel contains not only many things which unaided reason could never have discovered, but likewise many things which, when revealed, our minds cannot fully comprehend, is readily admitted. In this respect, the gospel is precisely similar to all the other works of God. Will any one deny that creation, in all its parts, abounds with incomprehensibles? Within and without us; above, beneath and around; in the vast and the minute of nature; in the animate and inanimate worlds; in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms; in our own bodies and souls; in their intimate connexion and mutual sympathy; we find exhaustless, inexplicable wonders. And shall the Book of God alone, that emanation of eternal wisdom, be entirely level to our capacities?

Other considerations bear still more directly on the point. The Bible comes to teach us something of God; something, too, which we have not learned before, and which nature could not teach. How natural, indeed how inevitable, that this *something* should be that of which we find in our minds no archetype. How natural, that it should be perfectly new and astonishing—utterly without the range of our previous thoughts and conceptions. And if, even when the object is presented, it is found too mighty for our feeble minds to grasp, shall this be thought strange? Shall it be made a reason for disbelief? We may then commence atheists at once. For natural religion, in presenting a God self-existent, eternal and omnipresent, places before us an object which we can neither distinctly conceive, nor fully comprehend.

And farther: the Bible comes to relieve us in a desperate case—in a case where all the efforts of reason, and the resources of philosophy, leave us without remedy and without

hope. We are sinners. And if sinners are saved, then either the divine law and government and glory must sink, or their salvation must come in a method strange, unsuspected, surprising, *mysterious*. This last is the real fact. The mysteries of the gospel, what are they, but so many vast resources of the Deity—so many grand achievements of infinite wisdom and love and condescension, in behalf of a ruined race?

Suppose the subjects of an earthly empire were perishing, by thousands, of some dire disease—a disease so singular as to admit no relief, unless administered by one in the same lowly station with the sufferers. Suppose the sovereign himself, touched with their woes, should abandon his palace, and concealing his person beneath the meanest attire, should visit their hospitals and their hovels; should familiarize himself with the most disgusting forms of their wretchedness, that he might give health to the diseased, and life to the dying. What celebrations could equal such condescension? And what would be the *ingratitude* of refusing to such a sovereign his proper dignities and honors; of denying that he ever possessed them; and this under the pretence that the condescension was incredible—was absolutely impossible?

To believe what we cannot completely comprehend, and to act on that belief, is neither irrational, nor at variance with daily and universal practice. Of the proper nature of diseases, of medicines, and of the process of cure, physicians know almost nothing; and the great mass of mankind, absolutely nothing at all. Yet men know themselves to be diseased; remedies are prescribed and applied; and cures are effected; just as if all were plain and understood. And if *reason* be the highest prerogative of man, the highest prerogative of reason itself is to believe whatever the God of truth has revealed, and to believe it on his simple testimony.

It is objected against the gospel, that it is, throughout, of a *humbling* character and tendency. It frowns indignantly on

every form of human pride. It strips us of that self-valuation in which some have placed the essence of dignity, and of virtue.

All this we readily admit. The gospel is indeed a humbling system. It originated in the free and self-moved mercy of God. Every where it takes it for granted that man is a sinner, a rebel against his Maker; that sin is a tremendous evil, and deserves an awful and endless punishment. It offers an undeserved salvation; a salvation spurned by the proud, and welcomed only by the humble. It inspires a spirit of self-abasement. To this point tend all its doctrines, all its precepts, all its promises, all its denunciations.

This, we contend, is not the gospel's reproach, but its honor; its prime excellence. It is fit that the pride of our hearts should be humbled; that all human glory should be laid in dust, and God alone exalted. Why so reluctant to take our proper place as sinners? What satisfaction, what real honor, in bearing about a bold front, as if we had no guilt to confess, and no pardon to implore? And what is that bright moment in which the first gleam of real joy finds its way to the heart? It is the moment when it begins to be humble—when, abandoning all its proud pretensions, and self-justifying pleas, it casts itself on the infinite compassion, the sovereign mercy of an offended, yet forgiving God. Then peace and hope and pardon come. Then an air of heaven breathes on the heart, before desolate and wretched. Then the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, comes down and dwells in the happy soul.

If, my hearers, the heaven of Christianity is a heaven of *perfect humility*; if there, none is great but God; if saints and angels combine to lose themselves in ascribing glory to their Eternal King; if this is the very essence of their felicity; then *let us look well to our religion*. A religion which does not make us genuinely humble; which leaves the pride and self-sufficiency of our hearts unsubdued: which perhaps affords nutriment and strength to these hateful dispo-

sitions ; is not the religion we want. It may flatter us ; but it will flatter to betray, and to destroy. In the arrogance of our minds, we may hope to scale the heavens ; to force our way, through cherubim and a flaming sword, to the tree of life ; but the attempt will be as abortive, as it is impious.

If to these momentous considerations, any thing could be superadded, we might say, that pride is the grand foe, even of temporal enjoyment. Shooting up within us in baleful luxuriance, it finds its way, by a thousand ramifications, to every source of human comfort, and infuses bitterness and poison into them all. What but pride renders us dissatisfied with Providence ; discontented with our lot ; restless in prosperity ; wretched in adversity ? Poverty, unkindness, neglect, reproach, disappointment, all have their stings ; but they might all be repelled, or evaded, did not our own pride acuminate and direct them to the heart. The proud man is a perfect *sensitive plant*, shrinking from every touch, and shrivelled by every breeze. Or, to use the more expressive language of Scripture, he is *like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*. O how kind is that gospel, which, designing to restore us to peace, aims its mortal blow at the grand *enemy* of our peace. Not content with the tedious process of cutting off the streams, it dries up the very fountain by which they are supplied. It makes us humble.

In this great point the gospel stands alone. Almost all the ancient systems of philosophy and ethics leave the pride of the human heart unsubdued and unassailed. The philosophers of Greece and Rome seem to have regarded the task as too hardy, and too hopeless. Nor had they weapons to attack this giant sin with any prospect of success. Indeed, the enemy had a citadel in their own breasts. All their views on the subject were indistinct and confused. That they had not so much as a speculative idea of *humility*, as a virtue, is evident from their language, in which they confounded it with

*meanness* and *abjectness of spirit*. In how many Christian communities do the same sentiments and language prevail. We so often hear of an *honest* pride, a *noble* pride, a *generous* pride, and even a *necessary* pride, that we almost forget that pride in all its forms is hateful. While to great numbers, humility and meekness convey no idea, but that of a tame, spiritless, servile character. It is time that our language were reformed. And surely it is time that our sentiments on topics of vital interest were assayed and corrected by the standard of the gospel.

We proceed to consider another objection against this divine system ; an objection drawn from its *unyielding, unassimilating* character. The gospel pays little regard to the factitious distinctions of society. It bends not to the maxims of worldly policy, nor to the caprices of fashion, nor to the refinements of polished life, nor to the lax morality of a dissipated age. It is equally unaccommodating to the speculations of philosophy ; nor will it modify its principles, in compliment to any imaginary or real improvements in art, or science, or literature. On all these points, the fact is confessed. And may not Christianity, in each case, be completely justified ?

It never was designed, surely, to interfere with the wholesome order of society, nor to trample down its salutary distinctions. It renders to all their dues. It pays a decent respect to station and rank. But it connects with them, too, peculiar duties and responsibilities. It faithfully warns them of peculiar dangers. Not unfrequently it dispenses its smiles and rewards by rules exactly the reverse of those which obtain in the world. It plucks the laurel from the brow of the ambitious, ruthless conqueror, to place it on the head of the humble man, who subdues his own passions, and is content to do good in silence. In short, it approves, it loves, it honors, it rewards nothing but SIMPLE GOODNESS. It passes by, with mortifying indifference, the schemes of statesmen, the exploits of heroes, and the learned labors of mere scholars

and philosophers. It even blasts with its deadliest frown the admired productions of prostituted genius, and perverted talents; consigning their authors to the depths of infamy and shame. Is not Christianity then the best friend of individuals, and of society?

Among the multitudes who acknowledge the general excellence of the morality of the gospel, there are not a few who think it unnecessarily strict and precise. Many a man engaged in traffick, who would not be thought destitute of a conscience, reconciles himself to occasional, and not unfrequent deviations. Yet who sees not that this very strictness, were it but universally practised, would shed the happiest influence, not only on all commercial transactions, but on the whole intercourse of society.—Many a grave politician, too, deems the morality of the Bible, however useful to individuals, altogether inconvenient to states; and without scruple sacrifices the *right* to the *expedient*. Narrow, shortsighted, wretched policy! Cannot the interests of our country be supported without violating the eternal laws of heaven? Then let them sink. But what man of reason and reflection can for a moment suspect it? Were the Fathers of New England mere novices and drivellers, in regarding the Bible as their pole-star, and the interests of religion and virtue as the main concern? Let the profusion of blessings poured on them by indulgent Heaven, declare. Let the fair and rich patrimony which they have transmitted to us, declare. When, when shall we behold the delightful spectacle of a whole nation imbibing the spirit of Christianity, and regulating by the principles of eternal truth, its policy, its laws, its administration at home, and its intercourse abroad? Would such a nation sink to a mean and degraded condition? Would it not be the happiest, the most dignified nation on which the sun looks down? Would not its example point out to a gazing, admiring world, the path to real prosperity, and happiness, and glory?

In commercial and populous cities, accumulated wealth never fails to induce luxury, dissipation, and an excessive rage for amusement. Pleasure spreads her snares, and is pursued through all her varied haunts. With thousands, amusement becomes the habitual pursuit, and the grand end of life. The gospel comes, and speaks to these triflers, of death, of judgment, of interminable joys and woes. It reminds them that they were not sent into the world to be amused; but to serve God and man, and to prepare for the high destinies of eternity. It warns them that a life of levity is a life of guilt; that many of their chosen pleasures pollute the imagination, and corrupt the heart; and that the most innocent, if pursued as a business, enervate the mind, banish serious thought, and close the soul against God and religion. And it faithfully warns them of the folly, the madness, the ruin of dreaming away those precious, fleeting moments on which their salvation depends. But in thus calling them off from the mere *phantoms* of enjoyment, it does not leave them without resource. It invites them to the fountain of pure and everlasting felicity. It bids them possess pleasures real, rational, elevated, unfailing—the unknown delight of opening the heart in love to God, and love to man—the luxury of doing good—the joy of an approving conscience—the transport of Christian hope—the sublime, heart thrilling anticipation of happiness beyond the grave.

In an advanced state of society, and especially in the circles of opulence and refinement, it is apt to be discovered that the principles and laws of Christianity, however suitable to the vulgar, are less adapted to informed and polished minds. A new code is introduced; and the general homage transferred to a new sovereign, termed Fashion. And truly, the pretensions of this new sovereign are far from modest. Not content with prescribing laws to dress, to equipage, to the intercourse of society, to the exterior of manners, she claims to mould and govern the very essence of manners,

and of morals and religion too. As a substitute for the rigid and repulsive system of the gospel, she prescribes a soft and easy religion ; a religion which has little to disgust the proud, the worldly, the gay, or the voluptuous. And shall Christianity, the daughter of the skies, bend in homage to this earth-born, self-created sovereign ? Shall her consecrated ministers descend from their elevation, and unite with the thoughtless crowd in their worship of the idol ? Shall they, with inverted ambition, court the world's smile,

By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ?

Shall they, in compliance with the popular whim, preach a religion which alarms no conscience ; which neither mortifies nor disturbs the latent corruptions of the heart ; which scarcely gives to open vice a blush, or a fear ? Or shall they, in the face of opposition, of ridicule, of scorn, dare preach the gospel—the gospel in its naked simplicity—the gospel in its uncompromising strictness ?

But reason and philosophy, not less than fashion, prefer their claims ; and frequently have arrayed themselves with a still more formidable front, against the religion of the gospel. Not that we admit that between the gospel and *genuine* philosophy, there is the least discrepance. Our religion courts inquiry. It shrinks not from the most rigid investigation. From the very hottest furnace of genuine criticism, it has ever come forth uninjured, brightened, and triumphant. Yet there is a spirit of bold speculation, in which it cannot be approached without a degree of impiety. Surely it will not be denied, that there are certain great points on which the Scripture speaks a language explicit, unequivocal and decisive. Nor can it be less clear, that in every such case, nothing remains to mortals, but implicit belief and acquiescence. To demur, on points like these ; to subject them to the ordeal of our own reason, what is it, but to call in question the wisdom of the Eternal, to rejudge his judgment, and

deny his truth? What is it, but to renounce the benefit of Revelation, to renounce Revelation itself, and plunge in the cheerless, shoreless gulf of skepticism and infidelity?

To instance, for a moment, in the great question of the future state of the wicked. That their punishment will be properly endless, we have precisely the same evidence from Scripture, as of the endless felicity of the righteous. The point being thus definitively settled, and by the only competent tribunal, should it not be for ever put to rest? Shall we unsettle our own minds, or the minds of others, in a point of such vital importance, by any plausible reasonings which go to diminish the evil of sin, and to mitigate its punishment?—To estimate the evil, and the desert of sin, may it not be needful that we should know, more fully than we can possibly know in the present state, the excellencies of the Being it offends, the perfection of the law it violates, and its own malignant aspects, tendencies, and actual consequences, as they regard both this and other worlds? Is it wise, in a point of such moment, to call in the imagination and the passions, to blind the judgment? Who but God himself can certainly know what he will do with his offending creatures? When he has made and declared his decision, shall man call it into question? Is it doing honor to the Sovereign of the world, to suppose that he will decide the final states of men by other rules, than those he has explicitly proclaimed? Shall selfish mortals arrogate to themselves to be more merciful than their Creator? Shall criminals ascend the judgment seat, and pronounce sentence in their own case? We may ask farther: shall the spiritual physician administer poison, because it is sweet? Shall he confine himself to opiates, because they give present ease? Shall the victim of fatal disease be soothed and flattered, when the hand of death is upon him? Shall the spiritual watchman, whose first duty it is, to warn the wicked, decline the merciful warning? Shall

he, by crying peace, till destruction comes, incur the guilt of cruelty—the guilt of blood ?

While the gospel resists the efforts of reason and philosophy to disprove or conceal its doctrines, it refuses to be modified by them. Attempts of this kind have been witnessed in every age. Men of subtile and speculating minds, perhaps friends to the gospel, but not perfectly reconciled to the simplicity of its doctrines, have aimed to improve and to recommend them, by heterogeneous mixtures of their own. Indeed, there is something plausible in the attempt to show that all the philosophy and logic and learning in the world are capable of being pressed into the service of religion. In a qualified sense, this is even the fact. But there is another fact which has been too much overlooked. These auxiliaries, however useful and efficient in arraying the evidences of Christianity, and establishing its truth, have much less to do in expounding its doctrines. Here, their office is altogether subordinate. And when they forget their humble station and duty ; when, instead of submissively inquiring what the Author of the Bible has taught, they assume to show what he ought to teach, they forfeit every claim to confidence. Their light becomes darkness, and their wisdom, mere hallucination. We undervalue not the rich and splendid contributions of learning to the cause of piety. From geography and geology, from researches in ancient history, from the various manuscripts and versions, from erudite criticism, the most important confirmation has arisen to the truth and divinity of the Bible. These weapons, once ostentatiously brandished on the side of infidelity, have been triumphantly wrested from its hands, and employed with effect in defence of the Scriptures. But the grand and most interesting doctrines of the Bible are found on the very surface of its pages. They claim to be seen by their own light, and to rest on their own peculiar principles. They borrow no aid from human phi-

losophy ; no splendor from human eloquence. They ask no recommendation, but from their own unadorned simplicity and beauty.

But it may be asked, perhaps, Is not this an age of great and unexampled improvements? Is not the human mind on its rapid march to perfection? Has not a flood of light recently burst upon the world? Amidst the improvements of art, and the not less astonishing revolutions of science, shall religion alone remain stationary? Since in other sciences, many principles have long been received as truths, which have ultimately been exploded as errors; and many truths, long latent, have by time and investigation, been brought to light, may not a similar process be expected in religion? May not many of its first principles remain yet undiscovered? And may not many points which the most enlightened Christians now hold as truths, be exploded, in some age of superior illumination, as so many errors and falsehoods?

Our reply to these questions is simple and brief. The arts and sciences are inventions of man. What man invents, as it is of course imperfect, he may improve; and he may improve without end. Religion is a revelation from God. Like its Author, it is perfect, and is incapable of improvement. It admits no change, no progress, no diminution, no addition. Christianity was complete and consummate in its very infancy. Or rather, it had no infancy. Like the first parent of the human race, it came from the hand of its Author, mature in all its faculties; perfect in all its attributes. By every past attempt to improve it, it has only been deteriorated and debased. Nor is any thing better to be anticipated for the future. Far sooner might weak, aspiring mortals hope to add lustre to the sun, or beauty and order to this fair and well adjusted creation, than to improve, by the refinements of learning and philosophy, that religion which has

come to us direct from heaven, and which, in all its features, bears the impress of its perfect and divine Author.

We admit, indeed, that in one great instance, Christianity has undergone a process of *reformation*. But what was that reformation, other than the removal of the dust and rubbish, the ignorance, and error, and gross superstition, which during a night of a thousand years, had been gathering around the religion of Christ? In other words, what was it, but a return, or more properly, an approximation, to the grand elementary principles of this divine religion, and to the simplicity and purity of its earliest and best days?

It has been objected against Christianity, that it is rigid, indeed impracticable, in its demands; that it enjoins a purity absolutely incompatible with our present state of being; in fine, that it permits us to rest in nothing short of absolute perfection.

That the gospel erects a lofty standard of morals; that its claims in point of purity are large; that it bids us aim even at perfection; is not denied. That it enjoins any duties which are, strictly speaking, impracticable, is not admitted. On the whole, we have a right to contend, that the objection itself stamps the religion of the Bible with a character of excellence utterly unparalleled, and even unapproached, in any other system of morals or religion which the world has seen.

From the very constitution of the human mind, it results, that in order to the actual attainment of even a moderate degree of moral excellence, the aims must be large and elevated. No man ever rises higher than the standard which he proposes to himself. The universal tendency is, to fall below such a standard. Had Christianity embraced in its system of morals, the allowance of a single sin, the defect would have been fatal. A single sin indulged is like a gangrene, which gradually and surely spreads its deleterious influence through the whole system. The gospel, in pro-

posing nothing less than perfection, as the object of our pursuit, has effectually provided for our arriving at lofty attainments. The object being grand and sublime, there is an inspiration imparted to the very aim.

Farther : let it be considered that if the gospel standard is high, and its duties arduous, its *motives* likewise are motives of immense and indescribable force. Take, for instance, the high demands it makes upon us respecting love to our enemies, and forgiveness of injuries. What duties can be harder than these, to flesh and blood? How do all the hateful propensities of our nature rise in arms against them. But behold the Saviour. Remember that the simple feeling which brought him down from heaven to earth, was love ; all-conquering, unconquerable love, to enemies and to rebels —and *we* were those enemies and rebels. Behold him on the cross. See those eyes raised to heaven in pity for his unrelenting crucifiers. And hear that voice : FATHER, FORGIVE THEM ; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. And now, does not every feeling of resentment and revenge die within you at once ? Do you find it hard to forgive, to love, the unkindest enemy you ever had ? Or do you find it easy, delightful, inevitable ?

But beside the all-powerful motives, there are all-powerful *aids* too. Nothing is to be done, nothing is to be attempted, by the power of unassisted nature. A HOLY SPIRIT offers his mild, but effectual influence, to subdue every corruption, to inspire every holy disposition, to excite, to strengthen, and carry into act, every virtuous purpose. This HEAVENLY FRIEND is ever at hand ; nay more, is ever within us, if we are Christians ; waiting to impart his sacred influence, and more ready to bestow, than we to ask it. How inestimably precious is this provision of eternal mercy. What a sovereign antidote against despondence. What an exhaustless spring of high designs, of holy resolutions, of strenuous efforts ; of

untiring, unconquerable zeal and perseverance in the path of duty.

In fine : as holiness, and holiness alone, is the happiness of intelligent and immortal beings, it follows, that to require it, in the largest measures, and by the most imperious obligations, is only to impose on us the duty of being sublimely and exquisitely happy. Shall this, in our Creator, be deemed unkind? Shall it be made a topic of complaint? What would a license to sin be, but an invitation to be miserable? Is there a soul that has begun to escape the iron bondage of corruption, that does not sigh and long for complete deliverance? Is there a heart that has known the ardors of heavenly love, that does not pant to be all inflamed with the sacred passion? Is there a saint in glory who would wish his obligations to holiness relaxed? Is there a seraph who "adores and burns" around the throne of God, who would consent to be less firmly bound to that throne? And what are the highest attainments of Christians on earth, but feeble approximations to the purity and bliss of the celestial state?

Time will permit us to consider but a single additional objection against Christianity. By many it has been thought to conceal within itself the seeds of *enthusiasm*, and to impart this mischievous spirit to its votaries.

Enthusiasm properly denotes an excessive mental excitement; an extravagant ardor of feeling. To determine, therefore, its existence in any given case, we must first estimate the feelings excited, the object to which they are directed, and their relative proportion or disproportion.

To those who, devoted to the cares, the business, the amusements, or the ambitions of the world, regard religion as a secondary thing, the deep and absorbing interest of its real votaries must naturally appear extravagant. To those whose faith in the Scriptures is feeble and vacillating, the settled,

earnest conviction of those who attach to them a divine and all-controlling authority, must seem misplaced and delusive. Those who think it of little importance what a man believes, will consider the zeal which is expended in defence of the truth, a mere waste of time and temper. Those who view all pretensions to vital piety as craft, or delusion, will view the friends of vital piety as either unsound at heart, or touched in the brain. Those who hope to see heaven without conversion, will regard all serious concern about conversion, as a needless trouble. Those who feel no anxieties for the spiritual interests and prospects of their neighbors and fellow-countrymen, will view the anxieties of others as gloomy and absurd ; and their endeavors to arouse them, as officious and unkind. Those who perceive little need of a public reformation of manners, will regard the advocates of the cause as righteous overmuch. Those who believe that the heathen can live happily and die safely, without the gospel, will not think highly of the wisdom of employing great exertion or expense to evangelize them.

But there are other views of the subject. What, my beloved hearers, if religion be in fact the grand, all-important object of life ; which being secured, all is secured ; which being lost, all is lost ? What if the Bible be indeed the word of the Eternal God ; written by his inspiration, and stamped with all his authority ? What if its truths, so obnoxious to human pride, and human depravity ; so disgusting to the nice and sickly palate of a polished age ; furnish the only medicine for the diseases of the mind ? And what if the wilful rejection of these truths should prove, in its very nature, an act of self-exclusion from everlasting blessings ? What if those despised things, *conversion, a new heart, faith in a crucified Redeemer*, should prove the only passports to heaven ? What if a life spent in thoughtless gaiety, or in anxious devotion to the world, in neglect of God, of prayer, of the soul, though

not stained with gross vice, should terminate in bitterness, and anguish, and despair? What if every human being be absolutely bound to make, not only his own spiritual interests, but the spiritual interests of others too, the objects of his grand and habitual concern? What if a general reformation of manners, and the preservation of religious institutions in their purity, be the only means of saving our free and favored country from going down to the common grave of republics? What if the heathen really and pressingly need the gospel at our hands; and what if, in case we withhold it, they will bitterly upbraid us before the tribunal of God?

One thing is certain. If religion be not the grand object; if the immortal interests of ourselves and others be not the chief concern; we must wholly change our estimate of numbers of our race, who have ever been regarded as lights of the world, and ornaments of their species. And can it be, that Abraham, in quitting all that is dear to man, that he might become an heir to brighter worlds, and a blessing to distant ages, was chargeable with weakness and folly? Were the apostles, in leaving their little all for their Saviour, content with toil and suffering; content with a martyr's crown—were they ignorant of the true value and end of life? Was Paul a weak enthusiast, when, with the ardor and rapidity of a seraph, he explored distant regions and seas, encountering every form of danger, and suffering, and toil; anxious only that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus?

But it is while looking at that Saviour himself; to the heaven from which he came down; to the garden in which he agonized; to the cross on which he expired; to the matchless LOVE which prompted the whole—that we get the brightest views of the worth of the soul, the worth of religion, and our own obligations of entire self-devotion to its interests. With these objects full in view, we shall feel how *unworthy*

we are of the charge of *enthusiasm*. Our warmest love to such a Saviour will seem cold; our liveliest gratitude, ungrateful; and our tenderest pity for our fellow sinners, a species of guilty apathy. We may lament, indeed, that our exertions for our Saviour are not animated by purer motives, by simpler aims, by more of his own heavenly meekness and humility; but never, never can we suspect that they can reach an ardor worthy of the cause. Nor will we fear that, on the bed of death, we shall regret any thing that we have done, or suffered, or sacrificed, for Christ and his church.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,

Providence has changed your place, but not your duty. In transferring you from that distant sphere in which you have, for years, delighted to preach the gospel of your Saviour, it bids you preach the same gospel in the midst of this great and flourishing metropolis. This, we doubt not, is your fixed and unalterable purpose. Convinced, by all your observation and experience, as well as by the testimony of Heaven, that **THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS THE POWER OF GOD TO SALVATION**, you will never, never be *ashamed* of it. Convinced that its most offensive truths are pre-eminently kind and salutary; that they humble to exalt; that they wound to heal and save; you will neither conceal nor disguise them. You will not cease to proclaim them in all their simplicity and energy.

And charged with a *gracious* message, you will deliver it with a grace. The love of Jesus, your favorite theme, will enliven every sermon, and perfume every prayer. It will impart tenderness to your aspect, heavenly compassion to your feelings, and an unaffected, winning kindness to all your demeanor.

Coming to your new charge in this spirit, you may hope to bring blessings with you. To some, indeed, your preaching

will too probably be a *savor of death unto death*; but to others it will be a *savor of life unto life*. You may not carry the crowd; but you will lead a humble and happy few to their Saviour, and to heaven. You may not receive the plaudit of the licentious and the gay; but the blessing of souls ready to perish shall come upon you. You may not dazzle the world; but you shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

AN

# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

**Collegiate Institution in Amherst, Ms.**

BY HEMAN HUMPHREY, D. D.

ON OCCASION OF HIS

INAUGURATION TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THAT INSTITUTION,

OCT. 15, 1823.



BOSTON:

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ADDRESS

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1838

1838

## ADDRESS.

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It is a deeply afflictive and mysterious dispensation of Providence, which has so lately bereaved this infant seminary of its head, and by which I am now brought with inexperienced and trembling steps to its threshold. If prayer offered to God without ceasing for Dr. Moore, on his sick bed, could have prolonged his invaluable life; if professional assiduity could have warded off the fatal stroke; or if agonized affection could have shielded him in her embrace, he had not died and left this favourite child of his adoption to an early and perilous orphanage. Committed to his paternal guardianship in its infancy, there was but one earthly object dearer to his heart. While, therefore, he daily commended it to the benediction of Heaven, and rejoiced in the rapid developement of its powers, he did all that experience, affection and assiduity could do, to cherish its growth, and to lay deep the foundations of its future usefulness. So completely had he

identified himself with its interests, that no hostile weapon could reach it without first piercing his heart. He felt all its perplexities and adversities as if they had been his own: and as some compensation for these, he enjoyed, in a high degree, its brightening prospects; its youthful and buoyant anticipations.

With what ability Dr. Moore presided over this Institution; how cheerfully he devoted to it all his time and talents; with how many difficulties he had to struggle, when every thing was to be done and the means of doing were so scanty and precarious; with what filial love and veneration he was regarded by his pupils; how liberal and disinterested were all his views and measures; how successful were his appeals to an enlightened Christian public in behalf of the seminary; and how his dying eye kindled with joy and thankfulness, when he was told that an important measure for increasing the funds had succeeded—all these things are best known to those, who were most intimately associated with him in his plans and labours, and they will be long and gratefully remembered.

The question has often occurred to a thousand anxious minds, How could such a man, in such a station, and at such a time be spared? And who can describe that deep and electrical throb of anguish, which smote the heart of this institution, when he breathed his last, and every student felt that he had lost a father? O what a shuddering was there within these walls, when that funeral pall, which hung portentous for a few days in mid heaven, was let down by hands unseen upon yonder dwelling! That pall is not yet removed. It conceals at once from mortal view, the venerated

form of our departed friend, and the awful depths of infinite wisdom in taking him away. And who, since the dying agonies are over, would call the sainted spirit back, to revive the troubled dream of life in a sleep that is now so peaceful? "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, that they may *rest from their labours*, and their works do follow them."

If Dr. Moore himself wished to live yet longer, it was, we confidently believe, more for the sake of others, than for his own. And while he did live, it was his ardent devotion to the interests of the church and of sound learning, which prompted him to efforts beyond his strength, if not immediately prejudicial to his life. It certainly would have gratified his benevolent heart, to have been permitted to see the Institution over which he presided, relieved from all its embarrassments, and taking rank in form, as well as in fact, with the older Colleges of New England. And if faith is any thing, it can scarcely be said, that he 'died without the sight.' With what confidence he spoke of the future prosperity and usefulness of the seminary, particularly towards the close of his life, many who hear me can testify.

If we estimate the length of life, by what a man actually accomplishes for the best good of his kind, we shall see, that Dr. Moore, though taken away in the high meridian of his usefulness, was "old and full of days." To say nothing here, of the ability with which he filled other important stations, and of the good which he did in them all, the services rendered

by him to this Institution, within less than the short space of two years, were sufficient to entitle him to the gratitude of thousands now living, and of far greater numbers who are yet to be born. Broad and deep are the foundations which he assisted in laying upon this consecrated hill. Strong was his own arm—freely was it offered for the great work, and powerful was the impulse which his presence and ever cheering voice gave to the wakening energies of benevolence around him. But highly as his various plans and counsels and labours are now appreciated, future generations, in walking over this ground, with the early history of the College before them, will, there is little reason to doubt, place him still higher among its distinguished benefactors. It will then more fully appear, what and how much he did, to give shape and character to an Institution, which we believe is destined to live and bless the church, in all coming ages.

The time will not permit me to dwell longer upon a theme, which is at once so 'pleasant and mournful to the soul;'—nor could I, on the other hand, have said less, without doing injustice alike to the occasion and to my own feelings, called, as I am this day, to occupy the chair which has been left vacant, by the mournful, though serene departure of my highly venerated friend.

It is possible, too, that at this interesting moment, I *might* be indulged in speaking of the struggles and misgivings and breaking of ties which it has cost me, to tear myself away from the quiet and much loved scenes of pastoral labours, and to exchange them all, for an untried and highly responsible sphere of liter-

ary action. But why should I look back? Why so fondly covet the mysterious pleasure of feeling in every rending heart-string, all those struggles again? Rather let me 'forget the things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before'—looking up daily to heaven for strength and wisdom and grace—bespeaking also the prayers, relying on the efficient aid, and throwing myself upon the Christian candour of the friends and patrons of this rising seminary.

Convened as we are this day, in the portals of science and literature, and with all their arduous heights and profound depths and Elysian fields before us, *education* offers itself as the inspiring theme of our present meditations. This, in a free, enlightened and Christian state, is confessedly a subject of the highest moment. How can the diamond reveal its lustre from beneath incumbent rocks and earthy strata? How can the marble speak, or stand forth in all the divine symmetry of the human form, till it is taken from the quarry and fashioned by the hand of the artist? And how can man be intelligent, happy, or useful, without the culture and discipline of education? It is this that smooths and polishes the roughnesses of his nature. It is this, that unlocks the prison house of his mind and releases the captive. It is the transforming hand of education, which is now in so many heathen lands moulding savageness and ignorance, pagan fanaticism and brutal stupidity, revenge and treachery and lust;—and in short, all the warring elements of our lapsed nature, into the various forms of exterior decency, of mental brilliancy and of Christian loveliness.

It is education that pours light into the understanding, lays up its golden treasures in the memory, softens the asperities of the temper, checks the waywardness of passion and appetite and trains to habits of industry, temperance and benevolence. It is this which qualifies men for the pulpit, the senate, the bar, the practice of medicine and the bench of justice. It is to education, to its domestic agents, its schools and colleges, its universities and literary societies, that the world is indebted for the thousand comforts and elegancies of civilized life, for almost every useful art, discovery and invention.

Education, moreover, is power—physical, intellectual and moral power. To be convinced of this, we need only compare our own great republic—with the myriads of pagan or savage men, in any part of the world. How astonishing the difference, in every important respect! For what can the ignorant hordes of central Africa or Asia do, either in arts or in arms?—What to make themselves happy at home, or respected abroad? And what, on the other hand, cannot civilized America accomplish?

In a word, education, regarding man as a rational, accountable and immortal being, elevates, expands and enriches his mind; cultivates the best affections of his heart; pours a thousand sweet and gladdening streams around the dwellings of the poor as well as the mansions of the rich, and while it greatly multiplies and enhances the enjoyments of time, helps to train up the soul for the bliss of eternity.

How extremely important, then, is every inquiry which relates to the philosophy of the human mind—

to the early discipline and cultivation of its noble powers—to the comparative merits and defects of classical books and prevailing systems of instruction—to the advantages accruing from mathematical and other abstruse studies—to the means of educating the children of the poor in our public seminaries—to the present state of science and literature in our country; and to the animating prospects which are opening before us. All these topics and many more, nearly related, present themselves to the enlightened and philanthropic mind, as it looks abroad from some commanding eminence, or ranges at leisure over the wide and busy fields of human improvement. It must be obvious, however, upon a moment's reflection, that it would take many a long day to traverse a space so ample; to drink of every Castalian fountain in the way; to take the altitudes of Parnassus; to measure the steeps of science; and to see what is going forward in a thousand splendid literary halls and wonder working laboratories. How little then, can be done within the brief hour, which is allotted to the present exercises. Upon many very interesting objects and enclosures we can scarcely bestow a passing glance, and can linger for a few moments only, where most we might love to dwell, or at least to sit down at our leisure and enjoy the goodly prospect.

In treating of education, we may advantageously divide the subject, into the three great branches, of *physical, intellectual* and *moral* improvement. Under these heads, we shall include all that is requisite to form a sound and healthy body, a vigorous and well stored mind, and a good heart. If the first of these,

or what I choose to call the *physical* part of education, has not been wholly overlooked, (as it certainly has not,) in the most popular systems, still, it may well be questioned, whether it has yet received that degree of attention, which its immense importance demands.

Such, in our present condition, is the mysterious connexion between body and mind, that the one cannot act, except on a very limited scale, without the assistance of the other. The immortal agent must have an "earthly house" to dwell in; and it is essential to vigorous and healthful mental operations, that this house should be well built, and that it should be kept in good repair. Now, it is the province of physical education, to erect the building, and in carrying it up, to have special reference to its firmness and durability; so that the unseen tenant, who is sent down to occupy it, may enjoy every convenience, and be enabled to work to the very best advantage.

That is undoubtedly the wisest and best regimen, which takes the infant from the cradle, and conducts him along through childhood and youth, up to high maturity, in such a manner, as to give strength to his arm, swiftness to his feet, solidity and amplitude to his muscles, symmetry to his frame and expansion to all his vital energies. It is obvious, that this branch of education, comprehends not only food and clothing; but air, exercise, lodging, early rising, and whatever else is requisite to the full developement of the physical constitution.

If, then, you would see the son of your prayers and hopes, blooming with health, and rejoicing daily in the full and sparkling tide of youthful buoyancy; if you

wish him to be strong and athletic and careless of fatigue; if you would fit him for hard labour and safe exposure to winter and summer; or if you would prepare him to sit down twelve hours in a day with Euclid, Enfield and Newton, and still preserve his health, you must lay the foundation accordingly. You must begin with him early, must teach him self-denial, and gradually subject him to such hardships, as will help to consolidate his frame and give increasing energy to all his physical powers. His diet must be simple, his apparel must not be too warm, nor his bed too soft. As good soil is commonly so much cheaper and better for children than medicine, beware of too much restriction in the management of your darling boy. Let him, in choosing his play, follow the suggestions of nature.

Be not discomposed at the sight of his sand hills in the road, his snow forts in February, and his mud-dams in April;—nor when you chance to look out in the midst of an August shower, and see him wading and sailing and sporting along with the water-fowl. If you would make him hardy and fearless, let him go abroad as often as he pleases, in his early boyhood, and amuse himself by the hour together, in smoothing and twirling the hoary locks of winter. Instead of keeping him shut up all day with a stove, and graduating his sleeping room by Fahrenheit, let him face the keen edge of the north wind, when the mercury is below cypher, and instead of minding a little shivering and complaining when he returns, cheer up his spirits and send him out again. In this way, you will teach him that he was not born to live in the nursery,

nor to brood over the kitchen fire; but to range abroad as free as the snow and the air, and to gain warmth from exercise. I love and admire the youth, who turns not back from the howling wintry blast, nor withers under the blaze of summer:—who never magnifies ‘mole-hills into mountains,’ but whose daring eye, exulting, scales the eagle’s airy crag, and who is ready to undertake any thing that is prudent and lawful, within the range of possibility.

Who would think of planting the mountain oak in a green-house, or of rearing the cedar of Lebanon in a lady’s flower pot? Who does not know that in order to attain their mighty strength and majestic forms, they must freely enjoy the rain and the sunshine, and must feel the rocking of the tempest? Who would think of raising up a band of Indian warriors, upon cakes and jellies and beds of down, and amid all the luxuries and ease of wealth and carefulness? The attempt would be highly preposterous, not to say utterly ridiculous. Very different is the course which nature points out. It is the plain and scanty fare of these sons of the forest, their hard and cold lodging, their long marches and fastings, and their constant exposure to all the hardships of the wilderness, which give them such Herculean limbs and stature; such prodigious might in the deadly fray, and such swiftness of foot in pursuing the vanquished.

I am far, however, from saying, that such training, would ensure to every child the arm of Achilles, or the courage of Logan, or the constitution and daring of Martin Luther. Some would doubtless sink under a vigorous early discipline; but not near so many, as is

generally supposed. The truth is, there is a mistaken tenderness which daily interferes with the health giving economy of heaven. Too many parents, instead of building upon the foundation which God has laid, first subvert that foundation by misplaced indulgencies, and then vainly attempt to build among the ruins. They cross and perplex nature so much, in her efforts to make their children strong and healthy, that she at length refuses to do any thing, and the doating parents are left to patch up the shattered and puny constitution as well as they can, with tonics and essences. In this way, not a few young men of good talents, are rendered physically incapable of pursuing their studies to any advantage. They can never bear the fatigue of close and long continued application. The mind would gladly work, but the earthly tabernacle is so extremely frail, that every vigorous effort shakes it to the foundation. It is like setting up the machinery of a furnace, in a mere shed, without studs or braces—or like attempting to raise the steam for a large ship, in a tin boiler. Whatever talents a youth may possess, he can accomplish but little in the way of study, without a good constitution to sustain his mental efforts; and such a constitution is not a blessing to be enjoyed of course. Like almost every other gift of heaven, it is to be obtained by human providence, and in the use of means adapted to the end. How many who begin well, ultimately fail of eminence and usefulness, through excessive tenderness, and for want of skill and care in their early physical education, it is impossible to say; but that many a young man is doomed to lingering imbecility, or to a premature grave by this kind

of mismanagement; and that the subject on which I have hazarded the foregoing remarks, is intimately connected with the vital interests of the church and the state, will not, I think, be questioned.

One thing more, I deem it important to say, before I dismiss the present topic. The finest constitution, the growth of many years, may be ruined in a few months. However good the health of a student may be when he enters college, it requires much care and pains to preserve it; and there is a very common mistake as to the real cause why so many fail. Hard study has all the credit of undermining many a constitution, which would have sustained twice as much application and without injury too, by early rising and walking, and by keeping up a daily acquaintance with the saw and the axe. Worthless in themselves, then, as are the elements which compose this mortal frame, so essential are its healthful energies to the operations of mind, that so long as the body and soul remain united, too much care can hardly be bestowed upon the former for the sake of the latter.

The *second* great branch of education is *intellectual*; and this, it must be confessed is vastly more important and difficult than the *first*. It is the intelligent and immortal mind, which pre-eminently distinguishes man from the countless forms of animated nature around him. It is this, which not only gives him dominion over them all; but raises him to an alliance with angels; and through grace, to converse with God himself. Mysterious emanation of the Divinity! Who can measure its capacity, or set bounds to its progression in knowledge?

But this intelligent and immortal principle, which we call mind, is not created in full strength and maturity. As the body passes slowly through infancy and childhood, so does the mind. Feeble at first, it 'grows with the growth and strengthens with the strength' of the corporeal system. Destitute alike of knowledge at their birth, the children of one family, or generation, have, in this respect, no advantage over those of another. All, the high as well as the low, the rich as well as the poor, have every thing to learn. No one was ever born a Newton, or an Edwards. It is patient, vigorous and long continued application that makes the great mind. All must begin with the simplest elements of knowledge, and advance from step to step in nearly the same manner. Thus native talent in a child, may be compared to the small capital with which a young merchant begins in trade. It is not his fortune, but only the means of making it. Or it may be likened to a quarry of fine marble, or to a mine of the precious metals. The former, never starts up spontaneously into Cyprian Venuses—nor does the latter, of its own accord, assume the shape and value of a shining currency. Much time and labour and skill are requisite, to fashion the graceful statue, and to refine and stamp the yellow treasure.

In every system of education, two things should be kept steadily in view:—*first*, that the mind itself is to be *formed*; is to be gradually expanded and strengthened into vigorous manhood, by the proper exercise of its faculties; and *secondly*, that it is to be enriched and embellished with various knowledge. In practice, however, these two things cannot be separated. For

at the same time, that the plastic hand of education is strengthening and enlarging the mind, by subjecting it to severe and sometimes painful discipline, this very exercise, is continually enriching it with new and important ideas. Thus, to illustrate the point by a plain similitude, we do not, when we begin with the child, find the intellectual temple already built and waiting only to be furnished; but we have got to lay the foundation, and carry up the walls, and fashion the porticos and arches, while we are carving the ornaments, and bringing in all that is requisite to finish the edifice and furnish the apartments. That, then, must obviously be the best system of mental education, which does most to develop and strengthen the intellectual powers, and which pours into the mind the richest streams of science and literature. The object of teaching should never be, to excuse the student from thinking and reasoning; but to learn him how to think and to reason. You can never make your son, or your pupil a scholar, by drawing his diagrams, measuring his angles, finding out his equations and translating his *Majora*. No. He must do all these things for himself. It is his own application that is to give him distinction. It is *climbing* the hill of science by dint of effort and perseverance and not being *carried up* on other men's shoulders.

Let every youth, therefore, early settle it in his mind, that if he would ever be any thing, he has got to *make himself*; or in other words, to rise by personal application. Let him always try his own strength, and try it effectually, before he is allowed to call upon Hercules. Put him first upon his own invention; send

him back again and again to the resources of his own mind, and make him feel, that there is nothing too hard for industry and perseverance to accomplish. In his early and timid flights, let him know that stronger pinions are near and ready to sustain him, but only in case of absolute necessity. • When in the rugged paths of science, difficulties which he cannot surmount impede his progress, let him be helped over them; but never, let him think of being led, when he has power to walk without help nor of carrying his ore to another's furnace, when he can melt it down in his own. To excuse our young men from painful mental labour, in a course of liberal education, would be about as wise, as to invent easier cradle springs for the conveyance of our children to school, or softer cushions for them to sit on at home, in order to promote their growth and give them vigorous constitutions. By adopting such methods, in the room of those distinguished men, to whom we have been accustomed to look for sound literary and theological instruction; for wise laws and the able administration of justice, our pulpits and courts and professorships and halls of legislation, would soon be filled, or rather disgraced, by a succession of weak and rickety pretenders.

In this view of the subject, it becomes a very nice not to say difficult question, how far it is expedient to simplify elementary books in our primary schools; but more especially, in the advanced stages of a liberal education. I am aware, that much may be said in favour of the simplest and easiest lessons for children; and I freely admit, that several elementary writers of the present day, are entitled to much credit for what

they have done in this humble, though highly important sphere. I am convinced, however, that even here the simplifying process has been carried too far. The learner, in many cases, receives too much assistance from his author. Little or nothing is left him to find out by his own study and ingenuity. His feelings are interested and his memory is taxed; but his judgment is not called into exercise; his invention is not put to the test, and of course, his mind does not grow.

Moreover; too many, who would be thought students of a distinguished rank, by having their abridgments and elements and conversations and other patented stereotype continually before them, early imbibe the persuasion, that almost any science may be mastered in a few weeks; and, of course, that the time which used to be spent upon languages, the mathematics and other branches of a public education, was little better than thrown away. Even in our Colleges, and partly I am apt to think from the same cause, there is much complaint of needless prolixity and obscurity, in some of the larger classical books. It seems to be taken for granted, that every thing should be made as plain and easy for the learner as possible. Hence, to be held in check during a long and painful hour or more, by a single proposition in Euclid, is considered an intolerable hardship by those, who dislike nothing so much as close and slowly productive thinking. It seems never to have occurred to their minds, that this is the very kind of exercise, which is indispensable, to give scope and energy to the intellectual powers.

In itself considered, it would be very agreeable, no doubt, to master conic sections, quadratic equations, spherics and fluxions, all in a month. But if this could be done, the student would lose incomparably more, than he could possibly gain by the saving of time and labour. He would lose nearly all the advantage which he now derives, from a long course of severe mental discipline. Indeed, could all the fields of science and literature be explored in a few weeks, or months; could some new method be invented to supersede the necessity of hard study altogether, the consequences would be truly deplorable. That hour would mark the boundaries of human improvement. From that moment, the march of mind would be retrograde. Within one generation, there would be no giants left in the earth; for how could the race be perpetuated, without the aliment which has in time past added so many cubits to their stature? Once release man from the necessity of bringing his powers into vigorous action, and nothing could prevent him from sinking into sloth and imbecility.

Let me here, in connexion with the foregoing remarks, offer a few thoughts upon the method of teaching by *lectures*; a mode which is so highly and deservedly popular in the most flourishing institutions of our own country, as well as in all the foreign Universities. Without *lecturers*, in various branches of science, no College could maintain a respectable standing for a single year; and it is greatly to be wished, that more professorships might be founded in most of our public seminaries. But even here, there are certain limits, beyond which it would not be wise, nor safe to go.

It is easy to see, that so much of a four years residence in College, *might* be taken up in hearing lectures, as to leave but little time for hard study. Nor is this all. When a young man knows, that he is surrounded by distinguished professors, who are all the while thinking and writing for his benefit, he will be apt to excuse himself from close application, and to rest contented with what he can take down, or remember in the Lecture-room. This arises from that kind of *vis inertia*, which must be reckoned among the laws of our fallen nature. We are, for the most part, so extremely averse to mental effort, that if we can find substitutes to trim the midnight lamp, we shall employ them, even in spite of conscience and our better judgment. Who is there that would not prefer taking as many eagles as he wants from the hands of the coiner, to bringing up the ore from the dark caverns of Potosi, and carrying it through the mint by the sweat of his own brow? Let every student, then, be on his guard against those temptations to indolence, which lurk beneath some of his highest privileges. Let him be thankful for the assistance of able professors, but let him depend more upon his own industry than upon them. It were better for a young man never to hear a lecture in College, than to estimate his attainments by the amount of instruction which he receives, rather than by his own diligence and success in study.

I cannot dismiss the present topic, without advert-  
ing to the new modes of *itinerant lecturing*, which are becoming extremely fashionable in various parts of our country. To condemn them in the gross, would

be doing injustice to some individuals of distinguished merit: for it cannot be denied, that they have reduced much valuable information, to a cheap and portable form, and have in this way contributed to diffuse a taste for science and literature among all classes of people. These are honourable exceptions; but what shall we say of those pedantic smatterers in every thing, who are coming up upon the breadth of the land; whose advertisements stare us in the face from a thousand hand-bills and news-papers; who are ready to promise, and if you please, to bind themselves for a very trifling consideration, not only to point out a much shorter road, than even a royal one, to the temple of fame, but to conduct their marvelling followers to the very pinnacle, before the disciples of Bacon, Newton and Reid can fairly begin to rise, by the ancient steep and rugged path. What need, according to these wonderworking teachers, of six, or ten years study, when *they* can lay open all the arena of science in half as many weeks or evenings! Nay so far is this literary necromancy sometimes carried, that even a single lecture is expected to do more for the awe stricken tyro, than he could gain by months of the closest application in the old way. While I appeal to your own observation, for the correctness of this statement, I am far from wishing to hold up any meritorious individual, to public reprobation, or contempt. Let every one receive the just reward of his ingenuity and usefulness. Equally foreign is it from my present design, to represent *all* attempts at improvement, in the methods of teaching, as visionary and hopeless. I believe, on the contrary, that great

improvements are yet to be made, and that even now, writing, geography and some other branches, are much more advantageously taught than they were twenty years ago. But I have no hesitation in pronouncing, a great part of what is pompously styled *lecturing*, upon natural philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, history, mnemonics and the like, the most arrant quackery, that ever disgraced the records of learning in New England. It is the mere froth and sediment—or, shall I not rather say, it is the *sulphurated hydrogen* and *carbonic acid* of science and literature. So far is it from raising the general standard of education, that its direct tendency is to discourage application, to foster pedantry, and to beget a general contempt for that long and tedious process, by which men have hitherto risen to eminence in general knowledge, and in all the learned professions.

I do not however mention these time and book and labour saving expedients, as if there was any very serious cause of alarm from this quarter. These Protean forms of literary quackery, cannot hold the ascendancy long in any enlightened community. And in spite of their present claims to public favour, it cannot be doubted, that intellectual education, in most of its branches, is steadily on the advance. Great light, has within the last thirty years, been thrown upon the science of mind, and the present ardour of philosophical speculation, promises still more brilliant results. There is, upon the whole, a steady and mighty advance in the great empire of cultivated intellect, which we trust nothing will seriously impede, and to which no definite limits can be assigned.

In connexion with this part of our subject, or rather in continuation of it, I cannot help calling your attention for a moment, to those rapid and splendid conquests of general science, which shed such a glory upon the age in which we live. What scholastic entrenchment is there which she has not carried—what moss-grown battlement on which she has not planted her standard? What height is there which she has not surveyed—what depth has she not explored? What desert of sand, or snow, has she not traversed—what arctic sea or streight has she not navigated—what ice of four thousand winters has she not seen—what mountain or heavenly parallax has she not measured—what mineral has escaped her search—what stubborn resistances in the great field of experiment, has she not overcome—what substance has she not found means to break, or fuse, or solve, or convert into gas?

It is indeed wonderful to think, how the boundaries of human knowledge are by the aid, and under the directing eye of human intellect, extending in every direction. Every camp that is lighted for the purposes of discovery in one department, sheds a portion of its radiance upon some other, or perhaps upon many others at the same time: and thus, by the intermingling and reflection of rays from so many points, the progress of discovery is greatly and increasingly facilitated. Objects which fifty years ago were scarcely visible in the dim horizon, are now left by its retrocession far within the vast circumference. The ever busy hand of experiment is daily laying open new wonders and making new discoveries in air, earth

and water. Some of the great agents of nature, which had been at work in secret from the foundation of the world, have recently been detected in their mysterious operations, and made subservient to the health and convenience of man. Science has scaled those awful barriers, which less than a century ago, it would have been thought the height of madness and impiety to attempt; and she is now successfully exploring far wider regions beyond, than were ever included in her ancient dominions. Thus while the astronomer is polishing his glasses, finding out the longitude, watching the return of the comets, and looking for new constellations in the blue depths of ether, the mechanical philosopher is lengthening his levers, perfecting his screws and pullies, and combining and concentrating all the prodigious energies of fire and water. And last, but not least, the chemist is rejoicing in the midst of his newly discovered attractions, affinities and antipathies: and if in subjecting every known substance to his acids, his blow-pipe and his deflagrator, he has not yet converted the baser metals into gold, he seems to be in a fair way, at least, of transmuting charcoal into diamonds.\*

The train of our meditations, falls in so naturally here, with the following bright and philosophical anticipations of a distinguished writer, that I shall offer no apology for laying them before you in his own words. Speaking of the progressive improvement of the human race, he mentions by way of example, the history of mathematical science, in which the advan-

\* I here allude to some very interesting experiments, by Professor Silliman of Yale College, of which he has given a particular account, in the American Journal of Science and Arts: Vol. V. and VI.

ces of discovery may be measured with greater precision than in any other.

“Those elementary truths of geometry and of astronomy,” he remarks, “which, in India and Egypt, formed an occult science, upon which an ambitious priesthood founded its influence, were become, in the times of Archimedes and Hipparchus, the subjects of common education in the public schools of Greece. In the last century, a few years of study were sufficient for comprehending all that Archimedes and Hipparchus knew; and, at present, two years employed under an able teacher, carry the student beyond those conclusions, which limited the inquiries of Leibnitz and of Newton. Let any person reflect on these facts: let him follow the immense chain which connects the inquiries of Euler with those of a priest of Memphis; let him observe, at each epoch, how genius outstrips the present age, and how it is overtaken by mediocrity in the next; he will perceive, that nature has furnished us with the means of abridging and facilitating our intellectual labour, and that there is no reason for apprehending that such simplifications can ever have an end. He will perceive, that at the moment when a multitude of particular solutions, and of insulated facts, begin to distract the attention, and to overcharge the memory, the former gradually lose themselves in one general method, and the latter unite in one general law; and that these generalizations, continually succeeding one to another, like the successive multiplications of a number by itself, have no other limit, than that infinity which the human faculties are unable to comprehend.”

How cheering, how ennobling is this intellectual march of our species! Who but must aspire to a place

in the ranks, if not to the honour of bearing a standard? Who is there, that will not contribute by every proper means in his power, to facilitate so illustrious a march; to elevate, expand and strengthen the immortal mind, as it still presses on in the path of discovery, and looking upward, pants for a wider range, a clearer vision, and worthier attainments in a brighter world?

The *third* and last great branch of education is *moral*. I use the word moral here, in the largest sense, as comprehending all the instruction, restraints and discipline which are requisite, for the government of the passions, the moulding of the affections, the formation of an enlightened conscience and the renovation of the heart. I do not merely say that this branch is *indispensable*—for in a sense it is *every thing*. What would a finely cultivated mind, united to the best physical constitution be, without moral principle? What but mere brute force, impelled by the combined and terrible energies of a perverted understanding and a depraved heart? How much worse than physical imbecility, is strength employed in doing evil? How much more to be dreaded than the most profound ignorance, is a high state of mental cultivation, when once men have broken away from the control of conscience and the Bible. The reign of terror and atheism, under whose bloody seal the demon of anarchy once presided over a great and polished metropolis, affords so good an illustration here, that I hope I shall be indulged in the hackneyed allusion. What availed all the erudition of the National Institute, and all the learning of the Encyclopediasts, in the hands of men, who could bow the knee to the meretricious goddess of reason, and write over the tomb, that death

is an eternal sleep? It was not the blind and unlettered frenzy of the multitude, but the cool and calculating genius of infidel philosophy, which put the wheels of revolution in motion in France; and it was the friction, occasioned by that tremendous impulse, which set the whole machinery of the government on fire, and burnt down the palace, the altar and the throne together. Now, take away all the restraints, and sanctions of religion, and something like this might be expected to happen in any state, and in spite of the highest intellectual attainments. Without the fear of God nothing can be secure for one moment. Without the control of moral and religious principle, education is a drawn and polished sword, in the hands of a gigantic maniac. In his madness he may fall upon its point, or bathe it in the blood of the innocent. Great and highly cultivated talents, allied to skepticism, or infidelity, are the right arm that "scatters firebrands, arrows and death." After all the dreams of human perfectibility, and all the hosannas which have been profanely lavished upon reason, philosophy and literature, who, but for the guardianship of religion, could protect his beloved daughters, or be safe in his own house for one night? What would civil government be in the profound sleep of conscience, and in the absence of right moral habits and feelings—what, but an iron despotism on the one hand, or intoxicated anarchy on the other?

Let any system of education, which leaves out God and the scriptures, prevail for a short time only, in your families, schools and Colleges, and what would be the consequences? How long would you have any domestic circles to love, or to live in? How long would children reverence their parents, or listen to the

voice of their teachers? The truth is, moral habits and religious sanctions, cannot be dispensed with. The world would be one vast and frightful theatre of misery and crime without them. What anxious and unremitting care, then, should be bestowed upon the religious education of children. How assiduously should the fond parent labour to imbue the mind of the little prattler upon his knee, with the knowledge and fear of God. It is needless to say, that if you do not sow the good seed, and sow it early, the enemy will be sure to preoccupy the ground: and if you sleep after it is sown, he will not fail of scattering tares among the wheat. If, then, your "heart's desire and prayer to God" is, that your son may be virtuous, useful and pious, "train him up in the way he should go"—teach him from the cradle to obey you in all things; to govern his own passions, and to exercise all the kind and generous feelings of his heart. Let that system of religious education which is begun in the family, be carried into the primary school, from thence into the academy and up to the public seminary. Such a course of moral instruction, is the more important in this country, on account of the free and republican character of all our institutions. Our civil government is happily a government of moral influence. It derives its supremacy not so much from the pains and penalties of the statute book, as from the virtue and intelligence of the people. Now the permanent safety of such a community, demands a high tone of moral and religious principle in the great mass of the governed; and it must be obvious, I think, that the freer any state is, the more virtue is necessary to secure private rights, and to preserve the public tranquillity. A government of opinion, founded on the

morality of the Gospel, exerts a silent and invisible influence, which like the great law of attraction keeps every thing in its place, without seeming to exert any influence at all.

Now, as the literary institutions of every country, must receive their shape and character from the genius of the government, the management of a College in our own free and happy land, must be the unseen efficiency of moral influence, much more than the frowning *shall*, or *shall not* of the written law. But how can this influence be established and maintained over the natural restlessness and ardency of youth? Clearly in no other way but that which I have just pointed out. They must be brought under the sway of an enlightened conscience and of good habits in early childhood. They must in the strictest sense of the term be religiously educated from their most tender years.

There is another view of the point before us, which immensely enhances the importance of a religious education. If human existence was bounded by this 'inch or two of time,' or if nothing which we can do for our children could have any influence upon their eternal destiny, the consequences of faithfulness, or unfaithfulness would be comparatively trifling. But when we think of their immortality—of what it is to rise and shine and sing—or to sink and wail in outer darkness forever, and then remember that we have the keeping of their precious souls, how can we help trembling under the weight of such a responsibility? Every system of education should have reference to *two* worlds; but chiefly to the future, because the present is only the infancy of being, and the longest life bears no proportion to endless duration. Every in-

structor should keep distinctly in view, and remind his pupils daily of that long, long hereafter from which a thousand earthly ages will shrink into nothing.

Viewed in the light of eternity, and as qualifications for the kingdom of God, what is health and what are talents of the highest order? What are the richest literary acquisitions? They may dazzle him, but nothing can shine without holiness beyond the grave. It is moral worth, it is piety of heart, or the want of it, which will fix the destiny of the undying soul. Without the image of God, the stupendous intellect of Gabriel would be nought, but mighty rebellion and suffering to all eternity. Nor on the other hand, is there a human soul, bearing that image, though dwelling in the most humble clay, and merely looking through the grates of its prison, but that will ere long rise to glory and "walk in white" and sing with angels. What prayers, what instructions, what unwearied efforts then, should be employed in the religious education of every child. It is true, indeed, that no human agency however long or faithfully exerted, can give a new heart: but it is equally true, that God employs instruments to accomplish all his gracious purposes. He works by means, no less in the moral than in the natural world. The means he has in this case prescribed. In numberless instances has he made them effectual to the saving conversion of the soul. Let parents, teachers and ministers then, do their duty, in humble reliance on the divine promises, and wait in hope and prayer for the blessing. May a worm, then, like one of us, aspire to the honour and happiness of guiding immortals to heaven—of assisting to prepare them for "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" Who would exchange such a priv-

hege for the diadems of all the Cæsars? This is a delightful theme. It warms and expands and elevates and fills with holy exultation the heart of christian benevolence. But I have already detained you so much longer than I intended, that instead of leaving room for enlargement on this point, I shall be constrained to pass over in silence most of the collateral topics, which I had reserved for the closing pages of the present address.

I am aware, that the view which I have sketched of the three capital branches of education, has no claim to originality in the general outline. Nor is this concession made with any reluctance. On the contrary, I rejoice to know, that the system which I would recommend, has been in high favour with the wise and good, ever since the Plymouth Colony found "a lodge in the wilderness." Our forefathers were no less the friends of sound learning, than of civil and religious liberty. However scanty their means might be, it was their earnest desire to raise up men of stature, and not pigmies, to be their successors in bearing the sword of the magistrate, and the ark of the testimony. If they placed a high estimate upon natural genius and mental cultivation, it was with the hope that both would be made subservient to the interests of religion. Hence were the earliest and now most flourishing Colleges of New England, dedicated "*to Christ and the Church,*" by their pious founders. And in looking over their stellated triennial records, for the names of those who "were of old men of renown," it is peculiarly animating to find, how many of them were as much distinguished for their piety, as for their talents and erudition. We confidently believe, that those venerable seats of science, from which the "wor-

thies" of so many generations have gone out, to bless and enlighten the churches, and to become the firmest pillars in the state, will be more and more distinguished in the annals of future times. The dedication of which I have just spoken, was not a vain and empty ceremony. There was meaning in every word. It was the love of Christ constraining the heart, which prompted to extraordinary efforts and sacrifices, in laying the foundations of Harvard, of Yale, of Nassau Hall, and of Dartmouth. The same spirit we trust, has predominated among the founders of those kindred seminaries, which have more recently sprung up in various parts of our land. In reference to the Institution, which is now just rising into being before our eye, we heed not the reproach of weakness and presumption when we say, that our confident expectations of its future growth and prosperity, rest chiefly upon its being consecrated to *Christ and the Church*, and being daily commended to God in so many closets and families. May Christ and the church be inseparable from all the prayers and hopes and wishes and gifts of its benefactors; and may 'Christ be formed in the heart of every student, the hope of glory.' Then, not only will it live; but be worthy to live. Then will the blessing of many ready to perish come upon its sons.

The observations which I have made in this address, upon the three great branches of education, have so direct a bearing upon the question of *age*, in reference to entering College, that I hope I shall be indulged in a few additional remarks. On this subject, no general rule can be laid down which will apply to every case. Some lads have more maturity, both of body and mind, at twelve, than others have at fifteen,

or sixteen. Still, there is a general order of nature, which should be carefully studied and observed. By strictly attending to this, we shall be able to fix, with a good degree of precision, upon the age when the generality of youth, are physically and mentally prepared for admission into a public seminary. This, I am fully convinced, is not so early as parental partiality and young ambition are apt to suppose. Neither the physical constitution and health, nor the intellectual powers, nor the moral habits of a mere child, are sufficiently established and consolidated, to render it either profitable, or safe for him, to encounter the many difficulties and temptations of a thorough classical course. All experience proves, that not one lad in a hundred, at the age of thirteen, or fourteen, can grapple with natural and mental philosophy, or with the higher branches of mathematics. In order to do this, the mind must have attained to something like maturity, and this it does not ordinarily do, till near the close of minority. If a student can graduate at twenty, or even a year or two later, he ought, in almost every case to be satisfied. His education is much more likely to be thorough, than if he had entered very young. It cannot be doubted that many have lost the greater part of their junior year, as well as much of the sophomore and senior, merely by entering college too early, and being driven on through studies to which their minds were not yet equal. Many, also, by too much confinement, and by intense application in the greenness of their growth, have early closed both their studies and their lives together. Nor are these the only objections to premature matriculation. A child can rarely form a correct estimate of the value of a good education—so that if he

was able to press on, with the older competitors, he is not so likely to feel the importance of diligence in study. And what may be more than all, is the exposure of his morals, at the critical age, when he is most likely to be led into temptation.

To the question, 'what then shall we do with our sons, when they are fitted for College at an early age?' I answer, put them upon a preparatory course, which will require more time, by embracing a wider range than is commonly taken. In some respects, I know, a student may be too well fitted, but there are studies, particularly those which require thought and invention, on which I should think he might bestow a year or two, without much danger. Perhaps the better way, however, in most cases would be, to reserve a considerable portion of time between the ages of twelve and sixteen, for manual labour. Nothing is so likely to give the lad a good constitution, and make him willing to study, as being obliged to wipe the sweat from his own brow through the long summer months, and to learn a little from his own experience, how much toil it costs to carry him through college.

Another topic on which I had intended to enlarge, is the education of indigent pious youth for the Gospel ministry. And I was the more desirous of stating my views somewhat at length, on account of the benevolent origin and leading design of this Institution. But I must not trespass longer on your patience, than just to glance at the subject. A new era in the history of the American church is begun, by means of those efforts which are now in successful operation, to educate the pious poor, and prepare them for the holy ministry. Hundreds of young men of promising talents, are at this moment members of our academies

and Colleges, who but for the hand of christian charity would have remained in their native obscurity; and thousands more will assuredly be assisted by the same bounty to acquire a competent education for the sacred office. This, certainly, is one of the animating signs of the times in which it is our privilege to live. Why were not education societies thought of fifty or a hundred years ago? They might be reckoned among the glories of any age. But experience has already proved, that no ordinary judgment and discretion are necessary, in selecting talents and piety from the shop and the field—in the distribution of hard earned charity and in the general superintendance of a long list of beneficiaries. It is not every pious youth, who has talents for the pastoral office, or the missionary service. Some, no doubt, are very devoted christians and very desirous of becoming preachers too, whom no pains or expense could ever qualify for the desk. Such may think it hard to be rejected, especially if some of their indigent companions are taken; but there ought to be firmness and independence enough, to follow the dictates of an enlightened judgment in an affair of so much importance. It can be no advantage to any young man, to be taken from the sphere in which God designed he should act, and placed in one which he can never fill: and most certainly, we have no right to waste the sacred deposits of charity, upon well ascertained imbecility, or dullness, though allied to the purest motives in the applicant. Nor, in my opinion would it be wise, even if funds were ever so ample, to recal our industrious, indigent young men from the plow, or to bid them lay down their tools, and then carry them through all the stages of education, without requiring any thing more of them, than a diligent

attention to their studies. The change would, in the first place, greatly endanger their health. Active and laborious habits cannot be exchanged at once, for the sedentariness of the school-room, with either comfort or safety: and why should not the beneficiary make his needful exercise, contribute if he can, towards his own support?

Besides; to excuse him for several years from all labour and hardship, would, in a great measure, disqualify him for the very service in which it must be the duty of many to engage. We want young men for the ministry, who are inured to self denial and who will be ready to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," wherever he may send them. We want soldiers for this holy war, who will cheerfully march to the frontiers, and pitch their tents in the dark interminable forests of the west and south. We want missionaries to go forth and gather congregations from the cabins of the wilderness, and to carry the Gospel to far distant pagan millions. Now what is the best way, to prepare indigent piety for these arduous and self-denying labours? Certainly not to remove it from the straw cot, and pillow it upon the softest down.—Certainly not to excuse the young man from all concern about his own support. On the contrary, he ought to be distinctly informed, when he lays down the hoe and the broad axe, that he is to help himself as far as he can, and to expect no more charitable aid, than his necessities may absolutely require. That youth is not worthy of being assisted by the late and early earnings of pious indigence, nor even by the bounty of christian affluence, who is not willing to endure privations, and to make every reasonable exertion in his own behalf.

Moreover, entire reliance upon charity, during several years of the forming age, can hardly fail of impairing, if it does not destroy that independence of mind, which is essential in every high and difficult enterprize. If such a state of dependence is not quite synonymous with anxious servility, it is too much to expect from it, that free and independent development of talents and designs, which gives the brightest promise of future usefulness. The best intentioned patrons of indigent merit, are sometimes capricious; and who in the midst of conflicting caprices, and earnestly desirous of pleasing all, can act like himself? Better, therefore, to struggle and fare hard through every stage of education, than for the sake of being wholly supported, to run the hazard of acquiring a kind of tame neutrality of character in such a school.

I hope that in speaking thus freely, I shall not be thought indifferent to the comfort of those pious dependent youth, on whom the hopes of the church are now fixed. Let them receive all needed assistance. Few, probably, are in danger of being injured by receiving too much, while owing to the scantiness of our charities, many are subjected to very great embarrassments. In the struggles and discouragements of this latter class, I feel, and trust I always shall feel a lively interest. *Haud ignarus mali miseris succurrere disco.*

But if I am not mistaken, the views which I have ventured to express on this highly important and delicate subject, accord with the sentiments which are now generally entertained, by the enlightened friends of charitable education; and they afford a sufficient answer to a popular objection against the system. We are charged with demanding the widow's mite, and the poor servant girl's wages, to support a host of healthy young men in ease and idleness. This is un-

true. We *demand* nothing. We are anxious, indeed, to increase the number of well educated ministers by bringing forward the pious poor, and are not ashamed to ask the christian public to assist us. But we require the beneficiaries to be saving, and to rely on their own earnings as far as their health and circumstances will allow. All we ask is, that when they have done what they can, they may be helped forward by the hand of charity.

These I take to have been the views of the benevolent founders of this Institution. They intended to help those, who are willing to help themselves. While, therefore, the indolent and the extravagant will be scrupulously rejected, the deserving poor of every denomination, who have respectable talents and desire to consecrate them to God in the ministry, will be cheerfully patronized. The funds of the Institution, indeed, will not enable the Trustees to do all they could wish; but they rely on the further aid of that christian benevolence which is enabling them to do so much; and the hope is indulged, that arrangements may ere long be made, in connexion with the seminary to furnish convenient, health giving and productive labour, for all the indigent students, whether they have the ministry in view or not. And here, let me just remark, that I think poor young men of good talents, who are not counted pious, have been too little regarded in the benevolent plans of this remarkable age. Why should they not be educated with the hope, that God will change their hearts and make them eminently useful? And why to this end, should not funds be raised to assist them? Who can tell how much they might do, to bless the state, the church and the world?

In looking round, this day, from the spot where we now stand; in thinking of the past and then of the future, what emotions of gratitude and hope fill the benevolent mind! Whence these walls built in troublous times—these goodly edifices which greet the eye and gladden the heart from afar? Whence this youthful band of brethren, dwelling together in unity, improving their minds by an elevated course of study, and so many of them walking, as we trust, in the “ways of pleasantness, in the paths of peace?” Whence all that our eyes now see and our ears hear? Verily God hath heard the prayer of his servants and blessed the work of their hands. Hitherto, may they say, hath the Lord helped us!

And will he frown all that is before us into ruins and forgetfulness? Will he forsake this comely daughter of Zion in her tender years, and after giving her so many tokens of his favour? We cannot believe it. He may afflict her still more, but surely he will cherish her growth, he will comfort her heart, he will raise her up friends. Under his smiles and sustained by his arm, she will hold on her way, and as she advances, will scatter blessings with both her hands upon many, who are famishing for the bread of life. She will not envy her elder sisters, who have riches, wardrobes and more attendants and are moving in higher spheres than her own:—but she will emulate their virtues, rejoice in their prosperity, strive to deserve their affection, and seek for herself that “adorning of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.” In this quiet, modest and beneficent course, who can wish her any thing but success? Where is the hand, that would rudely thrust her back, or the heart that can triumph in her disappointments, that

can rejoice in her afflictions? But should she be 'reviled, let her not revile again.' Should one 'cheek be smitten let her turn the other also!' Let the same mind be in her which was in Christ Jesus and she can have nothing to fear.

As we cast our eyes down the long track of time, from this consecrated eminence, how many bright and interesting visions crowd upon our view. *We*, indeed, shall soon be gone; but other generations will come, and what may they not enjoy and accomplish, canopied as they will be, by those Arcadian skies, invigorated by the pure breath of the mountains, and inspired to rapture and to song as they look abroad upon all the riches, life and beauty of this great amphitheatre? How many favoured sons of this institution, will hold sweet converse here, with the muse that loves the hill of Zion! How many statesmen, historians and orators will be trained on this ground, to shine in senates, to grace the bar, to adorn the bench of justice, and to record the doings of the wise, the brave and the good. But more than all that has been mentioned, what may not this seminary do for the churches at home—what victories may she not gain in distant lands, by sending forth her sons under the banner of the cross, and clad in armour of heavenly temper to fight the battles of her King?

Who is there in this assembly, that is not ready to answer, May these glowing anticipations be more than realized, in the future prosperity and usefulness of this Institution? May it live to gladden and bless the church through all future generations; and in that world, where holiness is perfect and knowledge is transcendent, may all its founders, patrons and friends meet and dwell together forever in the presence of God and the Lamb.

A  
SERMON,

PREACHED JULY 22, 1807,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER MACWHORTER, D. D.

*SENIOR PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,*

IN

NEWARK,

*NEW-JERSEY.*

---

BY EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, A. M.

SURVIVING PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

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NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY S. GOULD,

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1807.

THE MORMON

PERIODICAL

AT THE

TEMPLE

OF THE

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

IN THE CITY OF SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

1847

BY W. W. W.

PRINTED

BY ROBERT D. CHASE, JR.

FOR THE PUBLISHERS

TEMPLE

AND PRINTED IN THE CITY OF SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

1847

1847

TO THE  
CONGREGATION

UNDER THE AUTHOR'S PASTORAL CHARGE.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

*THE following sermon, preached in memory of a pastor justly dear to us all, and now published at your request, and for your special use, I affectionately dedicate to you.*

*In the biographical part, I have descended to a minuteness of detail, which I am aware would be uninteresting to strangers; but certainly not to you and the bereaved family, whose common gratification I have had chiefly in view. You will find several pages of narrative that were omitted in the delivery, and other matter which was necessarily reserved till the subsequent Sabbath. Neither the time nor the occasion admitted of presenting the entire sermon on the day of the*

*interment; but I trust no apology is necessary for laying the whole before you in the present form.*

*That God may comfort you under your bereavement, and render this discourse in some degree useful to you, is the anxious desire and prayer of*

*Your affectionate Pastor,*

**EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.**

Newark, Aug. 10, 1807.

# A SERMON.

PSALM CXII. 6.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING  
REMEMBRANCE.

IT is with trembling and distress that I present myself under this awful stroke of the Almighty, to address my afflicted congregation, and to mingle my sorrows with our widowed church. Standing in the place from which our friend has so often addressed us, and oppressed with the sight of these solemn badges of wo, I have no heart to speak. But duty has assigned my task, and I will perform it as well as I can. It is not to utter my own complaints that I have entered this house of God; but to speak a word of comfort to my friends, and to execute the last sad office of respect and love to my departed father.

The words which I have read are susceptible of a double construction, as the term *everlasting* may be understood either in a limited or an absolute sense. They import either that the righteous man shall long be remembered with affection and reverence on earth, or that he shall be had in eternal remembrance before God and the inhabitants of heaven. Both positions may be supported as general truths; and from the double meaning evidently contained in many maxims, as well as predictions, of the Old Testament, especially in those which are couched in such indefinite terms, we may reasonably presume that both ideas are expressed in these words. We shall therefore dwell a few moments on each.

I. The righteous shall be long remembered with affection and reverence on earth. This however is true only as a general proposition, which admits of many exceptions. Piety is not the door to fame in the splendid circles of the great. Many of the excellent of the earth have been overlooked in their life, and forgotten in their death. Thousands have given their bodies to the flames to gain a martyr's crown;—

“ Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown,  
 “ Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,  
 “ And chas'd them up to heav'n. Their ashes flew

“ —No marble tells us whither. With their names  
 “ No bard embalms and sanctifies his song :  
 “ And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
 “ Is cold on this.”—\*

Yet notwithstanding this complaint of the poet, one of the wisest observers of human affairs has stated it as a general maxim, that *the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot*. Men of the world, by their intrepidity in vice and their impenetrable assurance, by the brilliancy and point of their wit, and their arts of address, may attract, while they live, more attention than the truly good ; but it is often otherwise when they are dead. The infidel himself, while he praises the living sinner, venerates the departed saint. It is not those who in the circles of profaneness can raise the loudest laugh against the religion of Christ, that posterity will most revere ; but the sincere worshippers of God, and the benefactors of mankind. While a thousand titled libertines, who once dazzled the croud with their stars and crescents, now sleep with vulgar dust, with names that have scarcely reached the ear of posterity, a Baxter, a Flavel, a Whitefield, an Edwards, a Tennent, and a Davies, live still in the af-

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\* Cowper.

fections of mankind, and are immortal. It was a saying of a Jewish Rabbi, founded on ancient tradition, "Whoever makes mention either of the just, and does not bless him, or of the wicked, and does not curse him, transgresses a positive precept." However this traditionary precept may fail to be observed towards the living, it is by the common consent of mankind observed towards the dead.

II. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance before God and the inhabitants of heaven. Ten thousand ages hence, neither their persons nor their works shall be forgotten. The smallest act of charity which they performed, the faintest sigh which they breathed for sin, the feeblest desire which they moved towards God, though long forgotten by themselves, shall then be remembered by Him. Their pious deeds shall be celebrated in the circles of the redeemed, and among the countless millions of holy angels, when the exploits of an Alexander, a Cæsar, and a Bonaparte, shall be forgotten,—or mentioned as we now mention the destructive feats of mischievous children; or rather as we mention the actions of a Cain, a Cataline, or an Arnold. When these heroes shall no longer fill the trump of fame, and the page of history which transmitted their names to posterity, shall long

since have perished in the general conflagration, the conflicts which these Worthies maintained with their own hearts in secret, and the victories which they obtained over themselves, shall make a conspicuous figure in the annals of heaven. Then, an *Alexander* who faithfully laboured half a century in the gospel of Christ, will have greater fame than the Alexander who conquered Asia.

But with the inhabitants of heaven we leave the fame of the righteous in *that* world; our business is to preserve their name on *earth*.—Not only is there a sacred *pleasure* in perpetuating in this world the memory of the great and good, but it is an essential *benefit* to society, as it gives continued force to their example, and awes vice by the majesty of their authority. But when one is removed who was not only great and good, but for a long course of years acted a conspicuous part in supporting the interests of literature and the Church, it is due to him, it is due to society, it is due to the Church of Christ, that the memory of his actions should be more circumstantially preserved. Such a one is fallen this day in our Israel:—and believing that the present is a proper time to sketch the outlines of his history and character, I must not detain you longer by abstract remarks, but must enter at once on this mournful task.

I am aware that funeral eulogies are prone to degenerate into blind, indiscriminate praise. To avoid the appearance of this evil, I shall be sparing of *general* encomiums,—content to let the history and character of my departed friend speak for themselves. Fidelity on such occasions does not indeed require us to hunt for imperfections. I shall only be careful that in drawing the picture of his virtues, I do not lay on my colours with so lavish a hand as to conceal the features I wish to present. I know the suspicions attached to one supposed to be prejudiced by affection: I shall therefore be cautious what I say. Standing as I do in this scene of death, and by the awful remains of departed greatness, I will hold myself bound as by the solemnity of an oath, and every word shall be true according to my best knowledge and belief.

DOCTOR MACWHORTER was of Scotch extraction. His maternal ancestors were among the first emigrants from Scotland to the North of Ireland; and the family of his father removed to the same country about the time of his father's birth. By his mother he had the honour of descending from martyrs. Both of her maternal grandparents fell a sacrifice to papal fury, in the great Irish massacre of 1641, while England was convulsed by the civil

wars of Charles I.\* None of the family survived this horrid scene except her mother, who, at that time an infant, was concealed by her nurse, and preserved from impending death. On so minute a providence did the future existence of this luminary of the Church depend. His immediate parents, Hugh and Jane, lived in the county of Armagh, in the North of Ireland; where his father was for many years a linen merchant. The eldest of their children, whose name was Alexander, was a son of distinguished talents and piety; and being intended for the gospel ministry, spent two years at the university of Edinburgh. At his solicitation, the family removed to America, about the year 1730, and settled in the county of Newcastle, Delaware; where his father became a distinguished farmer, and an elder of the Church, under the pastoral care at first of Mr. Hutchinson, and afterwards of Mr. Rodgers, now Doct. Rodgers of New-York. Alexander died before he had completed his studies, leaving a most excellent character: and our future pastor, being born about a month after, bore his brother's name. But so affected were the family with their recent affliction, that his name was not suffered to

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\* They were hanged on a tree before their own door.

be pronounced in the house for six months after his birth.

The second Alexander, the youngest of eleven children, was born July 15, 1734. O. S. It was his happiness to be blessed with parents eminent for piety, and abundant in their labours to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It was their custom to devote the evening of every Lord's day, among other seasons, to this tender and interesting service;—a practice which was common among pious parents of that age; would God it were as common now! He remembered, till the day of his death, the tender solicitude of a father who would often take him alone into the woods, and of a mother who no less frequently would retire with him to a private apartment, to exhort him with tears, and to entreat him by all the anguish of a parent's heart to be reconciled to God. These faithful admonitions would often awaken him to temporary seriousness and prayer; and though they did not at once produce an abiding effect, they were not lost.

In February, 1748, when he was in his 14th year, he was deprived of his excellent father, who at his death left four children, all of whom were

so many proofs of the happy effects of parental faithfulness. They were all communicants in the church, and lived and died agreeably to their profession.\* The three eldest being already settled in North Carolina, their mother, in the following autumn, removed into that State, accompanied by Alexander, who left his paternal estate, in Delaware, under the care of a guardian. Here first commenced his permanent religious impressions, under a sermon preached by Mr. John Brown, (one of those evangelical preachers who in that day were called *New Lights*,†) from Ps. VII. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready.* An arrow of a different nature reached his heart. The horrors of guilt, and the terrors of eternal judgment, from that moment assailed him, and for near three years filled him with indescribable distress. He used daily to repair to a copse of pines, near his brother's house,

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\* The eldest of these was Nancy, married to Alexander Osborne; the second was John; the third was Jane, married to John Brevard. They are all deceased. Some of them lived to advanced age; and their descendants are still numerous in North Carolina.

† Mr. Brown was afterwards a settled minister for many years in Virginia.

where he resided; and there, to use his own expressive words, *would dash himself on the ground, looking for the earth to open and swallow him up.* Thus the seed of truth, which had been planted by a father's care, and watered by a mother's tears, was preparing to shoot.

After spending two or three years in Carolina, he took his leave, (and, as it proved, his *final* leave) of his mother, to pursue his education under the direction of his guardian.\* At first he was entered in a private school in a small hamlet in Delaware, which has since grown to a village by the name of Newark. Thence he was removed to a public school at West-Nottingham, Cecil county, Maryland, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Finley, afterwards President of the College of New-Jersey. Here the darkness which had long involved him, was dispersed; and he was enabled for the first

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\* Before his father's death, Doct. Rodgers, who had taken the charge of the congregation, had remarked the promising talents of this youth, at a time when he and the other children of the neighbourhood were assembled to be catechised by their minister. And now, after his return from Carolina, he received from Doct. Rodgers some affectionate attentions, which laid the foundation of that intimate friendship which ever after subsisted between them.

time to rest his soul on Christ, to a degree that gave him confidence, shortly after, to enter into communion with Mr. Finley's church.

Having continued two years in that school, in May, 1756, being in his 22d year, he joined the junior class in the College which was then in this town. Thus he began his publick career in science in the very place which was destined to be the scene of his future usefulness. The ground on which his youthful feet trod, was reserved to be the resting place of his weary limbs, after the labours of more than half a century.

It was already determined to remove the College to Princeton; on which account President Burr's pastoral relation to this church had the year before been dissolved. In October of this year the College was removed, and Mr. Macwhorter belonged to the first class which graduated at Princeton. He took his degree in the autum of 1757, a few days after the lamented death of Mr. Burr.

Having thus completed his academical studies, he was on the point of returning to North Carolina, to take his mother's counsel in regard to the future course of his life, when he received the afflicting news

of her death. This changed his purpose, and he entered upon the study of Divinity, under the instruction of the Rev. William Tennent, the pious and justly celebrated minister of Freehold, in this State.

In August following, (1758,) he was licensed to preach by the presbytery of New Brunswick, which sat at Princeton; and in October was married to Mary Cumming, daughter of Robert Cumming Esq. of Freehold, a respectable merchant, and high sheriff of the county of Monmouth. By this marriage he was introduced into a family connexion with his revered instructor, Mr. Tennent.\*

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\* Robert Cumming, Esq. was twice married. By the first marriage he had three children: the eldest was Alexander, who was a minister of the gospel for several years in the city of New-York, and afterwards in the Old South Church in the town of Boston, where he died, 1763; the second was Lawrence; and the third was Mary (Mrs. Macwhorter.) He formed a second marriage with Miss Noble, daughter (by a former husband) of Mrs. Tennent. By her he had four children: the eldest was Catharine, married to the Rev. Philip Stockton; the second was Ann, married to the Rev. William Schenck; the third was John Noble, now General Cumming of this town; and the fourth was Peggy, who died unmarried.

Doct. Macwhorter had five children: the eldest was

This congregation, after the dismissal of Mr. Burr, fell into a state of unhappy division, which continued near four years; some blaming the Presbytery for removing their pastor; others, their neighbours for consenting to his removal. Certain unpleasant disputes which existed at the same time relative to the parsonage lands, were not calculated to allay the animosity. In the collision of interests and passions, too common on such occasions, the people were long divided between different candidates, until Mr. Macwhorter, on the 28th day of June, 1759, preached his first sermon to them. At once they fixed their eyes on him as the object of their united choice.

Mr. Macwhorter had been appointed by the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia to a mission among his friends in North Carolina; and with that view he was ordained by his Presbytery, at Cran-

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Mary, married to Samuel Beebe, Merchant, now of New-York. She is deceased. The second was Ann, married to the Rev. George Ogilvie; the third was Alexander Cumming, now Counsellor at Law in this town; the fourth was John, who was a Counsellor at Law, and died a few months before his father; the fifth was Hugh Robert, who died in infancy.

berry, on the 4th day of July.\* But Providence had formed other designs concerning him. At that very meeting of Presbytery, commissioners from Newark appeared, and by their solicitations, seconded by the influence of Mr. Tennent, obtained him for a supply. The people were so well satisfied with his ministerial qualifications, that they harmoniously agreed to present him a call, and he was installed the same summer, at the age of 25, within two years after he had graduated.

In the course of his ministry, he bore an important part in all the leading measures, which, for near half a century, have been adopted, to promote the order and interest of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

He was among the first subscribers to the *Widow's Fund*, which was established in 1761; and in later life, was for many years a director of that benevolent institution.

In 1764, the Synod renewed his appointment to

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\* Mr. Kirkpatrick, who had been appointed to accompany him, was ordained at the same time.

the mission into North Carolina ;\* which gave him an opportunity to revisit his family friends, from whom he had been separated more than 12 years. But this mission came near costing him his life. While in Carolina, he was seized with the bilious fever incident to the climate, which left him with a hectic, accompanied with expectoration of blood, that for two years threatened to put an early period to his usefulness. Yet in this scene of affliction, it pleased God, in the winter of 1764, 5, to encourage him with a revival of religion in his congregation. In the following summer, he received a call from the united congregations of Center and Poplar Tent, in North Carolina ; which, though it presented him an opportunity to settle among the children and descendants of his father, he thought it his duty to reject. In 1766, the state of his health became so critical, that he was induced to try the experiment of a Northern journey ; and a tour which he made to Boston in the autumn of this year, proved the means of his sudden and complete restoration. From his first settlement in this place, he had been regularly subject to an attack of the pleurisy once

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\* In this mission, as well as in the one appointed by Congress, afterwards to be mentioned, Mr. Spencer of Trenton was associated with him.

or twice a year ; but after this return of health, he experienced no recurrence of the disorder as long as he lived. Except a few short periods of illness, and a paralytick affection in his hands, which he inherited from his father, and which grew upon him as he advanced in years, he enjoyed vigorous health even to old age.

Soon after his return from Boston, the congregation in that town, which had three years before became vacant by the death of Mr. Cumming, his brother-in-law, proposed to him to take a dismissal from his people, preparatory to receiving a call from them ; as they had conscientious scruples about calling a settled minister. This preliminary step he refused to take, and the business went no further.

In 1772, he was elected a trustee of the College of New-Jersey, and continued a very important member of that board till a few months before his death.

The same year commenced the second revival of religion under his ministry, which proved more extensive than the former, and continued about two years. At the close of this period, in 1774, the congregation, under the animating influ-

ence of their pastor, engaged with a laudible spirit to erect a new church. A considerable sum was raised for this purpose by subscription, and a quantity of materials was collected;\* but the revolutionary war, which commenced about this time, interrupted the design; and in the confusion which followed for several years, all the materials were lost.

This town, from its central and exposed situation, shared largely in the troubles of the war. Through the whole of that anxious period, Mr. Macwhorter was an active friend of his country, and partook with his afflicted congregation in the hardships and perils of the revolution. This same year, (1775,) he was appointed by Congress to visit that district of North Carolina in which he had been before, to employ his influence to bring over the enemies of the revolution to the American interest. But whatever zeal and abilities were exerted in this enterprise, it issued, agreeably to his prediction to Doct. Franklin, with little success.

In 1776, he was honoured with the degree of Doc-

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\* This design was carried so far, that early in 1775, the trenches were opened for the foundation of the new building.

tor of Divinity by the corporation of Yale College.

In the following winter, when the American affairs were at the lowest point of depression,—when Washington with a handful of half starved and half naked troops, had fled through Jersey, and abandoned the State to the ravages of the British arms, the warm patriotism of our venerable father carried him to the army, encamped on the Pennsylvania shore, opposite to the city of Trenton, to concert with Washington measures for the protection of this State.\* And he was there on the memorable 26th of December, when the American troops crossing the Delaware, took the Hessians, and turned the tide of the war.

In the summer of 1778, at the solicitation of his friend General Knox, he accepted the chaplainship of his brigade, which lay then with the main army at White Plains. During the few months that he held this station, Washington was frequently his auditor, and he was often Washington's guest.

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\* The Rev. Mr. Vanarsdale, of Springfield, feeling the same glow of patriotism, accompanied him in this excursion.

While he was with the army, he was visited with a severe affliction in his family. In the month of July, Mrs. Macwhorter was struck with lightning, which scorching her head and body very considerably, left her without any symptom of life. Though she recovered her senses in a few hours, she was unable to go abroad till the latter part of the winter, and even then her life was for some time very precarious. From this shock, her constitution which before had been feeble, never recovered. The Doctor did not immediately take leave of the army, but finding at length that his attentions were necessary at home, he was obliged to quit his station, and return to his family.

This affliction also prevented him from noticing, as he otherwise would have done, an application received in the month of June from the congregational church in the city of Charleston, in South Carolina. But his attention was more seriously turned to this subject in the following November, by a regular call from that congregation. On this occasion it was suggested to him, that the friends of our College had fixed their eyes on him as the future successor of President Witherspoon: but notwithstanding this, his mind still inclined towards Charleston. He had the call under considera-

tion till February; but found at last that the state of his family, and the critical situation of Charleston, threatened at that time with an invasion, presented difficulties which it was impossible to surmount.

In the following summer, (1779,) he received a call from the congregation of Charlotte, Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, accompanied with an invitation from the trustees of Charlotte Academy to accept the presidency of that institution.

This was an infant Seminary, which promised, under the fostering care of such a President, to become an important seat of learning. It was situated in the midst of his relatives, and in a part of the country where he might hope to be removed from the alarms of war. His congregation too had become much deranged by the calamities of the revolution, and his salary was deemed insufficient for his support. All these things considered, he judged it to be his duty to accept the call: and his friends in the congregation, under existing circumstances, did not oppose his removal. His pastoral relation to this church was accordingly dissolved; and in October he took his leave of Newark, furnished, by the liberality of his afflicted people, with every article needful for his journey.

Scarcely was he settled in his new abode, when the troubles of the war found him there. The army of Cornwallis, scouring the country, entered Charlotte. The Doctor with his family fled. Upon his return, he found that he had lost his library and furniture, with almost every thing that he possessed. He remained in Charlotte about a month after this calamity; but apprehending new inroads from the enemy, he quitted the place in the autumn of 1780, and returned to Abington, in Pennsylvania, where he engaged to preach for the winter. The people of Newark, hearing of his misfortunes, and influenced by the mingled emotions of sympathy and respect, invited him to make them a visit. This he did in February, 1781. They soon after sent him a regular call; in consequence of which he returned in April with his family; and though he was never reinstated, he was considered and acted as the pastor of the congregation till his death.

In the autumn of 1783, just at the close of the war, the trustees of Washington Academy, in Somerset county, Maryland, ignorant that Doct. Macwhorter was permanently settled, offered him the presidency of that institution, with a salary of £300 a year. But though the principal object of the

institution was the education of pious youth for the gospel ministry, and though the neighbouring country opened an extensive field for his ministerial labours, his attachment to a congregation which had recently given him such ingenuous proofs of affection, rendered it impossible for him to accept this invitation.

The termination of the war was an event not less happy for the pastor, than for the congregation. No where was the effect more sensible than in this place, which from that time commenced its rapid growth from a few dispersed ranges of farm-houses, to a large, beautiful, manufacturing town. The following year, (1784,) the long troubles of the pastor and congregation, were succeeded by a glorious revival of religion, which continued for two years. In no period of the Doctor's ministry, was he observed to be so deeply laden with a sense of everlasting things, and so ardent in his desire to win souls to Christ. Besides his labours on the Sabbath, he preached several times in the week, and spent a part of almost every day in catechising, exhorting from house to house, or attending religious societies. In this precious season, more than a hundred souls were added to the church.

This revival led to an important change in the practice and discipline of the church. One evening in the autumn of 1785, when the Doctor's mind was deeply impressed with divine things, he expressed to two of his friends, in a private conversation in which he was unusually tender and communicative, his concern for the want of discipline, and the looseness which prevailed in the church; which he attributed to what has been called, *the half-way practice*. It is still in the recollection of those persons, in what a solemn and indignant manner he deplored this practice, which he averred was contrary to the usage of the primitive church, and the opinion of the best fathers. He had found it here, he said, when he was settled;—but added with a sigh, how to get rid of it he did not know. He stated the necessity of drawing a line of separation between the clean and the unclean, and proceeded, in a distinct manner, to sketch the plan which he approved; which was precisely the same that the session afterwards sanctioned.

As the subject was in a measure new to his friends, they listened to it not without surprise: but the veneration which they felt for their pastor, and the influence of his opinion, roused them at once to serious attention to this matter. They soon became convin-

ced, and were the means of convincing others. Under the solemn impressions of that period, the practice which the pastor had condemned began to be contemplated in the congregation with increasing concern. Still the hazard of a change was dreaded, and the doubts of some were to be overcome. The more timid apprehended that a departure from long established usage, might lead to contentions and divisions. At length, however, after much inquiry and deliberation, the session, in 1790, took up the subject in earnest. The Doctor publicly advocated the proposed reformation, forcibly alleging that no half-way members can be found in the bible, that there are but two classes of men, and that they who are qualified to offer their children in baptism, are equally fit for the other sacrament. The decisive manner in which he treated these topics, and others less distinctly recollected by the surviving elders, removed every bar; and it was solemnly and unanimously decided, *that from that time, no persons should own the covenant with a view to offer their children in baptism, and to neglect the Lord's Supper; and that the examination of candidates for communion, which had been left to the minister only, should in future be conducted before the session.*—And this has been the practice of the church ever since.

While this business was in agitation, the design of erecting a new church, which had been interrupted by the war, was resumed; and met at once with so much encouragement, that in September, 1787, in less than a month after the business was moved, the Doctor had the pleasure of laying the foundation stone; not however on the same lot that had been selected before the war. Urged forward by the influence of some, and encouraged by the liberality of all, he himself obtained by subscription a large proportion of the sum expended on this spacious and elegant building. He went into other congregations to solicit money and materials; and so zealous was he to serve and animate the congregation, that, during the following winter, he was daily in the forests, selecting timber which had been given him, and encouraging the workmen. On the first day of January, 1791, the house was opened for publick worship, and was soon after elegantly completed: and it “stands,” in the modest language of your benefactor, “as a monument of the generosity and publick spirit of this society.” But *your* language will be: “It stands as a monument of the love and indefatigable exertions of our deceased pastor.” And *my* prayer is, that it may stand as a lasting remembrancer of his many warnings and instructions, which these walls have reflected upon your ears.

While the new church was erecting, the Doctor's attention was called to another subject of a still more important nature. He was one of those great and good men, who, in 1788, had principal influence in settling *The Confession of Faith*, and framing the *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; and in transferring the authority of the highest judicatory from the Synod to a General Assembly, which met first in May, 1789.—Ten years afterwards, when a board of trustees for the General Assembly was incorporated by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, at their session in the winter of 1798, 9, he was named in the charter as one of the board, and continued to hold this trust, until the growing infirmities of age induced him, in 1803, to resign it.

In 1796, he was blessed with another revival of religion in the congregation, by means of which 30 or 40 new members were added to the church. In 1802, the fifth and last revival under his ministry commenced. This continued two years; and in that period, 140 new members, besides those received from other churches, were added to our communion; of whom 113 were received in the course of 12 months.

In former years, Doct. Macwhorter had been

employed by the trustees of our College to obtain subscriptions in this town for the benefit of that Seminary: and when by the late disastrous conflagration the College edifice was consumed, they appointed him, in the spring of 1802, to solicit benefactions in New-England, to aid in the erection of a new College. Advanced as he was in years, his publick spirit would not suffer him to shrink from the task; and in the issue he brought more than 7000 dollars into the College funds. On very many less important occasions, his singular skill and publick spirit were called forth in a similar way; but these it is neither proper nor possible to enumerate.

My reverend father lived to a good old age. As I have heard him say, *he lived to see two worlds die*. He trod the path of life with those who have long since gone to rest. Your fathers knew him; and he helped to fit those for heaven whose aged dust now sleeps in that hallowed ground. He baptised most of you, and will shortly meet those faces at the bar of God which he covered with the sacramental water.—When I have heard him talk of the events of other times, and the well known characters with whom he acted on the publick stage, before I had existence,—and saw him a-

lone amidst a younger race,—I have often contemplated him as a venerable oak which once stood in the midst of the forest:—the ruthless axe of time has laid his companions low; and now he stands alone on the open plain, and every withered leaf trembles in the blast. That trunk which seventy winters had in vain assailed, must fall at last, like the companions of his youth. He *has fallen*,—and is gathered to his fathers! He no longer stands alone in the open plain;—he is surrounded once more by the companions of his youth, and stands, we trust, transplanted and renewed among the trees in the paradise of God.

Yes, he lived to a good old age, and saw what changes the current of threescore years will make in a transitory world. In the spring of 1806, at the close of the last General Assembly that he attended, he felt a desire to visit once more the place of his nativity, which he had not seen for more than 40 years. He made an excursion to Newcastle county; and when he arrived on the ground which had often been paced over with his infant steps, he knew it not. Every thing was changed. The information of strangers was necessary to tell him that there his father lived. A cellar, half filled by time, marked the spot where he first drew

breath. He could find none that knew him, and but one aged person that ever knew the family. He requested only to be supplied with a glass from the spring that used to slake his boyish thirst, that he might say, "I have tasted that spring again;" —and this desire fulfilled, he hastily turned and left the scene forever.

On the evening of the 25th of December last, he received an injury from a fall, from which he never recovered. He went to the house of God no more. In the first stages of his illness, he said little which discovered the state of his mind, except the often repeated sentence, *It is the Lord, and he does that which is perfectly right.* In February, when the dissolution of his aged consort was manifestly approaching, and his own nature was sinking under infirmities, his younger son was taken off by a disease, so rapid in its progress that his parents, though in the neighbourhood, knew not that he was sick till they heard that he was dead. At that awful moment, I visited the father with a trembling heart, expecting to find him overwhelmed with these complicated calamities. But I found him composed and submissive to a degree that told me, I had never known this man of God before. From that time, the submission and piety of his heart shone forth

with increased loveliness ; his constitutional reserve was in a measure gone, and his conversation often breathed the tenderness and sweetness of gospel humility and comfort. On the 2d day of April, the wife of his youth closed the long scene of her sufferings, with all the interesting tokens of child-like piety. He sustained the shock, as he had done his other afflictions, with submission and patience. He had now nothing to do but to make arrangements for his own approaching dissolution. He sent an affectionate and impressive farewell to his brethren of the Presbytery ; he distributed his volumes of sermons among his children, grand-children, and relatives ; and gave directions about his funeral. I could never discover in him any solicitude about death, except an anxiety to be gone. *I die slow ; I never expected to die so slow*, he would sometimes say. One day I ventured to suggest to him a hope that he might yet be continued with us, and begged him not to despond. *I have no despondency*, said he ; *death and I have long been intimates*. To a hint that I could not do without him, he replied with paternal tenderness, *God will give you strength according to your day ; only trust in him, and he will support you under every trial*. I never discovered any impatience in him, except when he was told that he was better, and might possibly recover.

When reminded that he was going to the companions of his youth, he replied with emotion, *Yes, there is a precious company of them! O what a precious company!* When it was suggested that the God whom he had long and faithfully served, would not forsake him in old age, he answered with quickness and apparent uneasiness, *that he had no faithfulness of his own to rely on,—that a review of his life afforded him little satisfaction,—that it had been miserably polluted,—and that his only hope rested on the atonement of Christ.* He repeatedly lamented, in strong language, the imperfection of his life, and discarded every hope but that which the gospel affords. I said to him, about three weeks ago, “ You do not at any time find your prospects clouded ? ” He replied, *No, blessed be God! I have a steady hope.* Always patient, and always composed, he sometimes appeared transported with Pisgah views. A few evenings before his death, he was observed wrestling with God for his release from the flesh. While he lay in the struggles of death, I asked him whether he still enjoyed the light of God’s countenance. He lifted his hands and eyes in a way of strong affirmation. The last word which he uttered, was expressive of a desire that we should unite with him in prayer. A few minutes before he expired, he gave his hands to two of his friends as a farewell token, and expressed by

signs a wish to unite with us once more in prayer. As the supplication was making that God would release him, and receive his departing spirit, he extended both of his arms towards heaven at full length, seemingly in the transports of faith and desire. It was the last motion that he made. His hands fell and moved no more. That moment the difficulty of his respiration ceased; he appeared perfectly at rest; and in five minutes breathed forth his soul, without a struggle, into the bosom of his God. He expired 37 minutes past 7 o'clock, on Monday evening, the 20th instant, aged 73 years and 5 days.

Thus lived, and thus died Doctor Alexander Macwhorter, after having served this people in the gospel ministry 48 years.

*The memory of the just is blessed! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!\**

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\* A church has been established in this town 140 years; during which time eight ministers, besides the one now living, have been installed over it.

1. Mr. ————— Pierson, having been episcopally ordained in or near Newark, in Eng-

The aspect of Doct. Macwhorter was grave and venerable, and strongly expressive of the properties of his mind. His deportment was affectionate, paternal, and dignified; calculated to inspire respect

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land, came to this town with the first settlers, in 1667; and died about the year 1680.

2. Mr. Abraham Pierson, son of the former, was for several years the colleague of his father; after whose death he continued to be the pastor of the congregation only a few years. He was dismissed, and afterwards settled at Killingworth, in Connecticut. His name is well known as the first President of Yale-College.
3. Mr. John Prudden was settled about the year 1686, and was dismissed about the year 1699.
4. Mr. Jabez Wakeman was installed in 1701, and died in 1704.
5. Mr. Nathaniel Bowers took the charge of the congregation about the year 1706, and was dismissed about the year 1716.
6. Mr. Joseph Webb was installed Oct. 1719, and was

and dependance, and to repel the approach of presumptuous familiarity: yet in conversation he was pleasant, and often facetious. At a great remove from assumed importance and supercilious airs, which

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dismissed about the year 1737.

7. Mr. Aaron Burr was installed about the year 1738, and was dismissed in 1755, on account of the removal of the College over which he presided. President Burr was married to a daughter of the celebrated President Edwards; and was the father of Col. Aaron Burr, late Vice-President of the United States, and of Mrs. Reeve, wife of the Hon. Tappan Reeve, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court in the State of Connecticut.

8. Doct. Alexander Macwhorter was installed in the summer of 1759. He was dismissed in October, 1779; but returned, and took the charge of the congregation again; which he held till his death.

It is remarkable that all the ministers that were ever settled over this church were dismissed, except the first, and one other who died young.

never were connected with such a mind as his, he was much of a gentleman, and an uncommon instance of true dignity.

He possessed a powerful and scientific mind, with a most retentive memory. He was wise and discerning, and had an eye that could penetrate the characters of men, and look through the connexion and consequences of things. His apprehensions were not quick, but unusually just. He possessed little fancy, but a deep and solid judgment. His genius had no uncommon share of vivacity; it held a stately and even course. It had no wings; but it stood like the pillars of the earth. He never would have gathered laurels in the paths of poetry; but he would have filled with superior dignity the seat of justice. His passions, like his understanding, were strong; but ordinarily held by strong restraints. With far less imagination than intellect, he was no enthusiast in any thing. He was never sanguine; but cool, deliberate, and cautious, to a degree that approached even to timidity; inclined rather to contemplate the difficulties of an enterprise, than to calculate on success. Great as he was, he was a man of most unaffected and consummate modesty. It was impossible for a mind thus constructed to be rash. He used to say

that the *second* requisite in a minister of the gospel is *prudence*; and he possessed this virtue, I may say, almost to excess.

The furniture of his mind resembled its construction. He was more thoroughly versed in classical literature than in Belles-Lettres; and loved the Mathematicks better than Milton or Pope. He was a proficient in some of the Oriental languages. He had looked into the Syriack, had made considerable progress in the Hebrew, and was critically acquainted with the Greek and Latin. He was well furnished with theological and literary science in general. He was a firm supporter of the great doctrines of grace; as his discourses which you have heard from this sacred place, can witness; and as his body of sermons, left among you as a lasting monument of his love, sufficiently attest.

In the former part of his ministry, he was a pungent and popular preacher: and though the ardour of his addresses was necessarily abated by age, his sermons continued to be instructive, and were heard with affection by a people, who in his impaired voice still recognised the accents of a father. His preaching was solid, judicious, and often moving. It was not the transient glare of the comet;

but the strong and steady light of the sun. He regarded with sovereign contempt the pretty brilliancies and fustian declamation of those who show us how an apostle did *not* preach.

But he never appeared in his might so perfectly as in a deliberative assembly; especially when his cautious and penetrating mind had leisure to examine well the bearings of the subject. Thoroughly versed in all the forms of presbyterial business, with a skill at management rarely surpassed, he filled a great space in the judicatories of our church. His voice was listened to with profound respect, and the counsels suggested by his superior wisdom, enlightened and swayed our publick bodies.

In the services of the sanctuary, and in all his parochial labours, he added to faithfulness great method and punctuality; and, with a uniformity peculiar to himself, was always the same. He was a distinguished peace-maker; and by his skill in settling disputes, added to his other excellent management, he greatly promoted the harmony and strength of the congregation. A liberal contributor himself to all charitable designs, and possessing a happy talent to awaken the same disposition in others, he was the means of forming a ministerial

and charitable people, as well as a numerous and orthodox church. And though there are, in every place, some spirits which never can be excited by human influence to generous actions, he probably left as few of this description as can be found in any other congregation equally numerous. He was, I believe, in a great measure, the instrumental cause of the distinguished temporal and spiritual blessings which have been bestowed on the congregation, by keeping alive in them that publick and charitable spirit which God delights to honour.

In every point of view, he was a great benefactor of the congregation; and you in return loved and revered him in no common degree. The delicate respect which you paid to him in advanced age, the full support which you continued cheerfully to afford him, when his power to serve you was impaired, and even after it had totally ceased, and your anxious attentions to him in his last illness, were instances of justice and ingenuousness which you must now review with satisfaction. They were instances of justice and ingenuousness of which he himself was tenderly sensible. *I leave*, said he with tears, *the kindest and best people that ever minister had.*

Yes, you loved and revered him in no common

degree, as your countenances and conduct this day attest. But he is gone! and you will see his face no more! No more will his anxious soul weep over you and your children. You must go to him; but he will not return to you.———Yes, he is gone! He is removed from *you!*—alas! he is removed from *me!* *My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!* Oh! that I might catch his falling mantle, with a portion of his spirit, and be to you, in some degree, what he has been!

The occasion calls for a word of condolence to the bereaved *children.*

With heartfelt sympathy, my dear friends, I partake of all your sorrows. The extent of *your* calamity is not hid from me while I consider *my own.* Few there are that could have lost so much in a single friend: but instead of repining, you have reason to bless God that you had such a friend to lose. You have reason to bless God for sparing him to you so long; and yet more, that he has left you so rich a legacy in his examples and prayers. As Beza said of Calvin, and as Mather said of Flavel, *since your father is dead, life will be less sweet, and death less bitter to us.* Henceforth there will be less

to bind our hearts to earth, and more to draw them towards heaven. May the examples of your deceased father be set as beacons to direct your passage to glory. May the counsels of his love long sound in your ears; and the prayers which his quivering lips poured forth for you in the midnight hour, come up before the Lord as incense presented by the interceding Angel. Deprived of your earthly parent, seek, I entreat you, a Father in heaven who will never die. To His arms, who delights to be known as the Father of the fatherless, I affectionately commit you; and pray that you may find in Him a Parent, and an everlasting portion.

I turn now to my afflicted congregation.

The awful event which has hung this house with mourning, and covered with grief our widowed church, *ought not*, and *must not* pass off merely with a few sighs and tears. It *ought* to be, and it *must* be improved as one of those solemn dispensations of Providence which are intended to rouse a whole people from sleep, to crowd vast ideas through their minds, and to fix lasting impressions on their hearts.

This is the proper time, my beloved hearers, to

call to mind the instructions which your deceased father imparted to you ; the good examples which he set before you ; his manner of coming in and going out among you, for a long course of years ; and all the interesting intercourse which you had with him. If you would give scope to your thoughts, you might recall scenes that would awaken your tenderest affections, and truths that would render you as solemn as eternity. This is the proper time also to consider deeply the business on which God sent his servant among you ; the reception which his heavenly messages met from you ; the awful account which you must give of your improvement of them, when you shall meet your minister at the tribunal of Christ ; and the influence which his ministry will have on your happiness or misery, ten thousand ages after the funeral of this world.

Know, then, that he was sent among you as an ambassador of heaven, to offer you, in the name of his God, terms of reconciliation. He was not merely your father and friend, but your watchman,—an officer of Christ, whose commission was received from heaven, and whose ministry and its effects have been attentively noticed from the throne of the omniscient God.

How he executed this commission, God is witness; and you are witnesses against yourselves. *Wherefore, I take you to record this day that he is pure from your blood.* He opened to you the great doctrines of grace. He taught you the original fall and total depravity of man. He pressed upon you the absolute necessity of being born again, by the supernatural operation of the spirit of God on the heart. While in one hand he offered you *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, with the other he pointed the curse of a broken law against every unregenerate sinner. He confined not his labours to the pulpit; but watched those softer moments of speaking which promised him easier access to your hearts. He visited your chambers of sickness, and counselled and prayed by your beds of pain. With his paternal sympathy he soothed your griefs. While he wept for you, he wiped the tear that trembled in your eye. He warned and entreated you in private. He catechised you when you were children; and laboured, by prayers and tears, to imbue your infant minds with the love of Christ. These things he did; and these things are recorded in the rolls of heaven, to be preserved *in everlasting remembrance*, and to be exhibited on your trial at the last day.

The doctrines which he taught you he did not indeed seal with his blood; but he gave a confirmation of them in his death no less decisive. They were the truths which supported his soul in his slow approach to the shadow of death. They furnished the whole theme of his religious conversation, and his only comfort in a near view of eternity. Hume\* and Voltaire, after spending their lives in disseminating their pernicious errors, shrunk at last from their own dogmas as from hell itself, and died in the horrors of despair. But your minister, after spending 48 years in preaching the doctrines of grace, left the world, triumphantly reposing on the blessed truths which he had taught. His dying eye said to us, in language not equivocal, "support these precious doctrines, and they will support you." We saw his arms extended towards heaven, with passionate desires to depart, but five minutes before he expired. We saw, after motion had ceased, his still intelligent eye fixed with pity on a weeping child,—looking unutterable things, as though he wished to express what he discovered on the confines of the eternal world. In that precise

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\* This fact in regard to Hume is well known to the religious people of Scotland, though much address has been employed to conceal it from the world.

posture he lay, preaching all his doctrines over again from the very vestibule of heaven, until his eyes closed;—and in one minute he was gone! We had followed him so near the precincts of light, that imagination could almost see him fly and enter in! He had looked back and spoken to us with his eyes, so near the heavenly gate, that we seemed almost to hear his voice, the next moment, among the choir of the redeemed! We seemed almost to see the companions of his youth pressing forward to embrace and welcome him to glory; and to hear their loud congratulations! Then it was that I felt the reality of that separate state of conscious being of which he had so often spoken. “There flies that soul,” said I, “which but just now spoke out of those swimming eyes! Yonder is my father, whose accents have been so familiar to me, and with whom I went *to the house of God in company!*”

Yes, while his body lies insensible before you, his soul still lives in a conscious state.—He loved you much; and in the abodes of bliss will, I doubt not, often think of you. Perhaps he may sometimes pass this way, to mark how you improve the instructions which he left among you, and whether you are coming after him to glory. I

have a strong persuasion that his former family and flock will not be wholly excluded from his present cares. Perhaps he will sometimes visit our *assemblies*, to hear those truths repeated which he so often preached, and to observe their effects on you. Perhaps he may *now* be present!—Sainted Spirit! hast thou come to witness our griefs? Do I see thee hovering over our assembly? O! if thou wouldst speak to us now, thy doctrines would no longer be unheeded!———Alas! he speaks no more! His ministry among us is then forever closed, and sealed up to the judgment of the great day. Nothing can be added to it, or taken from it. He has done what he had to do, and has returned to Him that sent him.——But his ministry has not done with *us*. Think not, that, except tears and tender remembrance, you have nothing more to do with your deceased pastor. As the Lord liveth, you shall meet him again. When the dissolving heavens shall open, and disclose the Son of man, coming in clouds to judge the world, your father, we trust, will be in His glorious train. And when the convulsions of that day shall burst the dormitories of a thousand generations, his sleeping body will rise! Then, he who baptised you,—he who catechised you,—he who warned and wept over you,——shall stand with you in judgment. Then,

all the scenes which have passed between you and him shall be examined, and an account taken how you improved his ministry in general, and each sermon in particular. Every hour that you sat under the sound of his voice, shall be found to have been big with life or death. The effects of improving or resisting his ministry, shall be felt through every hour and moment of eternity!— Oh! did you consider this while your minister lived? Did you consider this while his agitated soul was pleading over you? Did you consider this while you were bearing his clay-cold body to the house of God? Did you consider, that you were attending one who must be a witness, either for or against you, in the day that shall decide the destinies of all men, and whose ministry must either help you to heaven, or sink you deeper in hell? —I see some of you tremble. But the half has not been told you. If a review of his ministry be so overwhelming at present, what will it be in the day of judgment! *If in the land of peace, wherein you trust, it has wearied you, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan?*

My dear hearers, I ask each of you what account your translated pastor has already given of you in heaven? What *had he* to relate? What im-

provement have you in fact made of his ministry? Have you embraced the Lord Jesus Christ through his instrumentality? Or have you rejected all his earnest entreaties? I suppose that the greater part of those who hear me, are either his spiritual children, or they who for years have slighted his invitations.

You who are his spiritual children, have lost a father indeed, and have good reason to remember him more than any other created being. Your case awakens peculiar compassion; for you have lost, (so to speak,) *your all*, and can never see his like again. *For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus he hath begotten you through the gospel.* And though all other men should forget him, by *you* he will surely be had *in everlasting remembrance*. Yet let your hearts be cheered with a prospect of enjoying a more perfect union with him in a better world. *The seals of his ministry* you are, and are reserved to be *his crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ*. And I doubt not, that after all earthly ties shall have ceased, between you and him will subsist a special and most tender union forever. You shall find all his predictions of good fulfilled; and when your happy souls shall feel their accomplishment,

“ high in salvation and the realms of bliss,” *then shall you know*, to your everlasting joy, *that a prophet has been among you.*—*Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.*

Others, I fear, there are, who, though he was to them *as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice*, have never accepted the message which he brought them from God. Content with loving the man, and weeping perhaps under his affectionate sermons, they have never repented of their sins, nor bowed to the sceptre of Christ. Such will yet know, alas! when it is too late, that more than a soother of their ear, *that a prophet of the Lord has been among them.* When they shall feel the curse which he denounced, forever fastened on their souls,—when every sermon which he preached shall be as a thunderbolt, riving the nerves of their hearts,—then shall they know, to their eternal confusion, *that a prophet has been among them.* In the regions of hell, equally as in heaven, our father and his ministry shall be had *in everlasting remembrance.* Oh! how will they look back to the days when they sat under the melting voice of their minister! —to seasons when tears of compassion choked his words, as he entreated them to have compassion on themselves! —“Ten thousand worlds,” they

will cry, “for one more sermon, for one more prayer, of our ancient minister!”——but it will be too late.

Are there not some in this assembly, who have lived ten, twenty, or thirty years under his ministry, who are yet unreconciled to God? Are there not some whom he baptised more than forty years ago, who still remain aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel? Are there not some who can remember the day of his instalment; who have sat under his calls during the whole course of his ministry; and instead of growing up for heaven, have grown grey in sin, and are now almost ripe for judgment? Almighty God! pierce their hearts with conviction, ere thou smite them with thy curse!

All those who remain uninterested in the blessings of the gospel, at the close of our father’s ministry, I adjure, in the name of God, to make a solemn pause. Pause, I beseech you, at this awful crisis. Your minister is gone; and you are not the better for him! He came on God’s errand, he delivered his message, he has done his work, and returned; and *you have rejected his ministry! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved!* ——Is there then no hope? Yes, blessed be God! one hope remains: set your anxious minds

to recollect the doctrines which he taught, and the duties which he inculcated; and hasten to believe the one, and practise the other. O! yield, for once, to the voice of anxious friendship! Or, if the accents of your *living* pastor be unheeded, listen, I conjure you, to that reverend voice which seems to issue from the eternal world,—from a Soul which now has seen the amazing rewards or torments in reserve for you. Methinks I hear him cry, “O my poor, dear people! whom I laboured so long to save; do not let my ministry crush you to the lowest hell!” Heard you not that voice?—And *can* you resist it? No, you *cannot*,—you *must not*,—you *shall not*, if prayers or tears can move you. I will deluge you with my griefs; I will kneel and clasp your feet. By the shades of your pious fathers, who also stretch forth their hands to you,—by the bowels of Christ,—hear that voice from heaven, which on earth you disregarded! Ye who have slumbered away an inestimable season, never to be recalled,—days that are now “with the years beyond the flood,”—awake! At this late hour, arise to improve his ministry: that when the radiant Saint shall bend his eye toward the earth, to see whether the seed, sown in this beloved garden, shoots, he may have the joy to see it springing up in your hearts, and not the grief, (if grief could be in hea-

ven,) to discover that his labours will prove an eternal curse to those whom he loved. Eternal Mercy! grant that thy servant, like another Sampson, may do more execution in his death, than in his life!

And now, farewell, thou man of God! my father! my friend! Sweet be thy sleep in the tomb! and kind be thy thoughts of us in heaven! Thou hast left me alone, and I am solitary and weak.——  
 Yes, I am weak and solitary, O my friends! Crushed by the weight of so great a charge, I cannot lift up myself. I need and entreat your prayers. I need your candour, your sympathy, your counsel, and your support. Entreat God for me, that I may sustain the weighty charge with prudence, fidelity, and success;—that, like David, I may go forth, though it be only with a sling and a stone, in the name of the God of the armies of Israel. It comforts me to remember the prayer which Solomon offered in his distress, when left alone by his father to manage the affairs of Israel. He complained that he was as weak and unskilful as a little child. But he asked wisdom of God, and the Lord gave it to him. I will remember this; and I will also press to my bosom the paternal words of my dear departed friend: *God will give you strength according to your day:*

*only trust in Him, and He will support you under every trial. By the happy accomplishment of this tender prediction, may I also find that a prophet has been among us. Grant it, O my God! through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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