

THE DEATH OF THE GOOD MAN PRE-
CIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED AT PISGAH.

Occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Brown, late pastor
of New Providence congregation, Virginia.

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BY THE REV. JAMES BLYTHE.   
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*The death of the Good Man precious in the sight
of God.*

A

S E R M O N.

PSALM 115. 15.

*Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his
Saints.*



DEATH is an event, which every rational being contemplates with awe. The king upon the throne and his subject, the sage philosopher and the ignorant savage, the young and the old, stand equally in dread of that power, by which they are all to be laid undistinguished in the grave. Nor is this general concern, about dying at all surprising or irrational. This is the event which terminates all our earthly prospects, and ushers us into a state of existence untried by any of the living. Is it not rather surprising that a circumstance pregnant with so many important consequences; and which we know is inevitable, should be so imperfectly realized? That an enemy with whom we are certain to encounter, and who if he is met without the city of refuge will not only be inexorable but victorious, should be so little guarded against? Nothing but the infatuation of sin, with which human nature is so deeply infected, can explain the absurd conduct of mankind respecting this matter.

Where shall we find an antidote against death, or how prepare to meet our common foe? Will

that *dignity of character*, that noble *firmness of mind*, of which so many talk so much, enable us to stand unappalled when we approach the shady valley? Will that virtue which has for its source human reason, and for its object human happiness, arm us against the king of terrors, who, as on an eagle's wing is hastening to meet us? No my dear friends, nothing but a conviction that we are in covenant with God, and that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;" can enable a man in his right reason to die contented.

Perhaps there never lived a man who more realized the comfort to be derived from a constant dependence upon God than David, the author of our text. He was once a wanderer pursued by the malice of Saul, and hunted like a partridge on the mountains; then a king: again by the rebellion of his son Absalom, exiled from Jerusalem, from his throne, and from the house of his God; then again firmly reinstated in his sovereignty. In all those vicissitudes he found "God a very present help in time of need." And in the prospect of death, he could say, "Though I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Miserable indeed must that man be, who, when he comes to die, is altogether destitute of the comfort which arises from a reliance upon God his maker. This comfort belongs exclusively to the good man. None but a saint of the Lord can realize the consolation which my text affords.

It is worthy of notice that the sacred scriptures abound with promises and doctrines calculated to console the mind of a christian, under the prospect of death. It is proper that it should be so, and for this obvious reason---Other calamities

we may never meet with, innumerable evils which fall to the lot of humanity we may avoid, but *this* is a trial we must all endure, the path to the grave is one, we must all travel. This consideration sets in a very conspicuous point of light, the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father, who in his holy word has so well fortified our minds against that which is not only certain but decisive.

Our text like most other parts of sacred scripture, conveys much useful instruction, in a few plain and simple words. Did these words need any comment, they have received it from our Savior, when he assured his disciples, "That not a hair of their head should fall to the ground without the notice of their heavenly Father," Or from the apostle John who says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, they do rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." These passages unite in holding forth to us the care which God exercises towards his children, not only whilst they live, but when they die.

But it is the disciple of Christ who is thus carefully guarded; the saints of the Lord, whose death is precious in his sight. Therefore, if we would derive comfort to our souls from this portion of scripture, we must rightly understand this *character*...know what *does*, and what *does not* belong to it.

A good man, or a saint of the Lord, is one *whose heart has been renewed by divine grace.*

In vain do we lay claim to the goodness of the gospel, to the faintship spoken of by the Psalmist, while we are yet in our sins, and our hearts unrenewed by the grace of God. "For they who are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they who are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but

to be spiritually minded is life and peace ; because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. So then they who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Whatever may be our pretensions, can we really deem ourselves good men while we entertain sentiments inimical to that being, whose character is infinitely perfect ; or in any way oppose that government, which is established in righteousness and truth ; or neglect to yield the most unreserved and cheerful obedience to that law which is holy, just and good ? Can we expect to please God, “ who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,” while our hearts are like a cage of unclean birds or a foul sepulchre ?

In our attempt to delineate the character of a good man, we have mentioned the renovating influences of the divine spirit first, because we are convinced, the goodness which has its origin in any thing inferior to this, will be “ like a morning cloud, and the early dew which goeth away.” Our Lord has inculcated this doctrine, in very express terms, in his celebrated interview with Nicodemus, “ verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And lest we should arrogate to ourselves something in this important change, which does not belong to us, but is the particular work of God ; the apostle has assured us, “ That by grace are we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.” And the same apostle calls Jesus Christ the “ author and finisher of our faith.”

By some in our day, we are told much about the native goodness of the human heart ; and the power which man possesses, independent of the

operations of the divine spirit, to work faith in his own heart... correct his vices and live a holy life. This appears to us to be sapping the foundation of the gospel. The man who attempts to become good in this way, is, we think, engaged in an enterprise as fruitless as his, who would hope to render healthful the poisonous fountain, by correcting some of the noxious qualities of the stream; or his who should expect to erect a permanent building upon the sand.

It is the joy and consolation of the good man's heart, to feel himself entirely indebted to the grace of God, for the salvation of his soul. When he is disposed to take his proper place in the dust at the foot of the divine throne, confessing that he is as an unclean thing "and all his righteousnesses are 'as filthy rags.'"--- To say, O Lord righteousness belongeth unto thee, unto us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."

Many erroneous notions respecting truth, and many wrong conclusions relative to our own characters, arise from viewing those subjects presented to our minds too much in the gross, and not giving ourselves the trouble to contemplate truth and facts in the detail. That we may avoid this error, let us minutely observe the christian in the hand of this divine agent, to whose sacred influence we have ascribed every thing that is *really* good in man.

Faith is the earliest and noblest work of the divine spirit wrought in the hearts of the saints of the Lord.

When the mind of the awakened sinner is particularly engaged in contemplating the divine Redeemer, faith may be defined: *A saving grace wrought in the soul by the spirit of God, whereby*

we receive Christ as he is revealed in the gospel, to be our prophet, priest and king. This begets an entire trust in, and reliance upon him, and his righteousness alone for justification, and eternal salvation. When the mind is engaged in viewing that rest which God has prepared for his own people; faith may be called, *The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* When the effects of faith are spoken of in scripture, it is called that, *living principle, which purifies the heart and works by love.*

The faith of the gospel has Jesus christ, to the exclusion of every thing else for its object. To the carnal mind indeed the savior appears "as a root out of a dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness." To such a mind the christian's heaven is a very undesirable place, because a place of perfect holiness. But the best feelings of the good man's heart are perfectly in unison with those of the spouse, when she exclaims "Yea he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend O daughters of Jerusalem." Or with the Psalmist "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in thee."

There is no point of view in which the eye of faith contemplates the Redeemer, in which he does not appear infinitely amiable, and worthy of the most entire confidence. When the real christian views Jesus as the babe of Bethlehem, clothed in swaddling bands, and lying in a manger, he adores this infant of days—as the incarnate mystery—

God manifested in the flesh. He extols the wisdom of God, and the condescension of the Savior, and is disposed to join with the multitude of the heavenly hosts, in praising God and saying, "glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men." Nor is he ashamed, whatever a wicked world may say, or vain philosophy may suggest, to pay divine honor to him who was once "clothed in flesh and dwelt among us," because he believes him to be "the wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the prince of peace."

Again, when the good man beholds in his Savior's character, and exemplified throughout the whole of his life, the strictest justice...the most unparalleled benevolence...the most sacred attachment to truth; together with the utmost fidelity in the discharge of all the arduous duties he was called to perform as Mediator of the new covenant: and also views his Savior who did no sin, but always went about doing good; enduring the keenest reproaches, and the most malicious persecutions, with the greatest patience...weeping floods of undisssembled sorrow over Jerusalem, that devoted city, which thirsted for his innocent blood; his heart is filled with astonishment and drawn out in love, he wishes always to "behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Had we time to take a minute view of the life and character of our adorable Redeemer during the whole of his humiliation, he would appear a pattern suitable for our imitation, a being worthy of our highest worship, and an object upon which our faith may rest with the utmost confidence. The cross, even the cross, which has so often been "to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek

“foolshines,” when contemplated by the eye of faith, loses all its scandal, and its shame. Here the good man sees, that “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” The harmony and glory of the divine attributes displayed in the sufferings of Christ, so powerfully attract his heart, that he is determined to “glory in nothing save the cross of Christ.” When the sincere disciple of Christ remembers that he was wounded for our transgressions; and bruised for our iniquities, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, his heart dissolves in genuine sorrow, and he mourns that by his sins he has pierced the Lord of glory. But his lips are filled with praises, and his soul with joy, when he recollects, “that by his stripes we are healed,” and believes “that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins.”

In fine, whether the real christian contemplates his divine Master as the sufferer, humbled to the grave, or the risen conqueror...whether as the devout suppliant upon the cold mountains, or the prevalent advocate in the court of heaven...whether as the benevolent friend of the helpless and distressed, or as the prophet, the priest or the king; still he embraces him as the portion of his soul, the pattern of his life, and the author of his hope. Under these enrapturing views, he is humbly thankful, that he has, by the grace of God, been made partaker of that faith which has embraced Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel,—“which purifies the heart and works by love.”

Another grace which characterises the good man is *Repentance*.

Repentance proceeds from faith as necessarily as the stream does from the fountain. The same connexion which exists between the tree and the fruit, exists between faith and repentance.

We may define repentance by saying, *It is that regret which arises in a person, after having done something which he ought not to have done.*

Evangelical repentance has for its object, more immediately, the defiling nature of sin.

Altho' the penalty of the divine law awakens the apprehensions of the true penitent, yet it is not from this source principally that true repentance flows. Godly sorrow arises from a realising sense of the holiness of the divine character, against which we have offended...the matchless love of the compassionate Savior, which, notwithstanding it was so great, could not restrain our wicked hearts from iniquity. When the true penitent views, by faith, the glory of God in the face of Jesus, and has an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ to his soul, then and not till then, does his heart dissolve in genuine sorrow. David seems to have been a real penitent, when in the 51 Psalm, he exclaims, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." And the apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Many, we are afraid, who call themselves christians, conceive that when their first awakenings for sin are over, and their fears have subsided, they have nothing more to do with the exercise of repentance. Such, we are ready to conclude, are greatly mistaken. Repentance, we have already intimated, proceeds from just apprehensions of the divine character, particularly as displayed in the face of Jesus Christ; and surely renewed and increased discoveries of this character, must increase the humility, and renew the repentings of the good man. Just as we loath a deformed object when we see it by the imperfect glimmerings of twilight, but turn away from it with the most perfect disgust

when beheld by the light of noonday. Under the influence of these feelings, holy Job could say, "I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Hence it appears that as the christian advances in his heavenly course, so in proportion does his hatred of sin, his humility, and repentance increase.

These ideas of God which have entered by the hearing of the ear alone, not unfrequently produce that repentance which needeth to be repented of. But when Christ is beheld by the eye of faith, "when we look upon him whom we have pierced, we mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son; and are in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his first born."

I think we may venture to say, there is no man who lives a holy life, who does not also live much in the exercise of repentance. There is a sacred pleasure which arises from the exercise of this grace. Nor is this pleasure at all enthusiastic or irrational. A proper sense of his sins places the good man just where he ought to be. It lays him in the dust at the foot of the divine throne; and surely it is highly rational we should take our proper place in the creation of God. The real penitent is always the subject of exalted apprehensions of God, and that man is not only the humblest, but also the happiest, who has the most suitable conceptions of his Maker. Who from his heart is disposed to cry out, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, who was and is, and is to come." Who in every part of divine worship is enquiring; "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God."

Were the convinced sinner whose heart is overwhelmed with a sense of his guilt, to trust to himself only, despair must certainly ensue. But

when he looks to the Mediator of the new covenant, and believes that God can be just and the justifier of every one who believeth on Jesus Christ his fearful apprehensions subside, and his mourning is turned into joy. He anticipates that place where all sorrow and sighing shall be done away, when he shall have safely arrived at that haven where the storms of sin and temptation shall never blow.

Another effect of the operations of divine grace upon the human heart, which is truly characteristic of the good man, is *love*.

Our Savior says, "love is the fulfilling of the whole law." This christian grace seems very easily to divide itself into two branches---Love to God our Maker, and love to our fellow men.

Love is defined, *as the natural attraction of the soul towards any object that is conceived to be good.* Love to God is a gracious principle, or habit wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, which inclines us to delight in, esteem, and earnestly desire to enjoy an interest in God's favor, and communion with him, as our chief good. Three things appear to me to be implied in love to God--- *A sacred reverence for his divine character--- a cheerful and universal obedience to his holy law---and a thankful and daily acknowledgment of his great mercies, particularly the riches of his grace to our souls in Christ Jesus.*

The character of God, so far as it is discovered by the christian, appears infinitely perfect and holy; and an object worthy of his supreme love and esteem. Even the justice of God, that awful part of the divine nature, which strikes terror to the heart of the wicked, is a subject, upon which the mind of the good man dwells with pleasure and delight. He contemplates his God as the moral go-

vernor of the universe. He not only believes that "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and can not look upon iniquity:" but he also rejoices that this is his character---That in the adorable dispensation of his justice and grace, God has designed a state of existence where virtue and vice shall no more be confounded as they are in this life---where the blessed advocates of the one, and the guilty abettors of the other, shall be as distinctly marked as these things are distinct in their nature.

There is no part of the divine administration which exhibits all the perfections of God, in so conspicuous, and some of them in so awful a point of view as the transactions of the cross. It is here the justice of God assumes its most stern and inflexible aspect. Yet at the foot of the cross, the real believer loves to sit, and contemplate *his God* in that light which the dreadful sufferings of Christ reflects upon his character.

The prophet Zechariah is commissioned to utter a dreadful threatening, when he says, "Awake O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." This threatening was executed in that gloomy hour, when Christ hung upon the cross, and cried out in the anguish of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." In all this scene of suffering, the good man sees nothing unworthy of God---nothing which indicates the disposition of an implacable tyrant, who delights in punishment and misery. He contemplates God, in the whole of this transaction, as the great lawgiver, sitting at the head of the intelligent universe, and calmly demanding from our substitute, only that which the honor of his law required, and the good of the whole family in heaven and upon earth rendere

indispensable. He believes that in consequence of this manifestation of the divine displeasure against sin "God can be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." Let those who make a mock at sin, often reflect upon this dreadful display of God's justice, and cease to fret themselves against the government of God, and the gospel of Christ. Let them give over their vain attempts to blend in one undistinguished mass, the actions of men.—To take from virtue all its lustre, and screen from public view all the deformity of vice. When tempted to sin, before they comply, let them cast a look to Mount Calvary, and learn what sin is, and what the justice of God means. Let the good man learn more and more, to adore the justice of God; believing that the wisdom which has brought so much good out of that most wonderful display of divine justice made upon the cross, will continue to produce the greatest good to the intelligent universe even by the eternal display of this attribute, in the condemnation of the wicked.

It would be a pleasant and easy task, had we time to show how the heart of the good man, derives pleasure from the contemplation of all the divine perfections. We have selected the justice of God merely as an example.

We also said love to God implied a *cheerful and universal obedience to the divine law*. Says Jesus, "He who hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is who loveth me." Obedience is the great test of love. It is by this test that the christian tries his own state, and he is perfectly willing that the world should judge of him by the same criterion. In fact there appears to me to be no evidence of a gracious state comparable to this.

Supposed revelations and impulses may be roductive of very strong confidence; they may

also inflate the mind of the deceived fanatic with spiritual pride and presumption, but never can of themselves lay the solid foundation of religious comfort, or trust in God. Religious affections are very capable of being counterfeited. It is hard frequently to distinguish the fallies of a warm and ardent zeal for God and his service, from the rant of enthusiasm or hypocritical madnets. But a uniform, humble and devout walk with God, speaks a language which cannot be misunderstood, or long counterfeited. I am sufficiently apprised, that there is great need to distinguish the principle from whence our obedience proceeds. Hypocrisy is hateful, to every upright mind, and must be infinitely odious to a righteous and holy God. It is the heart God requires in his service, and that obedience which is not hearty cannot be acceptable.

There is nothing respecting which we ought to examine ourselves more frequently, or with greater strictness, than the motives we have in the performance of this, or that religious duty. Whatever is done to be seen of men, cannot be pleasing to God. That unhappy man who utters one sigh, or performs one action to call the notice of his fellow worshippers, to feed their prejudices or flatter their weakneses, is walking upon the verge of a dangerous precipice, and setting up in his heart a hateful rival to Almighty God. O my friends let each of us remember what God has spoken by the mouth of Isaiah, saying, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." We hear God complaining of his ancient people, by the same prophet, in the following remarkable words: "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts

“ of men ; therefore I will proceed to do a marvellous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

The hypocrite having reasoned upon the subject, and made his calculations, concludes it is best to obey the divine law, lest he should incur its penalty. The good man obeys from the choice of his heart. The hypocrite desires conformity to God's law, but he desires this, just as a sick man desires medicine, not because it is agreeable, but because it is necessary. The Christian desires holiness, just as a healthy man desires food, independent of all rational deduction, and chiefly for the relish or taste he has for it.

But again the obedience of the good man is *universal*. It extends to every precept of the divine law. He can say with David, “ Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments.”

It is no unusual thing to see many in the world, lay great stress upon some of the commandments of God while they almost totally neglect others. “ Straining at a gnat and swallowing a Camel, Tithing mint and anise and cummin, and omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.” We will not unfrequently see such persons, apparently much engaged for the promotion of the meek, humble, and peaceable religion of Christ, while wrath and envy and malice sit brooding at their hearts, disturbing their midnight hours, and sometimes appearing like poison upon their tongues. Whereas the Good man's province, is to rule well his own heart. He is anxious to keep his heart with all diligence, “ Knowing that thence are the issues of life.” In his daily deportment are seen the fruits of the spirit “ Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness,

‘ness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance.’
 ‘He believes, that against such there is no law;
 ‘and that they who are Christ’s have crucified the
 ‘flesh with the affections and lusts.’

The good man’s obedience to the law of God is not only *universal*, it is also *uniform*.

Whether we consider ourselves as men or as christians, nothing is of more consequence, than uniformity of character. To be one while as a flaming torch, then as a frozen mountain—now a strong advocate for this, and then for that doctrine, has often been characteristic of weak good men, but also much more frequently has characterized the deluded fanatic or deceived enthusiast. With David the good man sayeth “My heart is fixed, O God my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.” And again; “A good man sheweth favor, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion, surely he will not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord; his heart is established he shall not be afraid.”

Again, we said love to God manifested itself in a *constant and thankful acknowledgment* of all his mercies, but particularly his mercies to a lost world in Christ Jesus.

All the bounties of divine providence, the christian receives with a grateful heart, and uses them with temperance and moderation. But the grace and love of the Gospel, enkindles all his soul, and he is often crying out with holy rapture. “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

Is he called to advocate religion in public, and to persuade men to be reconciled to God thro’ Christ? The love of the Gospel is one of his most frequent and most powerful arguments. With ra-

tional and scriptural representations, on these subjects, he endeavors to engage the affections, and conquer the hearts of his fellow men.

Another very important branch of the christian's duty, consists in conducting in a proper manner towards his fellow men.

Many professed christians act, as though they thought religion, had much less to do in regulating their conduct to one another, than towards their Maker; and that if they abound in acts of devotion towards God, their fellow men ought to overlook small improprieties in their conduct towards them. Such persons have certainly greatly mistaken the nature and design of the gospel. The real reason, I apprehend, why this fatal mistake so frequently occurs, is, because it is much easier to pray an hour, than to bridle our tongues, when the wickedness of our hearts may be urging us to a breach of the laws of christian charity—Much easier to spend a day in fasting and prayer, than to do an act of justice, or declare the truth, at the expense of our worldly interest. Frequently the performance of *that* duty may feed our vanity and gratify our pride, while the performance of *this* may counteract those pursuits upon the success of which our hearts are very much fixed.

Love to our fellow men embraces in it, the faithful performance of all the duties of social life.

While many content themselves with saying fine things in praise of mercy and justice and truth, the good man loves mercy, does justly, and walks humbly with his God. “He walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth with his heart.” He is no less fearful of uttering an untruth, doing an unjust action, or maliciously slandering his neighbor; than he would

be of taking God's holy name in vain, or neglecting to perform any of those duties which arise immediately out of his relation to God.

There are no pursuits of human life where all the energies of the mind ought to be so much engaged, as in the affairs of religion. The subjects, about which religion is concerned, are all of them of the most exalted and interesting kind. Indifference here, is therefore, the greatest madness. Nor did we ever see any society or individual too much engaged about the momentous concerns of another life. Still, it is to be feared that much of the religious zeal in the world, has for its object nothing better than the augmentation of a particular party, or the extension of personal influence. But the zeal and benevolence of the good man is not confined to any personal concern, or particular sect.... The human family is its object, and the happiness of the whole its aim. Enmity itself, although it may check, cannot stop the peaceful current of benevolent affections which flows from a gracious heart.

No precept of the gospel is more congenial with the spirit of Christ, than that which commands us to love our enemies. This is a command obligatory upon all mankind. As we are all by nature children of wrath; hateful and hating one another; there are few of us who have not enemies, and therefore but few who are not called to the exercise of this difficult duty. None but the true christian can perform this duty aright, and consequently none but he can rightly estimate its excellency, or know the satisfaction its exercise affords.

The Apostle Paul mentions another form which love to our fellow men, not infrequently, assumes, and has enjoined it as a duty. He has commanded the Corinthians "to rejoice with them

“ who do rejoice, and to weep with them who weep.” It is no very difficult task for most people to sympathise with their fellow men in distress. There are few hearts, we presume, so callous as not to be touched with the artless tale of woe—in which there is not some cord which vibrates to the voice of real sorrow. But sincerely to rejoice in the prosperity of one another, is not so easy. We are too apt to think that the lustre and honor of our neighbor, casts a shade upon us: and envy, that child of hell, frequently occupies the human breast, and sometimes may take up a temporary residence, even in the bosom of a good man.

Finally, the christian in all his conduct, whether towards God, or his fellow men, endeavors to take Christ as his example. How happy must that man be, whose heart is thus formed by divine grace... Whose life is a standing testimony to the truth and purity of those doctrines, he professes to have embraced.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of such a man.

This reminds us, my dear friends, that the object of our convening to day, was not only to preach, and hear the gospel, but also to pay our last honors to one of the saints of the Lord.

The thoughts we have just been presenting to your view strongly apply to the occasion of my addressing you at this time; the death of that venerable man of God, whose remains have been so lately interred among us, and whose memory is so deservedly dear to us all.

It cannot have escaped the notice of any of you who have had the happiness of being personally acquainted with this pious and good man, that in the character we have just now been drawing of a saint of the Lord, we have had him in our eye, in many of the remarks, and our task has been little else, than to delineate his principles and conduct.

Early instructed in the doctrines of our holy religion, and in the most essential parts of literature, he devoted himself exclusively to the work of the ministry. Unambitious of the honors and preferments of this life, his greatest ambition was to be useful as a preacher of the gospel, and to exhibit to the world the pattern of a true Apostle.

He received the rudiments of his education in Ireland, his native country, and graduated at Jersey College, then under the presidency of the Rev. Aaron Burr. He studied divinity under the direction of the Rev. Samuel Blair, for whose character he always entertained the most profound respect. He settled at New Providence in Virginia, and continued unrivalled in the affections of a numerous and respectable congregation, in which he labored upwards of forty years.

In this situation his attention was directed to every object which could either inform or civilize the inhabitants of that frontier; or which more immediately arose out of the duties of his office as a minister of Christ. His house was always open for the reception of those who were enquiring what they should do to be saved. And not unfrequently were the calls of this kind so numerous, as to demand much of his time from his study; in which it was his wish always to spend a considerable portion of every day. But the demands of the enquiring soul were never unattended to by him, however low the rank or station of the person might be; and I have the happiness to recall to the recollection of some * who hear me this day, the

* Many persons who are members of Pisgah church, and were present at the delivery of this discourse; were formerly members of Mr. Brown's congregation in Virginia. And it is very remarkable that many of the most respectable members of the churches in Kentucky, were trained to piety and virtue under the immediate care of this useful and good man.

affectionate, wise and salutary instructions they have received from him during these private interviews.

Having the advantage of a good education himself, he always took a lively interest in the promotion of literature; and in a grammar school which he established near his own house, laid the foundation of Washington College, Virg.

He was not only a promoter of vital piety, a teacher of sound morality, and a warm friend to learning, but he also felt that true patriotism, which must always warm every virtuous bosom. Accordingly when the American revolution commenced, he took a decided part in favor of liberty; and though he was firmly convinced, that the pulpit ought never to be prostituted to the promotion of political parties; yet upon this grand occasion, he did not think it beneath him, often, by his discourses, to animate his countrymen, to resist the claims of unlawful power.

During the annual visitations of his congregation, it was his constant practice to examine the youth, not only for the purposes of instructing them in the great doctrines of our holy religion, but also to discover the latent seeds of genius; and no degree of poverty in the parents would be taken as an apology for withholding, from such youths as were promising, the benefits of a regular education. In this way many shining characters in Virginia were brought into notice, from the abodes of obscurity and ignorance.

In his congregation even slaves felt the effects of his unbounded benevolence, and were taught the principles of sound morality and religion.

As a preacher of the gospel, few men were so indefatigable, or more successful. Having a heart warmed with pure and rational devotion, and a life formed upon the pattern of his divine Lord, he stood forth in the cause of his Master, with a

mixture of meekness and boldness, highly descriptive of the faithful Apostle and the good man.

The love of the gospel was his darling theme. He felt the force of this love himself, and was truly anxious that all mankind should feel it too.

While his strength of body remained, his labors were unremitting; nor were they confined to the church of which he so long had the charge. In the adjoining country there are at this day many flourishing churches, which owe their origin to his fatherly care and fostering friendship.

I cannot, my beloved friends, forbear upon this occasion, reminding you that we in this quarter of the vineyard were blessed with some of the last labors of this venerable man. It was evident he was but the remains of what he once was: but how cheerfully were these remains devoted to our welfare, and the service of his God. Shall we ever forget with what earnestness he besought us to be reconciled to God through Christ, while the tears bedewed his ancient cheeks, and his heart bled for sinners.

But let us hasten to contemplate this man of God, in his more retired character, that we may grow wise by his precept and be encouraged by his example.

As the husband, parent, master and friend, he was exceeded by none, and equalled by few. It was a favorite opinion, with him, that much of our holy religion consisted in the punctual and faithful discharge of the relative duties of life. Accordingly in the discharge of them all, we find him very conscientious and uncommonly punctual.

That a good man should love his family,---that the warmest wish of the christian's heart should be to form his children to the practice of virtue and piety---That such a man should be a steady and

faithful friend, it may be thought is not extraordinary; but that a man should act a consistent and proper part in the most trying circumstances, when called to the exercise of charity, forbearance and forgiveness, is not so common nor so easy. Our venerable friend has left behind him an example in these circumstances, worthy of the imitation of us all. For upon his tongue, and in his heart, "was the law of kindness." He recollected the example of Christ, "who also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judged righteously." In all these circumstances it seemed to be a favorite maxim with him, "To overcome evil with good."

Finally having supported the most unblemished character, and devoted a long life to the promotion of virtue, and the extension of the gospel, he fell asleep in an advanced age. "Precious in the sight of the Lord was the death of this saint."

Permit me my friends, before we conclude this address, to suggest a consideration or two, calculated to reconcile us to death, and increase our confidence in the declaration of our text, That, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

This part of the subject is highly necessary, because we must all die, as well as our venerable friend, to whom we have just bid a final adieu.

None but a good man can possibly be reconciled to death; but the gospel presents to the mind of such a one, considerations which cannot fail to reconcile him to this event if they are realized.

The scriptures every where represent the present as a state of trial. Surely we ought to be wil-

ling to be dismissed from our probationary state, if we have acted our part well.

But this is not only a state of trial, it is also a state of great misery. Where is the cheek that is not furrowed with tears? the heart that has not often been torn with anguish? Nor are the best of men exempted from the calamities of human life. "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him—all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." Although worldly prosperity should attend the good man, and his cup should overflow; yet often when he casts his eyes abroad in the world he has the feelings of the pious Jeremiah, and is constrained to adopt his language. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

Why should we then be so fondly attached to a state of things, thus full of uncertainty and sorrow? Who ever preferred the solitary desert, where every step was beset with thorns, and every hour filled up with dangers and difficulty, to the social city, where plenty and peace and joy abound? No one ever saw the Canaan above with an unclouded eye, who regretted that he was come to the bank of Jordan.

Again, the recollection of that rest which is provided for the people of God, should completely reconcile our mind to that event, which closes up every avenue by which sin and wretchedness have been accustomed to enter; and opens to us the gates of heaven.

Respecting a future state the word of God gives us the only certain information, and furnishes the only solid foundation of hope. How different, the dying language of the wisest ancient philosopher,

or the most confirmed modern infidel, from that made use of by the apostle Paul, when contemplating death in the light which is cast upon this gloomy subject by the doctrines of the gospel. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword; nay in all these we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And the pious Job under the most pressing afflictions could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold him, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me."

To the Old Testament saints, God was a strange God, if we compare the imperfect knowledge, which they had of him, with the fuller manifestation of himself, with which the world has since been favored. If that imperfect degree of knowledge was sufficient to inspire Job with this strong confidence, how much firmer ground of hope have we who are acquainted with Christ and his apostles?

When we are under bondage through fear of death, let us visit the tomb where once our Lord lay; and hear the Angel declare, "he is not here; he is risen as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay."

Did the children of Israel not hesitate to go straight forward into the sea, at the command of a God, of whose power and veracity the world had

as yet but few proofs, and shall we be afraid to commit our bodies to the grave, having the example of Christ, and in addition to his example, his promise, that he will raise them up at the last day? I know of no consideration, better calculated to console those "who through fear of death, are all their lives subject to bondage;" than fully to realize the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord. A strong faith on this subject will enable the dying christian to cry out "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens."

In a word, the scriptures every where abound with doctrines and promises of this kind. "Behold," says the Apostle Paul, "I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trump shall sound) and the dead shall be raised, incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So then, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass, that saying which is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord." Amen.