



DR. BUIST'S  
DISCOURSE,  
*ON THE DEATH OF THE*  
REVEREND  
J. MALCOMSON.

*Sept.* 1804.

A  
**Discourse,**

DELIVERED, SEPTEMBER 25, 1804,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE REVEREND

**JAMES MALCOMSON,**

*FORMERLY MINISTER OF THE*

ORIGINAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OF WILLIAMSBURG, S. C.

AND

*LATE MINISTER OF THE*

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION

OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH-CAROLINA.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE greater part of the following discourse was composed in the few hours which elapsed between the decease and the interment of the person, as a tribute to whose memory it is published; while the mind of the writer was in no small degree affected by the loss of a respected friend. The candid reader, therefore, will not expect the recommendation of novelty on so common a topic, or of ornamented language, in so hasty a performance. The affecting occasion on which it was pronounced rendered interesting to the friends of the deceased even familiar truths, though clothed in a simple dress: And the faith, fortitude, and resignation displayed by the departed, in the decisive hour of trial, appeared to others worthy of being more generally known, as an honorable testimony to the truth and power of religion. Whatever, therefore, may be the author's opinion of this discourse, he could not refuse to publish it, in compliance with the wishes of the friends of the deceased; and in order to contribute his mite for promoting the interests of religion.*

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## A Discourse, &c.

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PHILIPPIANS, CHAP. XXI. VERSE 1.

*For to me—to die is gain!*

DEATH has been stiled the king of terrors, through fear of whom many are all their lifetime subject to bondage. And, indeed, if we consider this event as nothing but a cessation of existence, as a restoration of the dust whereof we are formed, to its original source, it is natural to expect, that creatures actuated by a strong desire of self-preservation should feel impressions of sadness and dejection when they look forward to its approach. To bid an eternal adieu to those whom affection and friendship have entwined around our hearts; to shut our eyes forever to the cheerful light of day, and all the scenes of former enjoyment; to be deprived of sense and motion, and stretched a lifeless corse upon the earth; to descend into the dark and noisome mansion of the grave, and there become the food of worms:—These circumstances, attending this awful change, form a picture which the coldest imagination cannot contemplate without horror. In this point

of view death could not possibly be gain to any one. It might justly be deemed inconsistent with the character of a Wise and Benevolent Being to permit the existence of an evil, which thus, without intermission, lays waste his fair creation; which sweeps away in succession the ages and the nations; which holds us in terror during life, and closes the scene by reducing us to ashes. Were death nothing else but this, far from inviting you, as we do on occasions of this nature, to contemplate this melancholy subject; instead of vainly endeavouring to reconcile you to an event which would rob you of all your present comforts, and bring you nothing in return, we would advise you to turn your eyes from the dreary prospect, to put the evil day far from you, to spend your years in gaiety and pleasure, and never once permit a thought of death to intrude upon your joys. In this case, it would certainly be an act of prudence, to enjoy as much of this world as you possibly could; the maxim of the sensualist would then be founded in the truest wisdom—*let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

But, when we view death in the light which reason and religion throw upon it; when we consider it as a deliverance from all those “ills which flesh is heir to,” as a state of sacred tranquillity and repose; when we reflect that it introduces the virtuous and good into a state of greater perfection and happiness, than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived, then the frown of this dreaded tyrant softens into the smile of a deliverer and friend;

we are no longer held in bondage by a slavish dread of his approach ; we then adopt the language of the apostle, that for us “to die is gain ;” with him, we “desire to depart, and to be with Christ.”

Such a view of death, it must be confessed, belongs not to men of every character. To those who are so firmly attached to the pursuits and pleasures of this life, that they can conceive nothing beyond the grave capable of balancing their loss ; who, unconscious of the beauties of holiness, have no desire to be delivered from this body of sin and death ; whose guilty consciences appal them with the awful anticipation of a future reckoning, death must in every point of view be full of terror. Those very circumstances which make it gain to the righteous, to them only sharpen its sting. To view it as a complete annihilation of their being, would be a melancholy kind of satisfaction. But how dreadful to know that it is not only the conclusion of all present enjoyments, but also the commencement of a state of just and awful retribution ! Still, perhaps, if not pleasing, it may be useful for them too, to meditate on this subject, because bitter reflections at present may prevent endless sorrows hereafter. The illustration which we now propose of the apostle’s assertion ; that to those who live by the energy of Christ’s spirit dwelling in them, who live for his honor and glory, and in conformity to the precepts of his blessed religion, death is no evil but great gain, may happily excite in the wicked a desire of attaining the same enviable privilege,

a wish to "die the death of the righteous," and to have "their last end like his!"

Death was no part of our original constitution. Had we continued innocent, our happiness had known no interruption. Pain and evil could not have existed in the works of God. But man, being in honor, abode not. He who was created happy, is now born to trouble: He who once had access to the pure stream of immortality, must now taste the bitter waters of death. Such are the rewards, O sin! which thou bestowest on thy deluded votaries. But, thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ! thy purposes are defeated. Death, the great instrument of thy cruelties on the human race, proves a sovereign remedy for all the evils which thou hast introduced into the world. Though the believer is subject, like other men, to all the natural consequences, both temporal and spiritual, of sin, and consequently is not exempted from the stroke of death; yet, in virtue of Christ's expiatory sacrifice, its penal effects are abolished. From being a punishment and an evil, it is graciously and wisely converted into a blessing and a gain.

That death itself should be abolished, with respect to the righteous, would be altogether inconsistent with the plan of Providence, and with the whole nature and intention of the gospel scheme. A privilege so exalted, and a distinction so manifest, bestowed on a particular class of men, would render unnecessary all motives and exhor-

tations to holiness, would destroy all freedom of action, and annihilate at once virtue and vice, reward and punishment. And in the present imperfect and corrupted state of human nature, an universal exemption from the sentence of death, would be unwise and contrary both to private and public interest. The fear of this event deters men from the commission of many sins dishonorable to God, ruinous to themselves, and destructive to society. Every law must be enforced by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment. To maintain that the love of God, and a regard to duty are sufficient motives to virtuous conduct, presupposes in human nature a degree of perfection which is inconsistent with fact, and with which the existence of prohibitory laws would be incompatible. This being the case, what punishment can we imagine better calculated than death, to influence beings actuated by a strong desire of self-preservation? What principle is found, in fact, to operate more powerfully in preserving the peace and good order of society, in restraining the vices and crimes of men, and in exciting us to keep our powers and faculties in the state fittest for the service of our maker and of our fellow-men? What but the fear of death secures us from the attack of the nightly robber, or deters the abandoned villain from the perpetration of his wicked designs? Were it impossible to "kill the body," men of licentious characters, insensible to shame, might indulge, without restraint, every criminal and lawless desire. What

prevents many from gratifying indiscriminately every appetite, from addicting themselves to luxury, intemperance and debauchery, but the apprehension that the pursuit of these courses will produce disease and death, and thereby put an end forever to their enjoyments? In order to discharge with propriety, our duty to God, and to our neighbour, our body must be maintained in a state of health, activity and vigour; our mind must be free from passion and the empire of lust. Now one of the strongest motives to the proper regulation of our mental and corporeal powers, is the consideration that a well regulated state of mind and body, is not only favorable to the discharge of our duty, but also contributes to long life and retards, more than all the aid of medicine, the approach of the much dreaded foe.— For who have attained to a good old age but the sober, the active and the industrious, whose powers have not been enfeebled by pleasure, whose minds have not been harassed by the cares of gain, agitated by the pursuits of ambition, worn down by the gnawings of envy, nor tormented by the pangs of remorse? In this point of view, then, death “is gain,” for it prevents many crimes and excites to the practice of many virtues.

But though death, in the abstract, may thus be considered as great gain to society, and as useful even to the wicked, yet it is only the true Christian who can say, in application to himself, *for me*

*to die is gain.* And for the Christian "to die is gain," because,

FIRST: He is thereby delivered from those bodily appetites and desires, which rule in his members, and are, in the present life, great obstacles to the progress of religion. In the state of innocence, every faculty of man was pure and holy. Then was the reign of Conscience, when every inferior principle acted in due subordination to its superior, and an admirable harmony subsisted between appetite and reason, inclination and duty. A sad reverse has now taken place. Appetite and passion, combining in a league with sin, have usurped the place of Conscience, and make the will captive at their pleasure. The body, instead of encouraging and assisting the soul in the execution of its duty, is a heavy incumbrance in the Christian race. The flesh, with its affections and lusts, is enmity against God. Whence come all the evils which prevail in the world? "Come they not hence? Even of our lusts which war in our members?" And "the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like."

Nor is the virtue of the Christian exposed to danger, merely from those principles of action which either wholly originate in the corrupted and degenerate state of our nature, or which it has a tendency to pervert and misapply; but even

the common wants and infirmities of nature, the innocent desires and appetites of the body are a great hinderance to the complete discharge of our duty. Our external senses and organs are incapable of constant employment: They require to be frequently repaired by rest and recreation. The calls of hunger, thirst and sleep frequently interrupt our religious exercises, and break off our intercourse with Heaven. The limited nature of our situation, our contracted and short sighted views of things perpetually expose us to error; and truth in opinion is intimately connected with rectitude in practice. Even the virtues of inferior obligation and of less importance, not unfrequently interfere with those of a sublimer nature and more extensive influence. Our love to God cannot be perfect, when so many other objects, endeared by the name of kindred and friend, claim a place in our esteem. That regard to our own interest and welfare which prudence prescribes, and which religion approves, on many occasions prevents the full exercise of the benevolent affections towards our neighbour.

In the believer, it must be confessed, the lusts of the flesh do not rule with such unbridled sway as in the natural man. The former has passed from death to life, being made partaker of a new and divine nature. Sin has no more dominion over him. He walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit; by faith and not by sight.— But though the spirit has obtained the ascendancy, the flesh is not completely subdued;

the struggle is not yet over. A continual warfare is carried on between the old and the new man. In vain does the Christian expect to rest from his labours, till death has closed the scene. While in the body he will still find some irregular desire to be suppressed, some sinful affection to be mortified, some root of bitterness to be destroyed. Those lusts and passions which, he thought, were reduced to entire subjection, will revolt afresh, and in an unguarded hour, humble him by a mortifying defeat. Hence we find good men, who have been attentive to the operations of their minds, lamenting that they make so little progress in holiness, that they frequently feel the discharge of their duty burthensome and disagreeable, that they experience so little fervency and delight in the exercises of religion, that unhallowed thoughts and desires often intrude into their minds when engaged in the immediate service of God, and that when the spirit would ascend to Heaven on the wings of devotion, the affections and lusts of the flesh drag it down to earth, and loudly call out for gratification. The psalmist David, and the apostle Paul, two of the brightest ornaments of religion, describe their own experience of this internal struggle between faith and sense, in striking and mournful language. " Mine iniquities (says the psalmist) are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more

than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me.\*” And still more explicitly the apostle thus speaks: “I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, waring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”†

Death itself shall deliver thee, O Christian! Rejoice, then, at the thoughts of its approach. The evil passions which now torment you will then cease to possess any force. When you “shuffe off this mortal coil” you bid adieu for ever to frailty and imperfection. The soul, disencumbered from its earthly load, and having “laid aside every weight,” not only has a clear perception of its duty, but also runs with chearfulness the ways of God’s commandments. Sin is for ever done away, and virtue holds an universal and perpetual reign. The wintery blasts of death destroy the noxious weeds of vice; but they nip not the buds of virtue. These, transplanted into a milder region, expand and flourish in eternal spring, continually becoming more beautiful and perfect.

\* Psalm xxxviii. 4. xl. 12.

† Romans vii. 18. 21. 22. 23. 24.

SECONDLY: For a good man "*to die is gain,*" because, while this important change delivers him from those internal foes which are so often a source of grief and which make him go heavily, it also places him beyond the reach of external temptations. Many are the allurements which, in the present life, would entice us to transgress the laws of religion. The voice of pleasure, the calls of interest, the snares of company, the influence of evil example, the suggestions of the tempter, will sometimes lead astray those who are best acquainted with their duty, and most resolute in its discharge. What watchfulness and care are necessary that we fall not into temptation! For we "wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." But beyond the grave temptations shall assail us no more. The grand adversary of God and of virtue has no power to hurt in the world of souls. "When death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed," our victory over all our foes shall be complete. The profits and pleasures of the world can have no influence on our minds when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. The cares and avocations of life can no longer disturb or interrupt those who serve God day and night in his heavenly temple. Evil example cannot seduce those who have God, the source of perfection, to contemplate, and angels as a model of imitation. For every thing that defileth, and whatsoever worketh abomination or

maketh a lie, shall be altogether excluded from the pure abodes of light and virtue.

THIRDLY: It is gain for the Christian to die, because death removes him from a world of sorrow and imperfection. However desirous we are of long life, we must acknowledge that but small is the portion of pure and unmixed happiness which we here enjoy. Even the most prosperous have their share of suffering. Solomon, king of Israel, who enjoyed every thing his heart could desire under the sun, who sought for happiness in power, in knowledge, in pleasure, in fame, and in every way in which men commonly imagine it is to be found, yet declared that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. If such is the state of those whose "cup runneth over," what must be the condition of such as are exposed to adversity and subjected to the various calamities daily occurring in the humbler walks of life? Poverty and want, sickness and sorrow, anxiety and disappointment form "a bitter draught," and in a great measure justify the declaration of Job, "that he would not live always." In the morning of our days, before we have experienced the cares and sorrows of the world, we imagine the prospect before us to be altogether fair and beautiful. We suppose the path of life to be smooth and easy, strewn with roses, where no thorn is found, and beset on every side with sources of enjoyment. But no sooner do we enter on this path than we find how egregiously we were deceived. Cares and toils, in constant succession, cloud our sky.

The tender buds of hope are nipped by the killing frost of disappointment. The airy visions of youthful expectation are dissolved by the touch of real life. We find the world stored with fewer enjoyments than we imagined. We see that nothing is to be gained without labour, toil and unceasing exertion. We behold around us a fleeting and transitory scene. The friends of our youth are removed into the land of forgetfulness, and leave us to prosecute our journey alone. Old age advances, with hasty steps, attended with infirmity and disease, destitute of enjoyment, and leaving us nothing to wish for, but that death would come to conclude our sorrows.

I speak not these things to disgust you at the world. In the world, such as it is, God has placed you, and in his appointment you ought readily to acquiesce. But if, by stating the true estimate of human life, I can reconcile you to the thoughts of your departure hence, and banish from your minds that fear of death which holds so many in bondage, I shall not disturb your innocent tranquillity, but rather lay the surest foundation of serenity and peace. And what in the present uncertain and vain scene can attach to it any rational being? What can there be formidable in death which is so sovereign a remedy for every disease, so certain a deliverance from every sorrow? In the grave you shall rest from all your labours. How silent, still and peaceful are the mansions of the dead! The turmoils, cares and pursuits of life are over. The storms of passion

disturb not the endless calm which there reigns. The cares of gain and the projects of ambition interrupt not the slumbers of the lowly bed. No more shall the corroding hand of envy trouble the repose of the inhabitants of the tomb. No more shall they feel the pangs of disappointment. No more shall they know the sickness of the heart which arises from hope deferred. In the grave "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest: There 'the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor, and the servant is free from his master."

FOURTHLY: It is gain for the Christian to die, because, with respect to those who die in the Lord, not only do "they rest from their labours," but "their works also do follow them." Death, while it concludes the sufferings of the just, introduces them to joys of the most pure and exalted nature. What are the joys of Heaven, what the happiness of the just in the higher house, eye hath not seen nor ear heard: The world to come is an "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller e'er returned to tell of what he saw;" and indeed were a messenger to be sent from these distant regions, to explain to men the nature of that state towards which they are going, it would be very difficult, if not wholly impossible for them, in their present imperfect state, to understand his description of a scene so entirely different from any thing they now know, and so much more exalted. In general, the happiness of Heaven consists in the absence of all pain, and the

possession of every enjoyment which the nature of the blessed will admit. All tears shall be wiped away from their eyes: Sorrow and sighing shall be for ever fled. There shall be neither death, nor crying, nor trouble, nor any more pain.— On the other hand, the joys of eternity are infinitely various, suited to every character; and, though undoubtedly very different from any thing we know at present, they are represented in scripture under the notion of those pleasures which we now deem most pure and exquisite. Those who delight in the pursuit of knowledge, and lament that, in consequence of the present imperfection of their faculties and the limited nature of their condition, they see through a glass darkly and know but in part, shall then see face to face and know even as they are known.— Those who admire, and love to contemplate, great and exalted characters, shall then see and enjoy God. Those who delight in the exercises of devotion shall be employed day and night in praising and serving God in his heavenly temple. Those who are fond of honor and power shall have their desire fulfilled; for they shall be made kings and priests unto God. Those who prefer the pleasures of friendship and the endearments of society, shall be admitted into the society of the just made perfect; a society of peace and harmony, where charity never faileth, where all is love and happiness for ever. Who can think of these things without perceiving how much all earthly enjoyments fall short in the comparison?

FINALLY: It is gain for the Christian to die, because death is the means which heaven hath appointed for refining our dust, that it may be restored and revived pure and spiritual, free from every stain and defect. Concerning the soul's immortality unenlightened reason was able to form conjectures which if not wholly satisfactory, were yet sufficient to excite hope; but the body it gave up as for ever lost; it left the material part of our nature in a state of perpetual union with its kindred dust. Christianity has removed the shadows which hung over the region of the grave. It teaches us that the separation between the soul and body, is only temporary. This body of which you are so passionately fond, and the loss of which you so much dread, must indeed see corruption; but it shall not be left for ever in the grave. The hour cometh when the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption. At the general resurrection of the just, those weak, frail and imperfect bodies, which at present are subject to so many wants, infirmities and diseases, shall arise glorious and perfect, no more liable to death or pain. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

I now proceed to apply what has been said to the affecting occasion of our present meeting.—

Nor can the application appear difficult or unnatural. Amid the sorrowful reflections which this afflicting dispensation of Providence suggests, it is no small consolation to think that our deceased brother has been an unspeakable gainer by that change, which to us is so distressing. If a mind well grounded and settled in the faith; if an upright, inoffensive and exemplary conduct, becoming a man, a Christian and a minister of Christ; if a kindness of affection, an evenness of temper and a suavity of manners which gained him the sincere attachment of his friends, blunted the shafts of malice and alleviated the burden of human calamity; if an end awfully impressive, honorable to himself, to his profession and to religion; if these are proofs that a man "is in Christ Jesus," we know that *he*, whose body lies before us, insensible of pain or pleasure, and about to be deposited in the cold, dark and silent mansion of the grave, now enjoys in his spiritual part, that blessedness which is the portion of those who die in the Lord. His soul, purified from every stain, and placed beyond the reach of sorrow, has joined the society of the "just made perfect," partakes of the joys of Heaven, and drinks of those rivers of pleasure which flow at the right hand of the throne of God.

They who knew Mr. MALCOMSON intimately through life, will bear testimony to what I have now said: \* We who witnessed its closing scene are

\* Mr. MALCOMSON was born in the parish of Castlereagh, in the county of Down, in Ireland: But, like most of the

able to add an authority still more unexceptionable and impressive. For

“ A death bed’s a detector of the heart :

“ There tir’d dissimulation drops the mask ;

“ There *REAL* and *APPARENT* are the same.”

YOUNG.

how much was it to be wished that the infidel and the worldling had been present in the last moments of our departed friend ! That they who foolishly barter an eternity of bliss for an hour of transitory enjoyment, had heard his senti-  
 young men in that country of the Presbyterian Communion, who are destined for the Ministry, he received the principal part of his education at the University of Glasgow. Being regularly licensed, and afterwards ordained to the Office of the Ministry, by the Presbytery of Belfast, he removed to this country in the beginning of 1794, in consequence of a call from the Original Presbyterian Church of Williamsburgh. There he continued for nearly ten years, discharging with fidelity and diligence the duties of his pastoral office, much and justly esteemed by the members of his congregation. With his Ministerial functions he combined (what should always, if possible, be united in remote country settlements, where a Physician seldom is resident) the profession of medicine, in which he possessed no small degree of skill, and which he practiced with considerable success. He also contributed largely to the benefit of the district in which he was settled, by promoting the institution of an Academy, which he afterwards superintended with credit to himself and profit to his pupils : And, at a later period, he vindicated with ability and success, both from the pulpit and the press, the cause of genuine and rational religion, in opposition to some misguided men who wished to maintain, that the kingdom of Heaven consists not so much in *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*, as in enthusiastic raptures, and in violent bodily contorsions and agitations, which they absurdly denominated being *religiously exercised*.

ments on the vanity of all sublunary things! That they who are carried down the stream of pleasure, unmoved by the sorrows and insensible even to

In that district there unhappily existed, long before his residence in it, religious and political divisions and prejudices, too deeply rooted and too inveterate to be easily eradicated; and, though his useful labours, upright conduct, and very obliging and agreeable manners, gained him the sincere and universal attachment of his own congregation, and of all men who had discernment to appreciate, and liberality to acknowledge merit, he found that the most inoffensive conduct will not always scure from the tongue of the slanderer, those whom he has resolved to persecute; and he experienced, on various occasions, the unhappiness of living in a society where, though we are for peace, others are obstinately bent on war. With a view to escape the evils of this state of society, in hope of providing more amply for the education and support of a numerous and increasing family, and induced, by the opinion of respectable friends, that his labours as an instructor of youth, and a Minister of religion, would here meet with encouragement and success, he removed to Charleston in the beginning of this year. Here his expectations were more than realized. Liberal and discerning men did justice to respectable talents, to attainments far above mediocrity, to upright and exemplary conduct, to agreeable manners, and to an unexampled suavity and placidness of disposition which is justly deemed one of the best proofs of a Christian temper. He had obtained a respectable and numerous academy; daily accessions were making to a congregation already considerable for numbers, and justly and sincerely attached to their pastor, and he had the fairest prospects of being highly useful and respected in the community, and of making a handsome provision for his family. When, alas! to the inexpressible grief of his family and friends, and to the great loss of society, in the prime of life, in the full vigour of his faculties, in the 36th year of his age, he is removed from us to occupy a more exalted station in another region of God's infinite dominions.

the joys of others, had witnessed the heart rending but instructive scene, when, finding his end approaching, he called his family and friends around him, comforted his afflicted consort, exhorting her to trust in the living God who had all along befriended them, and who would still prove her protector and guardian; when he took his infant child in his arms, blessed her, and commended her to the providential care of the Almighty; when he charged such of his offspring as had understanding sufficient to comprehend his meaning, to persevere in the virtuous course wherein they had been initiated, and diligently serve Him whom their father had served; when he expressed to his weeping friends and some of the affectionate attendants on his Ministry who were present, his ardent wishes for the success of the Gospel and for the interests of religion and virtue, declared his unfeigned assent to the truths of Christianity, devoutly thanked God for the comforts and hopes of religion, and desired his friends to join in the performance of that divine exercise of praise, which he was soon to enjoy in perfection in the mansions above.\* Such, O-Christians! were

\* *The Psalm which he desired to be sung on this occasion was the cXLVth of the Collection of Psalms and Hymns now used in the Presbyterian Congregations in this city and neighbourhood; and is as follows:*

I'LL praise my Maker with my breath,  
 And when my voice is lost in death,  
 Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs:  
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
 While life and thought and being last,  
 Or immortality endures.

the triumphs of religion in the dark and evil day! Here we saw "with what fortitude a Christian could die." Here was a lecture more effectual than volumes, to dispel the visionary charms of pleasure, to dim the splendor of the miser's gold, to put vice to confusion and give peace to virtue, to make the believer adore and the infidel tremble.

But, while the departure of our deceased brother was thus happy and enviable; though with

Happy the man whose hopes rely  
On Israel's God: He made the sky,  
And earth and seas with all their train:  
His truth for ever stands secure;  
He saves th' opprest, He feeds the poor,  
And none shall find His promise vain.

The Lord hath eyes to give the blind;  
The Lord supports the sinking mind;  
He sends the lab'ring conscience peace;  
He helps the stranger in distress,  
The widow and the fatherless,  
And grants the pris'ner sweet release.

He loves his saints, he knows them well,  
His love their joyful lips shall tell;  
Thy God, O Sion! ever reigns:  
Let every tongue, let every age  
In this exalted work engage;  
Praise him in everlasting strains.

I'll praise my Maker with my breath;  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs:  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life and thought and being last,  
Or immortality endures.

regard to himself, it was 'far better to depart and to be with Christ;' yet the loss of an useful and diligent instructor of youth, a faithful and able Minister of religion, a kind husband and affectionate parent, cannot be thought of without alarm, cannot be felt without the deepest and most poignant sorrow. We wish not to presage ill to the country or to the Church of God. It is to be hoped that there are yet left many good men whose prayers, and whose alms ascend in memorial before God, and help to shield us from the Divine vengeance so justly due to our manifold sins, and to restore the Divine favor to our guilty land. It is to be hoped that He with whom is the residue of the spirit will again send forth into his vineyard able and faithful labourers to feed his people with knowledge and understanding. But, my brethren, while our land mourns under the sad effects of the Divine displeasure; when wasting pestilence depopulates our cities; when the swelling floods, impelled by the breath of Heaven, threaten our habitations and our lives with destruction; when the tempestuous winds, sweeping our fields, blast the hopes of the husbandman,\* the most inconsi-

\* On the 8th of September, 1804, the States of South-Carolina and Georgia were visited with a Hurricane more violent in itself than had been known for half a century, and more destructive in its consequences than any which had occurred since the first settlement of the country by Europeans. The gulf stream being opposed in its course by a violent north east wind and thrown back upon the coast, raised the tide many feet, (at Savannah it was said to be ten, but at Charleston it did not appear to be more than five or six)

derate are called to solemn reflection. And when, in this moment of reflection, we consider the many heinous and presumptuous sins of this nation; when we observe the indocility, the immorality and the unpromising character of the young and rising generation; when we perceive, on the one hand, the unceasing efforts of infidelity and profaneness to rob us of that which is our guide in life, our comfort in affliction, and our hope in death, and, on the other, the lukewarmness and indifference of those who still retain the form of Godliness, no serious and good man can help being affected with apprehension and regret to hear of the sudden and above the ordinary height at high water. All the wharves in Charleston were over-flowed, and greatly injured by the violence of the waves and the beating of vessels against their sides. Many cellars and stores were filled with water, and property was damaged to a considerable amount. Many vessels lying at the wharves were sunk or dashed in pieces; others were forced from their anchorage and driven on shore: And scarcely one escaped without some material injury.— The coast was covered with fragments of the wrecks of vessels which had foundered in the gale at sea. Some were driven ashore and lost, though, in some cases, their crews and part of their cargoes were saved. The rice swamps and low lands within reach of the tide, were generally overflowed, by which the crops of rice and provisions were greatly injured, and in many places totally destroyed and swept away by the reflux water. The fields of cotton, particularly along the sea-shore, which previously promised an abundant crop, were blasted and nearly destroyed by the violence of the wind and the spray of the sea. The leaves of the trees were blighted, and it was observed that in a few weeks a new spring seemed to commence, the foliage was renewed, and many of the fruit trees were again covered with blossoms and fruit.

frequent removal of so many useful public characters and faithful Ministers of religion. "Help Lord! for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men!"

To us, my brethren of the Clergy! this dispensation of Providence speaks in a still louder and more alarming tone. It is one of ourselves; who was employed with us in beseeching sinners to be reconciled unto God, in holding forth the terrors of the Lord, and in displaying the blessedness and rewards of a virtuous course, who has fallen by our side. "The Prophets do not live for ever," more than others. Let none of us, therefore,

In Georgia many negroes and others were drowned in consequence of the low islands along the coast being overflowed to a considerable depth. Only one life was lost in Charleston: But, during the gale, the most serious apprehensions were entertained for the safety of many hundreds of its inhabitants, who are accustomed, during the warm months, to retire, for the sake of the coolness and salubrity of the air, to Sullivan's-Island, situated at the mouth of the bay or harbour. This island, which is nothing but a sand-bank, was completely covered with the waters of the sea, in some places five or six feet deep; upwards of twenty houses were blown down by the winds, or washed away by the waves: The inhabitants (with the exception of one Negro) were saved by retreating to the houses placed on the most elevated ground; but, had the gale continued a few hours longer, and raised the waters a foot or two higher, it was feared that every house on the island must have been swept away, and every soul have perished.

During the months of July, August and September, of the same year, the disease called the yellow-fever, which for 12 years past has, with two exceptions, paid an annual visit to Charleston, was more than usually fatal to strangers, and carried off many useful and valuable citizens.

indulge the mistaken idea that we have no interest in those solemn and awful truths which we are commissioned to declare to others. Let us study to be prepared, as our departed brother, to display that patience under affliction, and that fortitude in the hour of death which we so frequently inculcate on others. Let us shew that religion is not with us a mere speculative theory; but a practical system which has impressed our own heart and actuates our conduct. Let us not attempt to bind on others heavy burdens which we will not touch with one of our fingers.

Four times, within a few short months, has the shaft of this "insatiate archer" been discharged; and four times has a Minister of God fallen a victim to its irresistible force.\* It is again pointed: To whose breast, is known only to Him for whose permission he delays to strike. Let us set our houses in order. Let us work the work of him who sent us. Let us be diligent in season and out of season, that, by our labours in word and doctrine, we may save our own souls and the souls of them who hear us.

Believing also, that there is a superintending Providence who governs the world by just and

\* The Reverend Thomas Frost, and the Reverend Thomas H. Spierin, of the Episcopalian Church, the Reverend ——— Waters of the Methodist persuasion, and the Reverend James Malcomson, of the Presbyterian Church, all died within a few months of each other: And within less than three years preceeding, the Episcopalian Church were also deprived of the Right Reverend Bishop Smith, the Reverend Doctor Henry Purcell, and the Reverend Peter Parker.

Equal laws, and who, by every affliction, intends to punish or to try us, it behoves us to consider whether there may not be found in ourselves sufficient reason why the 'Lord's anger burns so fierce against us.' Have we not, one and all of us, been remiss in the discharge of our duty? Have we not sought our own glory and interest, rather than the glory of God and the interests of religion? Have not envyings and jealousies and divisions arisen among us to the injury of religion and the scandal of good and moderate men? Let us be induced by the affecting and humiliating example before us to set about a reformation of these evils. Let us shew that we are brethren not in name, but in deed and in truth. Let us reflect that we are all servants of the same master. Let us no longer severally say, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas:" are we not all of Christ? Let us, therefore, as becometh those who are his followers, co-operate harmoniously in spreading the Redeemers Kingdom through the earth, in counteracting the fatal effects of that disorder which sin has introduced into the moral system, in striving to make men wise, virtuous and happy.

With you, my Brethren of the infant but flourishing congregation over which our deceased brother presided! I condole, on account of the severe blow which your society has sustained by the loss of your beloved and respected pastor. For a short time only have you enjoyed the benefit of his instructions and labours. But, short as it has been, it will leave lasting memorials be-

hind it; your conscience will bear witness that, during this time he has addressed to you many arguments in behalf of a religious and virtuous life, that he has given you many earnest invitations to repentance and many solemn warnings to flee from the wrath to come, which, if neglected and unimproved, will leave you wholly without excuse in the day of the Lord. Let the melancholy reflection that you will see his face and hear his voice no more, quicken your recollection, and incline you more readily to comply with the advices which he gave you while he was yet with you. Let your respect for the memory of the deceased induce you to regard the dying injunction which he delivered to some of you. Though the shepherd has been smitten, let not the sheep be scattered abroad. Abate not in your zeal for the glory of God, and the success of the Redeemer's Kingdom; forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of too many among us is. And beseech the Great Shepherd to send you another pastor after his own heart, who will declare unto you the word of life, and who will build you up in faith, in charity and in good works.

But who shall describe the situation of the afflicted widow and her four helpless Orphans? Who shall undertake to administer consolation to them? If, to a good man, tried and approved of God, and duly prepared for a future state, there can be a bitter pang in death, it is this, to leave behind him an unprotected widow, and helpless Orphans, exposed to the storms and tempests of this rude and boisterous world, having no anxious father to watch over their early years, to instil into

them the principles of piety and virtue, and to protect the tender buds from the noxious blasts of vice. But this is a wound too tender now to be probed. Over this scene my feelings compel me to draw a veil. Let us commend them to the Almighty protection of our compassionate High-Priest, who has a fellow-feeling with all our infirmities; who, in all our afflictions, is afflicted; who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust; who is the father of the fatherless, the judge of the widow, the stranger's shield and the orphan's stay; who hath expressly promised, *leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them; and let thy widows trust in me.* And under what more infallible and certain protection can we place them than under the protection of the Everlasting God who fainteth not, neither is weary, who giveth power to the faint, and to them who have no might increaseth strength.

While we yet stand in the presence of God, with this affecting spectacle before our eyes, and surrounded with the numerous mansions of the dead, let me call upon all who hear me, whatever may be their interest in this dispensation of Providence, if any can be supposed to be uninterested in an event which may so soon be their own lot, to attend to, and to improve the important lessons so forcibly taught by the present scene. See here, my brethren, a faithful representation of the vanity of all earthly pursuits, of all human glory. Youth, health, beauty, fortune, talents, honors, serve for a short time to distinguish one worm of the earth from another. The grave opens and reduces all to a perfect equality. Look

into the house appointed for all living. What a sad spectacle do we there behold! Ye fathers and mothers of families! who are still so wedded to the world, whose affections, with a sinful excess are placed on the creature more than on the Creator, see here the hideous remains of that amiable and beloved daughter, once so fair and so gay, whose memory still wrings your heart and moistens your eyes—of that promising boy who was the idol of your soul and the hope of your declining years, but who was stopt short in the midst of his career and cut off in the flower of his age! Disconsolate husband! Behold the mangled form of that youthful spouse to whose accents of affection you surrendered the soul, on whose beauteous face you gazed with rapture. Afflicted widow! see here the husband of your youth, whose unstrung arm can no longer yield you protection, whose dull cold ear cannot listen to your soothing strains, whose breast, once kindled with the purest fire and beating with the best affections, is now mingled with the clods of the valley. “How vain are all things here below!” How uncertain and transitory our dearest possessions, and our purest joys! How careful should be to place our affections on the “Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,” and who will not, like earthly friends, die and leave us.

Hither let the men of the world also repair, and derive instruction from this scene. What desolation do you here behold! What profound silence reigns among the inhabitants of the tomb! But this silence is instructive; it is eloquent. Hear you not a voice issuing from yonder grave and say-

ing, *number your days, and apply your hearts unto wisdom.*

Listen ye votaries of ambition! to what is addressed to you by one of the occupants of that church-yard! "I have enjoyed before you that place of preferment which you now seek. I have been surrounded with that splendor which now dazzles your sight. I made a figure in the world. My titles, my wealth, my dignity, my credit were spoken of with admiration and applause. But where did all terminate? In the grave. And where shall it terminate also with regard to you? In the grave?"

Listen, ye covetous! to what another of these dead seems to utter: "I was tormented with the same insatiable desire of heaping up wealth that now occupies your breast. I became fat on the substance of the widow and the orphan. I got to myself large possessions. But of all these what did I bring with me into this dark abode? Nothing but a winding-sheet and a coffin. And what more will you carry away of the treasures which you may amass?"

Listen, ye sons of pleasure! to the voice from the tomb: "I too lived voluptuously. I withheld not my heart from any joy. Pleasure I tried in all its forms. But now the voice of music is low: My pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of my viols: The worm is spread under me, and the worms cover me. What you are, I have been; and what I now am, you will soon be."

May the salutary impressions which have this day been made upon our minds, abide with us, and influence our conduct during the whole of our remaining abode on earth!! AMEN!