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THE DEAD ARE THE LIVING

A

SERMON

PREACHED ON LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON,

OCTOBER 1, 1843,

ON OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. MARY L., THE WIFE OF THE REV. WARD STAFFORD, A. M.
OF THIS CITY.

BY

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Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστός, καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος.—PHIL. 1: 21.

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Dedication

TO THE REV. WARD STAFFORD, A. M.
AND HIS CHILDREN;

TO WILLIAM A. BURNHAM, ESQR. A. M.
OF VERMONT;

TO MRS. MARY BURNHAM,
THE WIDOWED MOTHER OF THE DECEASED;

AND TO THE NUMEROUS OTHER FRIENDS, IN DIFFERENT
AND DISTANT PLACES,
WHO SYMPATHIZE IN THEIR BEREAVEMENT,

This Discourse,

WRITTEN IN SUBSTANCE SINCE ITS DELIVERY,
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS NOW AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

S E R M O N .

But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.—Matt. 22: 31, 32.

IN this way were the Sadducees *put to silence* by our blessed Lord; refuting their position, exploding their doctrine, and disclosing their falsity before all the people. Who can doubt again that the immortality of man is taught in the Old Testament, taught in the Pentateuch of Moses? He quotes a most familiar phrase from the third chapter of Exodus; a phrase honorary and popular and national to the Jewish people; a phrase of which the easy and the necessary implication merely, is utterly destructive to their system. It was part of what God said to Moses at the bush in Midian. How much better is this method, than one of elaborate argumentation, with proud and clannish sectarians, or other perverse and wilfully blind enemies of God! It reminds us of one of the *five smooth stones out of the brook*, which his father David, eleven hundred years before, preferred to the armor of Saul; and with one of which, well directed, he brought Goliath to the ground. So the Son of David, in a way as simple, as pretensionless, as *smooth*, and as well aimed, smote mortally the fortress of infidelity and atheism. He seems to have taken, as it were, a mere pebble from the wilds of Arabia, and with it demolished the Sadducean heresy. What is simple, polished, honest, and direct, is commonly the most effectual.

With equal ease, but with more displayed majesty, will he answer all the arguments of error, and degrade the men that use them, in the day of judgment. Then the truth shall have the sole ascendancy—and all its murky and miserable rivals and counterfeits shall go down forever. Alas! how many of their venders and patrons and victims shall go down with them, in that day!

But what was the dogma specifically which the Sadducees held? What is the doctrine of the text that refutes it; with the instructions and the consolations thence deducible, as suited to the present solemnity?

In these questions, which I shall attempt to answer, is the general plan of my discourse.

I. THE PECULIAR DOGMA OF THE SADDUCEES, WHAT WAS IT SPECIFICALLY?

It was not that they denied the existence of God, or the inspiration of the canonical Scriptures, or the general truth of religion, or the divine legislation of Moses, in form or mainly; nay, they admitted and in some sort professed all these. Nor was it, though this was sufficiently included in their error, that they mainly or conspicuously denied, with some modern heretics, the resurrection of the body. Their position evidently respected the person of man, and denied to him all future existence beyond the grave. In what way they came, by successive degrees of degeneracy, and through deteriorating generations, to hold an error so enormous, in the time of Christ, need not here be told. It is sufficient to observe its enormity, as plainly resulting from its nature, in the estimation of the wise; and as palpably displayed in the conduct of the Savior towards the subverted religionists that entertained it. He seems to have had not a particle of what the world calls charity for them. He everywhere treats them as wilfully and wickedly blinded; and this on a fundamental article of the common and the universal creed of the worshippers of God. Their error was fundamental and peculiar. It subverted the whole of the revealed system. It was practically worse than atheism; since, had they professed this grandest horror and equal absurdity of abominations, its mere announcement would have revolted the sense of mankind, and produced a reaction that would soon have destroyed it. But error is ever insinuating and dishonest. It cheats and then poisons. It is specious, imposing, captivating. *Take heed*, said the Son of God, *and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*. That is, beware of their artful and seducing doctrines. If there be no immortality, it is practically of no importance whether there be any God or not. He is the God neither of the dead nor of the living, in that case. And this quite eminently, since the living are the dying; and life in this world, if this be all, is rather equivocal existence. It is the sanction of a hereafter, that gives its importance to every truth and every duty of religion. It is the assured prospect of eternal existence, that invests religion with an infinite grandeur. It is this which gives it supremacy. It is this elevates its virtues above the poor disparaged world, *its kingdoms and the glory of them*. O eternity! the life-time of the Almighty! And is man eternal too?

And can eternity belong to me,
 Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour ?

The evidence of our immortality is cardinally and primarily identified with the testimony of God. However it might be guessed or theorized by the light of nature, it is faith alone in what God has told us, that can give, to that august doctrine, the form and the force of a living reality, in the sentiments of men. It now becomes a practical, an all-pervading truth. It is a divine reality. And when received by faith in God, it lightens and glorifies all other objects. Now other evidences innumerable appear, and more convince us ; which otherwise had been never discerned or accredited. Now we can say,

'Tis past conjecture, all things rise in proof.

And now the whole world, all the scenes of Providence, and all the history of man, life, death, sin, conscience, the system of redemption, the government of God, heaven, hell, and every page of the Bible, every thing without and every thing within him, edifies the believer in the faith of immortality. No man ever practically feels the eternity of his being, except as he just receives cordially what God hath testified of its reality. Thus says Christ ; *Have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying ; or, by God speaking ?* What an idea is this of plenary inspiration, of divine revelation ! God speaks to us—it is God speaking. Thus, the fathers were well wont to say, that the great object of all faith is *Deus loquens*, God speaking to us. How high and perfect and awful the duty to hear what HE speaks—to learn what HE teaches—to do what HE commands !

The Sadducees, by denying the resurrection of the dead and its kindred truths, denied in effect the whole of revealed religion. They denied in effect the existence of God. And they began their career by refining on the truth of revelation—by altering or modifying it to suit their philosophy. Nor is this sin exclusively theirs. It is often done, no more alone in their way than their age. Yet who can think of this great impiety and not tremble ! Who ever altered the religion which God has revealed, and either made it better, or really advanced his own interests ? Who ever changed it from a motive which God will approve ? Did God send that master-piece of his own accomplished architecture, *the glorious gospel of the blessed God*, into our world, to be changed by us, or—to change us only ?

Their denial of immortality included indeed—not mainly opposed—the resurrection of the body. If this had been their main position, however, that the body does not rise, the reasoning of the Savior could have had no force or worth ; since the patriarchs, in that sense, were yet the dead, and not the living. But it was the future existence of the dead, it was the

immortality of their persons, which they denied. With them, God was not the God of the living, but of the dead only—the silence of whose sleep was interminable, that of non-existence. They denied the *anastasis** of men, the up-rising and the re-living of men in the state of immortality. Behold, the condition of man. Like the tall spires of grass in the field, which the scythe of the mower lays prostrate, death advances to the moving multitudes of our species in every age, and cuts them down with his incessant and unerring sweep. We see them fall in swift succession, and expect our turn from his impartial and inevitable stroke. All ages and generations, all ranks and conditions, friends and foes, prepared and unprepared, fall before him! What a mower, what a leveller, what a destroyer! The grass falls—and *the people is grass*. But will man, like the cut grass, never revive—stand up again—live anew—flourish and grow in a more genial clime?

This is the grand question—and yet is it now no question at all. God hath settled it forever. Nothing can be settled by divine revelation, if this is not settled. We know the truth—for God hath told us. Man is immortal. He lives hereafter. He exists forever. In weal or wo, in heaven or hell, his being is to endure without end, and to parallel in duration the life-time of God. This is implied or expressed throughout the whole book of books, from the Pentateuch to the Apocalypse. Its implications are abundant, are significant, are eloquent; and when rightly interpreted, they are clear and conclusive. What is revealed by fair implication, is as really revealed, as if it were always and repetitiously revealed by simple and express affirmation.

The resurrection of the species indeed imports the future existence of two classes, the good and the evil, the saved and the lost. *There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust*, saith God. The resurrection of the wicked is as really, but not as fully, revealed as that of the good. The resurrection of the just is more extensively, and graphically, and frequently, revealed. It is described by way of eminence often, as if it were simply and solely *the resurrection of the dead*. So is it in the text. It treats of the resurrection of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; and says nothing about Cain, and Nimrod, and Ishmael, and Esau, and Ahab. Hence we shall speak, especially henceforth, of the resurrection of the just alone. We all hope to participate that blessedness—and God grant to each of us, my friends, that in this prospect we may not be confounded! May no one of all who hear me perish forever!

We have now seen what the Sadducees denied, and also something of the desolating impiety of their scheme. Let us next consider,—

* A word of great importance, occurring in the Greek Testament about 40 or 50 times, and rendered—not perfectly—by the latino-anglican word *resurrection*.

II. WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT THAT CONFUTES IT.

This we may state as two-fold ; namely, their immortality, as already commenced in the conscious being of their spiritual nature, without any intervening pause of existence, or cessation of consciousness, after death ; and,

Their blessedness in Christ, as really happy and holy in the beatific presence of God, and of all the glorified before the throne.

In the statement of this doctrine, you see, my brethren, that we make all in all of the testimony of God to prove it. Its importance is infinite and incalculable. It is a point or rather a column of truth, which super-eminently deserves the best attestation, the most perfect confirmation and establishment. On no other basis would a wise man rest his creed, on such an article of religion. God says it—and therefore it is reality. It is incomparably the truth. He who cannot be deceived, who cannot be ignorant, and who cannot lie, has declared it. This is rationality and satisfaction. It is the repose of reason, the authentication of faith, and the triumph of piety. It is this great and simple vision, which soothes and recreates the conscience, conciliates the confidence, and tranquilizes the soul of the Christian. It shows also the perfect and eternal agreement between faith and reason. It suits and satisfies the mind. It does that, for our edification in the doctrine of immortality, which nothing else, in all the range of actual existence, can possibly perform—can equal or supply. Sense is bounded by the darkness of the grave. Reason speculates in possibilities, probabilities, and presumptions ; and remains unresolved and tempest-tossed on oceans of conflicting theory, always at sea, and never making even its proper course towards the haven of its own professions and desires. Whatever may be the reason of it, such is historically and ever the fact, that the conviction of our immortal existence never becomes realized on conditions other than these two, that revelation discloses and settles it, and that faith in God apprehends and approves it. Here a man first realizes and feels that he is immortal.

We might infer the same abstractly from the very nature of the case. What is the thing to be proved ? It is 1) eternal existence ; our being is produced, and created, and dependant, and still protracted through unnumbered cycles of duration interminably, without end absolutely, and so continuing to be as long as God himself continues, existing in all that future eternity, which no being but God himself can positively comprehend. Who but God can do this wonder of preservation and protracted being, for any creature ? Who but he can absolutely and originally know the stupendous fact ? And how could even he know that it will be, apart from what he knows of his own purpose to prolong forever the existence of a dependant

and upheld creature? Can a creature exist without supports divine? Is immortality an independent attribute or function of the creature? Are the sources of our being in ourselves? Is God not the author of our immortality, as well as of the doctrine of it? If he is, we need on that account a revelation, a spontaneous forthcoming from the impenetrable solitudes of his own bosom, to make it known to us. We suppose that just as really, though not in the same degrees or forms of existence, are seraphs in glory assured of their own immortality, as well as of their eternal confirmation in bliss. For who can know the mind of God, without an authentic communication from himself? Who can ascertain the secrets of his own plans or purposes, any farther than he condescends to disclose them?

2) It is to be proved also that this immortality is the property of man, as well as angels; that this eternity belongs to him, by the donation and the constitution of his Maker. And who can rationally predicate such an attribute, especially of such a subject, and sustain his position, on any basis other than that of divine revelation? Reason challenges an adequate proof, and revelation alone can furnish it. When proved by revelation, however, then every thing else, within and around, and above and beneath us, seems to assent, and illustrate, and confirm, and prove it too. Even the grave is now a witness, and dust to dust imports our immortality. The solemn procession, the devotional service, the final obsequies, the tears of bereavement, and the dirge of interment, all partake of the light of immortality, and all respond coincident to assure us of its truth. Apart from revelation, the immortality of man is a riddle and a paradox, which nothing can resolve. It is an idea of incongruities and seeming contradictions. Can eternity be predicated of that miserable pauper, Lazarus, starving on a dunghill, or pining in a wilderness, with ulcers covering his body, with dogs for his physicians, with angels waiting to convey his spirit home, and the frail casket that contains the gem of immortality, ingloriously crumbling to pieces, and already in its odor anticipating the offence and the dishonor of the grave? The true answer to such questions, and the only apposite and conclusive one, is equally practicable to the infant and the sage, to the Sabbath-school pupil, and the philosopher of incomparable fame. It is this—God has revealed it, and therefore it is true. And what are we all but children, in the relation of learners at the feet of God? If death levels us all to the dust and beneath it, so does depravity to the curse, and ignorance to the instruction, and ruin to the salvation, of our God.

Many even of learned theologians have made the absurd mistake, so specious and so spurious in its claims to philosophy, of attempting to demonstrate our immortality, and even to rest the proof of it, on some basis other than that of revelation. We say that the process is blind, and the desired

result forever impossible. And we say more. Could the attempt succeed, it would be religiously of little or no use. It is the testimony of the Father of spirits that every human spirit feels and realizes—or it feels nothing. And only as this great truth is genuinely realized by faith, is religion itself a reasonable and practical reality in the estimation of the soul. We would signalize then the naked glory of the divine testimony, as that which hath the deserved supremacy and the absolute dominion. And herein we conform only to the position and the altitude of holy Scripture. Look at our Savior's example in the text. God speaks it to them—hence the absurdity and the impiety, he says, of their unbelief, and especially of their contrary dogma, which was the distinguishing and the characteristic doctrine of their sect. And so the blessed Paul, to quote no more, in his second letter to the evangelist Timothy, written just before he was beheaded at Rome, states the case, in which his own proximity to death and immortality, gives interest to his words, when *ready to be offered and the time of his departure is at hand. It is now made manifest, says he, by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* In these important and excellent words, we understand by *life*, salvation, and by *immortality*, our future existence. Now it is herein implied that these had both been previously involved in darkness impenetrable, and palpable, and ever during. And who was competent to disperse these clouds of horrid night from the face of heaven? Was it Pythagoras, or Zoroaster, or Socrates, or Plato, or Zeno, or Tully? None of these. It was the Lord Jesus Christ who did it. He brought them to *light*; or, as the figure in the original seems to be, he shed on them a glorious illumination, by which they could be seen, apprehended, realized, by men, as well as triumphantly participated by all his genuine disciples—*by all them that love his appearing.* Why is it that we are so slow to own our obligations to the light of heaven, to the system divine, that comes to us from God, requiring our docility, and deserving, as well as rewarding so richly, our faith; *casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?*

When we hear the insolent ravings, and the profane inventions, and the impertinent traditions, and the impious substitutions, of heretics and innovators, against the system of God, we are calmly content, at least so far as our own faith is concerned, to answer them in the words of our Savior in the context; *ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.* But we recur to the two-fold doctrine of the text.

1. It teaches, in reference to our departed friends, who were also the friends of God, their proper and actual immortality, as already commenced,

in the conscious being of their spiritual nature, with no intervening pause of existence, or cessation of consciousness, after death. The living are the dying ; the dead are immortal.

As soon as the person fell asleep in this world, he awoke in the world of blessedness. His conscious spirit, emancipated from its fallen tenement, and loosed from bondage of the body, flew away and was at home in heaven. He died among men ; he was born among angels. Here his life ceased ; there it commenced. He left many dear and precious friends to mourn his absence here ; but there, among throngs innumerable, and ranks of glory, "order o'er order rising," he found other friends, more of them, and better friends than any who wept at his funeral, or remained to feel and to mourn his absence in this world. There he is well entertained, absorbed, delighted ; and not one of all the countless multitude, ever felt weary of the place, or the society, or the employment, or desired for one moment to return to this world and resume its foregone existence in the body. No discontent, no fatigue, no regrets, are there. How could they be, where *the spirits of just men are all made perfect*, in the vision, the fruition, and the perfection, of God? There is genuine and real perfection, not only attainable or possible, but attained and realized. Oh ! how different from, and how superior to, every thing which a poor mere mortal ever attains, or exemplifies, or delusively imagines, in the present world ! Who here *can understand his errors ? Cleanse thou me from secret faults !*

But some may doubt this grand reality ; and say, How can it be ? A spirit exist happy and perfect after death, and apart from the body ! I can have no conception how this is possible. A formless, insubstantial, disembodied spirit, how can such a thing exist ? I for one cannot conceive of it. How can it possibly be ?

To such an objector the proper reply is exceedingly easy. His objection would prove that a spirit cannot exist at all—that God does not exist. He proceeds on the supposition, that, if he cannot conceive of the mode of any thing, or how it exists, therefore the thing does not exist, and is all a nonentity. Hence his ignorance annihilates all of which it cannot conceive ; and his power or rather his impotence of conceiving, is his proud criterion of all possible existence. Again, he implies that all his difficulty is to conceive how a spirit exists separate from the body, and hence that he can conceive very easily how a spirit exists in the body. Here then the objector has the advantage of all Christian philosophers of whom we have ever read, or enjoyed the privilege of their acquaintance. These have all candidly and freely owned that they can comprehend the mode of the fact, neither in the one case nor the other ; since it is only the fact itself which they apprehend and believe in both cases. They believe that the spirit

exists, acts consciously, and freely, and morally, in the body; since their observation and their consciousness concur, with the universal sentiment of mankind, to prove it. And they just as really believe the fact that the spirit exists, acts consciously, and freely, and morally, in the state incorporeal and celestial; this, God hath clearly, abundantly, and conclusively testified in his word. All that God requires us to conceive, in order to believe, is the fact itself, and not the mode of the fact, in the one case as well as the other; and this not only in reference to the soul in the body, or apart from it, but in reference to every other fact or thing of revelation, as distinguished from the mode of it, or the manner in which it may or may not exist. And if a man cannot conceive of a plainly revealed fact, it must be because he is a maniac, or an idiot, or a very perverse and wicked enemy of God—or a judicially blinded heretic.

The soul exists apart from the body, consciously, till the second coming of Christ; when the body is raised, and being reunited to the soul, the whole person is glorified in *spirit and soul and body*, and conformed to the perfect humanity of Christ. And thus it is written, as we prefer to render the words, more literally, as well as more virtually, and more excellently, from the original; *for our citizenship is in heaven, whence also we expect the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the energy of his mightiness to subdue even all things to himself.*

Previous to such transformation of the body, the soul after death, suffering no syncope of consciousness, no suspension of its active and immortal powers, exists as one of the living, not the dead, in what is properly called, for that reason, the separate state. Alas! how has this plain, intelligible, Christian doctrine been corrupted, mangled, and superseded, by the paganizing wisdom of Rome, with its *limbus patrum*; with its purgatorial fire—having greater expiatory virtue than the blood of Christ, and greater cleansing power than the influences of the Spirit, and greater reconciling* and reclaiming efficacy than all the constituted ministrations and means of grace; and with its numerous theories and contemptible inventions, all adopted with the real, though latent motive, to get clear of the truth, and so to avoid that perfection of personal accountability and responsibility to God, which it is the sublime prerogative of THE TRUTH gloriously and always to illustrate and confirm, unmitigated, universal, inalienable, eternal. Not only Rome, but her veiled daughter, Oxford, appears homogeneously in this process and league of Satan. The tendencies of thousands are towards Oxford, the tendencies of Oxford are towards Rome, and the tendencies of Rome are incessantly, as God-abandoned and scripture-denounced, not to melioration or reformation or salvation, but just the reverse—to deterio-

ration, and a punishment not purgatorial, not disciplinary, not corrective, not remedial, but final, retributory, eternal; *where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched.*

How excellent and desirable, especially in these forlorn contrasts, is *the truth as it is in Jesus*, the uncorrupted and pure doctrine of heaven, the unaltered radiations of the throne of God! How consolatory to mourners, how incomparable for consolation to those bereaved! *God is not the god of the dead, but of the living*, says Jesus Christ. Yes! we are mortal, they are immortal. We are the dying, they are the living. We scarcely exist in comparison; their existence is worthy of the name, regaling in the blessedness of God, made perfect, holy, happy, ennobled, refined, confirmed, and associated in perpetual and delightful communion with all the countless millions of the glorified, both angelic and human, to *go no more out.* *Father, I will*, said the Savior, in his solemn impetration to the Father, *I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* And to the penitent and suppliant thief, he said, when it was now late in the afternoon, *Verily I say unto thee, TO-DAY shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Said the blessed Paul; *to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ; which is far better.* In the parable, says the Savior, *the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.* And says the apostle, *We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* Can there be any reasonable doubt as to the meaning of these inspired passages of *God speaking* to us? But they are only a few specimens of his word throughout. It is the pervading testimony of the Bible. And to obscure or vitiate that testimony—must require how much of the 'authority' of tradition, and what the fathers say, and what 'the church'—of the apostacy—believes? *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of man; preaching another gospel—which is not another; and making the word of God commonly of none effect through their tradition.* Without quoting another sentence of inspiration, however, our text fixes and concludes the point. Our God is *the God of the living.* To appeal to tradition or any human authority, where the oracles of God are plain, is not only a savage impertinence, it is impiety also. It is equal absurdity and crime. *Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written.* What idolatry against the first commandment, what corruption against the second, what irreverence against the third, and what folly and wickedness, and suicide, against all the full orb'd glories of revelation irradiating our path!

Why then their loss deplore, that are not lost?

Why wanders wretched Thought their tombs around

In infidel distress? Are angels there?
 Slumbers raked up in dust, ethereal fire?
 They live! they greatly live! a life on earth
 Unkindled, unconceived; and from an eye
 Of tenderness, let heavenly pity fall
 On us, more justly numbered with the dead.

Still, the perfection of their being is incomplete till the resurrection also of the body—a fact sublime, clearly announced, identified with Christianity alone, in its uses infinitely excellent, and in its revealed relations precisely fundamental. *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we, the apostles of Christ, have appropriately, officially, and constantly, testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. But if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

But here the ignorance and false imaginations of badly reasoning men, meet us with their objections. *And some will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*

The resurrection body of the saints, like the ascension body of the Savior, is so glorious and wondrous, that we can ill approach a proper conception of it. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* And is it a derogation from the excellence of the reality believed, that the future bodies of the righteous can be fitly illustrated by no earthly similitudes or analogies? that, of all the phenomena of nature, around, within, beneath, or above us, there is nothing good enough to illustrate its glory? that our present conception, in its best approximations, falls far short of its glorious theme—the *body of his glory*, who is our brother, our kinsman Redeemer, and whose present glorious corporeal form is the pattern, and the pledge, and the demonstration, of what we shall be, who love him?

We may in part conceive, and so illustrate, the resurrection body, mainly by negatives. We are expressly told that it is not *flesh and blood*, that it is not bones, nor any material fabric; that it is not mortal, nor corruptible; that it is unlike whatever is visible, palpable, tangible, or sensible, in the present state; since *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*; that is, it is *not manifested yet*; but it shall be manifested at the second *coming of*

our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. It is certain too that the nature and the structure, the stature and the texture, of the celestialized body, its organizations and functions, will be marvellously changed, for that state, where existence is so different, so improved, so gloried with the excellence of God ; where their being is no more vulnerable, morbid, or precarious ; where it is prolonged and recreated no more, by eating and drinking, by sleep and growth, by respiration and circulated blood ; where life's progress is no more limited, or its passing moments told, by the flutterings, the palpitations, and the vibrations of life's pendulum, the heart, that will soon and forever be still within us ; and where the relations of the sexes, immediate and consequent, forever cease,—*where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.*

It is a wise, that is, a conceited aphorism of the schoolmen, that all actual or possible existence is reducible to one or the other of these two categories, matter or mind. But how know they that? They know no such thing. A spiritual body, a celestial body, for aught that any man knows, may be something different from both. There may be a *tertium quid* or mediate quality of which our little globe affords no specimen, and which shall be the *vehiculum animæ* or corporeal tenement of the glorified soul. At all events, it is not philosophical to make our ignorance of what is, the criterion of all that is possible. Let us listen to *the law and the testimony* of heaven. *There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.* This imports a wondrous diversity between the two classes of bodies respectively, so that we can assume no analogy, or reason much from the one that we know, to the other that we as yet know not. *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.* A similar diversity the apostle directly asserts in the connection; and these are his memorable and wonderful words. *So also is the resurrection of the dead. 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* But oh! how different are the two! how superior that we are yet to see and wear, if we are the genuine disciples of the Son of man. Of this glorious fabric, there is more said in the Scriptures, there are more implications of it, and more frequent allusions to it, in the inspired pages, than ordinary readers know or imagine.

Of human bodies changed and glorified, there are probably more already in heaven, than is commonly supposed. The body of Enoch, transformed as he ascended, is there. And so is the body of Elijah, that

mighty and valiant prophet of the Lord. And also the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. But this probably is not all. Others may have been translated too. It is expressly said that at the crucifixion, and after it, *the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints, who slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* Now, for what end was this divine prodigy performed? Did they leave their sepulchres only to re-enter them? Assuredly not! They rose with Christ, or rather just *after his resurrection*; for they knew their place, in the rear of one *who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things, or among all persons glorified, he might have the pre-eminence.* They doubtless accompanied him when he ascended to glory. And their multitudes were probably great. They are expressly called *many*; and they went upward

To page his triumphal re-entrance to heaven,
One brotherhood vast and himself the first-born.

They came with him from the graves, as Enoch and Elijah came not. They were specimens and first-fruits of *the resurrection at the last day, the resurrection of the just.* They were spoils and trophies, monuments of his eternal victory. But how much more glorious at his second coming, when he shall *be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe!* How ineffable when,

In forms divine,
Their myriads shine,
The perfect new creation.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us! It will be made manifest at the last day, and all Christians then alive shall be examples of the astounding glory, as others shall revive to witness it and share its blessedness. *Behold, I show you a mystery; that is, I announce to you a secret. 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 trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

But who were those *many* whom the wisdom of the throne selected for this special honor? We know not—and yet we cannot forbear the thought that probably they were some of the chief worthies of the bygone ages; such as Abel, Noah, Melchisedec, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Josiah, Daniel, and many of the illustrious prophets; and many elect ladies, such as Sarah, Deborah, Ruth,

Abigail, and others of whom not even the histories inspired make any mention.

But leave we these realms of conjecture, and returning to our text, we briefly remark, as already announced, that it teaches, of all the dead at present, not only their conscious existence, but

2. Their blessedness in Christ as really ; that they are both happy and holy in the beatific presence of God, and of all the glorified before the throne.

What a reality ! What a competent and all-perfect testimony authenticating it ! How credible, how rational, how adapted, how superlative, how divine ! God attests it, Christ declares it, Scripture reveals it. While we are here on earth, and until we taste it ourselves, with our own beatified experience of its excellency, with the strong and pure passion of immortals and the full enlarged capacities of the glorified, how could we conceivably know it by any better or higher evidence ? Is there any medium preferable to the testimony of the eternal God ? Let our unbelief be shamed into annihilation at the fact, that the veracity of so perfect and so condescending a witness as Jehovah himself, is entertained, on our part, often with almost no faith, no confidence at all. What a sin is unbelief, the sin of sins ! the parent of the whole progeny of sin. Who so blind as not to see its impiety ! And how sanctifying, as well as rational, as well as consolatory, on the other hand, is faith in God ! Let us believe all he says, whatever he says. It is the way to be wise, safe, happy, true, holy, strong, valiant and triumphant.

A few added reflections on the nature and the medium of the blessedness, of glorified saints, will complete our discourse.

1. As to its nature, present and prospective, it implies the expansion and perfection of our being in all its excellent capabilities ; the full possession of knowledge, as opposed to all error, prejudice, and ignorance ; the incessant gratification, as well as the elevated and holy action, of all our desires, preferences, and volitions ; exalted communion with God himself, in his attributes, plans, and operations, as the eternal Proprietor and Governor of the whole universe ; the sweetest and most elevated fellowship with all holy creatures, especially with our brethren of the great ransomed family constituted of thousands of millions, all thinking in substantial unity the same worthy things, all doing the will of their common King and Savior, all singing the same peculiar and incommunicable pæans of praises to the Lamb, all occupied coincidently and forever in the same glorious cause, all related equally to *the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, as the great God of their redemption, their adoration, and their gratitude, all destitute of envy, jealousy, fear, suspicion, doubt,

guile, or one of these unlovely, these mean and miserable affections, (which often so infest and degrade us here,) in their serene and divinely happy bosoms, all conscious mutually and each in reference to all the others, of loving and being loved simultaneously, and all assured fully and completely of the eternal perpetuity, and the endless progression of their blessedness in God, being, by final confirmation and absolute conservation, divinely ascertained of their eternity of holiness, happiness, and glory, before the throne.

In heaven alone is friendship perfect and interminable. No selfish regards, no impure affections, no mixed and varying emotions, no sunderable ties, are there. Nothing partial, unprincipled, or anxious; no collision of interests, no unworthy predilections, no changeful sentiments, no alienations, no mistakes, no offences, no infelicities, are there. And there the passion for immortality, which seems to be the very instinct of our being, is not obscured, darkened, held in doubt, diverted from its proper aim, or tormented with a single apprehension of evil. Each one is secure as well as safe in the possession. Each has immortality and the consciousness of it, the immortality of the blessedness of God. It is immortality indeed; the thing without its shadows; the reality without its symbols, its monuments, or its factitious and futile decorations. No one there fears to be forgotten, or ever forgets another, or suffers in his reputation, or needs one prop to support the column of his memory. Oh! how different from that chased, vaunted, evanescent, impracticable thing, called memory—fame—immortality, on earth! that bubble of emptiness, whose thin and painted surface reflects all unsubstantial glory, dancing invitingly before the eye of profane ambition, but either eluding the pursuit, or perishing in the grasp of prosperous achievement. *The living* in that world, can well afford to be forgotten as *the dead* in this! Here efforts at perpetuation are vain. Some survive a little longer than others, in their ambiguity of posthumous renown. But time mystifies their character, history anon misrepresents their motives, a distant generation gradually loses their praises, their monuments moulder, posterity soon comes to regard them as strangers, newer heroes supersede them, and at length—*periere ruinae*—the very ruins of their sculptured names have perished, where sleeps their undistinguished dust. *The fashion of this world passeth away.*

But though friendship is perfect alone in heaven, it may begin on earth. That friendship is durable which is genuine—as founded on Christ, the only rock of ages. When death dissolves the loves and relations of time, especially where nature and grace coincide in the pure and strong attachments of this life, what a compensation, what a consolation, to look beyond the grave, and say, ‘there is my home, there we meet again—and part no more forever!’

It is often asked with sincere perplexity, Shall we know our friends in glory, shall we mutually recognize each other in heaven? I answer, undoubtedly; and only wonder that any intelligent reader of the Scriptures could doubt on the point one moment. The social principle will be illustrated and glorified in heaven forever. The question seems to imply three things, not one of which is true; 1) that our personal identity will be mystified or forfeited by the sublime transformation. Not at all! It will be only the more exemplified and perfectionated, with consciousness, and memory, and thought, advanced to consummation eternal. 2) It seems to imply that we shall not know ourselves there. But this is impossible. We shall there *know even as also we are known*; and we shall know ourselves historically, morally, physically, and metaphysically, as here, where we *know in part and prophesy in part* only, we never could do at all in comparison. Then, however, *that which is perfect is come*; and our knowledge will be, to the extent of our enlarged capacities, full, and clear, and perfect too. How then is it possible, that, in the associated state of glory, we should not perfectly know one another? But 3) the question seems to infer that here we already know each other so well, that there we may incur deterioration and loss. This surely is unreasonable. It is not a fact that we well know each other here. Far from it. The local and circumstantial differences that now divide us; the power of prejudice and even of that mean affection, jealousy; the remains of every ignorance and imperfection; the various degrees, forms, and defects of our education; the poverty and infelicity of language, as the medium of our present communicated thoughts; our relative distances and separations; and other incidental causes, make our knowledge of each other in the present world exceedingly imperfect and often very erroneous. This world at large has well been called a great masquerade, where the parties act in forms and characters assumed, or at least ambiguous and unknown. So it will not be in heaven. Our text itself designates there Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. On the mount of transfiguration appeared Moses and Elijah, knowing each other much better, than Peter and James and John knew each other or themselves. Yes! we shall there see and know and own our friends—and millions of others there first found to be our friends.

The blessedness of the ransomed will be forever peculiar. Like their relations to God, their past history, and their wonderfully diverse experiences in two worlds, it will be unique and unparalleled. The whole universe, with its correlative and constituent multitudes of innumerable worlds, and each world with a glorious history perhaps peculiar and much its own, will not furnish or contain, as we have reason to suppose, a counterpart or proper parallel to the world of the ransomed of the Lamb. The past will

be often retrospectively surveyed throughout eternity. What instruction will it afford—how full of humiliations, and wonderful providences till then not understood or explained—and how admonitory to an unceasing and transporting gratitude ; while its contrasts as a whole, when considered with their full, and ever-present beatitude in heaven and the bright prospect of divine fruition through all the cycles of the boundless future, the extremes and the reverses and the perils they have all experienced, their common indebtedness to *grace*, of which *the exceeding riches* are indeed and even there *unsearchable* ; and all this as identified with their relations to CHRIST as *the Captain of salvation*, who *brought* them all as *many sons to glory* : here we see something peerless and incomparable, enriching the primeval heaven with its own eternal novelties and wonders and glories, and forever modifying, as well as developing and communicating, the beatitude of the Divinity : *into which things the angels desire to look ; beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ ; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power ; to the intent that now to the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord : and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living ones, and the elders ; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand—* a definite number symbolical of all the finally glorified, as it were the fruits of all dispensations of the grace of God, or the twelve patriarchs multiplied into the twelve apostles, as the representatives, one for a thousand, of the mighty aggregate of all the ultimately ransomed—*who were redeemed from the earth.* Hence peculiar and wonderful,

2. Is the medium of their blessedness ; it is all derived to them through *Jesus Christ and him crucified*, and through him alone.

They are personal sinners, as well as sanctified characters and glorified persons. Their desert never anticipated their present bliss. It was not *wages* that was paid them, in the recompenses of grace and glory. Lawfully they were *under the curse* of God, and in themselves totally unable either to make an atonement for their sins, or to dispense with one such as the Son of God, alone of beings, could make. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Having access with confidence by the faith of him ; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. For by one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are*

sanctified. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and being made perfect, that is, perfectly accomplished in his sacerdotal office, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; who is consecrated for evermore; he hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Come unto me and I will give you rest. Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God, even his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Hence the Mediator, Christ, is the medium alone of all the blessedness of the righteous, both preliminary and consummate, in the present and the future world. God could not consistently and honorably pardon sin at all, except through an adequate atonement. Hence Jesus died on the cross, *that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* What a demonstration of the eternal placableness of God, that, at such a cost, he should himself provide the medium of life! How great was his eternal mercy, the perfect benevolence of his moral nature, that, in a way of *the manifold wisdom of God*, which neither men nor angels could ever have invented or anticipated, he planned, purposed, revealed, and executed, the one perfect system of redemption! *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that, whosoever believeth in him, or trusteth to him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengtheneth me.*

The doctrine of the Medium and the Mediator, is, we know, *not after man*; and this is no small evidence that man never invented it. Our natural pride and self-sufficiency, our profound moral and voluntary self-ignorance, our cherished and deceitful willingness to be held not accountable to God, according to the perfect standard of his *holy, just, and good law*, both in precept and in penalty, and our general dislike to acknowledge the infinite evil of sin—especially in relation to our own sin; these are the proximate causes, why we cannot receive the atonement of Christ, or see at once the necessity and the glory of any such transaction, or believe a doctrine so plainly revealed, and yet so humbling and hateful to the unregenerate. But this only reveals the necessity of a moral change in our-

selves—that which the word of God means by regeneration. When truly humbled at the feet of Eternal Mercy, as sinners needing gracious forgiveness; when we see the righteous penalty to which sin hath exposed us; when our hearts are really contrite and rectified, Oh! what a change comes morally over the perceptive and intellectual actings of the mind also! Christ is then a *a stone of stumbling*, and a rock of offence, no more; but he is the precious *corner-stone*, the *sure foundation*; he is *the beloved*, and our Saviour, as the Prophet, and the Priest, and the King, of our salvation. Then the Bible is a wondrous, different, and entirely new book—because we are *new creatures in Christ Jesus*. The change is moral, not miraculous. It is superhuman and surpassing, yet in its own nature consisting perfectly with our absolute accountableness and our included moral action as the creatures of God. What he works in us, we perform. He influences us effectually to do our duty and obey the gospel, which otherwise we should be certain never to exemplify or do! *Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like to Gomorrah.*

Thus vast and comprehensive and successful is the salvation of our God. Thus excellent is the blessedness of the righteous. They leave our shores of the changeful and the visible; they disappear, and we see them no more. But God assures us they are still alive. Their being and their blessedness are both complete, and glorious, and eternal. *God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.* That alone is their proper home. It is their final, their permanent abode. Are we too, my dear hearers, *as strangers and as pilgrims on the earth*, travelling thither? Are we,—in truth? Death will soon ask us the question. He asks us how. Behold, his trophies here—the coffin, the mourners, the solemnities of the funeral, and the admonitions herein of the Divine Providence.

MARY LETTISE, the wife of the Reverend Ward Stafford of this city, was born in Derry, N. H., Sept. 15, 1808. She died in this city, September 29, 1843, having just fourteen days previously completed her thirty-fifth year. About six months since, her only child, Samuel Burnham Stafford, was entombed; and now his infant dust is waiting a final resting place in the same grave with his mother. She had been but a few years a wife; for about eleven years, a professed disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ; and for eighteen years, an instructress of youth, increasingly useful and increasingly eminent. It is not often that such a Christian lady dies, because it is not often that such a Christian—such an *elect lady* lives.

If, in what follows, of an attempted but brief portrait of Mrs. Stafford, I shall appear to any reader to be partial or extravagant, let me plead honest intentions, sincere convictions, and some rational considerations, in

my own vindication. As a human being she doubtless had faults—but I never knew them, nor have I any formal evidence from her other acquaintance of their being or their character. As one of the race of Adam, she was a sharer in the apostacy of the species, a sinner in the sight of God, and a greater sinner in her own sight, incomparably and unspeakably, than she could ever be in the view of any one or of all her fellow-creatures. Besides, we dwell avowedly, and not improperly, on the excellencies of the pious dead. Worse than the spirit of the hyena is his, who would even wish to give a resurrection to their delinquencies. By panegyriizing their virtues, at least by suitably commemorating them, we best subserve the interests of the living; we elevate the standard of Christian character, and give some of the most potential motives for its imitation; above all, we glorify Christ, for the grace of God in them, giving Him the glory of their piety, as He alone was its *author* and *finisher*. Every recollection of their devoted and genuine piety, every instance of their self-denial, their humility, their faith, their patience, their zeal for God, their superiority to passionate and worldly provocations, their Christian decision of character, their trust in God, their compassion for others, their love of the truth, or their exemplary action in any other form, is incalculably precious to mourning friendship, richly consolatory to bereavement, and absolutely useful to mankind. It also *glorifies God in them*. And these are the relics of which death cannot rob us, or the grave bury them in oblivion; Christian, protestant, relics are these, worth more than fame or wealth, or heraldry or royalty, without or with them.

Born of excellent parents, the God of Abraham blest their offspring early with the influences of his Spirit, according to the promise of his covenant, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*, AND THY HOUSE. Her late distinguished and truly honorable father, SAMUEL BURNHAM, ESQ. of Derry, *was a good man and a just*. Liberally educated himself, and for many years the Principal of an excellent Classical Academy in her native town, her advantages were as extraordinary, as was her substantial improvement under them. Her father, I may just add, was not one of those lofty and impiously conscious scholars, who idolize learning, esteeming it superior to piety, and implying in their conduct that they have come almost or quite to deserve heaven, by taking the gospel under their sublime patronage—as *the manner of some is*. He was a man of humility, prayer, and cordiality in religion; who thought learning itself then most exalted in its appropriately noblest functions, when made most truly and totally subservient to true religion. Such was his character, distinguished and excellent, as now attested by many witnesses, and consecrated by the sealing sanctions of the tomb. And this I mention, as, under God, accounting for those elements of character and that disciplined superiority of mind, which, in her noble pro-

fession as an instructress, gave a rich and a durable charm to all her practical influence, and were the foundation of her singular success. At the same time, such was the allied delicacy and refinement of her character, her ways were so noiseless, her piety so utterly unostentatious and jealous of itself, that the superficial observer, or the partially acquainted friend, had little or nothing to inform them of the reality or the vigor of her excellence. She walked with God. His smile consciously beaming on her soul, was all the reward she wanted, all the fame for which she cared. Hence the holy unobtrusive serenity and consistency of her life of faith.

Stillest streams

Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
That flutters least is longest on the wing.

Her mental endowments and culture were extraordinary. Her attainments even in the exact sciences and in the rigid inductions of philosophy, were certainly uncommon. Her intellect was well disciplined by regular and habituated study. Her researches went through surfaces to substances. She knew how to think, and she thought to advantage. Words, thoughts, things, are three, and the three grand departments of intellectual learning. Some are wordy and grandiloquent, with very little thought. Some deal in thought only, but it is in the ideal world alone. They study dogmas, theories, controversies, sentiments; but see or go no farther. The true scholar studies things also; their natures, forms, definitions, classes, causes, consequences, relations, and affinities; while words and thoughts, his own or others, are investigated scientifically and well, but mainly or only in subordination to the truth of things; and such a spirit of philosophizing, especially when conjoined with what is so cognate to it—true piety, or love to God and man, is, I think, at one with that renowned wisdom of the divine oracles, which is there commended as *the principal thing*, the test, the glory, and the crown of all other attainments. Now, this statement I have made to illustrate the mental character of our departed and amiable friend; to commend such pursuits and attainments to all the truly and purely aspiring, especially of the sex, as those rare and durable ornaments which are the riches also of existence.

The stature and bodily frame of Mrs. Stafford, were indeed unequal to the fervid action of her mind. The tenant was too much for the tenement. Her form was fragile as well as tender, and too probably its fall was accelerated by the ardor of her studious pursuits. She was not however one of those abstractionists, who neglect their relative duties and forget in what world they are living. There was too much of order, symmetry, and prayer, in her pursuits, for the tolerance or the prevalence of such inequalities. Her friends, her pupils, her domestic duties, her daily cares, and her closet devo-

tions, by a happy distribution of her time, were all duly honored in her conduct and the habits of her life. She was a practical Christian; she was in a rare degree principled in all things. Her power and skill as a disciplinarian, ever blended with the manners of meekness and the dignity of kindness, were remarkable and palpable. Her pupils all loved and esteemed her. She had all their consciences on her side—even when her decision of character, for which she was always distinguished, and which was the more observable as conjoined with all the softer excellence of the Christian lady, was vindicated possibly in their rebuke. She had a wide circle of friends, which was—I had almost said—identified with that of her acquaintance. If she had any enemies—they were all concealed. It has been often said of her familiarly—she has not an enemy in the world.

Of the many letters of condolence, which have been written on the occasion of her death, I will make some extracts from three, two of which were written by Christian ladies, and the last by her former pastor. These evince such a spirit of sympathy and esteem, as might have been anticipated from those who knew her worth.

“Her example,” says one of them, “in every relation of life was worthy of imitation. In every thing she seemed governed by a desire to know and do the will of God. My acquaintance with her commenced subsequently to her profession of religion. Her natural disposition, I think, must have been amiable; but the renewing work of the Spirit of grace was manifested in her life and conversation, making her more kind and affectionate. Some traits I have observed as ever having unusual prominence in her character. She had a strong desire to do good; and to do it in the way, which God seemed to indicate as the best in which to glorify him. Another was—her disinterestedness, her forgetfulness of self. She was always ready to sacrifice her own ease or inclination, when in this way she might add to the happiness or promote the welfare of others. Though immovable on any point where principle was concerned, she was yielding on every other; and her concessions were always rendered with so much kindness and cheerfulness, as to make every one feel it to be her happiness to contribute to the happiness of all with whom she was connected. She had a deep spirit of humility, a distrustfulness of herself. She was fearful of doing any thing contrary to the profession of a disciple of Christ, and thus bringing reproach on his cause. For a holy heaven she was daily striving to prepare; for she loved holiness, and heaven without it could not be heaven to her. She is doubtless now rejoicing with her God and Savior.”

One of her early intimates thus writes: “I feel now more than ever what a rich treasure I possessed in her friendship, and what a privilege it was to retain it to the end of her precious life. * * Our Heavenly Father has taken her home to dwell with him; and we trust she is now rejoicing

in his presence, with her dear human father, and the lovely little babe, who smiled on her bosom for so short a time.

“How well do I remember our beloved Mary, as she looked in our early days, when with affectionate eagerness she sprang forward to greet me! I do not think her constitution was ever very strong; but her cheek had then a bright color, her face was round and full, and her black eye was expressive of mildness and intelligence. As I review our intercourse, it seems as if her whole life was one continued act of kindness; where all was so affectionate, so *pure, lovely, and of good report*, it would be difficult to particularize; though some of her offices of love I can never cease to remember!

“After more than eleven years of separation, I found indeed that her countenance was changed. Care, sickness, suffering, had left on her aspect their palid impress. Still, to me her face seemed more lovely than ever; for over her features had prevailed a spiritual and holy expression, which I felt more easily than I can describe. She was indeed a worshipper and a helper of the worship of others. But how much more pure and exalted is her worship now!”

Says her former pastor, the Rev. Edward L. Parker, “The removal of our departed friend, so sincerely and universally esteemed and valued, as she was, by her extensive circle of friends in this place, produced a deep sensation. And yet our sadness at the tidings was mingled with emotions of joy, that her now happy spirit had reached its destination in glory, with that of her sainted parent, whose image seemed ever before her while she sojourned on earth. In respect to any incidents in her life, I can only say that hers was one of those happily balanced characters, in which no one trait was so conspicuous as to attract attention. A loveliness pervaded her whole deportment. She at once gained and secured the warm attachment and confidence of all with whom she associated. She possessed in a high degree that moral sensibility, that delicacy and purity of feeling, that shrink at once from whatever is contrary to the great law of love. The law of kindness was ever in her heart and on her tongue. Her sympathies were strong, her affections ardent. As a daughter, no one could exceed her in her filial attentions and her untiring assiduities to promote the happiness of her parents. She truly honored them, in her actions as well as her words.

“In regard to her religious experience, I can only say it was marked with a deep and humble sense of her sinfulness before God, and with great jealousy and distrust of herself. It was attended with no strong expressions of joy, but distinguished by a firm reliance on the worthiness and the all-sufficiency of her Savior. This was the foundation of her hope for accept-

ance with God, accompanied with a manifest desire to be supremely devoted to his service. In her habits, she was during her youth modest and retiring almost to an extreme. Her discretion and strict propriety of conduct throughout the period of her residence here, was often the subject of remark. She manifested from childhood a great thirst for mental improvement. She was assiduous and untiring in her application to study, and held in our female seminary a distinguished rank among her associates. Having known her from her childhood, I do most cordially add my testimony to the records of her worth; of those excellencies of her character which rendered her so universally and deservedly esteemed."

I have been thus careful to produce other witnesses and better ones, lest any should think me dealing in eulogy as a matter of course, or with embellishment in a way of routine expected on such occasions. No! My sense of what she was, could not be trusted alone. But the testimonies I have cited speak for themselves. They speak one language and on one theme. I cite no others, simply because it were superfluous. You, my brethren and sisters of this church, did not know her. She was here with us too recently, and her worth was not proved by you—or you would all feel much more what you and I have lost. I regret that she was not more extensively known by you all. What an example in all the relations of life, filial, conjugal, maternal! How rare are such specimens becoming—when children so commonly now cease to honor their parents, except in words! and when virtue, practical virtue, in all the other relations of the social state, is an exotic so seldom cultivated or seen.

And you, my reverend and afflicted brother, you have lost—for a brief period—a daughter of God, a companion, lover, friend, such as few husbands ever called their own, or had to lose. I know *thy breach is great like the sea, who can heal thee?* And I knew, even better, and far longer, another excellent companion,* your former pious consort, now in glory too. I knew her in our common alienation from God; in her youth and beauty and

* Previously, Miss Hannah Ward, the accomplished and excellent daughter of the late Hon. Thomas Ward, of Newark, N. J.

The writer cannot omit, what he is competent thus to attest, as characteristic of the deceased—that, in the ordinarily or always difficult position of a second mother among the children of a former wife, Mrs. Stafford was a model of superior excellence. Far enough elevated above that execrable meanness, that jealousy or envy, that would—too commonly—disparage the posthumous claims of the predecessor, or endeavor to obliterate her remembrance, with her own children, she acted in all things on a principle precisely and sincerely the reverse. She honored the character and cherished the memory of the dead; she spoke of her affectionately and often; and hence her name was always had in honor, and her children seemed so to love their second mother as to identify both in one. Her wise and noble conduct, while it

worldliness, when she was often *the leading star of every eye*; in her remarkable conversion to God, her magnanimity, her wonderful decision, her intelligence in the things of the kingdom, her immutability of purpose, her faith, her patience, her piety uniform—persevering—triumphant. They twain were in some things diverse; but in many, and these the greatest, they were the counterparts of each other; and they are now, I doubt not, sisters in glory. Pardon me, if I need it, for seizing a moment here to pay a tribute of grateful esteem, and of a friendship even earlier than your own. Such an opportunity may never again occur; and in seizing it for this passing tribute, I have no apology to make, no digression even to confess. The visions of other times come over my memory like the light of the morning—and I look forward in hope to a meeting of holy festivity in that glorious heaven, where happy spirits and glorified persons are fully restored to each other, and where in society divinely blessed they are forever at home and forever delighted in God.

They're housed in his temple together,
They are waiting for us to come;
Where Christians are happy forever,
And the pilgrims have found their home.

There God is their portion and glory,
With Jesus they ever remain;
They ponder his wonderful story,
Their song is—The Lamb that was slain.

Then let us to join them be ready,
The angel of death's at the door;
Our journey is safe, it is speedy,
And we'll be at home evermore.

Our departed sister was educated for heaven not without trials. She *learned obedience by the things which she suffered*. If she *fought a good fight*, she also *kept the faith*. She kept where others abandoned or corrupted it; and where compliance with the power of prevalent examples, had been much happier to her personal ease, her worldly existence—in some relations. But *she finished her course with joy*. Her last moments anticipated the crisis without terror or agitation. Not only could she say, *thy will be done*; but with peace profound could add, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. And thus, she fell asleep.

But, my brother, you know who is the author of life, and the dispenser of death, and the everlasting lover of the just; and you, I am sure, submit devoutly to this visitation of his mighty hand. You would not bring her

replaced their first mother so admirably in their esteem, united and concentrated also their filial regards on the successor. How many other homes would be rendered better every way, by appreciating her example and enjoying its proper fruits!

Love, and love only, is the loan for love!

back or reverse the decree of God, if you could, by raising one finger. You do not grudge her the blessedness she now enjoys at the banquet of the just, *sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God.*

Would thy fond love his grace to her control,
 And in these low abodes of sin and pain,
 Her pure exalted soul,
 Unjustly, for thy partial good, detain?
 No! rather strive thy grief-worn mind to raise
 Up to that unclouded blaze,
 That heavenly radiance of eternal light
 In which enthroned, she now with pity sees
 How frail, how insecure, how slight,
 Is every mortal bliss.

And may you, dear children, twice motherless, find succor in the Lord God of your fathers. Yes! you have lost a second mother, whom you loved most deservedly, and whose self-possessed and exemplary excellence did more to compensate your former loss than commonly one woman in a thousand has either the wisdom or the address or the piety to do. I know you all loved her, and most tenderly and truly did she love you. Many prayers have been offered for you, both by her and by others. May you so *obey the gospel* as to experience at last, all that is meant in that divine assurance—*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living!* Amen.