

THE CHARACTER AND PEACEFUL DEATH OF THE
PERFECT AND UPRIGHT.

A
S E R M O N

DELIVERED MARCH 7, P. M.

1802.

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF
MR. BENJAMIN MOODY,

A RULING ELDER IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN NEWBURYPORT; WHO DECEASED
FEBRUARY 23^d, IN HIS EIGHTY-FIRST YEAR.

BY DANIEL DANA, PASTOR.

The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life—quite in the verge of heav'n.
Fly, ye profane! If not draw near with awe:
— A death-bed 's a detector of the heart.
— Here real and apparent are the same.
You see the man; you see his hold on heav'n,
If found his virtue. ———
Heav'n waits not the last moment; owns her friends
On this side death; and points them out to men:
A lecture silent, but of sovereign power!
To vice, confusion! and to virtue, peace!

YOUNG.

N E W B U R Y P O R T :

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M, DCCC, II:



A

FUNERAL SERMON.

PSALM XXXvii, 37.

MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT : FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE.

SCARCE any principle is more universal, or more uniformly operative in mankind, than the propensity to imitation : a principle in itself neither virtuous nor vitious ; and receiving its moral complexion from the nature and qualities of the object to which it is directed. Our degeneracy indeed has rendered us far more susceptible of impressions from wrong and dangerous objects, than from such as are excellent and salutary : far more prone to be seduced by the imaginary charms of vice, than allured by the real and venerable attractions of holiness. Nor shall we ever suitably feel the influence of the latter, but in consequence of a new moral taste imparted by Him whose prerogative it is to reform and regenerate his depraved offspring. Still, as there is a conscience within us, which if indulged a fair hearing, will generally give an impartial verdict respecting our own conduct ; so we are equally capable of receiving delight or disgust, of feeling sentiments of strong approbation or aversion, in contemplating the characters

ters and actions of others. And Heaven has so ordered it, that these contemplations, with the sensibilities they excite, have a powerful influence, in forming our own moral features. The observation of every day may convince us how extensively pernicious and depraving is the example of a single bad man; especially if by genius or learning, by wealth or power, he be placed on an eminence which invites notice, and attracts admiration. Nor are the reasons less forcible, (though the occasions may be, alas! less frequent) of remarking what important aid is contributed to the cause of religion by a single Christian, unpossessed perhaps of any of the advantages just mentioned, but exhibiting the power, the spirit, the attractive charms of humble piety. What resistless conviction does such an example impart to all around, that religion is a reality, and not a delusion! What majestic and commanding reproof to bold transgressors! What instruction to the erring! What confirmation to the wavering! What comfort and determined courage to the sincere!

May it not, my brethren, be even supposed, that could we take a near view of the real character and feelings both of the righteous and the wicked, with their respective happiness and misery, in life, in death, and after death—and keep our minds habitually and deeply impressed with these things; we should be furnished with arguments almost irresistible, to determine our choice and conduct on the side of religion?

To accomplish this great point, by these very means, is the aim of the inspired writer in the Psalm before us: a Psalm which, as Mr. HENRY observes, is “an exposition of some of the hardest chapters in the book of providence; the advancement of the wicked, and the disgrace of the righteous.” These difficulties, formidable at their first appearance, the psalmist solves at once, by a description of the real deformity

deformity and baseness inseparable from sin, and from sinners in their highest elevations ; and of the true dignity and comfort uniformly attached to the children of God, amid all their present humiliations—together with the correspondent misery of the one, and felicity of the other, in the future world. In this connexion is introduced the impressivè admonition of the text : *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace.*

If, my brethren, the word of God is the best comment on his providence, it is no less true that his providence is often at once an explanation, an echo and enforcement of his word. It is in obedience, I hope, to their united voice, that this passage is now presented to your meditations. God grant that the all-interesting subject, and the very tender occasion, may not be lost on your hearts, or my own !

What I propose is to attempt a delineation of the man whom the text honors with the appellations of *perfect and upright* ; some description of his *peaceful end*, and of the *duty of marking him* with the most attentive observation.

We have here presented a character not merely hypothetical, or imaginary, but real. It is a character, my brethren, which has been actually found on this guilty globe, and which still (however rare it may be) exists among men. Though scripture and universal observation, though the history of man and the painful experience of the children of God, all declare that perfection absolute and sinless has neither been attained, nor is attainable on earth ; yet in a sense, all sincerely pious souls are *perfect*, as well as upright. Of NOAH, it is declared that he was “ a just man, and *perfect* in his generations.” Of JOB, it is asserted three several times, (*twice* by JEHOVAH himself immediately) that he was “ a man *perfect* and upright.” Yet this same JOB disclaims all pretensions to perfection, as the height of folly and perverseness. And
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the inspired volume elsewhere declares that “there is not a just man on earth, who doth good and sinneth not.” Hence it is obviously necessary, in discussing this part of the subject, to describe a perfection neither so strict as to exclude every sinful defect; nor so loose as to leave the express and repeated declarations of scripture without a definite meaning.

First then, let me remark, every sincere Christian may be styled *perfect*, in respect to the *principle of grace* which he possesses. A child is called perfect, if it possess all the essential constituent parts of a human being, though it be but the miniature of a man. Grace may be properly styled glory in miniature; more properly still, glory in embryo. Every gracious man has the seminal principle, the bud, and the blossom of glory, or of perfection in holiness; and in this view, may with propriety be termed perfect. But this is not the precise idea on which we insist at present.

Every Christian, in possessing a principle of grace, or of holiness, possesses the principle of *every* grace, of every holy temper and disposition. Grace, though complex in its relations, and in its exercises, is in its nature, one, simple and uncompounded. It is a divine life introduced into the soul; or a supernatural habit of holiness, implying a preparation or disposition for all holy action. He then who possesses the principle or temper of love to God, possesses infallibly the temper of love to man: he who has faith, has repentance. Were it possible to separate these Christian graces; to find a lover of God a hater of his fellow creatures, or a real lover of his fellow creatures destitute of the love of God; were it possible to find an impenitent believer, or an unbelieving penitent; we might then find a Christian not *perfect*: *i. e.* maimed, defective, destitute of some essential feature of a child of God. But the fact is, no such being exists. God has no such monstrous productions

productions in his family. All his real children possess, from the first moment of their existence, a perfection of *parts*, though not of *degrees*. They have the radical principle of every Christian grace; of every holy temper. We now revert to an idea hinted above, and observe,

Secondly, every Christian may be styled perfect, if we consider to what he is destined, and shall surely attain; and at what he habitually aims. This is nothing less than perfection in holiness; perfect conformity to the moral image of God, as well as the full enjoyment of him. To this he was destined from eternity, adored by the sovereign, free, electing love of God! "Whom he did foreknow," says the Apostle (*Rom. 8. 29, 30.*) he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.—Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." The *last* assertion is remarkable. The Apostle, impressed with the indissoluble connexion between justification and eternal glory, seems to represent them *both* as *equally in possession* of every believer. The fact is, that the final perfection of every Christian, being as certain as the purpose, the promise and the oath of God himself can make it, the style of scripture in this and other passages, *anticipates* the glorious object, and denominates him according to what he will surely and shortly be. And the propriety of this will appear more conspicuous when we add, that it is an essential trait in his character, to breathe, to press, to strive after this perfection. If perfection is found no where else, it is found in his desires and aims. With an honest heart he can say, that his multiplied imperfections are his grief and sorrow, that his past attainments shame him, that perfect holiness is the object to which he aspires, and that he shall never, never be at rest till he possesses it. Thus (if the representation may be allowed)

he has *entered the school* of perfection, is already initiated in its elementary principles, and is gradually advancing to its summit.

In a word, every pious man may be characterized as perfect, in reference to his obediential respect to all God's commandments. It might have been said that he is emphatically so, in reference to his union to Christ, in whom he has a complete righteousness and salvation. But the term seems descriptive rather of a real character, than a relative state. It imports the Christian's sincere and cordial regard to the whole law of God, and to every part of it. He loves it as a transcript of the divine perfections, rights and claims, and as shewing him the way in which he may best glorify his God. With holy DAVID he can say, "I esteem *all thy precepts* concerning *all things* to be right; and I hate *every* false way." - "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to *all thy* commandments." In regard to his *actual* obedience, it is certain he comes short in every thing. If assayed by the perfect standard, his best works will be found mingled with much alloy; defective in a thousand views. Still his obedience is not like the seeming obedience of others; partial, insincere, inconstant. But it is thorough, uniform, universal. He does not *allow* himself in a single deviation. He does not habitually live in a single instance of known, indulged transgression.

Here, if I mistake not, lies the grand distinction between the genuine obedience of the Christian, and every thing that arrogates its name or appearance, in thole destitute of a gracious principle. The compliances of the latter with duty, are designedly partial. It is not so much as their *plan*, to take the whole length and breadth of the divine commandment, as their rule of conduct. In some duties they may be very strict, and perhaps they fondly hope that this strictness will atone for a proportionate laxity in others.

the 3. At least, it is the opiate which keeps conscience quiet. Far otherwise the true child of God.— He desires and endeavours to be all which his heavenly Father would have him be. In the sincerity of his heart, he puts himself under the government and guidance of his law; and in all things, his simple enquiry is, what the Lord his God would have him do. And though chargeable with ten thousand defects every day and hour, he does not allow himself in one.— Thus though his character falls essentially short of strict, legal perfection, yet he is evangelically perfect: that is to say, he is sincere, impartial, uniform. He is honest and habitual in his aim at universal and perfect obedience. Let not this be called a *legal spirit*. It must be yours and mine, my brethren, if we would not be hypocrites. *If we keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, we are guilty of all.* This inspired declaration is as true in a secondary, as in its literal sense. If, with all our religious strictness, there is yet a single duty which we knowingly, wilfully, and habitually neglect, or a single sin which we thus indulge, it vitiates all our obedience. It proves that our hearts are false, and that we never yet obeyed at all *from principle*.

The perfect man and the *upright* are in the intention of the text, the same. The description then, of the latter trait in the character, may borrow some light from the former. Uprightness in disposition or conduct denotes integrity, conformity to a standard, to principle, and freedom from allowed guile.— In short, the upright man is habitually under the influence of the dictates of truth, and of an enlightened, faithful conscience, in his treatment of *God*, of the *Savior*, of *his fellow creatures* and *himself*.

To his God, he renders the homage of his heart. He denies him not this tribute, without which all others are hollow and unacceptable. He realizes that not one of his fellow creatures has a claim to be

treated by him on the principles of truth and justice, a thousandth part so strong, as that which his glorious CREATOR has upon his supreme and tenderest affection. He gives him the throne in his soul. He yields himself to God, body as well as spirit, esteeming it his reasonable service. He reverences the authority of Jehovah, submits to his disposals, is grateful for his mercies, acts as under his eye, and makes it the great business of his life to please, to serve and honor him. Here, my brethren, is a broad and solid foundation for morality; a foundation, which will support the loftiest superstructure. The man who fears and loves God, who realizes his accountability to him, aims to approve himself to his eye, and feels that eye to be ever on him: this man, and this alone, is prepared to be faithful and conscientious in every scene, relation and duty of life.

He adores and trusts Jesus Christ. Why? Because he views him as equal and one with the Father, and therefore possessed of the same rights and claims: as having done infinite honor to God and his law, and therefore deserving infinite honor from all who love the law and the Lawgiver:—as having manifested, with the most determined enmity to sin, the tenderest friendship to sinners, and therefore meriting their unreserved confidence. When he considers that unparalleled, amazing display of the love of Christ in redemption, he feels it would be the highest injustice, yea robbery, not to render him in return, his *soul*, his *life*, his *all*.—Some there are indeed, who suppose a man may be upright, may have a *good heart*, without these believing, affectionate regards to Jesus Christ. Unfortunately for this opinion, the word of God is explicitly against it. It declares: “The upright love thee;” that is, CHRIST. It declares that he who believes not in Christ, *hath made God a liar!* May a man do this, and yet have a *good heart*?

It is

It is a prominent trait in the character of the upright man, that his conduct to his fellow-creatures is regulated by the dictates of sincerity, truth and justice. In this respect, his morality will generally be found far superior to what the world compliments with the name. There are many things practised in the course of commerce and of life, by men of fair characters, men of honor (as they are styled) to which his conscience cannot be reconciled. But what principally distinguishes and enables his morality is, that while his outward conduct to his fellow-men is strictly conformed to the golden rule, he sincerely loves them in his heart. He would be as far from harboring an unjust or unkind thought of them, as from aspersing them with harsh and cruel language. He would no more detract from their characters, than rob them of their estate. He does not arrogate to himself any merit on account of relieving the indigent and succoring the distressed, as power and opportunity are afforded. He esteems it one of the plainest dictates of justice and indispensable duty.— Above all, he loves the *souls* of his fellow immortals; and would consider himself as acting a most uncharitable, inhuman part, did he not habitually devote some honest efforts and prayers to the promotion of their salvation.

As to himself, feeling his connection with God, with a judgment-day, and an immortality of joy or wo, he faithfully improves those precious, fleeting moments on which his eternity is suspended. He dares not hazard his soul, to gain a world. He cannot be guilty of such madness, as to prefer a little present ease, to everlasting felicity; nor such cruelty to his better part, as to turn his immortality into a curse. He considers his soul as a sacred, invaluable trust committed to him by the Father of spirits; and is anxious to render back the precious deposit with approbation and with comfort. Hence he moderates his desires
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after the world, denies himself many present gratifications, and carefully governs his appetites and passions, lest they operate his ruin. Hence he is faithful to his own interests upon an extensive scale, and in the view of the whole of his existence.

In short, wherever you find the man of uprightness, in whatever company, scene or occupation, you find him acting as one who feels that he must give account. You find him exercising a conscience in every thing—and it has been justly remarked, that “he is to be trusted in nothing, who has not a conscience in every thing.” Place him in a crowd; and he feels surrounded with a Being whose presence is infinitely more awful and more animating, than a universe of spectators. Place him in the remotest desert of the creation, and he still acts to please his God. Open a window in his bosom; read his heart; and you will find him the same in principle and motive, that you found him in action and in profession.

Such is the perfect and upright man. Let us for a moment consider his *end*. It is *peace*, says the text. His life may have been vexed with many cares and disquietudes; but its close is bright and serene: as the sun, having been obscured through the day, sets without a cloud, and leaves a mild, majestic radiance behind.

In his end, the good man has peace of *conscience*. This best friend of the pious, and most formidable enemy of the wicked, is frequently found to speak with peculiar decision and energy, as the time approaches, when its verdict will be ratified in the court of Heaven. While to those who till then have disregarded it, its reproaches are terrible indeed, its testimony is no less consoling to the tender, faithful Christian. He feels indeed, that he is chargeable with numberless infirmities and casual deviations. And for ten thousand worlds, he would not venture his hope of salvation on the ground of the best works

he ever did. But of insincerity, of hypocrisy, of habitual, allowed sin, his conscience acquits him. It testifies that *by the grace of God, he has had his conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity.*

He has *peace with God.* This is a grand article of his blessedness. This distinguishes his hope and comfort from the delusive dream of the hypocrite, from the insensibility of the unawakened, and from the assumed courage of the affected sceptic or philosopher. The man who has peace with God, may smile upon the bed of death, may bid defiance to the last enemy, and “laugh at the shaking of his spear.” This courage becomes him. It is rational: it has a support: while the fearlessness of others is more distant from nothing than from that to which it sometimes makes pretensions; reason and philosophy. It is the very wildest delirium of the human mind. For a criminal to be carelessly sporting in the presence of his judge, when sentence of death might be every moment expected, would be decency and reason, in comparison. He, and he only, who in the crisis, the decisive moment, of an everlasting existence, knows or hopes that the JUDGE is his friend, can with reason be calm. And generally, if not always, there is more or less of this comfort imparted to the people of God in their last moments. Often have they a firmness and confidence then, which they never knew before. In the dawning light of eternity they can read their title to its bliss, and find in death a prelibation of heaven.

Finally, this is the blessed moment when the good man is introduced to the region of *perfect peace.* He “is taken,” says Inspiration, “from the evil to come. *He shall enter into peace.*” O kind and seasonable deliverance from the impending storm! Happy escape from calamities, public or private, long threatened, and long averted by the holy violence of prayer! —perhaps from heart rending trials actually felt! Happy escape for the child of God, to the arms and bosom

bosom of his heavenly Father, from a tumultuous, jarring world!—perhaps from a community or neighbourhood where he could enjoy little of that peace which he loved; and was often ready to say: “O that I had wings like a dove—that I might fly away and be at rest!” Blessed issue of *afflictions* comparatively *light and momentary*, in an *exceeding, eternal weight of glory!* Blessed exchange of imperfection, of sin, of doubt and fear, for the pure, perfect, beatific enjoyment of God and the Lamb!

What remains, my brethren, on this animating subject, is *the duty of marking* with the most attentive observation, the man whose character and end have been imperfectly described.

Mark the perfect man: behold the upright. How lovely, how dignified is his character! There is a majesty in virtue, calculated at once to attract and overawe every human heart. Would we see the *dignity of human nature* exemplified, we must look for it not amid its ruins—this would be to go in quest of disappointment—but in those happy instances exhibited in our world, in which fallen man has been restored, ennobled, regenerated, by Him who made him at first in his own holy image. Is not that, and that alone, true dignity and loveliness of character, which is formed on the model of perfect excellence, and which aspires after perfect resemblance to that model? Is it a degradation, or is it the highest honor of man, to bow humbly to the MAJESTY OF HEAVEN, and to glow with grateful sensibility to the SAVIOR OF THE WORLD? Can the schools, can philosophy, can the artificial, affected refinements of an age which boasts its illumination, furnish a morality which does not blush before the morality of the humble, heaven-taught Christian? Let us then habitually mark his spirit, his character and conduct, that we may be furnished with a *standard* in morals—a *test* by which to determine what is truly excellent, and what is so only in pretension and appearance.

ance. This is all-essential. Without such fixed principles of judgment and taste, we shall be the easy dupes of every impostor. We shall be liable every moment to err with the erring multitude, or with those still more deluded men who affect to be wiser than the multitude, their bible or their God.

Let us likewise mark the *principles* of the good man. Let us attentively examine the foundation of this fair superstructure. Let us trace him to the school in which he has learned such a sublime morality, such an exalted yet rational piety. The gospel, the gospel is this school. Its pure, heavenly doctrines and precepts are the basis of all this excellence. Its possessor has learned of CHRIST, and of THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD. Were it not for this, the character we have described would be a far more inexplicable phenomenon than ever yet appeared on our globe. But here is a cause completely adequate to the effect, and thoroughly accounting for it. Let this then be carefully kept in mind. Whenever we meet with a man who is truly benevolent, humble and pious, let us assure ourselves that *he has been with Jesus*, that he loves his gospel, lives upon it, and walks by it. And let us remember that *there is no other name* or system under heaven, by which ourselves, or any of our fallen race, may hope to attain such excellence.

Again, let us *mark the perfect man*; let us *bold the upright*; and ask: is not he the wise and happy man? Does he not pursue the noblest end; and by means which cannot fail to attain it? Has he not found what a restless, enquiring world seeks, and seeks in vain—*the secret of happiness*? He may want many things which *they* think essential to enjoyment. He may have little share in the wealth, the distinctions and pleasures of life. But he has learned to be happy without them. And he possesses what all their boasted treasures could not purchase; a calm, un-reproaching conscience, a relish for solid delights, friendship

friendship and converse with God. He has infinitely the advantage then of others, even were there no hereafter. But mark especially his *end*. Go to his dying bed, and observe the peace, the hope, the humble, tranquil joy which attends his latest hour. Compare him, in this honest, trying period, with the wicked man, reluctantly stripped of all he holds dear, compelled to look into that world into which he never seriously looked till now; while all within, around, before, is guilt, anguish and despair. Does not resistless conviction seize you at once? Do you not exclaim: "Let me die the death of the righteous—let my last end be like his?"—But even this is not enough.

Mark then the perfect man, and behold the upright, as an object of the most careful imitation. This is doubtless the scope and design of the text. A spectacle so full of instruction cannot be exhibited that we should gaze at it as unconcerned, or merely curious spectators. Nor is it enough that we coldly, or even *warmly* admire and applaud it. Its use is entirely practical. We must make the good man's choice our own; we must imbibe his spirit, act upon his plan, and pursue his path. Unless we do this, we must be criminally inattentive indeed, to the merciful design of Heaven expressed not only in this injunction, but in every pious example recorded in the sacred pages, or presented to our daily observation. Unless we do this, we must surely go self-reproached, self-condemned, through life: for we shall be acting a part directly the reverse of that which our best sense declares most rational, most amiable, most wise and happy. And how, otherwise, can we hope to know the good man's peace and blessedness, in our latter end?

Our first remark, in the APPLICATION of the subject is, that it powerfully illustrates the excellence of religion. How plainly, how transcendently superior are the spirit, the taste, the principles it inspires, and the course of action to which it prompts, to every thing

thing with which they can be compared! What a solid foundation does it lay for such consistency of character as all must acknowledge to be at once lovely and venerable! How evidently does it present to the capacious, ever-aspiring mind of man, its only adequate object—*perfection in goodness and felicity!* What a real lustre does it impart to its possessor, in rendering him a blessing to all around: a *benefactor* in the noblest sense, and on the largest scale! How envious, if any thing could be so, the peace in which he lives—in which he *dies!* In a word, how dignified and illustrious is that man whom the God of heaven delights to honor, by presenting as a model for universal imitation! It is HE who, in the text, announces to his human family the character which is lovely in *his* esteem, and which He has clothed with so many attractions, in order that we may be won to transcribe its excellencies, and enjoy its blessedness.

Our subject likewise instructs us, that if we would form a just judgment of a character, or course of action, we must judge it by its *end*. And let me tell you, my brethren, there are many objects which, however fair they may seem until brought to this test, are exposed by it, as deformed and wretched indeed. Try by this standard, the *hypocrite*, who dazzles the multitude with his pretended or fancied attainments. What a miserable spectacle in that hour “when tir’d dissimulation drops her mask;” and still more, when sinking down under the indignation of the final Judge, and the scorn of the universe!—Try the mere *moralist*; “rich, and needing nothing,” as he fondly dreams now; but awakened, when too late, to see that he is “poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked.”—Try the *man of the world*; surrounded perhaps by its possessions and delights, and enjoying a few years of dis-tempered gratification; but soon deprived of his idols, his gods—and alas! what has he more?—Try the *prayerless man*; casting off the fear of God and eter-

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nity, living insensible of his state, his wants and miseries; but finding on the bed of death that he has a soul, but no Savior—a Judge, but no Friend, in that neglected Being to whom he is going!—In short, bring to this test every character, but that of the real Christian, and it will appear poor, defective, miserable. Ah! what could it avail us, though the world should resound with the fame of our piety, if He at whose bar we must stand, should reject us at last—if He who knows our hearts, is even now writing upon all our religion, *TEKEL: thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.*

Finally, the subject instructs us how to improve the deaths of good men; especially such as were eminent in piety. We should carefully review their holy lives, that by contemplating them in connexion with their peaceful deaths, we may learn lessons of wisdom from both.

Doubtless, if the delineation given of the perfect and upright, is in any measure just, most of you have been applying it to that venerable man of God whose recent departure has excited so extensive a grief through this town. Few, probably very few, there are, or have been, to whom it is equally applicable. On most occasions, I have been averse to public description and praise of the dead. But on the present, neither regard to the providence of God, nor to your sensibilities and probable expectations, nor my own feelings, will permit me wholly to decline it. There is a peculiar *pleasure*, as well as propriety, in paying honor at death, to those excellent men who through life shrunk and retired from their own praise. And if religion is the highest glory of our nature, and if to have much of the spirit of Christ, is to be eminent in religion, I must confess, I have known no man personally, who has appeared to me more worthy of honor and everlasting remembrance, than he whom we now lament.

The basis of his character seems to have been a habitual sense and reverence of Deity. He exhibited much of the fear of God; a fear which, far from being abject and servile, seemed constantly cherished by a filial, ardent, active love. Wherever he went, and however employed, his simple object was *to do his Father's business*, and approve himself to his eye. A lively impression of his providence in all events, commanded his submission; and his fatherly favor sweetened to him every blessing of life. He enjoyed God in all things, and all things in God. In an eminent sense, he walked with his Maker, and appeared habitually to converse less with his fellow creatures, than with Him who is invisible.

The man who converses much with God, will be *humble*. This was a conspicuous trait in the character of our deceased friend. While all around him were convinced that he was eminent in grace, he seemed honestly to apprehend himself *less than the least of all saints*; and often felt oppressed in receiving that respect and honor which to others appeared far less than was due. Indeed humility, that cardinal virtue of the Christian, made up a great part of his character. He had deep and extensive views of human depravity, and of his own indwelling corruption; and went mourning under a sense of them. Hence he experimentally felt, and highly appreciated the importance of a SAVIOR, of his atonement, his intercession, and the influences of the Holy Spirit.— Hence he prized the *peculiar doctrines of Christianity*. He felt that they only laid a foundation sufficiently broad and deep for the salvation, and the religion of a sinner. On these he ventured his soul, and his eternal hopes. They not only supported him in death, but sweetened and adorned his life: while his life recommended *them*; and powerfully demonstrated how superior is a religion animated by the pure principles of the gospel, to every thing beside that bears the

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the name. The very spirit of his Master breathed in his temper, and shone out in his life. Where shall we find a man of such an affectionate, uniting, healing spirit—so ready to leap over those barriers which bigotry erects between Christians—so free from that narrow, contentious, censorious spirit which (I grieve to say it) has done such infinite mischief in this place—so ready to take to his arms and heart, the friends of God wherever found, and with whatever society connected—so ready to throw the veil of candor and compassion over their infirmities—so zealous for the *love* and *peace*, as well as the truth and purity of the gospel—so distant from the affectation of pressing unhallowed human passion into the service of religion—so ready to bear and to forbear; to become any thing, every thing, or nothing, so that Christ might be honored, and his cause promoted?—Yet when occasion and duty called, he was no unfaithful *reprover*: and the evident reluctance with which this office was assumed, with the meekness and compassion which tempered his reproofs, gave them double weight and efficacy.

The sick and afflicted among us will long remember the Christian benevolence and sympathy with which he visited, counselled and comforted them. On these occasions, and others, his *prayers* were remarkable. Never have I heard from the lips of a man, prayers which to me appeared more of a nature to solemnize and elevate the mind, to enkindle and cherish the spirit of devotion—I might add, to instruct and to edify. With what a fulness of thought and argument; with what pertinence, weight and variety of expression have we often, in our religious meetings, heard him plead the cause of God and man, of his fellow creatures and fellow Christians, of his dear country and dearer Zion. His prayers were far from study and formality, and literally the overflowing

overflowings of a pious heart. Remarkably did they realize the sublime description—

“ Pray’r ardent opens heav’n ! lets down a stream
 “ Of glory on the consecrated hour
 “ Of man, in audience with the Deity ”

He *conversed* with his God, as a friend : yet who ever perceived, in the prayers of this good man, any thing but remotely bordering on unbecoming familiarity or irreverence ?

He loved the habitation of God’s house, and was never more in his element than when engaged in public worship. Did not his constant attendance in the sanctuary, not only on the sabbath, but at all occasional meetings, if practicable ; and this, when he walked from so great a distance, though almost sinking under infirmities, and by his blindness in latter years, necessitated to be led by others—did not such an affecting spectacle forcibly reprove some of us who live near the sanctuary, and have our strength and faculties unimpaired ?

He was universally conscientious and exemplary. The love of Christ which constrained him, and the fear of God in which he acted, imparted a complexion of dignity, amiableness and uniformity to his whole demeanor. And methinks the high esteem and reverence in which he was held by all classes and characters among us, afforded a pleasing demonstration how much may be done, by living, breathing, and acting out the true spirit of Christianity, to commend it to the consciences of all, and to keep alive a general conviction that there is something great and excellent in real religion.

As he was held in general veneration, he was particularly valued and honored in this church and congregation, in which he sustained the office of a ruling Elder, if I mistake not, nearly thirty-four years. *He ruled well, and is worthy of double honor,*
 if

if to temper the dignity and authority of Christian government with exemplary tenderness, moderation, and meekness of wisdom, can claim such a description.

His death was *peaceful* : remarkably free from every thing of terror and dismay. He manifested indeed, in his last scene, his usual humility in speaking of *himself*. Nevertheless in the clear consciousness of death's approach, he signified his cheerful resignation to the will of God, and declared that he was not afraid to die. Being asked, if he did not think he was going to the enjoyment of his Savior—“Oh!” replied this humble man, “if I might be so happy!” Soon after, he fell asleep, and is doubtless now enjoying that happiness of which he had such exalted conceptions, and such ardent desires.

While we deplore this loss, as one of the greatest which could have befallen us, let us bless God for a life so long protracted, so eminently useful and exemplary, and for a death so full of instruction and animation.

We tenderly sympathize with the mourning widow, and her bereaved children. Their loss is great. Great likewise has been their privilege. What a favor, to have enjoyed for so many years, the company, the example, the counsels, the prayers, of *such* a Friend and Father! What a favor, to have seen his last hours more happy, more instructive than all that went before! How animating the thought, that all which was most worthy to be loved in him whom they mourn, is now consummated; that the path to that world to which he is gone, is open before them, and that short will be the separation which is so painful, if they may be found following him, where he followed Christ! Be comforted, my friends, with this thought: and let the love you bore him unite with all the other commanding motives of religion and eternity, in persuading you to be in readiness

ness for the glorious, final appearance of Him, who says, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me!"

My fathers and friends of this Church and Congregation: is there not something inspiring in the reflection, that some of our own depraved race, who were lately like ourselves, conflicting with sin, with temptation, with sorrow, have now attained what they sighed after, and are enjoying a perfection of holiness and bliss?—that some who recently were our fellow-worshippers within these walls, are now pillars in the temple of God above? There surely is. Let us not deny ourselves the precious benefit to be derived from such examples. Let us *follow* these holy and happy souls, considering the end of their conversation. Let us *mark* the man whom we now mourn, and keep his excellent spirit and virtues long in remembrance. Nor let us think it enough merely to admire and celebrate them. Let us make them our own. Let us endeavor, by the grace of God, to *be* what we contemplate with such approbation.—Let us imbibe the good man's spirit, and follow his steps. So shall we enjoy his peace in death, and share his everlasting triumphs.