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The Close of the Christian Conflict Desirable.

A S E R M O N

DELIVERED IN

THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALBANY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE FUNERAL OF CAPT. RICHARD WINSLOW,

JANUARY 10th, 1847,

BY

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NEW-YORK:

WILLIAM VAN NORDEN, PRINTER,

NO 29 WILLIAM STREET.

1847.



THIS Discourse, originally prepared in the brief interval between the decease and the funeral of the subject of it, is now printed in accordance with the wishes of his friends, as a brief tribute to the memory of one whose character is widely known and highly esteemed.

A SERMON.

“ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. which the LORD, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.”—2 *Timothy*, iv. 7, 8.

THIS is the language of triumph. There is no doubt, no solicitude, no forebodings of future evil, no anticipation of a further discipline. The position to which this great apostle has attained, is one of repose and joy. For more than a quarter of a century, he had stood in the van of the elect host ; and the banner of Christ had been borne by this illustrious Ensign over half the world of civilization. His life had hitherto known no rest. Since that awful vision which first blazed in upon him, the truth of Christianity, and kindled within his soul the fire of an intense and ever flaming enthusiasm in the cause of the Redeemer, he had flung himself into the great conflict of truth with error, and lavished on this unceasing and perilous warfare, all the energies of his renewed and immortal nature. He had preached the gospel in Jewish synagogues and Pagan temples—before Sanhedrims and Areopagi—to the rude Gala-

tian, the refined Ephesian, the licentious Corinthian and the intellectual Athenian—he had plead before Procurators, and Kings and Emperors—he had perilled life by land and sea, dwelt in dungeons, worn fetters and exposed himself to hardships, the bare recounting of which at this distance of time, stamps him a hero, confessor and martyr among the noblest who have ever suffered for the name of Christ. He is now at the close of this troubled and changing scene. He sees the end so near, that in anticipation of the fatal moment when the sword of Nero shall fall upon his neck, he sings this pæan of victory; he gives forth this prelude note of triumph. He viewed the point on which he stood with neither indifference nor regret. His falls may have been numerous and his imperfections great, but they are all swallowed up in the boundless glory that swells around him and laves the very spot where the martyr dies. The past is to him a monument of grace, life a discipline now completed, and eternity the region of repose and rapture. There falls from his lips no expression of desire for a longer pilgrimage—no presumptuous thoughts distrustful of God's power to carry on his work, even though *such* a man were removed from the earth to heaven. He feels that the *fit* time for his departure has come at length. For years he has seen it in the distance, a point receding as he advanced. At times he has longed for its approach; but always hitherto something has whispered, not yet, not yet. And thus through bodily infirmities, and inward conflicts, and forces of outward opposition, he has pressed forward in this good fight, until at length, he has reached the spot where his armor may be hung up and victory crown

with her unfading laurel the brow of the Christian veteran.

Nor is this language peculiar to him alone, as an apostle. It is the spontaneous voice of the *Christian*, when consciously to himself he has reached the point of victory and is about to enter upon his rest. To him, humble though he be, yet pressed even in his lowly cabin, with the same forms of evil, disturbed with the same inveterate and unsleeping opposition of spiritual adversaries, the language of the apostle, becomes the expression of his own intense satisfaction, when at length the conflict ceases and he feels that the crown is fully won. The trial and the victory are, in the main, the same in all cases; and whether the language of our text be the triumphant utterance of some obscure and lowly one, struggling for his crown, away from the glare and noise of earthly greatness, or of some apostle acting his part on a stage conspicuous to the world,—whether it be the dying words whispered by a Mary Magdalene, or shouted forth by the illustrious preacher of the Gentiles, it is alike appropriate, and in all does it indicate the desirableness of at length completing this conflict and entering upon our final rest.

The sentiment thus conveyed by the text, which I propose briefly to illustrate in reference to the solemn event that has called us together, is the desirableness of completing our Christian course, of reaching that point in our existence where with the apostle we can exclaim, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course.”

FIRST. Such a consummation is desirable, because

it closes our conflict with affliction. The world in which we are dwellers, is encompassed by a dense atmosphere on which disease rides triumphantly, scattering on every side poisoned arrows. They pierce the young, they arrest manhood, they hasten the natural decay of hoary age. In the train of this ever present enemy, Care lifts its furrowed front, and Bereavement moves gloomily, sweeping the earth with its weeds of woe, and Insanity glares wildly about, and a thousand forms of sorrow, with haggard visages, eyes dim with watching, and cheeks channelled by tears, march in sad companionship. God meant, since this was a fallen world, that amidst all its profusion of beauty and grandeur,—its myriad objects of attraction and interest,—its unnumbered radiations of his wisdom and goodness, there should be enough attendant upon us to demonstrate in the clearest manner, the utter ruin of the race,—visitors the most unwelcome knocking at our doors, and entering them without permission and against our wishes,—scenes of trial sometimes intermitted briefly, soon again to reappear and move with a sullen continuity across the brightest Eden spots that imagination had created in the future. There is no flower without its thorns; no sunny day without its cloud; no paradise without the serpent trailing his slimy course over that which bears the finest impress of beauty and nobility. I deny not the existence of happiness; I affirm not that a thousand strong pulses of joy do not beat within us, or that there is no real enjoyment on the footstool. But wherever you find the pleasure, you need not look far for the pain; wherever you see the brightest morning, ere long you may behold dark clouds sweeping across it. And thus,

through the pains of disease working in this exquisitely constructed frame ; through the desolation wrought by bereavement in the affections of the heart ; through a thousand bitternesses unrevealed by the subject to any other being, save him whose omniscient eye flames through all disguises ; through all this conflict with these hosts of Trouble, we press our way up to the throne of Immanuel. As we advance in life, the light-heartedness of childhood gives place to the deep earnestness of manhood ; and manhood, struggling in a cold and rapid current, soon feels its buoyancy depart and the stern influence of despair counterwork the power of hope. Youth is not Age. The one is the inexperienced cadet, whose slumbers no midnight alarm has broken, whose bright imaginings no sad reality has yet dispersed. While the other, is the warrior veteran, whose wounds, and fatigues and battle horrors, have forever borne from him the sweetness of imaginative childhood, and gathered around him the affecting experiences of real life.

And who can doubt, that it is a delightful, a glorious consummation, when the Christian closes this life long conflict with these various troubles, and hangs up his armor forever in his Father's hall. When death approaches such an one, he comes to recall him from the battle field ; to ungird his sword, and remove his helmet, and lay down his shield, and bid him henceforth walk untroubled amid scenes of peace and glory, the faint report of which has cheered him up to the hour of departure. At the appearance of this stern minister of God, the forms of pain, and sorrow and trial fall prostrate, and the victor, with his foot upon them, makes the vault of heaven ring with

his triumphant shout, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith."

SECOND. It is desirable to complete this great conflict, because it is a conflict with *Sin*. Sin is itself a monster trouble and the prolific parent of monsters. Even to the impenitent man, were his conscience sensitive, and his memory strong, and his reason roused to reflection on his relations to God and eternity, sin would be a living viper nestling in his bosom, and sending its poison through every vein, and muscle, and nerve, and sensitive fibre of his physical, intellectual, and spiritual being. But the Christian has passed through scenes of sorrow that have given him a deep experience of the evil of sin. His conscience has been quickened to feel its sting, and his soul has gazed upon that awful death to which, uncounteracted, it sooner or later subjects the entire being. He can never again, after so terrible an experience, become wholly insensible to its presence; never again close his eyes to its deadly working; nor ever again press it as a friend to his bosom.

In him indeed the force of this evil is broken, the cruel sting extracted; the *antidote* has begun to counterwork the poison. But as yet the remains of that evil, like a chronic distemper, still work in his soul, and the medicine, however such may be its ultimate triumph, has not reached its most effective end. We do not leap from conversion to perfection; we do not ascend by a single stride from the horrible pit to the sunlit mount of the saints made perfect, we still dwell in a body that through all its organs has felt the slow distillation of the poison; we possess minds that in

their rugged prejudices, their blurred visions of truth, their faint and often erroneous conceptions of God, and Christ, and the eternal world, proclaim the presence of some great evil not yet wholly eradicated; and through all the pulses of these hearts, as in the work of holy living they beat, now slow, then quick, now weak, then strong, now steady then intermitting, do we feel, in our deepest consciousness, and manifest to him who has skill to note it, that with our highest love for God, and our strongest faith in Christ, and our most ardent zeal for the salvation of man, there is mingled, oh! how much of selfishness and inordinate love of the world, under the pressure of which the Christian often travails in spirit, and with which he has to battle from "rise of morn to set of sun"—from Sabbath to Sabbath—from New Year to New Year—and on through all this earthly pilgrimage, until the last and grandest foe is conquered.

And is it not a blessed consummation when he feels that this conflict is over—that the tremendous evil of all time is forever vanquished—that from henceforth no tears shall flow over vows broken, no unmanacled besetting sins shall work deep anguish, and no love shall wax cool toward the Redeemer, no stammering tongue chant his praise, no polluted hands receive the speaking symbols of his passion, no unchristian words offend our brethren and no unholy affections wound the heart of Jesus? Where is the Christian who feels not a higher joy than doth the warrior at the trumpet notes of victory, in anticipation of that hour when his conflict shall be over and this foe shall be buried forever beyond resurrection, and he himself

shall put on the radiant garments of the saints made perfect ?

“These glorious minds how bright they shine ;
Whence all their white array ?
How came they to the happy seats
Of everlasting day ?”

A victory like this transcends all earthly splendor, and wakens among angelic hosts amazement and exultation. *There* where this conflict in its true nature is best appreciated—*there* where all other conflicts sink into insignificance beside the stern struggle of man’s conscience and new-born affections with the powers of darkness without him and the yet vigorous energies of a not wholly slain depravity within him—*there* on the high place of the universe, whither the roar of all other battles is never wafted, does the consummation of this struggle with sin seem greatly glorious ; and as the aged veteran, watched by the unslumbering eyes of these angel visitants, through all his well fought fields, at length, with one desperate, agonizing effort, casts off his life-long adversary, and with one bold stride rising to their level, flushed with victory, waving aloft the spotless banner of the cross, shouts “I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith,” they with an enthusiasm angels only know, welcome him *home* and prolong the notes of victory, and bear him to the radiant presence of the Lamb.

THIRD. It is desirable this conflict should be over, because it will complete our probation. Time with all its conflicts is but the first stage of an endless journey. Life here is a discipline with direct and

sole reference to a higher state of being. Thither tend, as in one ever increasing stream, all trials, troubles, cares, joys, and mercies. To this all things past point forward. The Word announces it; the Spirit suggests it and Providence, through all the net work of its mysterious operation, is plainly weaving the material for a future being. This is not the soul's eternity; these are not the scenes, nor this the state of a *fixed* condition. Here all things change; all things hasten to an apparent end. The world and all thereon grow old and give signs of decadence and final death. Creation travails in the birth of some better and holier state; and the very changing seasons and gradual reduction of all material laws to some fixed product, give token of another condition more stable. The end of the Christian here is but the beginning of his best estate. This is not his eternity; it is the state in which his spirit is made meet for eternity. It is fit therefore that this discipline should finish its work; it is fit that there should be some point beyond which the child of God shall suffer and struggle no more; that the harbor should at length be reached, and the vessel, long tossed on the unquiet sea of time, baffled by contrary winds, carried astray by secret under currents, washed by the overwhelming wave and strained by the tempest, should cast anchor and furl its sails in the port of peace. It is fit that a process of preparation should in time be perfected. We wish not to have things eternally making and yet never made. The work of change, and polish, and perfection may be long in the accomplishment, but unless it had its end, when would heaven be reached? When would the crown be won?

This life is only good, and gains its highest significance, from being simply a preparatory state; a probationary trial under the *gospel* of Jesus Christ. But a probation never to close,—a preparation never to be completed, is a contradiction; and life in such a case would be imperfection and despair with the impress of eternity. Hope here must become fruition there; our transient bliss, become permanent and vastly augmented; we must reach a spot where danger will be over; where our hope will be unclouded and uncloudable, reaching on from the bright morn of the fulness of life along a sky that ever lifts itself in glory as we advance on into eternity; where the promise shall reveal itself in the fulfilment; where Jesus shall be seen as he is in all his transforming excellences, and we in harmony with all the redeemed shall feel that our destiny, our lives and our hearts are all and forever his. Even Paul might have for a time desired to live away from his rest, that *he* might labor for the upbuilding of the Church, and the more perfect preparation of his own soul for glory. But Paul's work must at length be finished. It is not fit that his discipline or his labors on earth, should be very long protracted. The Church militant can afford, after a time, to give him to the Church triumphant. God can furnish for us other champions of the truth; while in obedience to his great law of fitness, he transfers the apostle to the Gentiles, from the prison and the scaffold to the throne of infinite love and everlasting perfection. With all the love of Paul for the Church and all his zeal to advance its interests, yet even he could not but feel that it was indeed a great and much to be desired thing, this discipline should have its

end, and hence, with a chastened exultation, he could exclaim in view of this glorious consummation, "*I have fought* a good fight; I have *finished* my course; I have kept the faith." To him, as it will be to all saints, the completion of his personal preparation for heaven was an event of thrilling moment and just exultation.

FINALLY. The close of this conflict is eminently desirable, because it introduces the victorious saint into the possession of eternal life. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness; which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give me at that day." Death confirms and stamps with the impress of eternity, our victory over sin and the world. It opens up to the departing believer, visions of glory brighter than imagination has ever conceived, and scenes of rapture here dimly apprehended and vaguely anticipated. (1.) Then begins the perfection of *holiness*. Ushered into a world of purity, the renewed spirit exults over Sin forever pardoned; over Sin eternally vanquished; over Sin utterly and forever banished from its presence, powerless to contaminate, annoy, destroy. (2.) Then begins the perfection of *knowledge*. He knows as he is known; he breathes an atmosphere of intelligence; he sees with eyes undimmed by tears, and reasons with an intellect unfettered by ignorance and undebauched by Sin. He stands on a platform with angels, and from a point far elevated above the darkness of time, surveys the being of Jehovah—the mystery of the incarnation—the crucifixion and the exaltation of the *Son*. All mysteries there either at once unbosom themselves to

his scrutiny, or more gradually reveal their hidden wisdom, as he ascends along the ever brightening course of life eternal. The *Cherub* there ministers to the *Seraph*, and Knowledge in its noblest aspects is the grand servitor of Holiness. (3.) Then begins the perfection of *Worship*. No curtain of flesh veils the sublime object of his love and praise. He enters an open Tabernacle; he approaches, directly, the flaming Shechinah; and amid the splendors of a present and visible Godhead, he presents the offerings of a perfect worship. No earthly affections, no earthly objects preoccupy his mind, divide his attention. Praise brightened by all beings and circumstances around, flows forth in anthems unto him who "loved us and washed us in his own blood." Neither pain, nor care, nor wearisomness, nor blindness, nor deafness, nor palsied tongue, are there to mar the purity and weaken the power of the worship in that upper Sanctuary. The veteran victor passes from our imperfect worship, to that which angels offer and the redeemed celebrate. Could we to day but catch the spirit of their extatic service; could we but feel one deep pulsation of that adoration which beats in their Hallelujah; could we stand near enough to receive only a faint, but just impression of the scenes of glory that perpetually renew themselves around that Throne, instead of wishing the aged saint back again to our arms and our earthly sanctuary, we would rather invoke the mighty Minister of the grave to open its portals and permit our ransomed spirits to hasten away to the enjoyment of bliss so ineffable, companionship so elevated and congenial, worship extatic and sublime. (4.) Then too, commences the final,

absolute perfection of our being. This indeed is not fully attained until the Judgment. "Which he will give me in *that day*." However glorious may be the intermediate state, yet the *crowning* of the redeemed one is reserved for that day, awfully grand, sublime and glorious when the material world dissolves and the Sons of God reveal themselves. Then will the Soul be installed in its spiritual tabernacle and crowned with righteousness. Crowns are the symbols of perfection and glory. Baubles themselves, they are the insignia of a state of exalted purity, happiness and power. When then Death has passed upon us, and the Judgment scene is opened, there will be revealed the glory of a grander coronation than mortal eyes ever before witnessed. In that sublime drama, the kings will be innumerable; the thrones of dazzling whiteness; the crowns more precious, conferring an inheritance infinitely more valuable, than all that ever sparkled on the brows of all the loftiest sons of Adam on earth, while he who confers them is the King of Kings, the Primate of the Universe. Then all imperfection has passed away forever. Complete in all the attributes of a most exalted humanity, encompassed by circumstances of ever varying interest; within, all harmony—without, all modes and forms of blessing suitable to the immortal nature; the glorified saint has reached the summit of all human perfection. Perfect in holiness, instinct with knowledge, fired with the purest spirit of worship, complete in all the attributes of humanity, surrounded by all the open fountains of joy at which the soul can drink, the saint becomes the victor and the possessor. With such scenes before him, with such changes wrought in him,

he can well exclaim exultingly at the completion of his earthly warfare, "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Such then are the grounds of that exultation with which our Apostle closes his earthly career. Such language, proper whenever a child of God completes his pilgrimage, is peculiarly appropriate when an aged saint—a veteran of more than threescore and ten, leaves this scene of trial and conflict for his everlasting crown. And to day I do but give utterance to the feelings which sustained and animated the venerable man, whose remains now lie before us, as nature struggled in the last agony, and the spirit, at length fully ransomed, spread its wings for brighter scenes.

It is not the province of the minister of Christ to eulogise the living or the dead. Praise unqualified ill becomes a mortal whose only title to salvation is the rich grace of God, that compasseth the multitude of our sins. That we are Christ's is our highest eulogy; Faith is our subjective title to life; the sacrifice on the cross, its glorious object; and the spirit of God, its author and support. To one who embraces this great system of Redemption,—a system which humbles man while it exalts God, eulogy is felt to be no less unjust than distasteful. Yet it is certainly fitting that we commemorate the faith of departed Christians; that as Paul hath done in his enumeration of ancient worthies, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we may on the one hand magnify the grace of God which wrought in them, and on the other, encourage the fainthearted by the sight of promises fulfilled—victory achieved and life everlasting attained, by

men as frail, as peccable, as weak as they. While the Redeemed in Heaven are casting their crowns at his feet and ascribing all glory unto him that washed them in his blood and *made* them kings and priests unto God, it is not improper for us to speak of the workings of Divine power in them when here on the footstool, ascribing all healthful and holy changes in character to the one true source. It is in this spirit I wish to say a few words respecting the deceased.

RICHARD WINSLOW was born near Saybrook, Connecticut, on the 24th of July, 1771. His father, Job Winslow, was born at Plymouth, Mass., the residence of his ancestors for several generations. *He was a lineal descendant of Edward Winslow, one of the original pilgrim band, brought by the "May Flower" to Plymouth Rock, and subsequently the second Governor of Plymouth Colony. Thus our brother enjoyed a relationship to those noble men, who at the cost of sacrifices, to us almost inconceivable, laid the deep and broad foundations of our national existence and grandeur. I do not state this fact as a matter of idle boasting, but as another illustration of the faithfulness of God in remembering the children's children of those who loved him, and suffered much in his cause. This is one among many instances in which you can trace down from generation to generation, a bright succession of pious descendants from the illustrious stock of the Puritans. It is this inheritance of spiritual benedictions, that more than all things else constitutes a pious ancestry a glory and a praise.

* The subject of this notice, was the sixth in descent from Edward Winslow.

Their prayers abide, operative and effectual, long after the paternal lips that uttered them are sealed in death. And when eternity has received them, the memory of their instructions and their example remains a track of living light, a pillar of fire to illuminate, and guide and attract heavenward the feet of their, it may be for a time, erring children. This it is which makes our ancestry a crown of glory. Wealth fades and corrupts; external rank puffs up without conveying down one real blessing; but piety illustrated by sacrifices, as it ennobles its possessor, so it confers upon his children an inheritance the most precious, a memory of perennial fragrance and ever living influence.

“ My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.”

Mr. Winslow, animated by the same spirit of enterprise so characteristic of the sons of New England—a spirit which has been of incalculable advantage to the entire union, in spreading everywhere the leaven of Puritanism—early left his father's roof to push his fortunes in this region. He first settled in Troy, then a thriving village; but after the lapse of some seven years, he removed to this city, in the year 1800. Here, with the exception of short intervals, he has resided ever since. His life has been one of great activity. Endowed with an impulsive and vigorous mind, fond of enterprise, with a muscular frame and a good share of health, he loved to be ever actively and efficiently at work. This trait in his

character revealed itself strikingly during the last few months of his life, impelling him, in spite of the progress of an enfeebling disease, to take his accustomed exercise, as if he was still in vigorous health. Much of his life was spent upon the water. For twenty years he commanded a packet vessel on the Hudson, in the days when that mode of transportation sustained the same relation to the travelling public, now maintained by our magnificent steamers. During the last war with England he was attached to the army of the North as commissary. He subsequently engaged in mercantile pursuits, in which he continued until within the last few years, when he retired from active life.

A reverse in business first led him to serious reflection on the vanity of this world, and the necessity of obtaining a title to an inheritance that would never fade away. He became a renewed man, and in the year 1818 united with the Second Presbyterian Church in this city, then under the care of the Rev. John Chester. In 1829 he formed one of the band who originated this Church.* In March 1st, 1837, he was elected a Ruling Elder, and continued with exemplary fidelity devoted to the duties of this office until his death. He lived to see his six sons well settled in life, and his only daughter reach maturity. He died on the 9th day of January, at half-past three in the afternoon, of a disease with which he had been occasionally troubled for more than forty years. At his death, therefore, he was one of the oldest inhabitants of this city, and one of the oldest packet masters—a

* The Fourth Presbyterian Church, formed Feb. 2, 1829.

class of men now nearly extinct, but who before the era of steam navigation were prominent and influential in our municipal affairs. He was the oldest member of the Session, with one exception.* He has gone from us, a father and an Elder, to that world where age renews its youth and a perennial vigor precludes disease and forbids the approach of death.

My acquaintance with our deceased brother commenced nearly four years ago. But although he had then reached the more than usual limit of our earthly life, yet the leading characteristics of the man, still gave strong and decisive manifestations of themselves. His character was naturally very marked and decided; and hence even the frosts of age could not wholly cool the fervor, nor the feebleness of physical decay smooth down the decision of early manhood. Possessing a mind of great activity and determination; affections strong, ardent, impulsive, and what is usually connected with such characteristics, a very open and candid nature; he engaged with great energy and boldness in the pursuits of life. His opinions were formed rapidly and expressed frankly. To those who knew him only slightly, there might have been at times an appearance of sternness of character; but this was in reality only the natural decision of his mind, rendered more marked and open by long habits of command, while beneath it there beat a tender, affectionate and generous heart. Yet with all this natural decision, it was a singular fact,

* Elder Uriah Marvin, now in his 77th year. Of the twenty-three Elders elected since the formation of this Church, only two besides Mr. Winslow have died—Timothy Fassett and Asaph Sykes.

that he was for years exceedingly diffident of himself as a Christian ; he had very low views of his attainments in the Divine life, and a very disparaging estimate of his own ability to do good. With all this modest and humbling opinion of himself, I have ever found him ready for every good work. As he enjoyed more leisure than most of the other members of the Session, it was our privilege to visit often together among the congregation. At one time for nearly two weeks, he went with me from house to house. I shall never forget, nor will those of you who heard him then, soon forget the spirituality, the appropriateness, the deep feeling of his prayers. His interest in spiritual things seemed then to have been especially deep and absorbing. He was in a few days attacked by the disease which has now removed him from us, and during its continuance he seemed to enjoy a wonderful measure of nearness to God and great joy in Christ. Within the last three years he has manifestly been rapidly ripening for his rest. His interest in the prosperity of the Church—his love for the sanctuary—his efforts to maintain meetings for prayer—his desires for a pure revival of religion, and his own personal enjoyment of the faith of the Gospel were never greater than during this period. During the past year he has felt that his time was very short, and that he must do with all his might whatsoever his hands found to do. Within the last four months, under the repeated attacks of disease, his physical energies have been fast giving way, and although most of the time able to be in his seat in the house of God, and about his usual duties, yet to his intimate friends and to himself, it was evident that

his departure was not far off. Two weeks ago he was with us in this house, and on the next Monday evening attended a meeting of the Session for the last time. During the closing days of his earthly pilgrimage, his mind remained in the same serene state of Christian peace, which he seems to have attained long ago. He viewed the agony of death as by itself an awful struggle—the change when flesh becomes spirit, as deeply solemn. For the scenes beyond Jordan he had no solicitude; and though he felt that the passage might be most terrific, yet confident in his great leader, he knew that Canaan was before him. His last words were expressions of confidence in Jesus—full of love for God—pervaded with the felt preciousness of the religion of the cross. He had been not a little solicitous lest when the last conflict came, he might be tempted to murmur. He dreaded its agony, the final sting of the monster sin, while he exulted in view of the glory beyond. But during the last hours of life, he became unconscious, and at length slept his life away, departing without a struggle to the bosom of his Redeemer, and the companionship of the Saints made perfect—calmly, slowly his sun set to us.

“His toils are past, his crown is won,
The immortal wreath is all his own;
I seem to hear the chaunt begun,
Of joy around the eternal throne.”

And though dead, yet in death he speaks to us with a voice more powerful than when in life. This Church has lost a venerated father—a faithful officer—a devoted member—one whose interest in its pros-

perity remained deep and pure to the last hour of life. Another seat is vacant—another voice that used to lead your devotions is hushed—another heart that loved the cause of Jesus has ceased to beat. Who of our young men will come forward to make good this loss? How should you all be impelled by this event to put your houses in order and prepare for your own departure. Do with all thy might, what thy hands find to do; for there is no labor nor device in the grave.

To those impenitent friends and companions of his early life, this departed friend speaks even from his coffin. He lived a Christian; he died sustained by the consolations of the faith he professed in life, rejoicing in hope of a better life secured by the blood of Christ. The last words I heard him utter—the last words heard by those who watched around his dying bed, spake of the blessedness of religion and the love of Christ. To-day he calls you to repentance.

Ye men of mere morality, come here to day and learn how a Christian can die. Come ye, who think that *doubt* is better than *faith*, and behold the excellence of that which you despise. I have seen the skeptic die—die with the indifference of a brute, with the rage of an exasperated spirit, and with the horror of a soul awake to its lost probation, the truth of the bible suddenly revealed, and the torments of a world soon to be entered—die with his last breath lamenting the neglect of religion and invoking mercy at the hand of Jesus. I have seen too the Christian die, but never have I heard him regret that he had professed the faith of Jesus, or trusted in atoning blood for mercy, or lavished too much of time, or effort, or

money in advancing the great interests of religion. But I have heard him lament that he had done so little for his glorious master ; I have seen him meet death with an intelligent calmness—with even exultation and triumph, converting the chamber of the dying into the vestibule of heaven and breathing around him some of the glory of a better world. And to day this aged Christian, from his coffin proclaims to you the power of a faith that can triumph over the grave and bless God amid the stern agonies of dissolution. Come here and learn to die ; come to the Savior of our departed friend, and when you are writhing in the anguish of disease, and trembling in view of an unknown future, one mighty to save will soothe your pain, dispel your fear, and enable even you to exclaim, “ oh ! grave where is thy victory ? oh ! death, where is thy sting ? ”

My brethren of the Session, another of your number has fallen. He has gone to join our brother Fasset, before the throne. If spirits departed are permitted to visit our earth, may it not be more than an imagination, for us to indulge the supposition that they are here at this hour, bending over you with deep interest, and invoking you all to act with increased faithfulness in your great work. Soon you will go hence to join them—already the feet of some of you are almost washed by the waters of Jordan. Be ye as men who watch for the Bridegroom ; on whose wakeful ears the cry *He cometh* will soon fall ; with lamps trimmed and burning may you meet him when he appeareth, and go in with him to the supper. A few more years and these hoary heads will lie low. Then like our brother departed may ye be gathered

as shocks of corn fully ripe into the garner of our Lord.

To-day Death speaks to none more affectingly than to these bereaved friends; yet is there cause for gratulation and hope even in his sad tones. From you the companion of his manhood and his age *he* has been taken, whose arm has long sustained, whose presence has long blest you. Yet while you will and must feel, even till your own sun shall set, the greatness of this trial, there are still in it many things to comfort you. You have seen the partner of your youth become the humble child of God; you have been cheered by the knowledge that his life has not been useless in the Church, and that his memory will be cherished by many a follower of Jesus with Christian affection. Together you have walked for many years. Though called to bury some of your loved ones, yet the *Father* has been spared until your family had grown to maturity and were mostly settled in life. And now when near fourscore, surrounded by friends, and mourned by multitudes, he is gathered to his fathers, in the full hope of a glorious resurrection. The time of separation cannot be long, and then when you too are called to pass over Jordan you will have in anticipation a meeting most joyful. To you, God's word presents a full cup of consolation. Its promises in all their blessedness are yours; and well do I know that you are no stranger to their sustaining power—their unmingled sweetness. May He the great comforter, uphold you amid this trial and when you feel renewed from day to day the affliction of your solitary state, give you greater joy and peace, than even the presence of your departed companion could bestow.

To you, who to day own a Father passed into heaven, what can I say that *he* has not often said? were I to consult my feelings I would lay aside the Pastor and take my place among you as a mourner. For I too have lost in him a father and a friend. Some of you profess the name of Jesus. Live then as heirs of the better inheritance; labor not for this world, but for that brighter world whither he hath gone. Let this solemn event quicken your piety and animate you to a closer walk with God. Some of you are yet without a saving interest in the mercy of Christ. With how much weight—with how much awful solemnity do the instructions and prayers of your deceased father now come home to your breasts. The mute appeal of those pallid lips is stronger now than when gathered around the family mercy seat, you heard his voice in prayer for your salvation. You possess the rich heritage of a pious ancestry, the benison of a parent's prayers and Christian memory. For you he plead; over you—his pride in all other respects—he wept as those unreconciled to his Redeemer and Lord. He died cheered by the hope that prayer would be answered and the object of his most devout and earnest aspirations would at length be attained. To day let his prayer affect you; make this sad scene, an era in your lives from which you will date the commencement of a Christian course. Then will you all at length, as one family, redeemed by the same atoning blood, renewed by the same converting spirit, meet around the throne of Immanuel. Life's labor done, its good great work accomplished, you will meet each other and the departed to endure no more separations for ever. May God in infinite mercy grant this unto you all. AMEN.

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