

A SERMON

W. Chauncy A. Goodrich

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH

From his Friend

OF THE
Daniel F. McMill

Honble. JUDGE WILDS,

DELIVERED BY DESIRE

OF THE GENTLEMEN OF THE BAR OF CHARLESTON,

IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THIS CITY,

On the 1st day of April, 1810.

BY THE REV. ANDREW FLINN, A. M.

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A S E R M O N.

“Be still, and know that I am God.”—Psalm xlv. 10 v. First clause,

THE occasion which has assembled us, at this time, in the courts of the Lord's house, is mournful. The painful event to which the solemnities of this day have a reference, has shed a gloom over this assembly,—hung with sables our courts of justice, and awakened the sensibilities of a State. God who worketh wonders—whose way is in the whirlwind—who plants his footsteps in the deep, and covereth with a cloud the face of his throne, has called us to weeping, to mourning, and to girding with sackcloth. We are this day embosomed in the mysteries of his providence. Clouds and thick darkness are round about him. Into his councils none are permitted to come. Into his secret designs none, with bold and inquisitive air, shall be permitted to pry. If we shall dare to rise in his presence, and demand of him a reason for what he does, the thunders of his power shall meet us—his terrible majesty shall make us afraid, and the voice of his sovereignty shall command us into silence. “Be still, and know that I am God.” True—he has quenched in darkness one of the most brilliant lights of our country—he has shrouded in death the first of her sons, and sent her, in silence, to mourn the loss of her brightest ornament; but he expects to hear, from her surviving children, no murmuring, nor complainings. He permits them to feel, and to weep under the bereavement—the eye may stream, and the bosom heave, but the heart must not repine. Amidst the floods of their sorrow, and the overwhelmings of their anguish, they are

bound to listen, with submission, to the voice which comes out from the throne, and commands them to be still, and to know that God has done it. We receive the mandate—we summon our souls to submission, and before thy throne, O God our Maker! we bow with reverence to the decisions of thy providence!

How interesting—how consoling—how enrapturing are the discoveries of revelation! It is through this medium that the lights of eternity are poured upon the abodes of darkness—through *this*, that the streams of consolation are directed into the bosom of the disconsolate; and through *this*, that the balm of heaven is conveyed into the bleeding heart—the heart borne down with many sorrows. The divine song from which I have taken the text is, *itself*, a proof of this. It is ushered in with the rapture of confidence in God, and the spirit of unshaken confidence, expressed in the highest strains of sublimity, runs through the whole.

Perhaps about the time that Jerusalem was delivered, and, with it the interests of the Church of God, from Sennacherib's invasion, this Psalm was indited. Disentangled from her enemies, and rescued from oppression, the Church appears to have taken her stand, high on the mount of deliverance, and in this psalm to have sung out her song of complete victory over all her opposers—Of what shall she be afraid? Shall hosts encamp around her? Shall embattled worlds direct the thunder of their artillery against her?—Shall “the heathen rage, and the kingdoms be moved?” She lifts her eye to God, her refuge—“He uttereth his voice, and the earth is melted.” Only let the Most High God, the streams of whose river make glad his City, be her “Refuge and her strength”—her “very present help in time of trouble,” and she will not be afraid, tho' nature should be convulsed—“though the earth should be removed—though the mountains should be torn from their deep foundations, and thrown into the midst of the sea—though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swell-

ings thereof." Through the medium of faith, she looks to brighter days—More enchanting prospects rise before her. The splendors of the latter day glory burst upon her view—when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth—when the bow shall be broken—the spear be cut, and the military chariot burned in the fire. To the same consolations is the believer entitled *now*. Only make the living God your refuge and your strength, and to these consolations shall *you* be entitled, my brethren in affliction. These shall ease your aching hearts, and dry your streaming eyes, in this day of your sorrow and bereavement. Believing that the Lord reigneth, and that the Judge of all the earth doeth right, while you feel the strokes of his providence, listen, I beseech you, to the voice of his sovereignty—“Be still, and know that I am God.” Resignation to the dispensations of heaven, founded upon a proper knowledge of God, is the single duty enjoined in the text. To the nature of this duty I will invite your attention, in the

1st Place—To some particular seasons when, more especially the exercise of this duty is both necessary and difficult, I shall call your attention in the

2d Place—And then direct the whole to the purposes for which we are now convened. And, now, may the light of Israel shine upon us! May that God, under the bereavements of whose providence we sit disconsolate—who sees our tears and knows our sorrows, assist us, this day, in the business of the sanctuary! Help us, O God! *so* to speak, and *so* to hear upon this interesting subject, that thy name may be glorified, and that our sorrows may be profitable to us!

I.—To the duty of resignation, in its nature and foundation, I am to direct your attention, in the first place. “Be still, and know that I am God.” As to the nature of this duty, I would just observe, that it consists in an entire submission to the will of God, without murmuring or discontent. As this is a calm and deliberate act of the will, yielding to the decisions of

infinite wisdom and justice, it necessarily presupposes a proper knowledge of the divine character. This knowledge of the moral perfections of God constitutes the only foundation upon which true resignation can rest. We may be *compelled to submit* to the superior power of another; but we never can be resigned to his will, unless we both know and approve his character. A proper knowledge of God, then, is necessary to true resignation. But *this* will lead us both to know and approve the divine sovereignty. Resignation, therefore, has respect to the sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God consists in his absolute power, and right of dominion, to dispose of his creatures, and all that concerns them, according to his own good pleasure. The demonstration of this attribute in Deity runs through the whole systems of creation—providence and redemption. It is absolute, universal, and eternal. The righteous sovereignty of God is founded upon his right of dominion, and his right of dominion is founded in creating power. Nothing can be more evident than this—that he who made has a right to govern. Standing, therefore, at the head of the universe—the fountain of life, the source of all being, whence have issued all the streams of created existence, he must be acknowledged to possess an undoubted right to dispose, at pleasure, of the works of his hands. To him does it become the creatures of his power to look up with humble submission and holy awe. To the decisions of his will, does it become them to bow, with reverence, and filial obedience. All this is true. It is true that God has a sovereign right to dispose of his creatures at pleasure—that by creating power, he has established the most perfect dominion over them—that the acknowledgment of this right of dominion is necessary to true resignation. But this acknowledgment must be cordial, pleasing, and founded upon a proper knowledge of the divine character. It also presupposes reconciliation with God, or being at peace with him. No man can be resigned to the will

of his *enemy*, whatever may be the extent of his power, or his right of dominion.

You have now the whole principles before you, upon which true resignation is founded—A true knowledge of God, in his nature and perfections—a hearty approbation of his character, and an acquiescence in his sovereignty. With these, my brethren, it is our duty to become acquainted. “Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace,” is the injunction of the Spirit of God.

In this time of trial and severe rebuke, when our heavens begin to lower, when God speaks in thunder, and the glory of our land is smitten down, it is time to acquaint ourselves with the Almighty, and be at peace with him. It is time to learn the principles of resignation, and to fall at his feet, with humble submission. Come then, brethren, lift up your heads, which are bowed down—wipe away the tear of anguish—gird up your loins—let the deepest solemnity possess the heart—Accompany me—we will turn aside and see this great sight—we will draw near to the excellent glory, and in the perfections of the God who has smitten us, we will find reasons to be resigned to the dispensations of his providence. But who can stand in the splendors of his glory? Who can embrace his full-orbed character, or by searching, find out his nature to perfection? To mortals this is not allotted. True, we feel that he is not far from every one of us. He is around our path, and our bed. He feeds us, and clothes us, and preserves us in being. He touches our gourd, and it is withered. He blows upon the streams of our earthly happiness, and they are dried up. He gathers in his breath, and we sink before him in the grave. We see him in the strokes, and in the smiles of his providence—we read his grandeur in the stars which sparkle on the mantle of night, and drink his goodness in the streams which water the meadows. But although all this is true—and though his people love him, and their desires are towards him, yet how

little of him do they know! The highest Seraph that burns before him, cannot glance a thought so far as to reach the extent of his perfections, and his glory. As we approach nearer, however, through the medium of revelation, we discover some of the outlines of his character. We can easily perceive that, as the King of nations, and Ruler of the universe, he possesses every perfection, in the highest possible degree, which is necessary to qualify him for the infinitely exalted and important station. He is infinite in goodness, infinite in wisdom, infinite in justice, and infinite in power. This is enough! A being who possesses these properties *ought* to be trusted. To his decisions we *ought* to be resigned. Infinite goodness prompting to the promotion of general happiness—infinite wisdom devising the best possible means to accomplish the purposes of goodness—infinite justice, giving security to the universe, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that, therefore, no description of rational beings shall ever suffer undeserved misery—and infinite power, controlling all events, supporting all laws, directing all causes, so as to make them subservient to the benevolent purposes of his righteous government; a government whose foundation is justice, and whose end is the happiness of all worlds. That our God possesses these glorious perfections, the oracles of eternal truth abundantly prove. They declare that his goodness is over all his works—that counsel is his, and sound wisdom—that he is just in all his ways, and righteous in all his works—and that his power is infinite, for “he spoke and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.” The possession of these perfections forever forbids the possibility of error in the divine procedure towards the creatures of his care. In these, O brethren! we embosom ourselves, and are tranquil, while the desolating storms pass along. With *this* knowledge, we bow, with humble resignation to the dispensations of heaven. Under the influence of this knowledge, and of a heart reconciled to God, through the death of his Son, we

are enabled to say, in the darkest times, and under the sorest bereavements, “it is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good”—While the chords that entwine around the heart, are snapping asunder—while we moisten, with our tears, the ashes of our departed friends—while we stand, solitary and disconsolate, amidst the long desolations, and ruins spread wide by the hand of death, *this*, with calm submission enables us to say, “The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” When this holy Lord God awakens the storms of his vengeance—when wave pursues wave, and peals redoubling upon peals of threatening thunder, shake the land—when he rises, in his anger, to “overturn, overturn, overturn” the guilty nations, whose iniquities have come to the full, standing unshaken amidst the tempests, the reconciled believer, under the heart-cheering influence of this knowledge, looks up, with composure, and fixing his eyes upon God, he says, “thou art my refuge and my strength, a very present help in time of trouble.”

We have said that *that* knowledge of God, on which true resignation rests, must be connected with reconciliation, or peace with him, through the blood of the cross. I wish this sentiment to be deeply impressed upon your hearts. Without it, it is *in vain* to talk of resignation to the divine procedure. Out of Christ, “God is a consuming fire” to the worker of iniquity.

This is a doctrine of your religion, which I need not now detain you to prove. On the truth of it, the whole system of salvation is predicated. Deny it, and you render the cross of Christ of none effect—Deny it, and the blood sprinkling was shed in vain—Discard it, and redemption through the Son of God, even the forgiveness of your sins, is rendered an unmeaning fable—the standard of salvation falls—your forms of worship become an useless parade—You may demolish your temples, and drive your teachers into corners. But *this* you will not do. This great first principle of

your religion you will hold sacred. You will be cautious how you touch it. It is written in the book of God. Wrath and lightning guard the page in which it stands recorded. You will suffer the minister of religion, and of your choice, to urge it home upon you. You would not wish him to act so unfaithful a part to you, and to his God, as to conceal from you *that*, without which all other doctrines will answer you no purpose. No, brethren—it is not *thus* that you would wish him to prove a traitor to the cause of God, and to lose his own soul, while he ruined *yours*. If then there be any truth in the gospel of the grace of God—any meaning in the doctrines of the cross—any necessity for the blood of sprinkling—any redemption, or forgiveness of sins through the atonement of our Lord Jesus,—it is a *truth*, that God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire, to the unreconciled and unholy sinner, of whatever description, or standing, he may be. With God there is no regard to the distinctions which obtain among men—between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned. Grace and holiness make the only distinctions which are acknowledged at the tribunal of heaven.

Reconciliation with God, through the merits of the Saviour, is the only principle which can remove us from under the frowns of his justice. To talk, then, of being resigned to the decisions, and dispensations of *One* who comes out against us, armed with omnipotence—declaring his anger, and the awakenings of his wrath—his jealousy burning, and vengeance rolling before him, is absurdity itself. It is assuming a principle which is at war with every feeling of the heart. Be ye reconciled to God, therefore,—be at peace with the Almighty—be on terms with your Creator,—He will then stand displayed before you in the endearing character of your Redeemer; he will become the object of your warmest love. Into the arms of his providence you will resign yourselves, with pious submission. Your knowledge of his sovereign right to dispose of human affairs

at pleasure—of his goodness to prompt—of his wisdom to devise—of his power and justice to carry into impartial execution, whatever may be conducive to general happiness, shall join the principles of love, and bring you to the feet of your Father. Here, safe and tranquil, you shall smile at the storms which carry desolation through the land. Between *your* resignation which, founded upon such rational principles as these, tranquilizes the soul in trouble, and *that* which is merely the result of necessity,—produced by the insupportable pressure of circumstances, there is the most marked distinction. The latter may silence the soul, and compel submission, but it cannot ease the heart. It still leaves the unhappy sufferer a prey to his sorrows—exposed to the beating tempests which toss the waves and the billows over him. But in a safer haven have you dropt your anchor. Storms, dark and portentous, may gather round you—“Deep may call unto deep at the noise of the waterspouts of the Almighty,” and death sit threatening on every surge; calm and serene, with your eye fixt upon the heavens, in safety shall you ride the wave, till your Almighty Guardian shall command the swelling ocean to be *still*.

Having thus endeavored to explain to you the foundation, the principle, and duty of resignation, to the dispensations of God, I shall now proceed, in the

II. Place, to direct your attention to some particular seasons when, more especially, the exercise of this duty becomes both necessary & difficult. When the dispensations of heaven run according to our wishes, and are favorable to our projected schemes of happiness—when our heavens smile—when our sun of prosperity shines, unclouded—our children, like olive plants, around our table—our friends numerous and happy—our Country flourishing—our public institutions prosperous—ministers of justice, firm, impartial, and dignified, shedding a lustre upon the tribunals where our rights are adjusted—our altars and our temples undisturbed, we find no difficulty in saying, “the will of

the Lord be done." We may then preach the doctrine of resignation to others, and think that we ourselves possess it. But this is not the *time* to try the strength, or prove the efficacy of the principle. We may collect around us the sons of sorrow, and the daughters of affliction. While their tears are flowing, and their hearts are bleeding, under the painful bereavements of providence, we may expatiate largely, while our own mountain stands *thus* strong, upon the nature, the excellence, and the necessity of resignation to the will of God. We may tell them to dry their tears—to check their sorrows—to sit composed, at the feet of their Father, for it is the hand of God that has touched them—that the Judge of all the earth will do right—that “he afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men”—that he has an undoubted right to do what he pleases with his own—that although they cannot *now* see the meaning of these sore afflictions, they shall know it hereafter. We may even attempt to hold up to their view the bright constellation of the promises of God to his children, who are “tossed with tempests and not comforted,” that “though they pass through the waters, he will be with them, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow them”—that though they pass through the fire, they shall not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle around them”—“that as their day is, so shall their strength be”—that comforting one another with these words, they *ought* to be resigned—they *ought* to be still and know that God has done it. All this is very well. This is what they are bound to do. It is *our* duty *thus* to preach, and *theirs* to believe and practise. But all this will not prove that *we ourselves* are living witnesses of the efficacy of this principle reduced to practice, or that it is the channel of consolation to our own heart. Our circumstances are by no means favorable for such an experiment—*our* wishes are not crossed—*our* schemes blasted, nor *our* gourd withered. It is *one* thing to *theorize*, and another to *practise*. But ah! when our heavens begin

to lower—our mountain to tremble—the sun of our prosperity to be covered with a cloud—the desolating storm to darken round our tabernacle—when our children are torn from our embrace—our friends numbered with the dead, or standing desolate and sorrowful, with the cup of bitterness in their hand—when our Country bleeds at every pore—public institutions dwindling—ministers of justice, guardians of our lives and property, cut off in the midst of their days—tribunals tottering—altars overturned—temples demolished, and long desolations stretching themselves over the land; *These* are times to try the force of principles, and to prove the strength of our confidence in God. Amidst these conflicting tempests, to stand unshaken—to “be still, and know that it is God”—to sit undismayed, as upon a rock, in the midst of a tempestuous ocean, “against which the billows dash with fury, but fall in empty murmurs at our feet,”—*this is the work. This* requires much practical knowledge of God, and of the correctness of his government over the affairs of men—much confidence in him, and much grace, to lay the foundation for *such* a resignation as this. But such a resignation is attainable. “Though the earth be removed,” says the holy Psalmist, “though the mountains be torn from their foundations, and cast into the midst of the sea—though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swellings thereof,” yet will I not be afraid.

It becomes us this day to take a song, and come into the presence of our God—to enter his courts with thanksgiving and praise, because we have been called to struggle with *so few* of these calamities. Ascriptions of glory belong to the king of nations, and let the borders of our land re-echo to the centre, with his praises, while the banks of our peaceful rivers catch the accents of the song, for he has done *good* to our Country—he has sent us prosperity—he has burst our bands and set us free. He has given us to occupy a proud pre-eminence among the nations—Our commerce has flourish-

ed—wealth has poured its abundance through a thousand channels—Institutions of science have shed their lustre round our land—altars have been reared—temples built—songs of redemption sung, and the banners of salvation waved in triumph, where *once* the savage and the wild beast blended their yells. As a people, we have been called to know little more than the *theory* of resignation to God. True, at times, in our national capacity, that we might not altogether forget our dependence upon him, he has put forth his hand and touched us. He has quenched in darkness some of those lights of our Country, whose glory had well near made us forget that there was a brighter splendor in the sun of righteousness. Once did he strike—the Father of our Country fell—the groan was heard from the centre to the remotest boundaries of the land—the sorrows of the nation burst their mounds, and flowed in full tide, across the American continent. Ah! I have touched the chord which *yet* vibrates to the heart of my Country.—*That* was a season, I remember it well, as *who* among you does not, when resignation to the high decrees of heaven, became both necessary and difficult—*necessary*, because it was a duty—difficult, because the bereavement was great—the stroke was heavy. Often, from similar causes, have the sorrows of various sections of our Country flowed, though confined within narrower channels. *These* have been seasons which called for the exercise of resignation, however difficult. They were always accompanied with a voice which said, “be still, and know that I am God.” In our individual capacities we have been more conversant with the bereavements of providence—we have *thus* received more repeated calls to “be still, and know” that it was the hand of God had touched us. Through our windows the desolating stroke has entered into our chamber, and stricken down the desire of our eyes—the child of our affections, or the friend of our heart. Has your soul never been pierced, as by a thousand daggers, when the eye, swimming in death, has turn-

ed its last sinking powers of vision upon you?—Speechless and aghast, under the strokes of heaven, have you never received through the ear, the dying groan, which has caused **** but I forbear—The gathering tear, and the heaving bosom answer,---yes!—Then you have known that these were times which called, in an especial manner, for the exercise of resignation to the righteous will of God. Seasons of desertion and of pain—of affliction at home, and desolation abroad—of individual anguish—of family trouble—of national calamity, imperiously demand the resignation of the Christian. *These* call him, with holy submission, to remember that it is *thus* the king of nations is conducting to their final consummation, the affairs of his government—*thus* that he chastises the iniquities of men—*thus* that the mystery of God is drawing to a close—*thus* that he is preparing the way for the introduction of the complete reign of righteousness, of peace and uninterrupted happiness—when “the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the continent,” and the church militant shall swell her anthems into the raptures of the church triumphant—when the banners of the cross shall wave over the world—when round creation, rising up to heaven, and thundering along the eternal hills shall be heard this song, “Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ. We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and has reigned.” To this glorious consummation, are all the dispensations of heaven directed. In the great designs of God, which have *this* for their object, are all the affairs of men embraced—and to prepare his people for *this*, he smiles and he frowns—he chastises, and he cherishes, as their necessities, and his infinite wisdom and goodness require. But when all his designs, relative to his church, shall be completed—when his mystery shall be finished, and transgression cease, then shall the ransomed nations join the angels round the throne, in declaring

that he has done all things well. But ah! Christians, before we reach that celestial state, many a weary step must be taken; “long tracts of pathless desert lie before us”—Many a tear shall flow, and many a sigh shall escape our laboring bosoms. Blessed be God, *this*, in tender regard to our weakness, he permits us to do, without offending against the law of resignation. Often, while plodding this weary journey, shall we be made to sit disconsolate, amidst the ruins of death—Often shall we be sent, with David, to the place where our friend has fallen, with *him* to lift up our voice of lamentation, and breathe out our sorrows in such strains as these—“I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been to me.” We shall, perhaps, have travelled on but a little distance, from this scene of sorrow, for a friend, before we shall be called to join the king of Israel in still more *cutting* strains, “O Absalom! my son, my son—Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!”—The tear, perhaps, shall have hardly ceased to flow for a beloved son, before, with breathless astonishment, we shall be made to hear the exclamation, “How are the mighty fallen!”—The heart sickens, and the soul is melted, when the awful tidings are announced, that “the Lord—the Lord of hosts has taken away the mighty man—the judge—the prudent and the honorable man, and the counsellor—and the eloquent orator!” These are the words of holy writ, and while, by their immediate connection with the funeral solemnities of this day, they touch the springs of the soul, and awaken the sensibilities of the heart; they remind us that it is time to approach the ashes of our departed friend—they remind us that this day is the *Scripture* fulfilled in our ears—that among us has fallen a great man—a Judge—a prudent and an honorable man—a counsellor, and an eloquent orator!”

Friends and Fellow-Citizens! You have commanded me to speak of departed worth!—You have commanded me to go before you to the grave of WILDS—

to pour the stream of anguish upon his ashes—to gather up what he has left behind—his Virtues—and his Maxims: to collect them before you, into one brilliant constellation, that while the eye, suffused with tears, gazes upon them; while the bosom bleeds at the tender recollection of HIM, around whose person they lately shed so bright a lustre, the heart, overwhelmed with sorrow, may have something on which to rest. O that the task had devolved upon one, the powers of whose mind, and the extent of whose acquaintance with the inestimable man, would have better enabled him to have done justice to his memory! Too sensibly do I feel that I shall not justify your appointment, nor meet your expectations. Rather would I resign my place to another, and sit among you, and weep---*Expressive silence* would do more justice to my feelings. Funeral Eulogies are not my favorite themes. To them, indiscriminately, I deem *this* place too sacred to be devoted. But there are times when silence would be injustice to the dead, as well as to the living---The present is one of them. Unfeignedly do I regret that I had not the happiness (for who would not deem it such) to have been more intimately, and for a longer time, acquainted with him, whose early descent into the tomb has awakened our sympathies, and opened the springs of sorrow. But I *knew* him sufficiently to *love* him. His name is written upon my heart. I can only tell you what I do know, and what thousands know---that he was born to be *great*, and to be *loved*. He was born to demonstrate, that none of the relations instituted in society are too tender, too important, or too high to be filled with dignity and usefulness, by MAN---that none of the duties which originate in those relations, are too extensive, too momentous, or too arduous to be discharged, with credit, by a *mortal*.

In travelling back the path of glory, which he so rapidly trod, we are surprised to find that, at *every step* he appeared to have gathered fresh honors. *Many* who, at *last* have risen to greatness, and to splendor of cha-

racter, have gained the ascent by very unequal steps. Their path has been alternately penciled with sunbeams, and covered with clouds---At *times* they have dazzled the multitude; at *times* disappeared in darkness; *then* emerged again into light, as circumstances favored, and not till having gained, or passed the meridian, their sun has begun to shine with more settled lustre. Not so with our beloved friend. *His* morning was ushered in without a cloud. Serene did he make his appearance above the horizon. Uninterrupted was his bright career---His light increased as he rose, till, while pouring the splendors of ~~his~~ *noon* upon his Country, alas! full suddenly was he eclipsed, and on his full-orbed sun settled the thick shades of the night of death.

Filial piety, the sure presage of rising merit, appears to have been among the earliest of his virtues, and to have continued to shine conspicuous among them, through every progressive period of his life. Early was this virtue put to the severest trial. The father of a numerous family, of whom our lamented friend was the eldest, was removed from over them, by the hand of death. To him did it belong, as standing foremost in the orphan band, either by his wayward conduct, to crush a sinking, widowed mother, and shut out from her bleeding bosom the last ray of comfort; or by his dutiful deportment, to ease her sorrows, and to let her lean upon the *Son*, while she mourned the *Husband*, dead. His generous soul chose the latter. He saw the mother sink—he flew to her relief---the *man* was instantly found in the *boy*—he wiped her tears; he spoke comfortably to her; he divided her cares; he participated her sorrows, and by participation, lessened them. He took her by the hand—the grasp grew firmer as his strength increased—it was loosened *only* when the stroke of death unnerved his arm. But while filling, for his mother and her children, the tender relations of a husband and a father, his vigorous soul gathered strength by the pressure of circumstances---the fires of future genius began already to be lighted up---his ardent

bosom panted for knowledge; and by the dawning lights of a mind, which was destined to blaze with uncommon brilliance, he began *soon* to search for the sources of improvement. With what eagerness and rapidity he commenced the career of science; how quickly he passed the companions of his youth, and his competitors in study; how he gained upon the affections of his teachers—with what mingled emotions of wonder and pleasure they looked upon his uncommon proficiency, let *them* tell, who, while they *envied*, could not but *admire*. How the parent struggled, and the son economised, that the fires of his glowing soul might continue to be fed, let *them* say who had nearest access to the interesting sight. Having thus, by economy the most rigid, and assiduity the most unremitted, fitted his mind for professional pursuits, the study of the law was selected, as opening the way to a theatre, on which his talents might be displayed to the best advantage. With *him*, to *determine* and to *act* was the same thing. Having settled the question relative to profession, he lost no time. Under the direction of a skilful hand, whose memory is still cherished, he commenced his professional study. And here we are at a loss to determine which *most* to admire—his assiduity and progress in study—his tender attention to the “little patrimony which sustained his mother and sisters,” or the fidelity with which he discharged the duties of the Sheriff’s office, for they were all blended, and at *once* claimed his attention. But what is it that the union of talents, industry, and virtue, cannot accomplish? The mind of WILDS was equal to the whole—He completed his studies—he broke from around him every fetter—he burst from the pressure of circumstances—he appeared at the bar—additional lustre shone around him—he engrossed the business of the courts—“he opened the fountains of justice”—he explored the subtleties in his profession—he surpassed his competitors in *practice*, as he had before surpassed his competitors in *science*. He revered the sacred principles of justice—he defend-

ed the rights of property—he asserted and supported the claims of the defenceless—he grew in the esteem and admiration of his fellow-citizens, and their united voice called him to the councils of the State. The sweetness of his temper, the amiableness of his disposition, and the liberality of his principles, endeared him to all parties. Unalterably attached to the constitution and government of his country, he ever stood forth as their firm supporter. A friend and votary of the religion of his God, he always carried with him a refutation of the calumny, that his profession was inconsistent with the bland precepts of the gospel. In the discharge of the important duties attached to the office of Solicitor, he shone conspicuous in the Northern Circuit. In that circuit he left an imperishable record, that in the discharge of the duties of his office, he combined *humanity* with inflexible *integrity*. But from a higher eminence were his talents and his virtues destined to shed their brighter lustre. In 1804 he was called to preside in our courts of justice—It was *here* he shone in his meridian splendor—It was upon the *tribunals* of our country that he poured his *brighter* glory. With what unbending firmness, what unshaken fidelity, tender humanity, and manly dignity, he discharged the duties of this high station, is not for me to say. A more indelible testimony of his superior merit, in these particulars, is to be found in the records of our Courts,—in the hearts of his brethren,—in the tears of his fellow-citizens. Never did the beams of Christianity, blending with every virtue of the man, pour so bright a lustre round his character, as when he sat, clothed with the authority of his country, to pronounce the sentence of death upon the capital offender against her laws. With what awful solemnity, and bleeding tenderness, have I seen him sit, while the criminal trembled before him!—How have I seen the tear gather, and the bosom swell, while his emphatic lips pronounced these words: “I would that I could make this last interview, which shall ever take place between us, profitable to you!”

With what resistless eloquence—that eloquence which thrills the soul, and establishes its despotism over the heart, have you heard him address the guilty offender, while he painted the enormity of his crimes—while he pointed him, all convulsed and trembling as he was, to the flaming tribunal of the Judge Eternal, where he should again be compelled to lift his hand, stained with iniquity, unless speedy repentance and faith in the merits of a Saviour intervened!—With what pungency did he exhort him to fly to this last, this only refuge for the guilty!—But alas! he is gone! Yes—“a thousand bursting hearts repeat it”—he is gone. This bright luminary is taken from his country, at a time when she most needed the light of his talents and his virtues. To an aged mother, an amiable and bereaved wife, and a lovely little daughter **** but I forbear—the subject is too tender!—O that I could comfort them!—Oh thou husband of the widow, and father of the fatherless, remember them in mercy, and forget not their sorrows!

Gentlemen of the Bar—I should do injustice to my feelings were I not, before I descend from this place, to express the gratitude which I feel for your indulgence and your partiality. I should do still greater injustice to my feelings, were I not to tell you how ardently I wish that I could, with greater abilities have discharged the duties to which your goodness has called me—that I could have done more justice to the memory of *my* friend, and *your* friend, and the friend of his *Country*. Under an unusual pressure of business I have prepared for the discharge of this tender duty, as well as circumstances have enabled me. Here would I stop—but a voice from the tomb of your brother, commands me to avail myself of your present circumstances, to address a word of exhortation to you. Your hearts are tender—your feelings are awake—Yes! the gathering tear, and the sorrowful countenance, tell me that the heart is tender. Your brother beloved has descended to an early tomb. He was an ornament to his profes-

sion—he was an ornament to his country—he was a blessing to this State. We have this day hovered round his grave—we have given vent to our sorrows—we have spoken of his virtues. In the light of these we have discovered reasons of gratitude to God for having lent us, although but for a short time—*O how short!* so rich a blessing. We have followed him through the various relations of life, and have been delighted to discover that he shed a lustre upon them all. In each of these he has set us a bright example. He has proved to us that, in order to be *great*, we must be *good*.

I have not dared to follow the departed Spirit, in its flight from the body, to the judgment seat of Christ; nor have I presumed to affix to its destinies the seals of eternity. *This*, I dared not to have done, without more evidence than I possess—I was not with him, in the closing scene, that I might have dropt a tear upon the forehead, on which had settled the shadow of death—I was not present to ask him whether he had anchored within the veil—whether Jesus was *precious* to him, in the last conflict of nature—whether the energies of the gospel had exerted their full influence upon his soul, and fitted it for glory—I can only hope that a character, in all other respects so amiable, was also a favorite of God, through the merits of the Lord Jesus. His departed spirit, however, speaking from its place in eternity, commands me to say to you, upon this solemn occasion, that neither strength of constitution, vigor of youth, brightning prospects, nor the plaudits of thousands, can turn aside the shaft of death—That nothing but a living faith in the Son of God “can tranquillize the waters of Jordan” before you. It commands me to say to you that, it is an awful thing to die—that to appear at the tribunal of the Lord Jesus—to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and to be adjudged either to the mansions of bliss and glory, or to the prisons of eternal darkness and misery, are circumstances of infinite moment. Yea. I think I see him, in eager solici-

tude for your salvation, bursting from the limits of his present situation, and with the eloquence of an immortal, intreating you to improve the talents, with which heaven has endowed you, in preparing to meet the change which he hath already experienced—He points his finger to the dismal vale through which he lately passed, and warns you of the horrors that must rend the heart of *him*, who enters into eternity impenitent, unbelieving, and unsanctified: Or with more pleasure he draws aside the veil, and directs your eye to the thrones of glory and immortality, prepared for the redeemed of the Lord in heaven; and invites you, thro' the merits of Jesus, to endeavor to have your hearts prepared, and put in your claim for a place among *them* who unite in the eternal praises of “him that sitteth upon the throne, and reigneth forever and ever”—To whom be glory, and honor, and dominion, and power, world without end. *Amen.*

