

The Death

THE

LIFE AND DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED, DECEMBER 4, 1810,

AT

THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REV. DR. WILLIAM M. TENNENT ;

LATE PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT
ABINGDON, NEAR PHILADELPHIA.

BY ASHBEL GREEN, D. D.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PHILADELPHIA :

PRINTED FOR W. W. WOODWARD,

NO. 52, SOUTH SECOND STREET.

Merritt, Printer.

1811.

[THE following Address, for want of time, was not fully written, when it was delivered. What is now offered from the Press is in no respect materially different from what was spoken at the funeral of Dr. Tennent; but the Author thought it allowable to endeavour to render it a little less imperfect.]

ADDRESS, &c.

Christian Friends and Brethren ;

EVER since I was informed that it would be expected of me to speak to you on this occasion, I have felt myself almost irresistibly constrained to fix my thoughts, as the subject of address, on those words :

NUMBERS xxiii. 10.—“ *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*”

These words were, indeed, uttered by a bad man ; by that Balaam who “ loved the wages of unrighteousness,”* and who “ taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”† But the words, though spoken by impious lips, are in themselves “ right words” and “ forcible ;”‡ words which the unhallowed tongue of Balaam was constrained to pronounce, contrary to his own inclination ; words which come with augmented weight because thus spoken. That a good man should wish to die like a good man, is not won-

* 2 Pct. ii. 15.

† Rev. ii. 14.

‡ Job vi. 25.

derful. But when a wicked man says, “let *me* die the death of the righteous,” it is the testimony, in favour of piety, which is wrung from the mouth of an enemy. Such testimony, indeed, has been given in abundance. From the time that the text was first uttered till the present hour, whenever a striking example has been exhibited how a good man can die, the language of the text has been the language both of the pious and the profane. No one, for instance, who has seen him die whom we have now met to bury—and very many have seen it; for he has, in a sort, been dying for nearly a year past—no one who has seen him sinking with heavenly serenity to the tomb, but has been disposed to say—“Oh, to die like him—Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.”

But, brethren, bad men, after all, do not utter this wish understandingly, though they express it vehemently. Their object is merely to avoid misery and secure happiness beyond the grave. They cannot truly desire, because they certainly do not love, that holy and happy state, to which the righteous are translated by death. As they are absolutely precluded from this state by the decision of God, and utterly unqualified to enjoy it, if they were not precluded, so in fact they could not wish to be admitted to it, but under a vague notion that it is a state of high enjoyment.—Farther, the wish, considered as the language of a bad man, contains a contradiction. *Righteous* is a characteristic term; and *character* is constituted by the tenour and habits of life. A

righteous man, at death, is what he is, because he has *lived* righteously. A bad man has not *lived* so, and, therefore, as he cannot be a righteous man, he cannot die one—the thing is impossible. I do not mean to deny, that there are some rare instances of a late repentance which is genuine. But even in these, it is only that part of life which follows repentance, which gives any claim to the character and hopes of the righteous.

I have said this to impress it on the mind of every individual who hears me, that he speaks what is both insincere and absurd, if he adopt the language of the text without resolving, in reliance on divine aid, to *live* like a righteous man. For not more necessarily does natural life precede natural death, than a righteous life a righteous death. I now propose to show very briefly, I. How a righteous man lives: II. How he dies: And, let every hearer remember that this is done to show *him* how *he* must live, if he would rationally hope to die in peace. Make the application for yourselves, as we proceed: It is my purpose to enforce it a little, at the close of the address.

My brethren—A man is denominated *righteous*, in the language of scripture, on two accounts: First, because he is interested in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ: And, secondly, because, in a qualified sense, he is personally righteous. No man can be happy after death who is not righteous in both these ways.

By nature all mankind are corrupt and depraved. What the Psalmist says of himself is equally true of every descendant of Adam; “Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* This original corruption manifests itself as soon as we are capable of moral action. No doubt there are different degrees of active and malignant wickedness. Some men, in their natural state, are worse than others; but in this state, all men, without exception, are destitute of positive holiness. They have no genuine love to God. Whatever they do that is called good, and which, as to the outward action, is right in itself, still is not done from a right principle; from love to God and a regard to his holy law. “But the Lord weigheth the spirits.”† That only is good, in his estimation, which proceeds from a right principle, or a good motive. Now, as there is a total and absolute want of this in the natural human mind, he who searcheth the heart, discerns in it nothing that he can approve. He sees that it is utterly vile and wicked. Hence the declarations of his word, “the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”‡ From this carnal mind, or evil heart, proceed, as our Saviour taught,§ all those abominations and excesses which degrade our

* Psalm li. 5. † Prov. xvi. 2. ‡ Rom. viii. 7, 8.
§ Mark vii. 21, 23.

nature and fill the world with misery. And even those who are not chargeable with outbreking sin, those whose exterior is fair and honourable—I repeat the idea, because it is most important—are still, while unrenewed, entirely alienated from God. The very thoughts of God, in his true character, are unpleasant to them, and they never “serve him in spirit and in truth.” Their lives are, therefore, made up of neglected duty and of actual sin. How shall any man of this description become righteous before God? Suppose that he repents and reforms—Will that make amends for all the sin he has previously committed? It will make no amends at all. Sin, in scripture, is represented under the idea of a debt: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* Now, if a man be run deeply in debt, will it pay his debts if he cease to contract any more, and sincerely regret what he has contracted? You know that men would not treat seriously a plea that should be urged on this ground. In like manner, repentance and reformation make no reparation to the law of God, for the debt which our sins have incurred.

But beside this, there is no man who entirely ceases to sin, in this life. The scripture declares, that “There is not a just man upon earth who doth good and sinneth not.”† Fresh debts, therefore, are contracted by all. And if this be so; if a man can make no atonement for his past sins, and will,

* Matt. vi. 12. † Ecc. vii. 20.

while he lives, be adding to their number, how can he—I demand it solemnly—how can he become *righteous* in the sight of God; in the sight of him before whom the heavens are not clean, and his angels chargeable with folly;* who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity.”† Verily, a sinner must have a righteousness which he does not work out for himself, or fall into hopeless condemnation. And, blessed be God, such a righteousness is provided. Let me state, in as few words as I can, how it is provided and applied.

Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, assumed our nature. His divinity gave an infinite value to what he did, while he “was found in fashion as a man.” Thus found he obeyed perfectly that law which our sins had broken and dishonoured. His obedience restored the honour of the law. His awful sufferings and death satisfied the penalty of the law; they made that atonement for sin which we could never make. This obedience and atonement of the Son of God, taken in the aggregate, constitute *a righteousness* which fully answers to all the demands of the law, both in its preceptive and penal parts: And this righteousness is freely offered in the gospel, to every sinner who,—renouncing and rejecting his own entirely,—is disposed to make this his sole reliance for justification before God. The sinner becomes willing and desirous to do so.

* Job iv. 18. and xv. 15. † Hab. i. 13.

“in a day of God’s power.”* Then he is effectually convinced of his guilt, made to see himself vile and helpless, and to cry out “Lord save me, or I perish.” The Holy Spirit changes his heart, works faith in it, and enables him by faith to flee to the righteousness of Christ. On this alone he now rests for justification. In resting upon it, it becomes his own; that is, it is reckoned as his. All his sins are then blotted out for the righteousness’ sake of Christ; and the possessor of this faith is adopted into the number, and entitled to all the privileges of the sons of God. Now it is, that, in the sense of scripture and in the estimation of God, this justified sinner, this believing penitent, becomes *a righteous man*.

Brethren; this is unquestionably the doctrine of holy scripture. The New Testament abounds with it. By consulting the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans, you will see that the very order of the statement which you have just heard, is borrowed from the apostle Paul. You will find that he first asserts the universal depravity of the human race—“proves both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;” and that, therefore, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;” and then asserts that sinners are justified freely “through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteous

* Psa. cx. 3.

ness for the remission of sins which are past through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The same writer elsewhere represents the gospel ministry as principally consisting in the publication and enforcement of this truth—"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* And the holy apostle declares that what he preached to others was the sole foundation of his own hope. "What things," says he, "were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."†

After thus giving you the testimony of inspiration to the truth of this great doctrine, that we become righteous in the sight of God only by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, I may notice, for a moment, the testimony of the deceased brother in whose place I now stand. Standing in his place I

* 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

† Phill. iii. 7. viii. 9.

cught to inculcate this doctrine, for it formed the favourite topic of his public discourses while he lived. But what I particularly wish to say is, that he urged it the most affectingly of all when he came to die. He told me, on his dying bed, that it was this doctrine that bore up his soul, and filled it with hope and consolation. He said (I do not profess to give his words, but the sense of them) he said, that when he considered his unprofitableness, his short comings, and his sins, his soul was ready to be cast down within him. But oh, said he—and the tears ran in streams down his pallid cheeks, while the smile of joy beamed through them—Oh, when I think of what Christ has done—that he has done enough even for the chief of sinners ;—and when I feel my soul powerfully and sweetly drawn to him ;—this sustains me ; this comforts me ; in this I trust and rejoice. Yes, brethren, the best men on earth must rely on this righteousness, and on this only, when they see the bar of God before them. On this we must all be brought to rely, or sink to hopeless misery.

But I said (2) that those who are characterised as righteous in scripture, have, in a qualified sense, a personal righteousness : That is, they are personally holy, upright, sincere : They truly love the law of God, and conscientiously endeavour to obey it. Their obedience to it is impartial, whether it relate to the duties which they owe to God, to their neighbour, or to themselves ; whether it enforce the demands of justice, of truth, or of benevolence. Christ

will never be the minister of sin ; and we are never justified by his righteousness that we may live in the commission of it. To imagine this is a horrible, detestable, and destructive delusion. That faith by which the righteousness of Christ is appropriated and applied, is the fruit only of a renewed nature : it is the exercise only of a soul changed from the love of sin to the love of holiness. And from these very premises, the apostle Paul, in the context of a passage already cited, concludes, that those who are thus “ dead to sin ” cannot “ live any longer therein. ”* Imperfection, indeed, will cleave to all they do ; and temptation may sometimes surprise them into transgression. But for this they will be deeply humbled, and mourn it as their greatest grievance. They will never plead for sin ; they will never excuse or extenuate it ; they will desire and seek a complete deliverance from it. In known, allowed and habitual sin, they will not, they cannot continue. It is, according to the apostle, as impossible as that a dead man should perform the actions of a living one. “ Whosoever (saith another apostle) is born of God, doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ” † Without a righteous or holy life, then, we can have no evidence, and can offer none to others, that we possess that genuine faith which takes hold on the righteousness of Christ, for justification unto life eternal. Wherever this faith is.

* Rom. vi. 2.

† 1 John III. 9.

it will as certainly and necessarily produce an exemplary practice, as a good tree will produce good fruit. “By their fruits ye shall know them,”* is the criterion given by our Lord himself, by which to try all religions and all the professors of them. While, therefore, the righteous man relies alone on the righteousness of Christ for his acceptance with God, and renounces all his own doings, even his best duties, as having any share in his justification, he, notwithstanding, is most solicitously careful to live righteously before the world—Before the world, did I say?—He rather endeavours to live so before God. He strives to keep a conscience void of offence toward God, as well as toward man.† He lives as in the presence of the heart-searching and rein-trying Jehovah. He is infinitely more concerned that his Maker should approve what he does, than that his fellow worms should applaud it. The righteous man sets before him the perfect example of his Saviour. Like him he goes about doing good.‡ He does it diligently, vigilantly, and perseveringly; he does it in all the relations which he sustains in life; he does it in despite of all opposition. He performs difficult and self-denying duties. He forgives his enemies, and returns blessing for cursing: He visits, pities, and relieves the poor and the distressed. In a word, he is not *perfect*, but he renders to the law of God an obedience which is *sincere, impartial, and persevering*—He cordially obeys the comprehensive in-

* Matt. vii. 20. † Acts xxiv. 16. ‡ Acts x. 38.

junction—"To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."* We have now seen how a righteous man *lives*. Let us for a few minutes consider—

II. How he dies.

The text, if I mistake not, contemplates the circumstances in which a good man finds himself both at the approach of his dissolution, and after that event has taken place.

The righteous do not always approach death without fear, though they usually rise superior to it at the last. When the light of eternity shines on the mind, it commonly produces a clear perception both of the number and aggravation of our sins. Of these the best men have enough to fill them with dismay, if their views of the method of pardon through the Saviour be clouded; and clouded they sometimes are, even with the unquestionably and eminently pious: And then their piety itself will make them fear. This fear, however, you will be careful to observe, is always *a safe fear*. It does not alter at all the safety of the state of those who feel it. They are as safe as if they had not a single apprehension. A few hours of anxiety at most, and every uneasiness is terminated in the bliss of heaven. But, blessed be God, the righteous often meet death without fear. Very often it happens—and I have been told that this was the precise case of our brother deceased—it very often happens, that humble Christians, who have,

* Mic. vi. 8.

through life, been much afraid of death, so much as at times to be sorely disquieted, ~~as~~ as death has *come for* come near them he has dropped all his terrors. Their graces have been so invigorated, their faith so strengthened, their hope so brightened, the light of God's countenance has been so lifted upon them, that they have passed "the valley of the shadow of death,"* in holy and rapturous triumph, or in calm and placid serenity. Of the righteous generally we may affirm without hesitation, that as their piety delivers them from the state of those who "through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage;"† so, by the same powerful principle, they are enabled to face the "last enemy" without amazement—frequently to adopt the animated language of the apostle, "O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."‡

But who can unfold the scenes on which the righteous enter after death? One of the elders whom John, in vision, saw before the throne in heaven, gave him this information, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he

* Psalm xxiii. 4. † Heb. ii. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 26. and 55.

that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”* Yes, brethren, the righteous have then bidden a final farewell to all sorrows, all sufferings, all sickness, all labour, all fatigue, all perplexity, all anxiety, all conflicts, all temptation and all sin. They have become perfectly holy. They are blessed with the vision and fruition of God. They behold the Saviour face to face. They are the companions of angels, and of all the worthies of the human race who have died before them. They join the general assembly and church of the first born whose names are written in heaven.† They serve and enjoy God without imperfection and without weariness. Absorbed in discoveries of the divine perfections, government and glory, they experience an extatic delight, to which the highest and purest pleasures on earth have little resemblance. They are actively employed in the service of God. They fear no change;—every change that awaits them is from great happiness and glory, to happiness and glory still greater, through all the range of an endless existence.—Such appear to me to be the leading ideas of the heavenly state, conveyed by

* Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.

† Heb. xii. 23.

those numerous figurative expressions, in which the oracles of inspiration give us some general view of a condition of existence, of which our faculties, at present, do not permit us to form full and definite conceptions. But even on this very summary and imperfect representation (all that our time will permit me to give) of that happiness which shall be revealed in the saints hereafter, who is there that is not ready to say with all the energies of his soul—
 “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

Such, we have every reason to believe, was the death of that dear man of God, whose mortal part we have just committed to its kindred dust. Having known him fully, you know that he lived the life of the righteous; and many of you know, by personal observation, that he approached death in a manner most exemplary and desirable. I am not going to say much about him—I am forbidden to do it, not only by the want of time, but by his own injunction. A few weeks since, when I was with him, he desired every other person to retire from his chamber; when, calling me to his bed-side, he said—and it was with a manner which it was impossible to see and not believe that he spoke from the bottom of his heart—he said, “I have to request that, at my funeral, but little may be said of me. Let the occasion be made use of to do good to others, but let as little as possible be said of me.” Never was I so struck, as at that moment, with the charms of deep and unfeign-

ed humility. I asked him if he was not willing that the circumstances of his sickness and death should be mentioned, with a view to improve them. He said "he must leave that, in some measure, to the discretion of his brethren." But he still subjoined—"it will not be necessary to say much of me." Much, therefore, I will not, and indeed, I need not say. A volume of eulogy, or a monument of marble, would do him less real honour than the temper which made him unwilling to be applauded.

He was descended of a family by whom the American church has been much benefitted. The name of Tennent is justly venerable and precious, to the lovers of evangelical truth and a faithful gospel ministry. A man of this name and family has not been wanting in the sacred office, in our connexion, for about a century past, till now.—Dr. Tennent died in the sixty-eighth year of his age. He was early pious. He received his education at the college of New Jersey. His attainments in literature were respectable, and a few years since he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He began to preach in his twenty-third year. He was first settled at Greenfield, in the state of Connecticut. Thence he was called to this church, about twenty-seven years ago. Here he has laboured with fidelity, and not without effect. He has never dishonoured his Christian or ministerial character, by negligence or by misdeed. He has incessantly inculcated the great truths of the gospel, and he has

adorned them by a life exemplary in all the relations which he sustained.

He had been declining in health for more than three years, and last spring he began to die. So he then thought and said, and the event has proved that he judged rightly. Since that period his declension to the grave has been regular ; and certainly it has been one more instructive, comfortable, and edifying, than has ever before been witnessed by me. He had no fear of death. He had indeed a strong desire “to depart and to be with Christ.”* Yet he was not in haste to be gone. He was willing to wait his appointed time. He sustained his long illness with a patience and cheerfulness that were truly surprising. He sought to employ every moment, and every opportunity that offered, to speak or do something that might promote the spiritual welfare of those around him. Many opportunities did offer, and much good has he done. The enviable state of his mind was mentioned by his friends ; and numbers, not only of his own charge, but of his remote acquaintance, visited him in his sickness ; and very favourable, and apparently deep impressions, have, in several instances, been made by his addresses to them. Perhaps he has preached more powerfully, and more effectually, since he has been dying, than in his most vigorous days. Those indeed must have stubborn hearts who have not been softened by what

* Phil. i. 23.

they have seen and heard in the apartment where he expired. While he was tottering on the brink of the grave he was several times brought into this house, and I think you can never forget how he looked, and how he spoke—May you remember and improve, to your eternal benefit, these last and affecting labours of his love.

He told me that he had none of those rapturous views of future glory which some have known. What he thought *little*, perhaps others would have thought *much*; for during the interview at which he said this, he seemed to talk like one who was looking right into heaven. But be this as it might, he certainly had an even, unshaken, animating hope, which was most uncommon. Though he had formerly been afraid of death, though he was constitutionally subject to fluctuating feelings, and though his disease was calculated to exhaust the animal spirits, yet for eight months past, I believe he did not pass one gloomy hour, nor suffer depression from one serious fear. What could *so* sustain him but the grace and power of God! “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” In reading a pious commentator* on these words, I found a description of the last scenes of our brother’s life, as exact as if it had been drawn for him—“That calmness (says the writer) with which a true believer expects and submits to the stroke of death;

* Scott on the passage.

that hope full of immortality which supports him at the solemn season ; and that prospect of eternal felicity in another world, in which he rejoices, and which he recommends to others, render his latter end desirable.”—Desirable indeed ! Every other object of desire on earth is worthless and contemptible in the comparison.

In concluding this address, let me, first of all, direct a few words to you, *Madam, the mourning consort of the deceased*—Deeply do we sympathise with you. You have indeed lost much. But under such a loss, I can scarcely think of one consolatory circumstance or consideration, which is not all your own. These circumstances and considerations it were superfluous to repeat. You know them, you recollect them, and you appreciate them. Let me only, with fraternal tenderness, counsel you often to think that the covenant God of your husband lives, and that he will be to you the widow’s God. On him let your dependance at all times be placed ; to him apply in all your trials and exigencies. He will “never leave thee nor forsake thee.”* Press forward in the path which was trodden by him who was most dear to you—a path which we trust you have already entered ; and the time is at hand when you will meet him never more to separate :—meet him where death, and sorrow, and sighing, shall be exchanged for life, and joy, and blessedness ineffable. To the care of di-

* Heb. xiii. 5.

vine Providence, and to the influences of divine grace, we most affectionately and fervently commend you.

Relations and friends of the deceased—Your connexion and intimacy with him over whom you this day shed your tears, was indeed a privilege, the loss of which it is natural to deplore. But do not forget that you have not wholly lost it. The prayers of your kinsman and friend in your behalf—and they were many and fervent—are still before the throne of God ; and his counsels and example are still in your memory. If those prayers be answered, if those counsels be regarded, if that example be followed, you cannot fail to be happy. Be it your concern to do all in your power that these suppositions and this event, may be realized. In so doing you will give the best testimonial of your attachment and love to him for whom you mourn—In so doing you will ensure yourselves against an everlasting separation from him. To this he would exhort you, if he could now speak to you from the mansions of bliss. Live the life of the righteous. Such a life reckons among its advantages a consolation under affliction, which the wicked and ungodly can never know. To all who live this life, and to them exclusively, it belongs to say—“ Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal,

but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* You have reason to be thankful that “ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope.”† God grant that you may have the same hope in death which your departed relative possessed. Live the life of the righteous, and your last end shall be like his.

Brethren in the gospel ministry—The Sovereign Disposer of life and death has taken from us one of our number, with whom some of us have long been connected in ministerial fellowship and affection. His death is a loss to us and to the church. But he had finished his labours, and the Lord of the vineyard has called him to his rest and reward. Let us emulate his fidelity; and by increased exertions and activity prevent, as far as we can, that lack of service which his removal might otherwise produce in this congregation, and in other places. Especially does this occasion call each of us to think seriously of the account which we are speedily to render of our own stewardship. Could we, at this moment, put our souls in his soul’s place who is taken from us, what should we see to be most important? Would it be that we had enjoyed ease, or wealth, or literary leisure, or fame, or any of the distinctions of this vain world? No assuredly—But that we had been willing to spend and be spent in the service of our Lord; that we had been faithful to our own souls and the souls of others; that we had been instru-

* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

† 1 Thess. iv. 13.

mental in turning many unto righteousness; that we met with many in heaven who, through our instrumentality, lived the life and died the death of the righteous, and who, to all eternity, were to be our “joy and crown.”* Let us then, in the strength of God, address ourselves, with all our energies, to the pursuit of these objects. Let us set aside every thing that would come in competition with them. Let us work while the day lasts—there will be rest enough in heaven. There “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”†

People of this congregation—Your faithful pastor has completed his labours among you. But remember that you are yet to stand with him before the judge of quick and dead—There you are to account for the prayers, the tears, the instructions, the counsels, the entreaties, the warnings, the reproofs and the example, which have filled up his long ministry among you. A solemn responsibility this, which rests upon you all. Those who shall be found, by the aids of grace, to have improved his ministrations to the saving of their souls, will enter with him “into the joy of their Lord.”‡ But oh! if any shall have remained without improvement, he will be “a swift witness”§ against them, that they have neglected and abused the most peculiar privileges and advantages;

* Phillip iv. 1. † Dan. xii. 3. ‡ Matt. xxv. 21. § Mal. iii. 5.

and, of course, they must be subjected to the most aggravated condemnation. To prevent, if possible, so fearful a doom, let every unsanctified sinner here, consider our deceased brother, though dead, as yet speaking to him*—consider the dead as sending him, by me, one earnest intreaty more, that without delay he flee to the Saviour. His blood cleanseth from all sin.† Though your guilt be great, the merits of Jesus are still greater. Take to yourselves, without extenuation or excuse, the character of sinners in all its extent. Fall as condemned criminals at the footstool of sovereign mercy. Plead there for a free pardon, through the perfect righteousness of the Redeemer. Beseech of God, by his holy Spirit, to enable you to rest by faith on this righteousness, for a complete justification. Urge and continue your suit till it be successful—till you know in whom you have believed.‡ And let the love of Christ constrain you§ to devote all that you have and are to his glory and praise. Seek from him, as your spiritual head, grace to subdue every corruption, to avoid every sin, to discharge every duty—In his strength live the life of the righteous; and then, your past neglect notwithstanding, “your last end shall be like his.” Amen.

* Heb. xi. 4. † 1 John i. 7. ‡ 2 Tim. i. 12. § 2 Cor. v. 14.