

HOME,
THE SCHOOL,
AND
THE CHURCH;
OR THE
PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.

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THE
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ARTICLE I.

DEFICIENCIES AND MEANS OF SUCCESS IN
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.*

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

CHRISTIAN education is a most important part of every parent's duty, and the root of innumerable future blessings. It is common to hear complaints, that the children of pious parents disappoint the expectations which are usually, and not unnaturally formed; and it is true that this is too often the case; and that in some instances children piously educated, will, when they break through the restraints of education and habit, become excessively wicked; and they may even, like Eli's and David's children, perish in their wickedness. In these extreme cases, there has probably been either some serious neglect of parental duty, or the formation of unhappy connexions with others; at least every Christian parent is dumb before God under such awful dispensations, and is feelingly alive to the conviction of his own sinfulness.

But, after all, the mass of Christian piety in a country will be found to be in the generation of the pious; and though God shows his own sovereignty in raising up, sometimes, an eminent instrument of good from among the most wicked, he also shows the riches and the faithfulness of his own promises: "The generation of the upright is blessed: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

It may be useful briefly to notice some causes of want of success, and also to touch upon the means of a successful Christian education.

I. In considering the causes of want of success we must first notice the *disregard of one of the most important religious principles*, a due knowledge of which lies at the root of all success in this work—that all children are by *nature* born in sin, and the children of wrath; that they inherit from their parents a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. However pious the parent, his nature is cor-

* Part of the *Introduction to DOMESTIC PORTRAITURE* of Legh Richmond, &c., by the Rev. E. BICKERSTETH. Republished by R. Carter and Brothers, N. Y. 1850.

ARTICLE IX.

A SERMON ON THE DEATH OF DR. ALEXANDER.*

BY THE REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., TRENTON, N. J.

"Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."—PHILIPPIANS 3 : 17.

WHEN the apostle, in this as in several other places, seems to hold himself up as a pattern of the Christian character, we have no reason to be offended as if he had departed from the humility which is so essential a feature of that character. In the same sincerity with which he spoke of himself in his unconverted state as "the chief of sinners," he spoke of himself, after his conversion, as "less than the least of all saints." It is in this tone he characterizes himself whenever he speaks of his personal standing disconnected from the grace of God, which made him more than he was in himself. Just as when he speaks of his official rank in the church, he distinguishes between what he was by the force of providential circumstances and gracious endowments, and what he was, if judged according to his personal demerit and insufficiency; in the one case having the boldness to affirm that he "was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," and in the other honestly confessing "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle;" his own words defining the twofold character to be, in the one aspect, "though I be nothing," and in the other, "by the grace of God I am what I am;" "not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

To this general explanation it may be added, that in many instances in which the apostle presents himself as an example for imitation, it is done in reference to his general course, as one who having been convinced of the truth of Christianity, had openly and wholly renounced all unbelief, and adopted the whole creed of Christ, and all its institutions. As he had now ceased to be a Pharisee, and an Old Testament Jew merely, and was confessing Christ openly and unreservedly, baptizing in his name as a divine person, observing the Lord's supper, knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified as the foundation of his ministry, endeavouring in all things to make known and act according to the truth of the Gospel, in such respects Paul might, without the slightest presumption, appeal to his fellow-converts, to "be followers of him." This is the spirit of our immediate context, where, in connexion with the humblest acknowledgments that he had not "already attained, neither was already perfect," nor "counted himself to have apprehended," he avows his determination to renounce all confidence in the flesh, and in his natural advantages as a Jew, and to count all things but loss for the

* This sermon, preached by Dr. Hall on the Sabbath after the decease of Dr. Alexander, was, at the Editor's request, sent for the "Presbyterian Magazine." But another article having been subsequently prepared by the Editor for the "Presbyterian Magazine," the present communication, whose length prevented its insertion in that periodical, was reserved for "Home, the School, and the Church."

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; forgetting what was behind, to reach forward for the gracious prize, and to control his course in life by this principle. In all this there was no vanity, no presumption; no setting up of himself as a pattern of perfection; no violation of his own maxim that a Christian ought not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but, on the contrary, not a word more than every disciple of Christ, however humble in rank or character, ought to say, and does say in the very profession of his faith.

The text, therefore, gives us a warrant, even an injunction, to use the lives of consistent Christians as examples of the nature and influence of Christianity. "Mark them, [literally behold, notice them,] which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample." Such lives are the practical results of Christianity. They illustrate it, by showing in real life, how true faith looks and acts. The Bible gives the description of such a character; but particular biography furnishes the living instance and exemplification. The Bible enjoins such a life, but the biography shows that it is practicable, and how it is practicable for all believers, as well as chief apostles; practicable for persons like ourselves, and of our own time, as well as for those of the first ages, though they were of such as were inspired, and had seen Jesus Christ our Lord.

The text, considered in the proper scope of its exposition, instructs us also in the principle upon which all human examples of Christian faith are to be lawfully and practically used. They are not to be held up as themselves the objects of our praise and admiration. They are to be regarded as the works of divine grace; as specimens of what it is to walk according to the power of the Spirit of God, disposing and enabling men like ourselves to obey the Gospel. Hence they are to be used, not for eulogy, but for ensamples. We are not to celebrate, so much as to study them. There is a solemn responsibility connected with our "marking," them. The great end before us, in regard to such examples, should not be to gratify our friendship, or express our gratitude, or to pay our honours; but to mark their walk for our own imitation, to disprove the theory that a consistent Christian life is beyond our reach, and to stimulate us by all the encouragements that their living examples afford, to be followers of them.

One of the first and most important of our religious inquiries, is as to the nature of faith, the evidence of its existence, the signs of its genuineness. Verbal definitions on these points, even those that are given in the Scriptures, become much more intelligible and impressive when they are illustrated by living examples. The Epistle to the Hebrews defines faith in a single sentence; but follows the definition with a long chapter of historical references, covering the whole compass of the sacred records as then existing, from Abel to the latest of the prophets. The New Testament furnishes a supplement to those illustrations, in the parables of our Lord, and in many inci-

dents of the lives of the apostles and other disciples ; so that from the beginning of the Bible to the end, we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. This is enough ; but still, in a matter of such fundamental consequence, we feel as if we could not have too numerous specimens of the varieties of form and manner in which faith is developed. We love to read the lives of men of God, who, like ourselves, have had no help from the invisible manifestations of miracles, from the sight of Christ, or from the experience of those who personally saw and heard the testimony of eye-witnesses. And even when we have all these in our libraries, we feel that we should understand the subject more clearly, if we could see men of our own day, men acting and conversing amongst ourselves, whom we can follow year after year, in their private as well as public "walk," and whom we can "mark" by our constant observation, to see what is the life of faith.

The venerable father whose departure has just occurred, would have been eighty years of age, had he lived until the 17th day of April, 1852. For more than three-fourths of that long period he may be said to have been in public life ; for as early as the age of nineteen [Oct. 1, 1791], he was licensed by the Presbytery of Lexington, Virginia, to preach as a candidate for the ministry. After four years of missionary employment in the wild regions of his native state, he was ordained [1795]. Two years afterwards he was elected President of Hampden Sidney College, in Prince Edward County, Virginia, where he served for about nine years, for most of which time he was the principal supply of three neighbouring congregations. For six years, from the year 1806, he was pastor of a church in Philadelphia, when (in May, 1812) the General Assembly called him to open their theological seminary in Princeton, as its first professor. He began his instructions in the same year. From that date till the hour of his decease (on the 22d of October, 1851), he was, by the very office he held, kept in a prominent position before the country ; an object of "mark" to a succession of pupils, whose aggregate number is over eighteen hundred, comprising men scattered over every part of the United States, and at most of the missionary stations abroad ; to the Church at large which had such an important stake in his character, and to the multitudes to whom he became known by his writings, and by the report of the great numbers of his pupils, who, as preachers, teachers, missionaries, officers of public institutions, and otherwise, carried his name and influence to a wide extent ; and by the report of the thousands who, during his forty years' residence in Princeton, were educated at the College there, and had such frequent opportunities of knowing him as a preacher of the Gospel, and a private Christian. He was known also, personally to a large number who have, in the course of his ministry of sixty years, heard him preach, and known his life. In many counties of Virginia, his native state, he is still familiarly remembered. In the city of Philadelphia he was well known, not only

by his preaching in his own pulpit, and by his introduction to the delegates of the whole Church then meeting annually in the General Assembly held in that city, but in the suburbs, where it was his custom to hold religious meetings; in his weekly catechizing of children; in his co-operation in the "Evangelical Society," for the diffusion of the truth amongst all classes, whether within or without the limits of any particular congregation; and in his connexion with the various enterprises of philanthropy in which that city then took the lead.

In thus casting a glance over the prominence of Dr. Alexander's public life, and recalling the wide-spread notoriety of his name in our own and other churches, it is a most profitable fact to state in connexion with such a review, that gathering up the testimony of all these classes of observers, his walk has been that of faith. From youth to old age his course has been that of consistent piety. His life has been that of those who walk as they have the apostles for an ensample. And the illustration, the instructive point of all this, strikes me as consisting, in showing us that the essence, the great quality of the true life of faith, lies now, as it ever has done, in a simple following of what is true and right in the sight of God. The ignorant, the weak-minded, may have a religious faith which is little more than credulity, an uninformed, indiscriminating confidence in what they have received by education or tradition; they may pass through their obscure and unobserved lives, from the cradle to the grave without a reproach, because their very circumstances have protected them; but where we see a man of the strongest and most sagacious order of intellect, a man of solid learning, and such extensive and varied knowledge, as to be proverbial for the treasures of his memory;—a man whose daily reading was in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin,—a man who was at home in the mental sciences, and whose inquisitive mind penetrated into all kinds of knowledge, so as to be ready on every subject of conversation; when we see a man of this description, living, conversing, preaching, instructing, writing, with the same simplicity, and directness, and perseverance of faith as the obscurest and most illiterate of God's people,—when this faith becomes the pervading spirit and grand characteristic of the whole man, so as to modify and shape every other quality of his intellect and affections,—then we see that this was his true greatness—this was after all what made him so extraordinary a character. And the practical benefit of marking such a man is, to make us know that whilst the best grade of piety may subsist with the highest mental endowments and acquirements, as well as with the humblest, yet, after all, the true ensample of the piety of apostles and all saints lies in their simple credence of Divine truth, and a simple conformity of common life to Divine precepts.

Those who marked the character of Dr. Alexander's piety, must have noticed with what a direct and childlike docility he received whatever he found in the Scriptures. His excellent works, on the "Canon of Scripture," and "The Evidences of Christianity," show

that his faith in the Bible was founded on the deliberate conviction of his reason that it is altogether the Word of God. Convinced of this fact, after personal and careful scrutiny, he knew that he had nothing to do but to yield his mind, his judgment, his conduct, to the simple statements of revelation. It was not credulity, not a servile adoption of other men's conclusions, but the faith of evidence. He thus received the kingdom of God as a little child, and followed the revealed word just as it is, without presuming or desiring to interpose his own reason to qualify or vary the plain and palpable truth. His theology, accordingly, was purely scriptural; free from speculations; abhorring any statement or system that would stand in the wisdom of men; never seeking the notoriety of novel or peculiar views, or of making discoveries. This was his character, alike in the pulpit and in the Professor's chair. His views were, in the best sense, profound, thorough, the reverse of superficial; but they were simply Scriptural—the obvious Scripture. His whole dealing with theology was of this description. He never made Divine truth the theme of declamation; he never brought the arts of oratory or fine writing to set off the truth; he affected no tones or gestures, or artifices of any description, to give to that truth some extraneous and human embellishment. It was, as I conceive, the vivid, habitual consciousness and experience of the reality and solemnity of sacred truth, that brought him to, and kept him in that simplicity of mind, that destroyed the power of the temptation, which less humble minds do not resist, to turn theology, preaching, and all religion, into a department of the fine arts. I suppose that a mind thus led by grace into an habitual sense of Divine realities, cannot endure anything, either in opinion, expression, or spirit, that would seem ambitious of adding to the obvious and self-contained greatness of what God has said in the words of his own inspiration.

This trait was manifest in every part of his character. We must all remember that notwithstanding the great weight that has attached to the opinions of Dr. Alexander, not merely out of personal deference to him, but by the convictions which the grounds for his judgments produced, yet that all this power was the result of this very singleness and simplicity of his character. He used no management; he depended on no secret plans; he obtruded no opinions; he neither flattered nor threatened; he was silent and reserved, rather than forward; he listened with composure to the most opposite sentiments, and gave his own as if he were the last and least; but after him there was seldom any to rise; his free, direct, plain-spoken words came like the dispassionate verdict of a mind that had considered the point in all its lights, and that verdict seldom failed to secure concurrence.

This is true Christian power; a power, not of name or station, but of character and sound judgment; therefore one that can be marked as an ensample;—a power resulting from the simplicity of an intelligent faith, a habit of perpetual reference to the Bible standard, and accompanied by unaffected modesty and humility. It was one of the

remarkable qualities of this beloved man, that his humility continued unaffected by all the deference with which he was regarded. When he was at the age of nineteen licensed to preach, the Presbytery assigned him as the text for his trial sermon, Jeremiah 1 : 7 : "But the Lord said unto me, Say not I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak." The manuscript of that sermon is extant, and it is highly characteristic of the whole life that followed that beginning, to find that though the selection of the text was so well calculated, and probably designed, to draw out some allusions to the candidate's youth, not a word of reference is made to himself. From that day onward we should search in vain, in his discourses, speeches, writings, or conversation, for egotistical mention of himself, or in the history of his life, for any seeking of publicity, or of self-advancement. He sought nothing. He kept himself waiting upon Providence. He was also the "child" to go where the Lord should send him, and speak what He should command. Who ever saw Dr. Alexander putting himself forward in any matter small or great? Who ever saw him strive for the floor in any ecclesiastical assembly, or aim to be a leader on any question of debate? Who ever found him making himself conspicuous, excepting as his very faithfulness and readiness to do whatever was required of him, made him so? In a word, who ever saw in him anything like a display of his own influence, or a disposition to employ it in any other way than in the modest expression, in the fewest words and calmest manner, of his own conclusions? In this plain, scriptural, unambitious cast of his religious character and views, we may find the secret of the excellence and universal acceptance of his preaching. For it was one of his apostolic marks, that his preaching was not only intelligible, but attractive to all classes of persons. Simple, direct, discriminating, sensible, aiming at the heart, with a wonderful knowledge of human nature in all its states and attitudes in relation to the truth, it was emphatically true that his speech and preaching were in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. And it deserves to be noted by all ministers and candidates, that one of the chief external means by which Dr. Alexander attained what are often called his inimitable excellencies as a preacher, was his spending several years both after licensure and ordination, in itinerant missionary service, preaching in the humblest and most destitute places, often in the open air, and adapting his language and manner to the minds that needed the plainest kind of instruction. It will be a good day for the ministry and the church, when the performance of a term of such itinerant service shall be exacted as part of the trials of every probationer before ordination.

It also deserves to be marked by us all, that from his earliest years as a Christian, he who reached such attainments of piety, was accustomed to pay constant attention to his own personal religion. Upon the details of his practice in this respect, no one can fully

enter ; for he was remarkable both for the privacy of his own religious exercises, and his avoidance of everything that bordered upon a relation of what is so sacred and personal, as a Christian's own self-examination and discipline. But it could not be concealed, that throughout his life, his preaching, his conversation, his favourite reading, were connected with a constant devotedness of his mind to personal piety, whilst the seasons of devout abstraction, and sometimes the involuntary changes of his countenance, and movements of his hands, evinced fixed habits of spiritual communion, and ejaculatory prayer.

Christians, and especially clergymen, of strong intellect, of studious habits, of scholastic attainments, often find their professional pursuits so absorbing to their taste, as to become their great temptation. They bury themselves in books—exhaust their minds in researches, which though they may be theological in their relations, are purely intellectual in their process. But I think no one who intimately knew Dr. Alexander, can think otherwise, than that profoundly as he studied the range of theological and philosophical science, his heart was in the Bible, and in experimental religion ; that *his* musings were not on the speculative theories of his own, or other men's minds, but on the revelations of the Divine Spirit, and the actual workings of the human heart, in its relations to God and inspired truth. One striking proof of the habitual culture of his own heart was, that it never seemed to cost him an effort, or produce a reaction, to come to the most serious and spiritual subjects or duties. He was not serious by turns or on occasions ; but could pass interchangeably from common to sacred topics, in that equable tone and manner which showed that the levities of time and of sense were habitually subordinate with him to the realities of Divine things. At the farthest possible remove from sanctimoniousness, or assumed seriousness—easily moved to the greatest enjoyment of cheerfulness, highly sensitive even to whatever is amusing or ludicrous, he never lost his dignity, nor gave a moment's encouragement to a hilarity inconsistent with Christian gravity. No one ever heard from his lips, in his most cheerful moments, what might not be properly repeated ; no one dared to say in his presence aught that bordered on irreverence for sacred language or sacred objects ; no one ever heard from him, when treating of sacred things, a sentence intended to create amusement, or attempting to excuse a jest under the plea of eccentricity. The substratum of godliness was too deep and firm, to allow of vagaries of this kind, which have too often disgraced eminent and even good men. In fact, I may here say, that whilst some of the best men have had foibles or peculiarities, which have in some degree detracted from the completeness or symmetry of their character, and disturbed the pleasure of our associations with their memory, I can, after the knowledge of a lifetime, recall no such exception as attaching to any of the characteristics of our departed father.

Apostolic example shows us faith in an active life of usefulness.

The apostles and first disciples did not rest in their Christian name, and offices, and privileges; it was not enough for them to know the truth; they gave themselves, according to their capacities and opportunities, to "the work of the Lord." We ought to "mark" this trait in those who walk according to their example; for we, too, like them, may find, if not the same, yet some ways of imitating them.

Our venerable father belonged to this apostolic class of believers. As a missionary, as a college president, as the occasional preacher or settled pastor of a congregation, as a teacher of theology, as a preacher of the Gospel through all the time of his professorship in Princeton and in the neighbouring and distant churches, he was assiduous in labour, seldom seeking relaxation or interrupted by ill health, always ready to give his services when he thought they would be seasonable. And when we speak of him in these several offices, we should have but a faint impression of his usefulness, if we conceive of him only as punctually performing the more public routine of his duties. In one department alone, the time of Dr. Alexander was occupied to an extent little known: it was that of an adviser. He was the pastor, not only of his congregations, but of his pupils in the seminary, and of many long after they had left it. His study door was ever open for those who sought his counsel, whether on spiritual or temporal concerns; and his correspondence with ministers, churches, church-institutions, on points on which his advice was requested, would form a great mass of evidence to his diligence, wisdom, and influence. In the designation of graduates for particular fields of labour, in suggesting ministers to churches and churches to ministers, in encouraging the proper persons for the work of foreign missionaries, in answering theological difficulties and questions of conscience, in superintending the financial interests of the seminary, especially as to its scholarships and other benevolent funds, in his co-operation in all the boards and institutions of the Church, Dr. Alexander did a work for the Church which alone would constitute him one of the most efficient ministers it has ever possessed. To this we must add his writings. These were all of a practical character. As he disliked the title of "*Polemic* theology," so he never showed any taste for controversy, either by his pen or lips. Strong as he was in the conviction of his own opinions as to what was essential or most scriptural and expedient in doctrine and in forms, he never was a bigot; he never insisted on universal and total conformity to every point as he saw it, as the orthodox standard; he was sometimes thought by the more ardent to be too moderate in his tone, or backward in his zeal in times of controversy; but it was that moderation which was necessary to balance and restrain the impetuosity of those who took narrower views of the questions in discussion. Besides the volumes on the "Canon" and "Evidences," both of which are received as standard text-books in a number of academies and colleges, the principal publications of Dr. Alexander are his Essays on "Religious Experience," "A Compend of Bible Truth," a history of the

“American Colonization Society,” “Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College,” a compilation of “Hymns,” and a volume of “Sermons.” Besides these, and some smaller books and tracts, he published a large number of articles in various religious periodicals, and so diligently did he make use of this means of doing good, and of keeping his mind in active exercise, that several of his writings were in the hands of different editors at the time of his decease. All these publications are of a practical and permanent kind, and are imbued with that spirit of benevolence which was so invariable a trait of their author’s disposition. In vain shall the writings or discourses of this wise and good man be searched for terms of violence and rude denunciation, even against the abettors of the greatest errors. Though in his time, the Protestant and other controversies were strongly debated, and though his own mind was strong in its own sentiments, he never descended to those vulgar, or abusive, or personal modes of argument, which sometimes almost prejudice one against the right side of a discussion. His long possession of posts of authority and of instruction, never made him in an offensive sense, magisterial, or dictatorial, or dogmatical. He was, indeed, sometimes plain in his expressions, even to abruptness, but that his manner was justified to those to whom he thus expressed himself, is proved by the fact that innumerable as were the occasions on which he was called to give his opinions, and unreservedly as he gave them, when the occasion was proper, it is a thing almost, if not wholly unheard of, that he gave serious offence to any one.

It was in these ways that the life of this exemplary man teaches us, that true piety will lead to the employment of whatever talents or means we possess, in the promotion of what is good and true; that we should employ every channel of well-doing within our reach, and that so long as we have our faculties unimpaired, we should not be content to pass our time unprofitably. It shows us also that one may be diligent and prominent, and extensively useful, without the clamour of publicity, without departing from one’s own sphere, and without making adversaries. So it was with the apostles. Their aim and delight was to have Christ preached “in any way;” they spoke and wrote; they did good to the ignorant and the poor, the learned and the great; they were considerate of the bodily as well as spiritual wants of men; they gave themselves no rest, they made no plea for idleness, or for declining the most humble services, from their age, their high office, their past labours, their great successes; let us mark them when we have seen and known who have walked so as they had them for an example. Let us add to this the encouragements of the blessing that may be expected to follow such employments, whatever may be the scale on which they are exercised. Those who are steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, may know that their labours will not be in vain in the Lord. The benefit, which have directly attended the example and influence of Dr. Alexander through his active life, and multiplied through those

whose minds he has trained and whose lives he has shaped, cannot be computed. They are known to have been eminently and divinely beneficial to individuals, to communities, and to the Church at large. Here, too, was the mark of an apostle; and when we see the Holy Ghost sealing such a life year after year, both by the personal graces bestowed and by the divinely wrought effects attending his instrumentality, how contemptible, how impious, sounds the theory that would denounce the ministry of such a man as unauthorized of God. One such case, even if it stood alone, has that Divine stamp of authenticity, which no hands or succession of hands of men can ever impart.

But what is the *end* of a life of faith? how may we expect a believer to meet death? what is the apostolic ensample on this point? Let Paul—"Paul the aged," Paul the most laborious apostle, the most abundant writer, answer: "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain: having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." "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; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Let the voice of other Scriptures tell us what we are to expect as the sealing testimony of a godly life: "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." Where faith has been founded on an intelligent reception of the truth, and nurtured by a constant use of the same means of growth,—where the life has been a serious, uniform conformity to the truth thus received,—where Christ has been not only accepted in the first instance as the Lord our Righteousness, but depended on, looked to, and confided in, as the source of all grace and hope, there is reason to expect a calm, peaceful, solemn transition from time to eternity. The general characteristics of one's piety in life, may be expected to be seen in the closing scene.

All this was eminently exemplified in the departure of him whose life we have been contemplating. It was still *faith*,—simple, child-like faith, that guided and taught him at fourscore as at nineteen. His implicit belief in the assurances of the Scriptures, as to the immediate blessedness of the redeemed, the heavenly life and service, the guardianship of Christ and angels over the dying believer, had been so long cherished, that there can be no doubt he felt a familiarity with these unseen objects, that can only be attained by a long-continued habit of meditating upon them. As he advanced in age, he was conscious of his nearer approach to these scenes, and concentrated more and more of his thoughts upon them. Death became to his apprehension, indeed, the gate of heaven, and he could see his pious associates and friends descend to the grave with the

composure of one who believed that they were with Christ, and that he should soon rejoin them. Ten years ago, in his essay on "Religious Experience," he was led to refer to himself, when treating of the preparation for death, as follows :

"The writer confesses also, that in dwelling so long on this subject, he had some regard to his own edification, and preparation for death. As he knows from infallible evidence, that he will soon be required to put off this tabernacle, and to emigrate from this lower world, he was solicitous to acquire as much information as he was able from those who have gone before, what were the difficulties, sufferings, and encouragements, of pilgrims in this last stage of their journey. And, however it may be with others, he has derived instruction and encouragement, from the contemplation of such scenes as are here described. It appears to him supremely reasonable, that during the short time which remains of his life, he should be chiefly concerned in the meditation of the things of another world, and in making actual preparation for his own departure. He once supposed that the near approach of death would of itself be sufficient to arouse the mind, and impress upon it the reality and awful importance of eternal things: but he finds by sad experience, that however his judgment is convinced of the certainty of death, and its consequences, that nothing will bring these things to bear on the heart, but the illumination of the Holy Spirit. He wishes, therefore, to engage in such reading, meditation, and writing, as may have a tendency to fix his thoughts on the solemn scene before him, when he must close his eyes on the light of this world, and bid adieu to all friends and objects with which he has been conversant here. He is not of opinion, however, that the best way to make preparations for death, is to sit down and pore over the condition of our own souls, or to confine our exertions to those things which are directly connected with our own salvation. We are kept here to do our Master's work, and that relates to others as well as ourselves. It will not do to relinquish the proper work of our calling, upon the pretext of seeking our own salvation. Our own seeking will be entirely unavailing, without the aid and blessing of God, and this we may expect most confidently, when we are diligently engaged in doing his work, which is always the duties of our station and calling. Active duty must be performed as long as we have strength for the work; and like the Levites, we must attend around the tabernacle and altar, when we are too old for more laborious services."

Accordingly, when he found, but a few weeks since, and whilst yet in the unimpaired possession of his mental faculties, that the decline of his bodily strength was giving premonition that his end was drawing near, his whole manner and conversation indicated an entire readiness for the solemn event. He took a deliberate review of his whole case, and came to the conclusion that in all respects it was now the most proper time for him to die. He had attained a good old age, and had thus far been able to discharge his multiform duties without interruption; but he could not hope to be spared much longer from the disqualifications of fourscore. The Seminary was in such hands that he could now leave it without anxiety. There had been interval enough since the removal of his venerable colleague to make this second great bereavement less trying; the affairs of the institution were in a good and settled condition; he thought no man could expect to prolong his usefulness after the age of eighty: his prayers had been answered as to preservation from agonizing disease, and from mental imbecility; his large family were in health and comfort; for the first time in his long and active career, he

could now find nothing to make it desirable to delay his departure. With this conviction, and before he was confined to his chamber, he made every arrangement in view of his decease, and requested that what prayer should be made for him should not be for his recovery, but for the continuance of the Divine presence with him till the close. The intelligent scriptural character of his faith, was prominent to the last. There was no excitement, no ecstasy. He seemed ever, as a matter of principle, to avoid strong expressions of his feelings. He knew (as is fully stated in his volume on "Religious Experience,") how often physical causes produce what appears like spiritual rapture, even on a death-bed, and he loved to be alone, and rather silent and meditative, than to say much or to see many. But his testimony was sufficiently perfect and strong to prove the unbroken continuance of his faith. He said that he had "an assured belief"—that he had reviewed the plan of salvation, and assured himself of his acceptance of it; that he was in peace; that he had no fear of death; not that he did not feel that the transition so utterly unknown as to its mode and circumstances from this world to another, was in one sense awful, but that he could confide in the promise that Christ would guard the soul in its passage, and would do all well. But all this may be described in his own words, for his departure was a literal fulfilment of the prayer to be found at the close of his book on "Religious Experience," where it is given as "The Prayer of one who feels that he is approaching the borders of another world," which, after a humble confession of sin and unworthiness, and a profession of faith and corresponding petitions, thus concludes :

"O, most merciful God! Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength declineth. Now, when I am old and gray-headed forsake me not; but let thy grace be sufficient for me; and enable me to bring forth fruit, even in old age. May my hoary head be found in the ways of righteousness! Preserve my mind from dotage and imbecility, and my body from protracted disease and excruciating pain. Deliver me from despondency and discouragement, in my declining years, and enable me to bear affliction with patience, fortitude, and perfect submission to thy holy will. Lift upon me perpetually the light of thy reconciled countenance, and cause me to rejoice in thy salvation, and in the hope of thy glory. May the peace that passeth all understanding be constantly diffused through my soul, so that my mind may remain calm through all the storms and vicissitudes of life.

"As, in the course of nature, I must be drawing near to my end, and as I know I must soon put off this tabernacle, I do humbly and earnestly beseech thee, O Father of mercies, to prepare me for this inevitable and solemn event. Fortify my mind against the terrors of death. Give me, if it please thee, an easy passage through the gate of death. Dissipate the dark clouds and mists which naturally hang over the grave, and lead me gently down into the gloomy valley. O my kind Shepherd, who hast tasted the bitterness of death for me, and who knowest how to sympathize with and succour the sheep of thy pasture, be thou present to guide, to support, and to comfort me. Illumine with beams of heavenly light the valley and shadow of death, so that I may fear no evil. When heart and flesh fails, be thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Let not my courage fail in the trying hour. Permit not the great adversary to harass my soul, in the last struggle, but make me a conqueror and more than a conqueror in this fearful conflict. I humbly ask that my reason may be continued to the last, and if it be thy will, that I may be so comforted and supported, that I may leave a testimony in favour of the reality of religion, and thy faithful-

ness in fulfilling thy gracious promises; and that others of thy servants who may follow after, may be encouraged by my example, to commit themselves boldly to the guidance and keeping of the Shepherd of Israel."

I have no time to dwell upon the providential circumstances that made the departure of our venerated friend so remarkable a fulfillment of all that could have been desired. To one of his strong attachments to his brethren and pupils in the ministry, it must have been a great gratification to know, that while he was slowly withdrawing to his eternal rest and crown, he was surrounded, as it were, by hundreds of these affectionate and beloved friends. Not only the Seminary and the College were in full session at the time, but the Synod of eight Presbyteries, comprising more than one hundred and seventy members in attendance, by a blessed coincidence, that could only occur once in several years, was then assembled in Princeton. Their prayers were unceasing for him, until the announcement that he had fallen asleep in the early dawn of their second day's meeting, called for thanksgiving and praise to God for such a life and such a death. It did, indeed, seem as if God had summoned so many at that time to be witnesses of His grace to his dying servant, and to receive a salutary impression, to be transmitted to the churches there represented.

But, my brethren, let us beware how we allow our admiration and love to carry us away from what ought to be our first and main consideration, the *example* for us to remember, that we may be incited to imitation. This distinction, this pre-eminence, this influence may not be ours; but all this faith may be. This peaceful dying—this glorious rest may be ours; this simplicity, uniformity, perseverance in the humble walk of faith with God in Christ, is the privilege of every believer. Let us adopt the means—let us exercise the dependence—let us cultivate the grace, that were the great qualities to be marked in the ensample we have been considering, and even *we* shall attain to the fellowship of his faith and triumph. *Mark* them—*mark* them who walk so; for they walk, not in their own strength, but in the strength of Christ; they trusted in him and were helped; He fulfilled all his promises to them; He is, and ever will be the same to all who put their trust in him. This is religion, this is Christianity; here is proof of the nature and reality of the Gospel doctrine, and Gospel promises, and Gospel life, which is better than a thousand volumes of arguments. We have it before us—we shall have to confront it among our privileges at the bar of Judgment.