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## → SERMONS ←

### A GREAT MAN IN ISRAEL.\*

BY PRESIDENT ROBERT GRAHAM, D.D., OF THE COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE, LEXINGTON, KY

*Know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?—II. SAM iii., 38.*

THE services of this hour are to be severely simple, as most in harmony with the Christian character of our well-beloved deceased brother. There are probably over half a million of hearts this morning that are beating in sympathy with this bereaved family and with the Church at large, and we have met in simplicity and love to commit the mortal remains of a manly man to their last resting-place; but we are here this morning, also, to attest our love for Isaac Errett living and our reverence for him now that he is dead. I trust, my dear hearers, that we are here realizing as never before that as one by one the leaders of our great communion are being called home to their eternal rest, we are imbibing more and more of the divine spirit that animated them and led them to lives of sacrifice and service in the cause of God, and that we may make up for their absence by more consecration and devotion to the work that called forth their noblest powers and sympathies.

It is related that when Bossuet was called upon to pronounce the funeral oration of Louis le Grand he commenced that memorable address by lifting his finger to Heaven and declaring, "There is nothing great but God"; and as we look upon this bier, and see the dishonor and weakness in which the mortal body is brought down to dust, we are disposed to think that the great

\* Delivered at the funeral of Isaac Errett, D.D.

ing one session, with great acceptance to the University. While in the University, a gentleman of great excellence and piety was sent from Louisiana to Harrodsburgh, to induce him to return to his former home, and give himself to missionary work in the South, and become the General Agent of the Southern Christian Missionary Society.

This proposition was accepted, and, resigning the professorship, he returned to Fayetteville in 1860, preparatory to entering on the work. The whole arrangement, however, failed on account of the breaking out of our national difficulties.

Being a Union man without an "if," he suffered the loss of all his accumulations, about \$10,000, and after many tribulations arrived in Cincinnati in the fall of 1862, and was immediately invited to the charge of the First Christian Church, which he accepted. In November of the same year, his family came North under the protection of General Schofield's army, and were reunited with him in Cincinnati.

In 1864 he resigned his position in Cincinnati, and removed with his family to California where he was engaged in preaching and teaching until 1866, when he returned eastward, and was soon afterward elected unanimously presiding offi-

cer of the College of Arts, and Professor of the school of English language and literature in Kentucky University. He accepted the post, and has continued to the present time in that institution, occupying for several years past the position of President of "The College of the Bible."

Robert Graham is a heavy-set man, inclining to corpulency, and, while of low stature, weighs about one hundred and eighty pounds. He has all the external indications of a fine, healthy, physical constitution. With a bright, florid complexion, a brain largely developed in the intellectual and moral region, with a large, prominent, light-blue eye, and the orator's mouth, he is able and exceedingly fluent in speech on almost every topic, whether before an audience or in the private circle. His language and style are so highly finished, in the "dotting of every *i*" and the "crossing of every *t*," and yet so perfectly familiar and "off-hand," that the stranger critic is apt to suspect that the whole is memorized. But, aside from a few brief notes in the course of his *thorough* preparation, he does not write at all, that being too slow a process for his readiness of thought and speech. He stands in the front rank among the able preachers of his denomination. T.

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## LEADING THOUGHTS OF SERMONS

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### Calamities not Indicative of God's Lack of Mercy.

BY MOSES D. HOGE, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), RICHMOND, VA.

For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God.—HEB. iii., 4.

If God built all things—if the world in which we dwell and all the worlds which move through space are His handiwork, then such a universe must have been built in accordance with a fixed plan, and the study of physical nature more and more demonstrates the unity of that plan, its wisdom and its beneficence. Man too, in his little sphere, is a builder, but his

creations are safe and enduring and subservient to his convenience, comfort and happiness, just as they are framed and regulated in strict accordance with the physical laws which environ him.

The investigation of these laws demonstrates the uniformity of their operation. There is nothing fitful, nothing capricious, nothing irregular in their action. Men recognize this uniformity in nature and regulate their own movements and adjust all their plans and enterprises in accordance with it. Science calculates the exact moment of the rising and setting of the sun in any given locality at all seasons of the year; it ascertains

the precise period of the ebb and flow of the tides; it discovers the unchanging laws of light and heat, of electricity and gravitation.

If these laws were changeable—if they were sometimes in operation and sometimes suspended—all human enterprise would be arrested, commerce would cease, and the most ordinary transactions of life would become impossible. God does not abdicate His control of the world because He subjects it to the reign of law. His power, wisdom and goodness are all demonstrated in governing the material creation in this orderly, beneficent way, and man finds his safety and comfort, and secures success in his undertakings just in proportion to his obedience to immutable, resistless law.

Under the divine government there is no such thing as chance or accident. What men call "accident" is but a word under which ignorance tries to hide itself. Nothing can happen without a cause. A bridge never breaks down, a boiler never explodes, a dam never gives way by accident. There is always a reason for it, though the exact explanation may not always be possible. Yet when wise and beneficent natural law is violated by reason of man's ignorance, or recklessness, or carelessness, or the covetousness which will not incur the expense which proper precautions demand, then come the calamities which startle the community and which bring desolation and mourning.

The laws of nature, being designed for the good of the whole race, will not be suspended or changed for the benefit of individuals whose ignorance or heedlessness or presumption treats them with contempt. And the violators of natural law only add another insult to the Great Ruler of the world when, in addition to their disregard of the prescribed order of the universe, they either deny that there is any God at all, or that if one exists He is pitiless when the calamities occur which are the result of their own folly.

Men say, How can a benevolent Deity permit the sea to dash on a rocky shore a ship freighted with hundreds of His creatures? But the sea at that very moment is bearing on its bosom thou-

sands of vessels riding securely or making their way in safety to their desired haven.

The rising tide may engulf a sweet child playing on the sands, but should the tide cease to ebb and flow because the mother or the nurse has permitted the child to incur the peril?

It is a benevolent provision of Providence to store in the bowels of the earth inexhaustible beds of coal, and the skill and industry of the miner digs the pits and constructs the machinery which extracts the ore; but if the men working below are prostrated and poisoned by mephitic air because the owners of the mine are too penurious to incur the expense of a sufficient number of ventilating shafts, or if a miner, leaving behind him his safety lamp, strikes a light in a chamber filled with explosive gas and an explosion occurs, causing death and bereavement, shall divine Providence be arraigned and condemned because of human greed or human recklessness?

A heavy train goes thundering over an insecure bridge; it comes down with a crash. The scene which ensues is one of indescribable horror; but was God under any obligation to build a stronger bridge to excuse the incompetence of the engineer who constructed that mantrap over the flood beneath?

It is a beneficent law of Nature that waters moving freely seek lower levels. Because of this provision thousands of crystal springs are sending their waters down mountain slopes and thousands of rivers are gently descending toward the sea. Ought God to be blamed for not suspending this beautiful law when men build a dam at the head of a valley with cities and villages beneath it, and construct it so unscientifically or with such unfit materials that it cannot withstand the pressure which mathematics calculate to a fraction that water bears on every square foot of surface.

Science has ascertained the origin of zymotic diseases, but if men will erect chemical works on the banks of rivers which convert their waters into poisonous slime; if men will persist in drinking from wells contaminated by unmentionable filth or if they will herd together,

like swine in foul tenement-houses, and pestilence ensues, shall scepticism be permitted to lift up its hands in affected horror and assail the wise and beneficent providence of God as the author of what was the result of man's stupidity or avarice or inhumanity ?

Such illustrations will make it manifest that God's goodness and mercy cannot be charged with what is the result of man's ignorance, recklessness, lack of fidelity to duty, or greed of gain.

### Water of Life.

BY REV. T. W. GARLAND, BOWMANVILLE,  
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And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Rev. xxii., 17.

This Book begins and ends with Christ. That is the best book, the best sermon, the best hymn, the best prayer and the best life, which begins and ends with Christ. Without further introduction we notice, that the text contains four invitations.

#### I. We have a royal invitation.

1st. It is no ordinary water. Kings and Queens must not do ordinary things. When the Queen of Sheba came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, she brought royal presents. Neither was there any more such spice as the Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

When the wise men came to do homage to Christ, they brought the best of the best things of their country. So here, the Bible is no ordinary Book; the pardon is no ordinary pardon; the Saviour is no ordinary Saviour; and the water is no ordinary water. It is living water and giveth life, healing water and giveth health. The woman of Samaria might well say, "give me of this water."

2d. It is no ordinary supply. As the sun is full of light; and the air is full of health; and the sea is full of water; so is the river of life, always full. Elijah's brook may dry up, and the wine at the feast may be done, but not so with the water of life. Rather, it increases as it flows. So is the Word of inspiration, "My God shall supply all your need, ac-

ording to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

3d. It is no ordinary authority. The voice of the Church is the voice of God, and the voice of the Spirit, is the voice of God. These two voices always blend in the Gospel. The man speaks to the outward ear, and the Spirit speaks to the ear of the soul. There is the outward and inward hearing. The Spirit and the bride say, come. Not the one without the other. When the Spirit speaks in the conscience, it may be as the sound of the Archangel's trumpet.

#### II. We have an auxiliary invitation.

1st. There was an awful sacredness thrown around the Jewish ark,—only the Priests might touch it. But Jesus Christ as the true Ark, all may touch; others than ministers of the Gospel may help to spread the knowledge of Christ Jesus. "Let him that heareth say, come."

If a congregation were so impressed with hearing the Gospel, that each one did his best to invite a neighbor or a friend to hear the minister preach, preachers would be greatly multiplied. That is a notable text, "the earth helped the woman." The unconverted may not preach nor pray, but they can render much help in many ways in the Church, and should be duly respected for the good they do. In this way they should be encouraged. "Let him that heareth, and wishes the welfare of his neighbors, say, come."

#### III. We have a distinctive invitation.

1st. Sin is a dreadful thing, When a man feels it, how he is alarmed! Not wonderful that he cries out! How bowed down the publican; how distracted the jailor; how agonized Saul of Tarsus; how terrified Belshazzar. It is a burden too heavy to be borne!

2d. How anxious to know if there be any hope! Can so great a sinner as I be saved? No one knows it like himself! His head may be as waters, and his eyes as a fountain of tears! How mercifully the case is provided for; how it speaks to him. It does not name him, but mentions the anxious one. "Let him that is athirst come." A thousand may be around him, he would give a world to be