

Jones, Joseph H.

~~17362.83~~

XP6458

HELEN ELIZABETH LAWSON.

1853.

Ⓞ

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

DEATH

OF

HELEN ELIZABETH LAWSON.

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH H. JONES,

PASTOR OF THE SIXTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.



PHILADELPHIA:

1853.

1856. Dec. 16.

Gift of

Wm. S. Perry

of Watertown,

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS discourse is put at the disposal of a few members of the Sixth Presbyterian Church, who heard it, and who are desirous of preserving some such memorial of the interesting friend whom it commemorates. It is committed to the press as it was delivered, with no other alteration than the addition of two or three extracts from some private papers found after her decease, containing a few fugitive thoughts on miscellaneous subjects. It was proposed to issue only a limited number of copies, with the intention of presenting one to each family of the congregation, and to those relations and friends to whom it would be specially acceptable.

In thus offering a tribute of affectionate respect to a departed friend, it is hoped that a more prolonged and effective influence may be given to her bright example.

DISCOURSE.

LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM.

John xi. 16.

As the grave has taken an object of so much love, and so large a portion of our heart is already buried, why should we not wish to go there ourselves? What does the world any longer contain to make life desirable, after so many of those loved ones have been removed who constituted its highest charm? Is it not better to die with Lazarus than live without him? Such appears to be the meaning of Didymus in this language, which was called forth by the information given him of the sad change at Bethany. Whether there had been a special intimacy between himself and the deceased,

or was he thinking of the loss of such a man to his affectionate sisters, to the church, or merely to himself, I do not pretend to say. But, for the moment, the whole world seemed to be limited to Bethany, and nobody to live, since Lazarus was gone. It is but candid, however, to confess, that in this construction of his words I am not sustained by the unanimous authority of the critics. Although it is the interpretation that is warranted by Burkitt, Haweis, Henry, Poole, and some others, probably the greater number of commentators apply the words of Thomas to Christ. As if, in view of the danger which his Master was about to encounter from the Jews, this courageous disciple would exhort his brethren not to shrink from the same themselves; but, if their Head should be put to death, let them go and *die with him*.

It would be a departure from my purpose, and not congenial to the frame of spirit in which this discourse was prepared, to indulge

so far in mere biblical criticism as to offer my reasons for dissenting from such a construction of the text as this. I pass it all by therefore at present, and only reaffirm the opinion that the person referred to is the deceased Lazarus; a view in which I am the more confirmed whenever I read it. As if the suddenness of his death, in addition to its sadness, prompted this hasty ejaculation, indicative less of proper Christian submission than of *a wounded spirit*; and which upon a little reflection, perhaps, would not have been uttered. And yet, there is so much of ourselves in this passionate language of Thomas, so much of our own infirmity, in this half querulous despondency when brought into unexpected trials, that, if rightly considered, it may be profitable for our admonition. To those who have lived long enough to make a proper estimate of life, and whose experience has made them familiar with its mingled sorrows and joys,

the text hardly needs an exposition. They will discover, without a helper, lessons of touching interest, which no human teaching could make perceptible or intelligible to others. They can read in the exclamation before us, what was probably hidden at the time from its authors, who, if preserved from *despising the chastening of the Lord*, were overcome by the opposite temptation of the afflicted, to be *weary and faint*, when rebuked by him. Admitting his words, therefore, to be susceptible of various interpretations, and suggestive of different lessons, according to the acceptation in which they are received, we may take them, as already intimated,

I. AS EXPRESSIVE OF DESPONDENCY. As the sudden ebullition of wounded feeling under a bereavement which may be as unexpected as it is severe. Like David's burst of grief when he heard of the death of his idolized but unnatural son, *O my son Ab-*

salom! my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! When the stricken heart, in the hopelessness of its sorrow, seems to undervalue and lose sight of every object that is left, and prefers to leave the world that has now become so blank and cheerless. In such seasons, moreover, how many that were not restrained by Christian principles have felt the loathing of life so acutely as to take it away by suicidal violence. And although the fears of future evil in some cases, and an enlightened conscience in others, have kept them back from such a dreadful extreme as this, yet how many have yielded to the pressure of their sorrow so far as to render the remainder of life useless to others, as well as a burden to themselves. Such a result of trial, I need not say, evinces the want of submission; and however silent may be the lips of such a sufferer, the language of his heart, as expounded by his con-

duct, is like that of Naomi to the people of Bethlehem, *The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.* Has the Lord taken away a friend, however dear; and has it caused a wound that is deep, and even incurable, yet it betrays an estimate that is culpably low of the countless blessings that are left, when we are made to forget them all by the removal of one. "O, what passionate and impatient expressions do sometimes drop from our mouths," says a devout writer, "on the occasion of the decease of our dear relations. We are ready to be so affected with their death, as to wish ourselves out of the world, that we might be with them. But we must remember that it is God who appoints us our several posts and particular stations, which we must keep until the wisdom of God sees fit to remove us."

II. WE MAY RECEIVE THE WORDS OF THOMAS AS THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH. Our friend has been taken from us, and all that we can see

of him is dead. The eye that lately beamed with intelligence, and was the exponent of the soul, is now glassy and sightless. The cheeks are sunken, the face is pale, the expression of the countenance is gone, the lips motionless, the limbs and body are rigid and cold as marble, and we are going to lay this mortal remnant of our friend in the earth. O, the dreadful change! it shocks our natural sensibilities to look at such a spectacle. All that the eye can see is forbidding and awful. And yet, in spite of all these visible terrors, we would gladly *go and die with him*. Dreadful as is this exhibition of the trophies of the king of terrors to our sight, it is divested of all that makes it fearful to our faith. His earthly part has ceased from all its vital functions, and is unfitted for any longer converse with the living. But the change that has come upon him is not death. That is the penalty of a violated law. Death is armed with a sting, and is the precursor

of perdition. But our pious friend has only fallen asleep. All that makes death fearful, and which deserves to receive the name, has been taken away, so that the threatening has become a promise; and hence this change, so repugnant to our senses, is a cause of thanksgiving to our faith. It is not the end of our existence, but only a change of the mode; and this so pleasant, so easy, and so harmless, that the Saviour calls it a sleep, and assures us that it is nothing more. *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.—He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.* He must undergo the change that has been imposed by his fallen condition. He must be made to mingle his own dust with the dust from which he was formed, and then slumber until in due time the loud peal of the archangel's trumpet shall penetrate this mansion of forgetfulness,

and wake its tenants to a vigor of existence that shall never grow old nor weary, and to a life which shall never end.

But all this cheering truth, I say, is to be apprehended only by faith. Nothing to comfort or sustain can be perceived by sense. To this, the grave is dark and gloomy; and when we lay our departed friend there, it is "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and for aught that meets our eye, or can be discovered even by our reason, this last act is final, and we have parted forever. But faith can look through the veil which hides the future from our vision. With the clue of revealed truth in its grasp, it can follow the decomposing mortal part into the valley of the shadow of death, and beyond it, where this *corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality*. Yes, faith can exultingly say, *Let us also go and die* with our believing friend, that we may live and reign with him forever and ever.

III. AND THIS LEADS TO A THIRD REMARK, THAT IN THESE WORDS OF THOMAS WE MAY SEE THE LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE. I have said that it is sometimes the unpremeditated ejaculation of mere passion. The smitten heart, in its agony of grief, knows not what to do, and seeks relief in pouring out its feelings of mingled affection and despair in terms which the sober judgment would repudiate, and which the conscience condemns. How often do we hear it from the lips of the unbelieving, who, if taken at their word, and permitted to follow their lamented friend to the grave, would sink at once from a world of hope to the greater sorrow of a state of despair. Hence the man, who, like Thomas, with an enlightened view of death, and of all that lies beyond it, can look for its coming not only without fear, but can even desire it, must be buoyed up with a belief that amounts to assurance. Such, undoubtedly, was Paul's, when he told his beloved Philip-

pians that he was *in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* To himself personally his departure would be *gain*, and his only motive for wishing to remain in life longer was the spiritual welfare of others. No doubt the views which even the believing cherish of the heavenly state, are often erroneous as well as inadequate. Thus, although we may be fully assured that we shall be made perfectly happy, it is very doubtful whether our cup of future bliss will possess all the ingredients which are to compose it according to our present expectations, and perhaps desires. Perhaps no question has been put to the writer oftener concerning the heavenly, than whether they resume the intercourse that was productive of so much enjoyment on earth, or will there be a mutual recognition? I hardly need observe that the answers of the wisest who still live, express only their conjectures, yet the prepon-

derance of these is greatly on the side of them who with the fullest confidence believe the affirmative. But all such inquiries as this only evince our imperfection. In the present world, where the number of those who truly love us is small, their offices of friendship constitute such an essential element of our earthly enjoyment, we seem to think they will be as needful in any other state of being as we have found them in this. But when, by the aid of faith, we can bring before us the purity, holiness, and moral perfection of heaven; when we can realize, however inadequately, the divine promise that we are to be like Christ, as well as to be with him; to be partakers of all that makes him happy, as well as partners of his glory, we may well say it is knowledge enough. And although *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*, nor where; though neither the place, the occupation, nor the precise joys of the heavenly world have been revealed to us here,

yet, with David, *our flesh may rest in hope, that we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness.*

Such are a few meditations that have been suggested by these words of wounded affection in the case of a primitive disciple. They have arisen in my mind almost spontaneously with little effort or study—called forth by an event not unlike that in the family at Bethany ;—a dispensation of Providence, by which an affectionate family, often bereaved before, have again been made mourners, in circumstances so full of instruction that we feel constrained to pause and revolve them, less for the purpose of showing posthumous honor to the departed, than to impart useful lessons to the living. The truth and divinity of our religion—its renovating influence, its power to soothe and sustain in sickness, and to cheer in death—have been so exemplified in the case of that esteemed member of this church whose interment we have just at-

tended, that it should not pass away without a distinctive review. In the religious experience of many professors there is such ambiguity; they are so often doubting concerning themselves, and thereby exciting the doubts of others, that they have constant need of all the refreshment and support which are ministered in those triumphs of grace which demonstrate its divinity.

On the 15th day of December, 1843, a little more than nine years ago, Helen Elizabeth Lawson was received to the communion of this church on a public profession of her faith. Till within a few months previous to her seeking this connection with us, she had worshipped in the Episcopal church; nor was it known to the writer that she had been a frequent hearer in his own congregation till it was learned from a friend, through whom she solicited an introduction and an opportunity for religious conversation. If my recollections can be trusted, this interview

occurred shortly after a discourse had been preached on the character and offices of Christ, to which she had listened with much interest.

The change of her ecclesiastical relation, so far as I have ever known, was sought by herself without the solicitation of others, or any influence from without. It was not made in haste, nor without due examination, but was the result of convictions of duty, based on reasons that were deemed ample, and which were reviewed with increasing satisfaction to the end of her life. For several months after her admission to the church, her mind was frequently agitated with strong exercises, in view of her responsibilities, her imperfections, and fears of self-deception. At length, however, these spiritual conflicts subsided in a full persuasion of her union to Christ, which proved to be the anchor that her soul needed. From the close of this short period of spiritual trouble to the last

moment of her life, she was supported and cheered with an assurance of her salvation, which was the source of ineffable enjoyment. In all my acquaintance with Christian character and experience, I can remember no one instance in which the happiness imparted by religion was more marked and obvious. Indeed, the fact is as instructive as it is rare, that, surrounded as she was in childhood and youth with so many circumstances that give the highest pleasure to others, they could not bestow it on her.

In her diary, dated August, 1849, she writes: "It is now nearly seven years since I dedicated myself to God; and when I look at my present life, and contrast it with the life I once led, I do not wonder that I was often unhappy, and never satisfied. Oh! how many sins flourish in the heart of the unregenerate; their very virtues are without reward from the meanness of their motive. I was what the world calls good and amiable;

good as young girls generally are who are brought up under the eye of a careful mother; and amiable, because it was natural for me to be so. I could not be called disobedient, for I obeyed my parents; but I lived *without God in the world*. I looked around me on the beauty of the outward world, on mountain and stream, on tree and flower, and I cried in ecstasy, How beautifully God has created all things! I gazed upon the heavens, and as the majesty of the universe unfolded itself to my mind, I exclaimed, How wonderful are the works of God! I felt awe, I felt reverence, but I did not love God; I knew he had created me, but I felt not that he was my Father; yet did he call me to him and remove my blindness. Though I asked not for light, he poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit into my prayerless and indifferent heart, and made me feel the need of a Saviour. Since then, peace has entered into my soul. I no

longer look on life as a chance, a lottery, or think that success must always follow well-directed efforts. I feel neither undue desire to obtain an object, nor great disappointment when it is denied; I know that his providential care watches over me, and to his merciful guidance I consign myself. But this is not all; it is not merely submission to his decrees that I feel. Oh, no; to the Almighty and most merciful Father, my soul brings its humble tribute of love and gratitude. I thank him day and night for all his loving-kindness to me; I thank him for the gift of life, and for the strength, through Christ Jesus, to bear its trials; I thank him for the promise of a glorious eternity—a promise which gives joy to the troubled soul, and opens for me a second life beyond the tomb.”

With an inquisitive mind, with genius, and an exquisite taste for the sublime and beautiful in nature, and gifts for copying to the life, yet this season of elasticity, and hope,

and gladness to most, was only comparatively joyous to her. Timid, distrustful of herself, shrinking from even a look of disapprobation, dissatisfied with her best performances, she was the poet's "stricken deer." Her busy and useful life was aimless, and often sad, till the date of her religious hope. From this time the change was as palpable to others as it was to herself. *The winter was past, the rain was over and gone; the flowers appeared on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds had come.* Everything in nature was decked with new attractions, and now, it was a pleasant thing to live. Now her rational existence appeared to begin, and from this period of self-consecration to the service of her Saviour, onward to her peaceful end, her religion was at once the business and the pleasure of her life. Always cheerful, but self-possessed and tranquil, without raptures or extravagance, she realized the constant presence of God. None who saw her

could fail to observe the habitual control of Christian principles. Her Sabbaths were days of the highest enjoyment. Nothing ever detained her from her post of duty in the S. School, or from her seat in the church, but a providential cause, to which she submitted as a chastening, and one of her sorest trials. But the social meetings of the week possessed a peculiar charm, and nothing refreshed her spirit so much. After returning home from the public religious services of the church and the lecture-room, it was her custom to repeat the substance of what she had heard, and on Wednesday evening, to unite with the family in singing the hymns that she had sung before in the social assembly.

“Went last night,” says her diary, “to the lecture-room belonging to the church; they have both been closed for several weeks to be cleaned; heard a few remarks from the pastor, and prayers from some of the mem-

bers ; I felt so happy to be united with them again. It is true I have not been excluded from public worship ; other houses of God have been open to me, and I have listened to many eloquent and improving discourses ; but I love our own church ; it was here I first found peace, and it will always be dear to me as long as I live. I love these evenings of social waiting on the Lord. If this house is so endeared to me, well might David lament, in a burst of sorrowful eloquence, his exclusion from that tabernacle of God which stood alone, a clear spot amidst a wilderness of heathen temples. How beautifully are the feelings of his heart poured forth, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. And again, Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ; they will be still praising thee.*"

Nor was this punctiliousness in religious duty the cold dictate of conscience merely,

or a pious expedient to nurture devotion; but it was the prompting of an overflowing heart, out of whose abundance the mouth was speaking continually. When the state of her health had become so precarious as to render every precaution important, and she was forbidden to go out to the religious assembly, the trial was at first too great to be borne. Indeed, her desire to participate in the ordinances of the sanctuary could not be repressed, and, in spite of the prohibition, she was often seen in this endeared place after she had been admonished of the peril she incurred by the exposure. That a person of such gifts and capacities, with so great a desire to be useful, should have been no more prominent in the religious enterprises of the day, was because of her frail health and natural timidity, which caused her to shrink from places of observation.

The disease by which she was ultimately removed, made its first alarming development

in the early part of last summer. Though its symptoms were somewhat allayed by skillfully applied palliatives, yet the attack was regarded as decisive by all, excepting those whose affection rendered incredible what they were so unwilling to believe. But what was fraught with so much terror to others, excited no apprehension in herself. Amidst all her physical sufferings, of which she had full the ordinary share that attend a protracted pulmonary malady, she had no personal solicitude, uttered no complaints, but was enabled to say, with perfect resignation, *Not my will, but thine be done.*

Among her meditations, dated July 25, 1852, she writes: "I think it the duty of every Christian to bear testimony to the happiness of a Christian life and a Christian's hope. I am not called on by my situation to give my experience to the world in words, but there is a satisfaction in recording them, though no eye but that of love may read

them. I have been heavily afflicted, yet have I been upheld; it is Christ that strengtheneth me; it is through his teaching and example that I have learned to submit, and to bow in meekness to the divine will. I am threatened with a disease which has made thousands its victims, yet I feel no dread. It is *Christ who is our life*; and if he will be with me I need not fear, but rather rejoice. If he hath already carried me through the dark waters, will he not be with me though *I pass through the valley of the shadow of death*? He will, he will. It is not only in times of great trial that I rejoice in the Saviour, but it is my joy to walk daily and hourly in the light, to learn the will of God, and to perform it, to know that a heavenly Father watches over me, to pray for direction from him, to strive in all things to act as may seem pleasing in his sight, to know that he loves and pities me, that I am ever under his protection. Oh, it fills the whole

soul ; it makes the things of this world comparatively indifferent to me, and secures me from the annoyance which troubles often bring to those who are not thus guarded. Who can injure me when I am at peace with God ? Who can disturb my serenity of soul, or bring shame on me, if I feel that God doth not condemn me ? There is an exaltation of sentiment in this Christian life which is delightful to me, and I would not exchange it for the most brilliant genius or the brightest gifts of fortune. How weak, how insufficient are words to express the happiness it has been to me ! But it must be felt, felt in sincerity, to be understood. I wish that all the world could sympathize with me, and could give their whole heart to God in true faith and holiness of spirit ; then might they say we have not lived in vain. Of a Christian hope beyond the grave I write with humility, yet must I say it is strong within me ; and I look forward *with joy unspeakable* to the time

when I shall be with the saints made perfect; when the glories of the heavenly kingdom shall be opened to my wondering vision, and hope shall be lost in the certainty of bliss. I may have to struggle with bodily suffering many years, I may have severe trials to go through, yet shall I see the mercy of God shining forth behind the cloud that shall encompass me. He is my heavenly Father, and knoweth what is best for his child. I am placed at present in the midst of an affectionate family, have many friends and many pleasures; then will I not anticipate afflictions; but rest in hope, until that day when I shall enter into that heavenly rest prepared for the children of God."

When, about two months before her death, she asked her physician's opinion concerning the probable continuance of her life, his answer did not cause the slightest agitation. Her only prayer was for patience to wait with Christian resignation *all the days of her ap-*

pointed time, and to have her mental faculties continued to the last. As the time of her departure drew near, she made every desirable arrangement of her personal affairs with great self-possession, and this being accomplished, she calmly looked for her approaching change with perfect readiness to meet it. Feeling that her work was done, and her bodily sufferings great, her desire to depart was at times so strong that it caused some apprehension that it might not be consistent with a proper degree of Christian submission. On one occasion, therefore, not long before her death, she asked of one sitting by her whether it was wrong to feel a desire to die; and was answered by a reference to the case of the apostle, who, in his Epistle to the Philippians, expresses his desire *to depart, and to be with Christ*. She then inquired concerning the ministry of angels, the employment of the heavenly, and other questions about the spiritual world,

which were answered, as may be inferred from some remarks which have preceded. In all our interviews, the burden of her conversation was the mercy of God as manifested in Christ. "Was it not kind," said she, as I once sat so near as to hear a voice scarcely above a whisper, "was it not kind in God to manifest so much regard"——for one so insignificant and unworthy as myself? she wished to say, but her strength failed, and the sentence was left unfinished. Not many mornings ago, about the break of day, she was heard by one that occupied the same room to exclaim, "Glorious, glorious;" and when the friend had come to her bedside, her eyes were open looking upwards, and her hands clasped, when she remarked that "She had just had such a view of Christ, and of the glory of being like him, that she would have rejoiced to be permitted to die, in order that she might be with him." Her desire that her mental faculties should be continued

to the last was gratified, as was evinced by her conversation. For nearly a day preceding her death there were clear indications that the crisis was very near. About an hour before she died, she expressed a wish that the curtain should be drawn aside to let her once more see the light, when she observed, "this is a beautiful world," but added, "the one to which I am going is far more beautiful." One remarked that there she would make a discovery of truths that were involved in much perplexity and darkness here, and perhaps would see those dear departed ones who had been the objects of so much interest on earth. *In my Father's house*, she replied, *are many mansions*, "but mine will be a very humble one." A friend added, that wherever we can see the glory and perfections of God, there must be happiness. "O yes," she replied, "what happiness, what happiness!" and these were the last words she was heard to utter.

Such is but an imperfect outline of the friend and fellow-disciple, who, though deceased, is yet speaking, by her many acts and graces of piety, in which she exemplified the precepts and doctrines of Christ.

Should it be asked by any, what were the distinctive lineaments of her character as exhibited to those who most intimately knew her, I doubt not that it would be the concurrent sentiment of all, that one of its prominent features was extreme modesty; an humble opinion of herself, of her talents, personal worth, and attainments; which, so far as known, were so much the admiration of others. And hence those products of taste and genius for which she was known and honored by men of science in foreign countries, as well as her own, were seen or known by comparatively few even of her acquaintances. Though for many years an habitual worshipper with us, and so generally respected, yet it has probably come to the know-

ledge of very few even of ourselves, how great were her contributions to the cause of natural science. That without instruction, more than a few hints which she received at home, she had become a skilful amateur engraver at the age of sixteen or seventeen. But the fixedness of attention and posture of body required by this employment proving injurious to her health, it was not long pursued. The only samples of her success in this province of art that remain, are two American birds, whose pictured forms and limbs, their posture and plumage, are so like the reality, that you look at them with mingled admiration of the beautiful creatures themselves, and of the surprising powers of the pencil that has copied nature with such a lifelike exactness. Thus compelled to lay aside her graver, she soon found ample scope for her genius and taste for studying the works of nature, in the use of her pencil. She was invited to aid in the elaborate work of pro-

fessor Haldeman on Conchology, whose plates of shells, occupying so large a part of the volume, were all sketched and painted by her. A task in which her success was so pre-eminent that Professor Agassiz of Switzerland, regarded by many as the first naturalist of the age, on receiving this work, wrote to a friend in this country, which he was then expecting to visit for scientific purposes, that if we had such artists among us as the author of those drawings, he need bring no one from Europe to aid in his interesting mission of science. The great work of Mr. Binney, of Boston, on this subject, to which he consecrated his ample fortune and his life, had made considerable progress under the hands of an artist in that city, but on seeing these productions of Miss Lawson in the book of Haldeman, he cancelled all the drawings that had been already made for his own, and wrote at once to procure her assistance in preparing others. Several of her sketches

from nature, miniatures, &c., have been preserved, which exhibit proof of extraordinary genius; and it is an interesting fact, that the last of these works was a head of that bleeding Saviour on whose bosom she has since reclined in death, finished last March, done with great difficulty, and yet unsurpassed by any product of her pen or pencil which had preceded.

She was not only a skilful critic in estimating the poetical capacities of others, but has demonstrated the superiority of her own in several productions, which were unknown till death put her papers in the possession of survivors.

In addition to these high attainments in art, her conversation evinced a familiar acquaintance with books; not merely the current issues of the day, but with the solid works of the past, in the various departments of history, polite literature, ethics, and religion. But, with all this well-earned reputation—

these honors from the scientific, this superior intellect, and moral excellences so much the admiration of others—she seemed to be unconscious of any such endowments herself. Indeed, not the half of what has now been rehearsed in your hearing was known to myself till after her decease; and it has been disclosed to me since, only in answer to inquiries made, for the laudable purpose of taking the hidden light of her interesting life from under the bushel, where her extreme modesty had studiously kept it. Nor was this concealment in any respect the result of morbid pride or affectation, but of an evident unconsciousness of her personal merit. Thus, when elected to the important office of Secretary, in the School of Design, I well recollect my surprise on her calling, not so much to apprise me of the fact as to express her sense of unfitness for the place, and to propound certain questions which evinced the sincerity of her self-distrust and

solicitude, on being called to a post for which she was so admirably qualified in the opinion of every one else but herself.

Another trait in her character not less obvious to her familiar friends, was her charity. I use this term, for the want of a better, in its restricted sense of kindness towards others, respect for their feelings and opinions, and great tenderness in regarding their imperfections. Not that she wanted decision, or really had formed no opinions of her own, and regarded all sorts of theories, whether in morals or religion, as equally true, or harmless, or unimportant; but, although her own opinions were fixed, and held with a tenacity nerved by a sense of their vital importance, she could bear with candor and kindness the dissent of others. Her sound judgment and discriminating mind were always under the influence of a heart that was deeply impregnated with the charity so divinely portrayed by Paul, which *suffereth*

long, and is kind; which envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. In all our conversations, some of which might easily have led to expressions of opinion on the personal character and conduct of others, I do not remember a word from her lips which would have given pain to the person concerning whom it was uttered, had he been present and heard it himself.

But the crowning excellency of her character, and which imparted the richest grace and beauty to the whole, was her eminent piety. So soon as her mind was enlightened to perceive the distinctive truths of the Christian system, and she had received them into *a good and honest heart*, they became the rudder of her life. Taking the sublime mysteries of Revelations upon the authority of their author, she believed them

with a childlike simplicity, as well as confidence. Renouncing all dependence on herself, her personal merits, moral excellences, her hope for justification was based upon the atonement of Christ. His benevolent spirit, unwearied philanthropy, were her admiration and her pattern; but his vicarious sufferings were the sole basis of that peace which was witnessed in her tranquillized heart through life, and in the support she felt at death.

“Christ and his cross were all her theme.”

They were the favorite topics of her conversation, and the subject of her thoughts in health as well as sickness, and became the more precious the nearer she approached the time of her departure. When we were requested to sing, the last evening I saw her, she proposed that exquisite hymn of Newton,

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear,” &c.

Every line of which, was only an exponent of the exercises of her heart, that was overflowing with a love to which she wished to give utterance, so far as she could, through the voices of others. Her attachment to the church was not only sincere but strong; every member was an object of interest and affection; and I was touched with the ardor and tenderness with which she expressed her love in one of our last conversations.

It was her special request, that if convenient, her dust should be attended to the grave by those who had been her fellow-worshippers, a token of affectionate respect which was shown with the greatest cordiality. Many were drawn to that house of mourning as sufferers with the bereaved, who, with heart-smitten Thomas, felt that "the earth now had one less, and heaven one attraction more, by the translation of such a purified and happy spirit." But the burying-place,

fellow-survivors, is not full, and there is space left for us. We have *the sentence of death* in ourselves, and so soon as we can well *set our house in order*, adjust our secular and spiritual concerns, we must pass through this change that is now so appalling to our sensibilities and vision.

The death which we have contemplated in this discourse, exhibits the power of religion not only to take away its terrors, but to make it even an object of desire. Let it be our purpose, then, to seek that support for this coming crisis, which we shall then feel in all its importance, if it be not realized now. Let us seek that heaven-imparted preparation which involves at once a title to the inheritance and a preparation to enjoy it; the one put upon us by the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the other wrought in us by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Let us all strive to be brought into that state of

present blessedness here, that, with Paul, we may say, for us *to live, is Christ*; and death, whenever it comes, or whatever its attendant circumstances, shall be our unspeakable and eternal gain.

AMONG the poetic effusions of Miss Lawson, to which there is an allusion in the preceding pages, I find the following, which I select as a sample :—

THE POET'S REVERIE.

Beside yon lovely stream,
When the bright sparkling beam
Of the young moon is o'er the waters shining,
Its soft and melting rays
Stole on the poet's gaze,
As on a mossy bank he lay reclining.

Far in the world of thought
His visions, fancy-wrought,
Glow with the splendor of that sweet magician ;
Before his raptured eyes
New realms of glory rise,
And wrap his bosom in a dream elysian.

Sad to the poet's sight
 Seemed the approaching night,
 That threw her cold and starlit beauties o'er him,
 Warning him hence away,
 Ere the new-coming day
 Shall bring its stern realities before him.

Like thee, sweet night, he cried,
 My hours of youthful pride,
 Of eager, anxious hope, and ardent feeling,
 Alas! have fled too soon,
 And left a darkened noon,
 O'er which the mists of doubts and fears are stealing.

Time, like the golden ray
 Of gloom-dispersing day,
 Shall teach my wandering steps the path of glory;
 I'll mingle in the strife,
 The toil and din of life,
 And carve out deeds that shall be worthy story.

Vain thus to seek for fame,
 The world admits thy claim;
 Thy task shall be to soften and refine it;
 Not thine the part to know
 Its scenes of crime and woe;
 Dream on, till Heaven shall call thee to resign it.