

From Notice TWO *L. F. & M. S. Denny*
Chambersburg
DISCOURSES,

OCCASIONED

BY THE

DECEASE

OF THE

REV. DOCTOR JOHN KING,

**LATE PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION OF UPPER
WEST CONOCOCHIEAGUE.**



**DELIVERED IN THE CHURCH OF UPPER WEST
CONOCOCHIEAGUE, AUGUST 1, 1813.**



BY JOHN M'KNIGHT, D. D.



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*TO Mrs. ELIZABETH KING, relict
of the Reverend Doctor John King ;
to the ELDERS, TRUSTEES, and PEO-
PLE of the Congregation of Upper
West Conococheague, these Discour-
ses at first delivered, and now pub-
lished at their request, are respect-
fully inscribed by their friend*

THE AUTHOR.

DISCOURSE I.



HEBREWS X. XXXvii.

*For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come,
and will not tarry.*



MANY and arduous are the duties assigned to the christian in the present state ; numerous and severe the afflictions and trials to which he is frequently exposed. So many and arduous the one that human strength is altogether unequal to the task. So numerous and severe the other that the resolution and fortitude of man must infallibly sink under them.

But as the religion of Jesus Christ calls us forth to the discharge of difficult duties, and to endure severe trials, so it promises likewise grace and strength proportioned to the task assigned us, and insures a reward great and infinitely more than an abundant compensation for them all. Are the duties assigned us and the temptations and trials to which we are exposed great and severe? Then it is promised, “as thy days so shall thy strength be. My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Are our afflictions and trials oft-times extremely severe and hard to be born? Then it is promised, 1st. That as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation

shall also abound by Christ. 2d. That though no chastening, for the present, be joyous, but grievous, it nevertheless afterwards yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.—And 3d. That our light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall, in the end work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Let us lay these things together. The christian has much to do ; but there is provision made for him of grace and strength proportioned to the task assigned him. He has much to suffer ; but under all his sufferings there is ample support and consolation provided for him. His time of trial is but short. His reward is sure. It is exceeding great. It is eternal. If you consider him as to his external condition, and limit his enjoyments and his hopes to this world you will, perhaps, in some instances, find reason to pronounce him of all men the most miserable. But if you take into the account the provision of grace and consolation which is made for him here, together with the exceeding and eternal weight of glory in reserve for him hereafter, you will find reason to alter your opinion, and of all men to pronounce him most happy.

We are beings of yesterday, and our days on earth are but a shadow. We shall not however die like the brutes which perish. We are destined for and eternal existence. Whilst then the common afflictions of life are an intolerable burden to such as are without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world ; the believer is supported under them by his present comforts, and his future prospects. And whilst the enjoyments of the sinner shall all terminate with time, and the hypocrite and his hopes shall be cut off together at death ; the believer shall then enter upon the possession of fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore. He doth not look on this world as the place of his constant residence, nor will he rest satisfied with the things of

time and sense for his portion: but as a pilgrim and stranger, who has no continuing city here, he is looking forward to a better, even an heavenly country,—and for a city which hath foundation whose builder and maker is God, and which is eternal in the heavens. The faithful God whom he serves has promised to come, and that shortly, to put an end to all his sufferings and sorrows, and to put him into the possession and enjoyment of everlasting glory and blessedness. The strength which this must administer to his faith, and the life with which it must invigorate his hope, are sufficient to render him superior to all his trials, and to fill him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. “For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.”

These words declare the certainty, and the suddenness of Christ's coming. The certainty of it, “he will come.” The suddenness of it, “yet a little while;” or as some would render it, a little, a very little while, “and he will not tarry.”

These two then shall constitute the subject of the present discourse.

The Comer, he that shall come, or he that is about to come, are appellations by which the Messiah is frequently designated in scripture. Thus John, the Baptist, when in prison, sent two of his disciples to our Lord to ask him, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”

The faith of the people of God under the Old Testament dispensations was exercised in waiting for the manifestation of the Son of God in flesh. But the expectations and hopes of believers, under the gospel, are fixed on him as about to be revealed from heaven, whither after his resurrection he ascended, to put an end to their labors and sufferings and to confer upon them the rewards which he has promised them.

The coming of Jesus Christ here may refer both to his coming, by death, to remove his people from the labors and sufferings of the present state, to the enjoyment of glory and happiness with himself, in heaven : and to his glorious appearing, at the end of the world, openly to acknowledge and acquit them, before the assembled universe, and to render their glory and happiness complete. We shall consider the certainty and the suddenness of Christ's coming in each of these respects.

The certainty that Jesus Christ will shortly come, by death to remove each of his sincere disciples and faithful friends from this their state of trial, and to confer upon them the glorious reward of their obedience and sufferings, may be argued from the three following topicks ; namely, from the express declarations of his word—from the conduct of his providence—and from the intimations of reason.

1. The certainty that Jesus Christ will shortly come, by death, to remove each of his sincere disciples and faithful friends, from this their state of trial, and to confer upon them the glorious reward of their obedience and sufferings, may be argued from the express declarations of his word.

The penalty annexed to the prohibition respecting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was, " In the day that thou eateth thereof thou shalt surely die." " The wages of sin is death. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into our world, and death by sin ; so death passed on all men for that all have sinned." To these I might add many other passages of scripture which expressly assert the certainty of death. " For I know," saith Job, " that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. What man is he," saith the psalmist, " that liveth, and shall not see death ? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave ?" To these passages which refer to the certainty of

death, I might add many which declare the swiftness of time and the shortness of our lives, Job says, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. Now my days are swifter than a post, they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." The Psalmist says, "Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee : verily, every man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath, we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three score years and ten ; and if, by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." To which I shall only add the declaration by the apostle James. "For what is your life ? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

These passages which I have mentioned, you will observe, equally respect the righteous and the wicked.

Alike happeneth to all men in this respect. Their end here is generally a like however different their characters in life may have been, or however different their state beyond the grave shall be. "For wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish."

But I am particularly concerned here to point out the grounds of assurance to the righteous, from his word, that Jesus Christ will certainly come shortly, by death, to remove them to that kingdom of glory which he has purchased and prepared for them. And there is one passage uttered by his own mouth, when in person on earth, so full and express to this purpose that I shall not need to adduce any other. You will readily apprehend that I allude to that in the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of the gospel by John, where comforting his disciples who

were sorrowful at the prospect of his leaving them, he says, "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God ; believe also in me. In my Fathers house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also."

It is true that believers who are found alive on the earth, at the coming of our Lord to judgment, shall not die ; but they shall undergo a change equivalent to death. "Behold," says the apostle, "I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Thus then stands the argument from scripture. Death is to be the fate of all the living, excepting those who are found alive on the earth on the morning of the resurrection, who shall undergo a change equivalent to death. But Jesus Christ has brought himself under special obligations, by promise, to his own people, in this respect. "I will," says he, "come again. Yet a little while, and I will come, again, and take you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. I will not tarry."

2. That Jesus Christ will shortly come, by death, to remove each of his sincere disciples and faithful friends from this their state of trial, and to put them into the possession of the glorious reward of their obedience and sufferings, may be argued from the conduct of his providence. In this, so well as in every other respect, is he manifested to be the true and faithful God. The time which has hitherto been assigned to his people as the period of their trial has been but short, and we have no reason to expect that it will be extended. Where are now the Patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles ? Where are

all those worthies who have preceded our day, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens? The Captain of their salvation has long since discharged them from their warfare. He that loved them, and died for them has long since made them conquerors and more than conquerors over every foe. He has admitted them into the new Jerusalem, and they walk with him in white, being reputed worthy of the distinguishing honors of the celestial mansions.

And may I not add, where are many of our acquaintances, some of them perhaps of our near relations and intimate friends, who having served their generation by the will of God, have fallen asleep, and been gathered to their fathers? Have we not reason to believe of many such that they rest from their labors and their works do follow them? Have we not reason to believe that having the harps of God given unto them, they have struck into concert with angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and are now singing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb?—Yes, my Brethren, and I trust that there are of you who now hear me, who, whilst on earth, can but faintly lisp the praises of your God and Redeemer, who shall shortly join this blessed society, and throughout eternity, in anthems of praise, celebrate the wonders of redeeming love.

3. That Jesus Christ will shortly come, by death, to remove each of his sincere disciples and faithful friends, from this their state of trial, and to confer upon them the glorious reward of their obedience and sufferings, may be argued from the intimations of reason. There is an intimate union subsisting between Jesus Christ and his people. He is the head, of which the church is the body, and every

particular believer a member.—Jesus Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; and it is the character of every true believer that he loves the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the full enjoyment of its object, is what love aims at, and it is that which will alone satisfy it.—The church is in a militant state on earth. This life is a place of probation, and it is through many tribulations that the righteous must enter into the kingdom of heaven. As then the honor of God is dear to each of his children, and their righteous souls are vexed when that holy name by which they are called, is dishonoured; so Jesus Christ has a fellow feeling of their infirmities, and sympathises with them in all their distresses. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmities.” As the head feels the pain with which even the most distant member of the body is affected; so our Lord Jesus Christ is sensible of the injury that is done to the meanest of his people on earth, and considers it as done to himself.—Every believer, also, in a greater or less degree, has his fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ. In all this communion is imperfect and liable to interruption on earth. It will be perfect and uninterrupted in heaven. From this intimate union then, this reciprocal affection, sympathy, and imperfect communion result mutual and earnest desires after perfect nearness, and uninterrupted fellowship. Every sincere soul, according to the strength and evidence of grace, will long for the period when, that which is perfect being come; that which is in part shall be done away: when the day shall break, and the shadows flee away, and he shall enter into the uninterrupted joy of his Lord. These desires of his people, so conformable to his will, produced, nourished and strengthened in them by his Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ will not fail speedily to accomplish; more especially when in accom-

plishing them he will accomplish what his own heart desires, and is so intent upon.

We proceed in the second place to consider the evidence which we have that Jesus Christ will certainly come shortly to judgment: to pass sentence on men and angels, to doom the wicked to the punishment which they have incurred, and to render the glory and happiness of his people complete.

The certainty of a future judgment is a truth discernible by the light of reason, or, having been first communicated by revelation, was so conformable to the sentiments of the human mind that the belief of it has prevailed in every nation, throughout every age. The natural apprehensions which we have of God, as an infinitely holy and just God; of the essential difference between virtue and vice, the intimations of conscience, and the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in the present state, are all strong intimations of a judgment to come, and of a state of retribution beyond the grave. Accordingly the Heathen, who did not enjoy the benefits of revelation had nevertheless their judges, their rewards, and their punishments in a future state.

What reason indicates is abundantly confirmed by the word of God, which, besides the certainty of a future judgment, of which reason was not ignorant, reveals several important circumstances respecting it to which reason must have forever remained a stranger.

With regard to the time, when the judgment shall take place, we have no express information. Some of the primitive christians had an apprehension that it was then near at hand. This mistake was probably founded on a misapprehension of some things spoken by our Lord. And because it did not take place so soon as some were looking for it, the atheists of those days reproached them with it, saying, "where is the promise of his coming? for since the

fathers have fallen asleep ;” or excepting that the fathers have fallen asleep : that is, that one generation has passed away and another succeeded them, “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

Some have conjectured that the judgment will be at the expiration of six thousand years from the beginning of the world ; computing two thousand years before the giving of the law, two thousand years under the law, and two thousand years under the gospel. All such surmisings are vain, if not presumptuous. God has reserved this knowledge to himself. “For of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, but the Father.” The knowledge of the time when the judgment will be is kept from us, probably, because it would be injurious to us. We err then in curiously enquiring after it.

But to attend more particularly to this point :

1st. The certainty that Jesus Christ will shortly come to judgment may be proved from express declarations of scripture. And here nothing can be more fully or directly to the purpose than the words of the text. “For yet a little while and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.” This important truth was early revealed to the world. Thus the apostle Jude tells us, that “Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophesied of these,” that is of the scoffers who should appear in the last times, saying, “Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” In the book of the Revelation it is said, “Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” Our Lord says, “In

those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven."

To those passages of scripture which declare the certainty of Christ's coming to judgment, many might be added which speak of it as near at hand. The apostle Peter says, "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." It is promised that, for the elects sake, the days of tribulation, which shall precede the judgment shall be shortened. And in the book of the Revelation, which closes the scripture canon, our Lord frequently uses these expressions, "Behold, I come quickly. Surely, I come quickly."

2. The certainty that Jesus Christ will shortly come to judgment may be inferred from the displays of the divine perfections and glory which shall be made on that day. In the administration of the kingdom of his providence, on earth, God often makes darkness his pavilion, and clothes himself with the thick darkness round about. His path is in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known: his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. But justice and judgment will then appear to have been the habitation of his throne, mercy accompanied with truth shall go before his face. The righteous now have much injury and many wrongs done unto them: but God will then bring forth their judgment as the light, and their righteousness as the noon day. They shall then receive an abundant compensation for all their sufferings and sorrows, and all their reproach shall be forever clean wiped away. The wicked now generally prosper in their way: but they shall then

weep and howl, and, in the utmost terror and consternation, call to the rocks and to the mountains to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the face of the lamb. Every thing that is now obscure in the divine government will then be made clear, and every crooked thing straight: for God will be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth. And O ! what wonders in the divine administration will this scene unfold, when every work shall be brought into judgment, every hidden thing revealed, and the secrets of all hearts made manifest ? How will the wisdom and goodness, the holiness and justice, the truth, the mercy, and the love of God be then displayed to the admiration of the assembled universe ?

3. The certainty that Jesus Christ will shortly come to judgment may be inferred from this ; That his own glory, as Mediator, shall on that day be complete. This commenced when he was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead. It was continued and increased by his ascension into heaven, his sitting at the right hand of the Father, in his being given to be the head over all things to the church : and it shall have its completion in the judgment of the great day. He shall then come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. His elect shall then be all gathered in, and his mystical body perfected. The ignominy of the cross shall then be forever clean wiped away, and his victory over all the powers of darkness perfect and entire. Then shall he deliver up the kingdom, which had been delegated to him, to the Father, and God shall be all and all.

4. That Jesus Christ will shortly come to judgment may also be inferred from the glory and happiness which await his people on that day. It is at the resurrection of the just that they shall be fully recompensed. Their souls indeed, at death, made

perfect in holiness, pass immediately into glory. Thus our Lord declared to the penitent thief on the cross, "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." But both soul and body are requisite to constitute the man. The bodies of believers then, which have, perhaps, for thousands of years slept in the dust, shall on that day be raised up, spiritual bodies, in incorruption, in power, and in glory, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and being re-united to their souls, both shall be made partakers of glory and blessedness in as great a measure, and in as large a proportion as they are qualified to enjoy.

This is an argument for Christ's speedy appearance to judgment, in as much as from the intimate union subsisting between him and the church in general, and every true believer in particular, he has a most endearing affection for them, and the glory and happiness conferred on them ultimately redounds unto himself. It is a part of his office, as mediator, and in which his honor and happiness are deeply interested, to bring all those, whom he hath redeemed unto God by his blood to the full possession and enjoyment of all that glory and blessedness which he hath purchased for them. And the mutual ardent affection subsisting between Jesus Christ and his church and people, together with their earnest desires for, and expectations of it, will be powerful arguments with him to hasten that day.

What then is so repeatedly and expressly declared and promised in his word—what will tend so remarkably to display the perfections, character, and glory of God—what will be the consummation of his own mediatorial glory—and what shall forever complete the glory and happiness of his people; Jesus Christ will not fail speedily to accomplish.

I would improve this subject, in the 1st place, for the conviction and reproof of such as live without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world. You have heard that Jesus Christ will cer.

tainly come shortly. “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” Be exhorted then to prepare to meet your God. He comes for the salvation of his people: but he comes to the confusion and dismay of his enemies.

To which of these classes do you belong? Or with whom will you associate? If with his enemies, Gird up your loins like a man. Deck thyself with majesty and excellency, and array thyself with glory and beauty. Harden thy heart as the adamant, or the nether mill-stone. Make thy neck as an iron sinew, and thy brow as brass. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and in the fury of rebellious madness come forth to the combat. But consider, O sinner, “Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” Art thou able, with a feeble arm of flesh, to oppose him who cometh forth against thee accompanied with myriads of saints and angels, and arrayed in all the terrors of incensed omnipotence? O, no: he looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. The sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon become as blood, the stars of the firmament shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. The heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll, and being on fire shall pass away with a great noise; the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the things which are therein shall be burnt up at his glorious appearance. Do you expect that you shall be able to stand, when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth?

The expectation would be the height of presumption and madness. Now then is the time to be wise.

Submit yourselves now to Jesus Christ as your Lord, and accept of him as your Savior. He will be unto you an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Kiss ye the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they, and they only who put their trust in him.

2. I would improve this subject for the support and consolation of the righteous under their afflictions and trials. It is indeed the joint testimony of scripture and experience, that we must, through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. But let not this discourage you. There shall no temptation take you but such as is common to men ; for God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able ; but will, with the temptation also make way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. Whatever your afflictions and trials may be, whether of body or of mind, whether in person, in reputation, or in property, whether they proceed immediately from the hand of your heavenly Father, or by his permission from the hand of devils, or of wicked men, or however numerous, complicated or severe they may be, still you have this consolation that they will be short. Jesus, whose disciples and followers you profess yourselves to be, if you prove faithful unto him, will shortly come to put an end to all your sufferings and sorrows, and to put you into possession of everlasting glory and blessedness beyond the reach of every trouble and of every fear. "Put on therefore the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

3. I would improve this subject for the excitement and encouragement of the people of God to diligence and perseverance in their christian course. Glory, honor, and immortality are set before you ; and it is by a patient continuance in well doing that you are to be made partakers of them. Be ye then not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Let your loins be always girt about, and your lamps always burning, and ye yourselves like unto them that wait for the coming of their Lord. He has given you every possible assurance that he will come shortly. His reward will be with him to render to every one, not only according to the nature, but also in proportion to the measure of their works. Awake then to righteousness. Be not weary in well doing. You know not how soon your Lord may come. And God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love.

In the 4th and last place, I would improve this subject by earnestly recommending to each of you frequent and serious meditation on death and judgment. The benefits resulting from a compliance with this recommendation will, in all probability be many and great. It will tend to fortify you against temptation, and be an happy mean of preserving you from sin. It will serve to wean you from an undue attachment to the world and the things of the world. It will tend to administer, support and comfort to you under the afflictions and trials to which you are now exposed. It will invigorate your endeavors, and animate you in the discharge of duty. In a word, the happy fruits resulting from frequent and serious meditation on death and judgment will, in all probability, be to render death comfortable, judgment triumphant, and eternity glorious and happy.

DISCOURSE II.



REVELATION XIV. xiii.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.



WE cannot, my Brethren, too frequently realise, or be too habitually or deeply impressed with the truth, that, as we are beings of yesterday, so our days on earth are but a shadow. **Man is born to die.**

This indeed was not the original constitution of human nature. Man was at first made immortal. But, "by one man sin entered into our world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned."

Whether, in case man had retained his primitive innocence and rectitude, this world would have been the place of his constant residence, whether he would have been subjected to any change, or removed, as he was, to any other place or state, are points which we are not competent to determine. This, however, is certain, that he would have been forever a stranger to death. **Death is the wages of sin. Death is the curse of disobedience.**

Death then being an inroad on the original constitution of human nature, reason and nature knew not, nor could they possibly devise any remedy against it. This was beyond the reach, not only

of all human, but also of all created wisdom. To the device and accomplishment of this, infinite wisdom and love were alone competent.

That Almighty Saviour who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto him by him, has, by dying, conquered death and him that had the power of it, that he might deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. Accordingly you hear him declare, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Deliverance from death, as it consists in the separation of the soul from the body, Jesus Christ has not indeed promised, nor doth he grant it to his people. In this respect it is appointed unto all men once to die. But he has taken away the sting of death; and not only deprived it of every thing that is either frightful or dangerous, but he has also converted it into a blessing. Thus it is declared in the text, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

I shall restrict myself here to two observations on the words. The one is, that the blessedness here pronounced belongs, exclusively, to those who "die in the Lord:" who are united to our Lord Jesus Christ, as their covenant head, by a true and living faith, and interested in all the blessings of salvation through him. With regard to all others, death is still clothed in all its native terrors; and the death of the body will terminate in the destruction of both soul and body in hell forever.

The other observation which I shall make here is that so important and comfortable is this declaration, that the apostle John is particularly commended to record it for the benefit of all succeeding generations. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

What I propose in discoursing to you on this subject is, To endeavor to shew you wherein the blessedness of those who die in the Lord consists. And then to apply what may be said with a particular reference to the occasion on which we are assembled.

I am, in the first place, to endeavor to shew you wherein the blessedness of those who die in the Lord consists.

In entering on this I would observe, that the blessedness here spoken of, as belonging to those who die in the Lord, is not to be considered as consisting in the manner, or external circumstances of their death. Neither from the word of God, nor from experience and observation does it appear that there is any just foundation laid for placing it in these. As, in life, the people of God are not exempted from those temporal afflictions which are the common lot of human nature; but on the contrary, most commonly share largely in them: so their death may be preceded and accompanied by much pain and many sufferings.

Still however, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." This we trust will fully appear if you attend to the following considerations.

1. The death of such as die in the Lord is always safe. This is equally the case at whatever period, by whatever means, or in whatever external circumstances they may die. Whether they are taken away in the morning of their days, like the tender plant which is nipt in the bud; in blooming youth; in the meridian of life; or when nature has become exhausted and is worn down by the infirmities and decays of old age. Whether they are taken away by a sudden and unexpected stroke, or by a slow and lingering disease. Whether they die by the hand of violence, or in a natural way. Whether their pains and sufferings at this period be more or less. Whether they die in abject poverty, or in the pos-

possession of an abundance of the good things of this world: kings on thrones, or beggars on the dunghill. Whether they die under a cloud, and exercised with many perplexities, doubts and fears, respecting their character and state; or in the bright prospect and full assurance of future glory and blessedness. These are all adventitious circumstances, adjusted and directed in infinite wisdom, in themselves, of comparatively small moment, and which do not, in any measure, affect their character or state. Still to them the sting of death is taken away, and it is converted into a blessing. Still present in the sight of God is the death of his saints. His covenant remains sure. Their Redeemer liveth. Their lives are hid with Christ in God. Death is to them the gate of life. They sleep in Jesus, and go to be ever with the Lord.

2. The death of such as die in the Lord is generally serene and comfortable. Most commonly they are enabled to meet this king of terrors, and to submit to his stroke, to which all must submit, with firmness and fortitude, having their confidence and hope fixed in God. In a steady uniform course of holy obedience, the christian usually attains to such a comfortable persuasion of his gracious state, and to such a permanent well founded hope of his interest in the covenant, mercy and love of God, as tend to inspire him with an holy magnanimity, to administer support and consolation to him under all the afflictions and trials of life, to enable him to fear no evil when he walks through the valley of the shadow of death, and as prove to him an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail.

His assurance and confidence, his comforts, his peace, and his rejoicing, do not indeed arise to the height of exultation, rapture, or transport. But it is a peace which is not understanding, which keeps his heart and mind from anxiety, distress, and fear through Jesus Christ his Lord: a peace which

the world can neither give, nor take away, and which strangers intermeddle not with. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the latter end of that man is peace."

3. The death of such as die in the Lord is frequently glorious and triumphant. Blessed be God, the instances are not rare in which from a sense of his gracious and comforting presence, from the bright prospects of future glory, and the sweet foretastes of approaching blessedness, his people are rendered superior to every fear, triumphant over every terror, are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and exclaiming, Lord, why tarriest thou? why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming? enter with full sail into the haven of eternal rest.

This has been the case with multitudes, not only of those who have been called to the high and honorable post of sealing their testimony with their blood, and of yielding up their lives under the most excruciating pains and tortures, in adhering to the cause of their God and Redeemer; and whose strength and comforts have been proportioned to their sufferings: but also with many who have died under lingering and painful diseases. It has been the case not only with many who have been distinguished for their high stations and eminent services in the church of Christ; but with many also, in the humble stations and retired walks of life.

Let me invite you, my Brethren, to draw near to the death bed of him who dies in the Lord, and to take a view of him in these comfortable and gloriously triumphant circumstances. The sight is calculated to do you good. Behold him strong in the faith giving glory to God, and in the full assurance of faith and hope rejoicing in prospect of the glory of God. Behold him abundantly supported and comforted under the sickness and pains of his body, by those consolations of God which are neither few nor small; desiring and longing to depart and to be with Christ; yet waiting for his release from the

prison of the body with patience and resignation to the will of his heavenly Father. The serenity and cheerfulness of heaven are on his countenance, whilst his soul is filled with its glory and joys. See him resigning his spirit into the hand of his God and Redeemer, and entering with triumph, and with transport into the realms of bliss. How edifying is such a sight? How desirable, how enviable is such a situation? who in the contemplation of it is not disposed to exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

4. Death is, to those who die in the Lord, the termination of all their sufferings and sorrows, and the commencement of their everlasting glory and blessedness.

Take a view of those who die in the Lord, when death has accomplished his work on them. The body, it is true remains a lifeless corpse. It is deposited in the house appointed for all the living. It becomes the prey of corruption and worms, and moulders to its native dust. But with it are deposited in the grave, all those sicknesses and pains, all those labors and cares, vexations, disappointments, and sorrows which occurred in providing for its support. It also rests in hope. The union subsisting between Christ, and the believer, is an union of the whole man: of both soul and body. This union then between Christ and the bodies of his people is not destroyed, or in any wise affected by death, any more than the union between him and their souls.

Their bodies are the purchase of the Redeemers blood, as well as their souls. They are still his charge. They are still his care. As the servants of God favor the dust of Zion, and take pleasure in her stones and rubbish; so the dust and ruins of the bodies of his people are precious in the eyes of their Redeemer. They rest in the sure and certain prospect and hope of a resurrection to glory and immortality. Thus the prophet Isaiah says, "He

shall enter into peace ; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." " For," says the apostle, " if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again ; even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him."

Such is the state of the body after death. But what is become of the immortal spirit. Follow it in its journey through the skies. It has winged its flight to the regions of eternal day. Angels were its escort. The heavens were opened to it. It saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ready to receive it. Made perfect in holiness, passing the boundaries of time, and entering into the confines of eternity, it sees God as he is. It beholds him face to face. Its conformity to him is perfect. It rests in the bosom of its God. It contemplates and enjoys all the divine and mediatorial fullness and glory of Jesus Christ. It associates with angels, and with the spirits of the just made perfect. It is clothed with all the glory, engages in all the delightful employments, and participates in all the extatic and transporting enjoyments of heaven.

But both soul and body are necessary to constitute the man, nor is the man complete whilst either of them is wanting. And notwithstanding the glory and happiness of the soul, in this state of separation from the body, are as great as it is capable of enjoying, yet reason dictates, and the oracles of infallible truth assure us that large accessions of glory and blessedness await those who die in the Lord at the resurrection of the just. The soul then looks forward, with pleasing expectation, to the morning of the resurrection when it shall be re-united to the body, and the upright shall have the dominion.

To receive his body again such as it once was, the seat of corruption, the source of temptation, and subject to diseases and death, would, to the believer, be a curse instead of a blessing. But widely different from this will be the case. His body shall then

he fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

After death, we are told, cometh the judgment. There is reason to believe that a particular judgment takes place with regard to every individual, immediately after death, according to which their final destinies will be determined. But besides this we are assured that there will be a future, general, and final judgment; termed in scripture the judgment of the great day; in which the equity of the whole of the divine conduct towards his creatures shall be fully manifested, and an illustrious display given of the divine perfections and character. Into this judgment shall the righteous, as well as the wicked, be brought. Whilst then the wicked shall appear in this judgment with terroure and dismay, whilst they shall call to the rocks and to the mountains to fall on them, and to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; the righteous shall appear with confidence, with hope, and with rejoicing. They shall appear to be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the presence of the assembled universe. And having been assessors with Christ in judging and passing sentence on wicked men and apostate angels; and having shared with their Lord in all the glory and triumphs of that dreadful day, they shall ascend with him into heaven; so shall they ever be with the Lord.

To endeavor to describe the felicities and glories of the heavenly state would be a fruitless attempt. The language of mortals is not adequate to it. The most exalted conceptions which we can possibly form fall infinitely short of it. Let it suffice then to

say that they will be such as are worthy of a God of all perfection, fulness and glory to bestow ; such as are worthy the purchase of Immanuel's blood ; such as the refined and enlarged powers and capacity of men shall be capable of enjoying ; that they will be progressive, unchanging, and eternal.

Thus you see the death of those who die in the Lord is indeed blessed.

Their death is always safe—generally serene and comfortable—often glorious and triumphant—the termination of all their sufferings and sorrows, and the commencement of their everlasting glory and blessedness.

There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. “ They rest from their labour, and their works do follow them.” Justly then may they adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say, “ I shall behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

From what has been said you may see that the believer in Christ has no just cause to fear, or to be intimidated at the prospect of death : but, on the contrary, every reason to rejoice. To him death carries in it no real evil or danger. It terminates all his sufferings and sorrows ; and it brings him to the completion of all his desires and hopes.

From what has been said you may also see the little cause, which the surviving relatives and friends of those who die in the Lord, have to indulge in grief and mourning. Could you see the celestial glory with which they are clothed ; could you realise the perfect and unmixed happiness which they enjoy, you would rather rejoice.

Nature, however, has its feelings in such cases. Weep we may but not as those who have no hope.

This naturally leads me to apply what has been said, with a particular reference to the occasion on which we are assembled.

Such as we have been describing, we have every rational and scriptural ground to believe is the case with that servant of God, whose death we this day commemorate. To him to live was Christ, and death gain. We cannot doubt that he died in the Lord, and is blessed.

I am no friend to extravagant panegyric, either on the living, or the dead. At the same time I consider it a duty to exhibit eminent worth in a just point of light, that others may profit by the example.

The character which I shall give of the deceased shall be drawn from an intimate personal acquaintance, of nearly forty years. And for the truth and justice of it I trust I may confidently appeal to the knowledge of those who enjoyed the best opportunities of being well acquainted with him.

Dr. John King was born in Chesnut-level, in the lower part of Lancaster county, December 5, 1740, of honest and reputable parents.

He was the second son of Robert King, who emigrated from Ireland and purchased a tract of land there, on which he resided, and on which Dr. King was born. His father was a ruling elder in the congregation of Chesnut-level, in which office he continued until his death, which was about the year 1763, or 4.

At the age of 14 or 15, Dr. King commenced his classical studies in a Grammar school, under Mr. Smith. Some time after, he was removed to New-Ark Academy, where he completed his classical

studies. Between the time of his leaving the Academy and going to College, he visited Conococheague, where, for several years, he taught an English and Grammar school.

He entered Philadelphia College, then under the care of Doctors William Smith and Francis Alison, May 6, 1765.

Whilst prosecuting his studies in the College, he, at the same time, taught one of the higher classes in the Academy, which was connected with it.

He commenced Batchelor of Arts, May 22, 1766.

After leaving College, being much afflicted with a pain in his breast and hoarseness, he was afraid that he would not be able to speak in public ; which induced him to enter on the study of Physick, which he did in Baltimore. Getting better of the pain in his breast and hoarseness, he relinquished the study of Physick, in about three months after he had commenced it, and applied himself to the study of Divinity. It is not known under what minister he prosecuted his studies.

He was licensed to preach, August the 5th, 1767.

Having preached some time in this congregation as a probationer, he was presented with a call to be their Pastor, which he accepted, and was ordained and installed, August 23d, 1769.

In May, 1770, he took his degree of Master of Arts.

April 2d, 1771, he married Miss Elizabeth M^c. Dowell, daughter of Mr. John M^c. Dowell, one of the Elders of the congregation in which he was settled ; and with whom he lived very happily the remaining part of his life, and who proved a careful and tender nurse to him in his affliction. He has left no issue.

He was Pastor of this congregation upwards of forty years.

During the last six years of his life, he laboured under a Rheumatic complaint, with which he was severely afflicted, and which baffled every medical application. For four years of this time, however, he continued in the exercise of his ministry, in the latter part of which, his limbs were so enfeebled that he was not able to stand, and officiated sitting in a chair fixed in the pulpit. Finding his complaint still increasing, and his prospects of usefulness, in a public capacity, at an end, he resigned his charge, September, 1811.

His complaint continued to increase, and his bodily strength to decline, until he became utterly helpless. Some time before his death, he was seized with a violent fever, which brought his natural life to a close. He died July 5th, in the 73d year of his age.

Dr. King was a man of good natural parts, which he diligently cultivated. And, in particular, from the time of his being settled in the ministry, being placed in favorable circumstances for study, he industriously improved what time he could redeem from the immediate duties of his office, in acquiring the knowledge of all those branches of literature and science which tended to respectability and usefulness. Besides being a good Latin and Greek scholar, he had a competent acquaintance with the Hebrew and the French. He had studied Natural and Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, the Mathematics, and Logic with attention, and had a considerable general knowledge of Chymistry. He had paid considerable attention to ecclesiastical history. With Divinity, in its several branches, he was well acquainted.

Influenced by his well known, and established character, as a scholar and a divine, the trustees of Dickinson College, at one of the first commence-

ments in the College, viz. in the year 1792, conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Dr. King was the author of several small publications, particularly a Catechism, for the instruction of youth, in the principles of the Christian religion—and more especially calculated to fortify them against that spirit of scepticism and infidelity, which at the time of its publication, threatened to corrupt the principles and morals of many—of some pieces in the *Assembly's Magazine*, on the subject of a man's marrying his former wife's sister—of a dissertation on the prophecies, referring to the present times, &c.

As a companion, Dr. King was sociable, cheerful, and instructing. As a friend, he was sincere, affectionate, uniform, and faithful.

It will be remembered by those who were most intimately acquainted with him, that, in his most cheerful hours, and when his mind was most unbent in social conversation, he manifested a constant disposition, and embraced every favourable opportunity to improve what was said to some useful purpose; and, in a manner equally removed from rigid severity, on the one hand, and vain ostentation on the other, to suggest reflections of a moral and religious tendency.

He paid a particular attention to youth, and especially to such as were entering upon the business, and about to be exposed to the temptations of the world; and took frequent opportunities of administering to them suitable advice and caution, in the most affectionate and friendly manner.

He was conscientiously steady in his attendance on the Judicatures of the church, and being well acquainted with its discipline and government, and possessed of a sound judgment and much prudence, was an highly useful member.

He was very serviceable to the church in directing, and assisting several young men in their studies for the ministry, whom he always treated with much tenderness and affection, and who retained for him much reverential respect.

Naturally modest and unassuming, he was never forward or obtrusive ; but when duty called, always decided and firm.

In his principles Dr. King was strictly orthodox ; a uniform and warm friend to the great doctrines of grace. His piety was rational and warm. His life fully corresponded with his profession, and he has left behind him a character unsullied by a blot.

He evidenced an increasing concern for the interests of Zion ; and so far from being of a bigoted or contracted spirit, he held friendly intercourse with persons of different denominations, and was ready to countenance and encourage all who appeared desirous of promoting the cause of religion.

He was ready to distribute, and willing to communicate to every real object of charity that presented, and to such literary institutions as promised to be useful.

He has left this Bible to you, my Brethren, as a memorial of his affection for you ;* and he has bequeathed \$ 200 for the use of the Bible Society in Philadelphia.

Even when greatly depressed under his long continued and severe indisposition, the visit of an acquaintance, and more especially of an old friend, revived and animated him in a remarkable manner.

* This refers to a handsome hot press folio Bible, left by the Doctor, in his will, which had been provided, and was on the Pulpit when this discourse was delivered.

'Tho' his afflictions were severe and of long continuance, and tho' he was considerably advanced in years, yet he still retained, until very near the close of his life, his intellectual powers, very little impaired. His mind was still vigorous and active.

As a public speaker Dr. King always labored under a feebleness of voice and frequent hoarseness, which prevented him from being so well known, and so highly esteemed as a preacher, as the abundance of evangelical matter contained in his discourses justly entitled him.

You, formerly the people of his charge, well know the fervor of his devotion, how edifying and savory his discourses from the pulpit were, with what diligence he taught you from house to house, and with what parental affection, solicitude, and care he watched over you: and we trust that many of you will be his joy and crown of rejoicing, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

Having a good constitution, Dr. King generally enjoyed, through life a good state of health. During the last six years of his life, however, he was severely afflicted. Let us now proceed to take a view of the state of his mind under his affliction, and in prospect of his approaching dissolution.

Here I shall introduce a communication on the subject, from Mr. Elliot, your present worthy Pastor. It is so happily expressed that I shall give it to you precisely as it was communicated to me.

"I visited Dr. King, some few weeks before his death, and during his last illness. He entered into an animated conversation with respect to his own views of religion, and the peculiar experiences of his mind. He spoke in exalted terms of the doctrines of grace, as the only foundation of a sinners hope. He said he could see nothing in his past life which afforded him any ground of dependance, and

that he had no hope from any other quarter but from the glorious scheme of redemption, as revealed in the word of God. No other way ! said he. Nothing will do but this !

He observed that he frequently felt a desire to be more fully acquainted with the glorious character of God, than what perhaps was justifiable. He believed Christians ought to be careful, not to transcend the limits assigned them in the word of God : adding, that the word was our only standard and directory, with respect to the great mysteries of religion, and that to it we ought always to keep close.

During the intervals of fever, when his mind was capable of regular exertion, he said, he was generally in prayer for himself and others.

He was much afraid that he was too desirous to depart. He longed for the time when he should be delivered from his affliction. But he frequently observed, that he strove and prayed against an improper solicitude, wishing to wait the Lord's time.

In the course of our conversation he mentioned a fact, which, tho' it may appear trivial, in itself, is I think deserving of notice, as it serves to illustrate the speciality of Providence, about his saints, even in the smallest matters connected with their happiness, and also affords a striking instance of the efficacy of prayer.

For some time after his disorder had become more violent, and the fever which accompanied it greatly increased, his slumbers were almost constantly disturbed with frightful and distressing dreams. Being much perplexed on account of them, he made it a subject of special prayer to God, and to his great comfort soon found himself relieved, and these unwelcome disturbers of his repose banished from his mind. And what is remarkable is, that he continued to enjoy this tranquility in his sleep, although the fever was not removed, and it was not till shortly before his death that it totally subsided.

About two weeks after the above conversation, and about ten days before his death, I was present at his bed side, and upon his complaining that he suffered much, I observed that I hoped he received abundant support from above. O, yes, said he, I am greatly supported. He then observed that he had been strongly tempted, some time before, to doubt with respect to the foundation of his hopes ; and whether that system of truth on which he had built his faith, was agreeable to the word of God. Convinced that he had, long ago, carefully examined into the ground of his belief, he sought comfort in prayer to God, and it was not long till he experienced it. I have now, said he, with a tear of joy sparkling in his eye, I have now no doubt of my love to God. He is the most glorious of all objects. None other can be compared to him.

Such was the faith, such were the comfortable hopes of this aged servant of God about ten days before his death. Owing to a special visitation of Divine Providence, I was prevented from seeing him again till the morning before his departure, when he was speechless. We cannot doubt, however, that death found in him a firm champion of the cross—one who was willing to submit to the awful stroke for the sake of being present with him whom his soul loved. He had lived the life of the righteous, his last end also was like his.”

Such is the account which I received from Mr. Elliot.

To this I would add that I visited Dr. King on the sabbath afternoon, which was the day preceding the one on which he died. He was then evidently on the verge of eternity, and able to utter but very few words. He however knew me and gave his hand to me, and to another person who accompanied me. After sitting down at some distance from the bed, I observed that he several times looked earnestly at me. Upon which I arose and went

to him. Having observed that I found him very weak and low, he assented by a nod of his head. I then repeated the words of the apostle, "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." To this he also assented, and with a degree of animation in his countenance, repeated what he was able of the passage after me. Having again sat down, I observed that he still looked earnestly at me. Upon which I arose and went to the bed. He then gave me his hand, and called me, his *dear friend*. I repeated to him a verse out of one of Dr. Watts' hymns :

"Jesus can make a dying bed

"Feel soft as downy pillows are,

"While on his breast I lean my head,

"And breathe my life out sweetly there."

To this he also gave a pleasing assent.

Having, at his own intimation, prayed with him, I took my leave of him, saying, that tho' I should never see him again; in this world, I trusted we should shortly meet in one infinitely better: to which, looking up, he also gave his assent.

Thus lived, and thus died that servant of God, whose decease we this day commemorate. Both in his life, and by his death he has borne honorable testimony to the religion of Jesus, of which he was a professor, and of which he was a minister. Having done much and suffered much, according to the will of God, he has fallen asleep and is gathered unto his fathers. We trust that he has received the glorious reward of grace according to all his labors and sufferings ; and that he can now say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" and I have received that "crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, hath laid up for all them that love his appearing." He lived respected and esteemed. He

lived to a considerable age. Death released him from his pains and sufferings. He came "to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." We have just ground to believe that he has had the sentence passed upon him, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." And "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. Let us be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

AMEN.