

1406

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CEDAR-STREET,

ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 27th, 1825,

ON OCCASION OF

THE DEATH OF

JOHN B. ROMEYN, D. D.

BY STEPHEN N. ROWAN, D. D.

Pastor of the Eighth Presbyterian Church, New-York.

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TO THE
SESSION AND TRUSTEES
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN CEDAR-STREET:

AT WHOSE REQUEST IT WAS PREPARED, AND IS NOW PUBLISHED,

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR SYMPATHIZING FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

SERMON.

ISAIAH lvii. 1 & 2.

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away; none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

THERE is a sort of sacredness attached to the recollection of departed worth. The history of *illustrious men of former ages*, excites a strong interest in succeeding generations; and the study of their characters is found one of the best methods of strengthening the love of excellence in the youthful heart. In their virtues, genius has found a theme worthy of its powers; a theme on which to employ, without reproach, its fairest colours, and its most glowing praise. But the memory of the *good*, whom we *knew* and *loved*, is still dearer to us than theirs. With the idea of their worth, we connect the interest which they took in our happiness, and the loss we have sustained in being deprived of their society and their counsels. Their excellencies *now* appear to us greater than ever, because they are purified from all the *infirmities* with which we saw them mingled. And we reflect, with bitter regret, on our own folly, in profiting so little by the wisdom of their counsels, and the holiness of their examples.

Such are the feelings and reflections of men in the first meltings of sorrow, for the removal of the good,—when that

removal is duly considered. And it is to be lamented that such removals do not excite more consideration ; and that even when they do excite it, the good feelings and purposes resulting from it are so transient. Such is the subject of the Prophet's lamentation, in the words of the text. Good king Josiah, and other pious persons in the Jewish nation, were dying off ; but the survivors remained careless and secure. " The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart ; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." The same apathy characterizes the conduct of men in these days. The virtues of the dead are forgotten amidst the gayeties of the living. The *business* and the *company* of the world lead men astray ; and having once wandered, they shun the memorials of the dead, because they are a source of self-reproach. Such being the propensity of men to become careless and secure, Providence *frequently* awakens them from their slumbers, by calling away the wise and the good. He reminds us that *we* are rapidly following the dead in Christ to the grave ; that we may be excited to press after them in the way to heaven. He points us to patterns of genuine excellence *departed*, that those who are to survive, and occupy their places in the various departments of life, may aspire after their falling mantle. With this view, let us attend to the prominent ideas of the text, in their order.

I. The characters here mentioned, " *The righteous—merciful men.*" These are terms which comprehend both their manner of acceptance before God, and the nature of their walk before men. As to the first—what is righteous or unrighteous can be determined only by the test of God's holy law. Every thing repugnant to this perfect rule is, *unrighteousness* ; and whatever is commensurate with its sacred requisitions is right-

eousness. There is no medium between righteousness and unrighteousness. The Scripture asserts, "that *all* unrighteousness is *sin*;" and that "Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in *all things written* in the book of the law to do them." *That*, therefore, can only be denominated *righteousness*, which implies full conformity to all the precepts of the law; which implies *purity of principle, perfection, universality, spirituality, and perpetuity of obedience*. And he alone can be denominated a *righteous man*, whose conduct is a literal transcript of such righteousness—whose heart is perfectly free from every wrong principle, and whose life exemplifies obedience to the law in its fullest extent.

But where is such a righteous character to be found? The heart and life of Adam, previous to his fall, literally exemplified it in the greatest perfection. But since that melancholy event, there is an end of all human righteousness. The Scripture concludeth all under sin. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

The only way in which man can now be constituted righteous, in the sight of the holy Lord God, is through the meritorious work of Christ; his perfect obedience to the Divine law, and his full satisfaction to Divine justice. He only possesses the power of constituting others righteous. For he only was God and man in one person. Had he been a mere creature, though his righteousness might be sufficient to justify himself, it could never have transferred a power of justifying others. The fact, therefore, that Jesus Christ is possessed of such power, proves that he is *very God*, as well as *very man*; that in a sinner's justification, there is a translation of merit infinitely sufficient; and that the active and passive obedience

of the Mediator is, through the infinite dignity of his person, a *Divine* righteousness. Hence, this is the name whereby he shall be called "*Jehovah* our Righteousness."

This righteousness of the Lord Jesus, is made over to sinners, by an act of gracious and sovereign *imputation*, and is received by *faith*. Abraham *believed* God, and *it* was *accounted* or *imputed* to him for righteousness. *The righteous man*, therefore, is one, who renouncing his own righteousness betaketh himself to the righteousness of Christ: who, through the infinite merit of the Saviour's blood, and the perfection of his obedience to the law, is delivered from the curse, and possessed of a legal title to heaven; and who receiving this method of justification by faith, believeth to the saving of his soul; has the fruits of righteousness implanted in his heart, and exemplifies them in his life. The same grace of faith by which he is justified, is also the great instrument of inward sanctification; because it receives from Christ's fullness, *grace* to purify the heart, and work by love; because it cleanseth the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God, and lays the axe to the root of corruption, by destroying the love, and mortifying the power of sin.

Hence, while the text, by the term "*righteous*," describes the manner of a sinner's acceptance before God; by the term *merciful*, it describes the nature of his walk before men. And these are inseparable, the one from the other. He who is *righteous* will be *merciful*. Yet as righteousness is best known to God, so *mercifulness* is manifest to men. Mercifulness is the evidence of righteousness. "*When I was hungry, ye fed me; when I was thirsty, ye gave me drink.*" When there is grace in the heart, it will show itself in the hand, and in the lip; in words, and in actions. And thus, while in the plan of salvation, justification and sanctification are inseparable, they

are by no means confounded. The one is descriptive of our state before God; the other of our character before men. Such are the characters here mentioned, “the *righteous* and *merciful* men.”

II. It is predicated of these characters that they *die* as well as others: “*The righteous perisheth; merciful men are taken away.*”

When it is said “the righteous perisheth,” the meaning is not, that he is lost—that his soul is ruined; for this interpretation is guarded against in the next verse—“He entereth into peace.” It is not true that the righteous literally perish *in a bad sense*. When the righteous die, their souls mingle with the spirits of the just; and even the dust in their graves is precious in the sight of God. They sleep in Jesus; and by his power their bodies shall be raised incorruptible and glorious. The meaning, therefore, of the expression is, that they die, and go down to the house of rottenness—the house appointed for all living. Hence the terms are varied—the righteous perisheth—merciful men *are taken away*; their death is only a removal from one place to another—only the cutting asunder of the relations of husband and wife—parent and child; but not a separation of their union with Jesus Christ.

The righteous must perish, and merciful men be taken away, for reasons common to them and other men; and for reasons peculiar to themselves.

1. They, like others, are included in the statute of death. “It is *appointed* unto *all* men once to die.” In regard to the righteous, Christ has taken away the sting of death; but not death itself. He has made it like the viper which fastened upon Paul’s hand, but did not hurt him; like the brazen ser-

pent which, instead of poisoning, had a healing power : but he has not, he could not, prevent death itself ; because *it* is included in the irreversible decree of God.

2. Besides, the righteous consist of perishing materials, as well as the unrighteous. They are *earthen* vessels ; they have their foundation in the dust.

3. Further, they have a body of sin about them ; and therefore have always that about them which deserves death.

And, beside these reasons for their dissolution, which are common to them and others ; they must die for reasons peculiar to themselves. They must perish, that they may not perish ; that they may be freed from sin ; that they may take possession of that crown of glory which is laid up for them ; that mortality may be swallowed up of life ; that they may be perfect in grace ; that they may be ever with the Lord. None of these blessings could they attain, if they did not see death. Hence, in all ages, the righteous have died. The very first who died, was righteous Abel. And ever since, death has come alike to righteous Abels, and unrighteous Cains ; to *faithful* Abraham, and *apostatizing* Demas ; to *beloved* Jacob, and *rejected* Esau ; to *meek* Moses, and to *cursing* Shimei ; to *devout* Josiah, and *impious* Ahab ; to the *tender-hearted* David, and the *churlish* Nabal ; to the *humble* publican, and to the *vaunting* Pharisee.

And, if *righteousness* will not excuse from death ; neither will *honour*, or *riches*, or *beauty*, or *wisdom*, or *strength*. Hence, while the *righteous* Abel has *perished*, and the *merciful* Job been *taken away*—Cæsar, and all the *rulers* of the world—Croesus, and all the idolaters of *wealth*—Socrates, and all *his learned* disciples—Helena, and all the favourites of beauty and fashion—Samson, and all the vaunters of their *strength*—have followed in the train of death. In this the

righteous and the wicked agree, that they die. But in this they differ; their *state* is not the same *after death*. This is intimated in the third part of the text.

III. "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, *each one walking in his uprightness.*"

The *evil to come*, here referred to, may be the vengeance which was to be poured upon the Jewish nation for their idolatries and other sins. And the removal of the good Josiah, and other righteous persons, before the storm descended, is here recorded as a proof of the goodness of God to them. They were taken away that they might not be involved in those calamities which their prayers, labours, and examples, could no longer retard.

There are evils of a personal, a domestic, a civil, and an ecclesiastical character, to which the righteous are *now* exposed; and from the *sight* and *suffering* of which, God is pleased, sometimes, to free them by death. It has ever been esteemed a happiness, both by Christian and by heathen, to die, before they see the miseries to which their families, and the places where they reside, may be exposed. Virgil,* in recording the lamentation of Evander over his son Pallas, who had been slain in battle; with his poetic license, puts into his mouth an apostrophe to his deceased wife: "Thou, partner of my bed, art happy in thy death, that thou art not to this wo reserved! I, on the other hand, by living on, have passed the bounds of nature, and remain a childless father!"—And, in another place, he exclaims, "happy they who die before the ruin of their country!"† And if the heathen, who were in the dark about their future state, cherished

* Æneid, XI. line 159.

† Æneid 1.

such sentiments; much more may Christians who have their eye fixed on heaven. Many a *pious* father would have considered it a blessing to have left the world, if God had so pleased, before he saw the dissensions, the poverty, the disgrace, which attended the conduct and the lot of his children. Many a Christian patriot would, gladly, not have survived the liberties of his country. Many a pious Greek would rather have dug his own grave, than to have seen the crescent of the impostor, Mohammed, waving over his native, his classic soil; or the lawless Turks spreading devastation and death among his kindred and his countrymen. And many a righteous man, and minister, would have considered it a happiness to have slept with his fathers, ere apostacy, heresy, or ruin, came upon the Church with which he was connected. Hence, though God is *sometimes* pleased to sweep away the righteous, in common calamities; and sometimes to preserve *them* in calamities, which sweep away others,—he is also pleased, when he intends to visit the earth, or the Church, with plagues, to take them away from *the evil to come*: to remove them by death, lest by their presence, or their prayers, they might endeavour to prevent the accomplishment of his purposes. Methuselah died a year before the deluge. Noah was safe in the ark, while the world was drowning. The *Israelites* departed, before the earth swallowed up Corah and his company. Lot entered Zoar, and the rains of fire and brimstone descended upon Sodom. Luther died, and soon the most desolating wars raged in *Germany*. But national or local evils are not the only ones from which the righteous are taken away. They are also removed by death from *moral* evil—from the evil of seeing others sin, and from the evil of sinning themselves.

1. It was a great trouble to David to see others sin: “rivers of waters run down mine eyes; because they keep not thy law.”

This is a source of affliction to all the pious ; and, therefore, God, in his goodness, takes them away, that their ears may not be assailed with blasphemies ; that their eyes may not see and sorrow for, the sins of the world.

2. But what is a still greater blessing, He takes them away from sinning themselves. Their purposes and endeavours are habitually bent upon good ; yet it is a source of lamentation that sin dwelleth in them ; and that the law, in their members, often warreth against the law of the mind. But God has so ordered it, on the part of his saints, that while *sin* brought *death* upon them, *death* shall, in return, carry away *their sins*, and conduct *them* to that world where there is no more sin or sorrow. Nor is this blessedness merely negative ; it is positive. They are not only taken away from the evil to come, but “they enter into peace” Their *souls* are in peace, and in joy ; and their bodies “*rest in their beds*”—in the bed of the grave, until the resurrection :—“*each one walking in his uprightness,*” that is, this shall be the portion of every one who hath walked before God, in integrity and uprightness. *He enters into peace* ; a term which presupposes trouble and warfare ; and which presupposes what is true. The righteous are, in this world, sharers in those general afflictions to which human nature is subjected since the fall. And they have a superadded portion of trials, which are inseparably connected with their character as Christians, and with their life, as believers. But from all that sin, Satan, the world, and their own corruptions, can oppose to their spiritual progress, they shall be released. After they have borne the burden and heat of the day, *death* at last arrives as the welcome messenger to relieve them from their toils, and usher them into their Father’s kingdom. Then the body drops into its original dust, where it lies till the heavens be no more ; where the wicked cease

from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Then *the mortal part enters into peace*:

“ The corpse is affected no more
With trouble, or shaken with pain ;
The war in the members is o’er,
And never shall vex him again.

The languishing *head* is at rest,
Its *thinking* and *aching* are o’er ;
The quiet immovable *breast*
Is heaved by affliction no more.

The *heart* is no longer the seat
Of trouble, and torturing pain,
It ceases to flutter and beat ;
It never shall flutter again.”

The *disembodied spirit* also, enters into peace. The instant *it* is disengaged from its prison of clay, it flies in the convoy of angels, to the regions above. The gates of the New Jerusalem are thrown open ; and the righteous *enters*, through the infinite merit of the blood of atonement : enters, amid the congratulations of kindred spirits : *enters*, like an exile, returning from a long captivity to his native home : *enters*, like some vessel, richly laden, with all its sails crowded to the wind ; escaping the horrors of the deep, and making for the destined haven. And while the righteous enters, every golden harp is strung, to welcome him to the celestial city ; and every voice is raised in the song, “ open ye the gates, that the righteous, which keepeth the truth, may enter in.”*

What a glorious exchange ! An exchange of sickness and pain, for everlasting rest and peace ! of the groanings of corruption and sin, for the songs of the redeemed around the throne ! of the cross, for the crown of glory ; and of earth, with all its distractions, vanities, vicissitudes, and woes, for the blessings of heaven, and the rapturous enjoyment of the vision of God !

* Isaiah xxvi. 2.

———"Happy day, that breaks our chain !
 That manumits ; that calls from exile home :
 That leads to Nature's great metropolis :
 And re-admits us, through the guardian hand
 Of elder brothers, to our Father's throne !"

IV. The prophet laments, that while the righteous perisheth, *no man layeth it to heart* ; that while merciful men are taken away, *none consider*.

Consideration is an act of the understanding. The want of it, is a neglect of the proper application of reason to the rules by which rational beings should be governed. The import of the charge then, here brought, is, that men are not in the habit of comparing causes and consequences ; of looking back to the introduction of sin, or forward to its effects upon our race ; of inquiring into the design of God in removing righteous and merciful men. And this charge of inconsideration is very general.—"The righteous perisheth, and *no man layeth it to heart* ; and merciful men are taken away, *none considering* that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

One would think, that when the righteous perisheth, the general prayer would be, " Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth ; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." And that when *merciful men* are taken away, the orphan and the helpless would mourn for the loss of their patrons. And such, sometimes, is the fact. *Interest* and *natural affection* send forth corresponding cries of distress. If a father is removed, nature will exclaim, " My father ! my father ! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." If a brother or sister is taken away, the lamentation is heard, Alas, my brother ! alas, my sister ! " wo is me for my brother Jonathan !" —Or if a child is taken away, there are parents who sigh, and say with David, " Oh, Absalom, my son, my son ! would God I had died for thee, Absalom, my son !" But this is not the

point. The charge is not that there is no natural affection—no friendly sympathy—no, my friends, we can bring no such charge against you on this occasion. You loved your Pastor “much, and *now* you love him more.” Any who have witnessed the groups of his dear people, as in solemn and mournful succession they visited his late dwelling, to take their last look—and who witnessed the wailings which exhaled in their groans and their tears; any who witnessed the emotions of the thousands who formed his funeral procession, will testify that your keenest sensibilities have been roused by your late bereavement. But, as I said, this is not the charge against survivors. It is, that there is want of *consideration*; that there may be *feeling* without *thoughtfulness*; that when death removes a friend, survivors do not duly and properly consider the being and providence of God—their obligations to serve him—the danger of offending him—the certainty of death and judgment, and the awful realities of eternity; that they do not bring these things closely to their minds, so as thoroughly to discern them in their truth and importance; that they do not carefully detain and dwell upon them, till they produce abiding and practical impressions. This is owing to a variety of causes; to levity of mind, contracted in early years; to the diversion of the mind by the honours, and pleasures, and business of the world; or to the fatal presumption, that it will be time enough to reflect hereafter. All these conspire to draw off the thoughts of men from subjects which providence presents to their minds in the death of others. And thus are they kept from advantages they might themselves derive from reflections on the gain of the righteous, and the loss their removal is to the community of which they were members. *None considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*

The removal of *distinguished, righteous, and merciful men,*

while it is a blessing to them, is a token of God's displeasure towards those with whom they are connected. This is proved by the fact of their loss. They are a loss to their families—to the community, and to the church. While they live, they are a blessing to those around them, by their *prayers*, in drawing down blessings; by their *life and conversation*, in recommending the practice of piety; by their counsel, in directing others in the way they should go; and by their very presence, to delay the evil to come. While Lot was in Sodom, that city could not be destroyed; and while Paul remained in the ship, his three hundred fellow-passengers could not be drowned! When such men, therefore, are taken away, not to lament, not to duly consider their loss, is a proof of insensibility to the importance of religion; shows an utter destitution of zeal for the glory of God, and the interests of the church.

Such a loss has been sustained during the past week, in the death of the Rev. Dr. John B. Romeyn. He was beyond all human peradventure a *righteous* and *merciful* man. And I give prominence to my own unequivocal persuasion of his personal piety in this place, rather than in the one where it might more naturally be expected, on account of its alliance with my text. I know little of his *early* religious impressions, save that they were deep and pungent; and that they resulted in satisfactory evidences of his regeneration, and his vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; in his profession and preaching, and exemplification of the principles of our holy religion; and that these results warrant the well-grounded hope that the last prayer he uttered is answered. Yes, his departed spirit already mingles in the glorified joys of the spirits of the just made perfect, there,

“There
Where Seraphs gather immortality,
On Life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.”

The loss of such a man, and under circumstances of such appalling suddenness and surprisal, as marked the decease of our friend, is indeed great. His loss to the widow is irreparable; as she is deprived of her best earthly friend, counsellor, and supporter, and remains like "a sparrow alone" in her dwelling. He is a loss to the son of his adoption, in respect to guardianship and guidance. His loss to *this church* is, "as when a standard-bearer fainteth." You have now no rallying point; no leader to concentrate your forces, or give a direction to your plans. He is a loss to the whole community, as we had his prayers, and his solemn and affectionate admonitions. But our loss is his gain. He has been *taken away, perhaps, from evils to come* upon his family; *perhaps from evil to come* upon this congregation and this community.

And peradventure he has been taken away from the evils to come upon this city, in respect to the standing and usefulness of his ministerial brethren. In consequence of the acknowledged faults and infirmities of all,—for we are men of like passions with yourselves,—but more by the arts and influence of those who have been actuated by motives of personal and party hostility; or by immoral and infidel principles; strenuous efforts *are making* in this community to lessen the public respect for the ministerial office, and public confidence in the ministerial character. And those efforts have been but too successful, in consequence of the apathy, the indifference, the caution, of the professed friends of religion and morality. We plead for no respect for the ministerial character to which it is not entitled by the authority of God, and its own consistency. But we have a right to look from our friends, for *their own sakes*, for their encouragement and defence, when we are undeservedly vilified and abused. I say for *their own sakes*; because we have *as little* at stake in the increase of vice as themselves; and by retiring we may find the post of honour

to be a private station. I say, *for their own sakes*: for after these violators of the laws of God, and these enemies to the interests of the church, shall have prostrated our altars; after they shall have ascertained that *one* day in *seven* is too much for God, and shall give him only the *tenth* as they did in France; after they shall prove to the satisfaction of fools, that the immortality which the Gospel has brought to light is nothing but a dream, and have decreed *death to be an eternal sleep*; after they shall have established all the deism of the English radicals, and all the atheism of revolutionary France; shall they have taken their vengeance on the clergy merely? Shall it not rather be poured upon those *calculating, temporising Christians*, who, shrugging their shoulders, assent, *without examination*, to the unfounded charges brought against their ministers? Yes! those very men will see the flood-gates of wickedness opened on our city; *they will see* all the ligaments of society rent asunder; *they will see* the morals of their sons and their daughters depraved in this world, and their souls writhing in the torments of the world to come. For myself, I forbode dreadful things for the morals of this community, by the growing disrespect for the officers and the institutions of religion. And from this evil, my deceased brother has perhaps been taken away. At all events, he has been taken away from the evil of suffering and of sin. "He rests from his labours, and his works follow him." He has entered into peace.

Previous to a concluding attempt at a profitable improvement of that lamented *taking away* of our friend, it is your just expectation to receive some brief notices of his life, character, labours, and usefulness. The melancholy task assigned me, I could not, I did not wish to decline. Yet do I unaffectedly deplore that the *noble subject* had not fallen into hands which might have done it ampler justice.

—————"O had *he* let fall
 One feather as he flew, I then had wrote,
 What friends might flatter, *prudent* foes forbear.
 Yet what I can I must; it were profane,
 To quench a glory lighted at the skies,
 And cast in shadows his illustrious close."

The Rev. Dr. John Brodhead Romeyn was the only son of the Rev. Dr. Theoderick Romeyn and Elizabeth Brodhead.

It has been supposed, that as his father was at the time pastor of the United Reformed Dutch congregations of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, in the state of New-Jersey, the subject of this notice was born in one of those towns; but the place of his birth is ascertained to have been Marbletown, in Ulster county, in this state, on the 8th day of November, in the year 1777; his father having removed his family for safety from Hackensack, into which place the British troops were constantly making predatory incursions during the war of the revolution, which secured our independence.

His father, who as a learned divine, a Professor of theology, and an able preacher, deservedly occupied, during a long life, a high station of influence and usefulness in the councils of the Reformed Dutch Church, removed during the early minority of the son to Schenectady,* in this state; where, till the close of his life, he sustained, with great respectability, the relation of pastor to the Reformed Dutch Church and congregation in that city. There your pastor received the rudiments of his classical education; in an academy which his father, who was a distinguished patron of literature and a Regent of the University, was instrumental in founding; and which was the germ of the now deservedly popular institution, Union College. Having a large share of native intellect, an intellect that was active, enterprising, and capable of great expansion, Mr. Ro-

* In 1784.

meyn soon became master of the studies, preliminary to a collegiate course, and at the early age of seventeen entered as a member of the senior class in Columbia College in this city. During one year he there assiduously prosecuted his classical studies: and though in his class he had to compete with the intellects of some of the first men in church and state, in this country, he sustained his reputation, as one of its best scholars, and was graduated in 1795. There he laid a solid foundation for that literary superstructure which his intellectual enterprise, and his persevering diligence subsequently reared; and Columbia college may, in this instance, as in that of a multitude of others, laudably boast of an alumnus, who took a high stand; and a wide, a distinguished, and a useful range, in all the departments of literature and science; and who at the time of his decease held the honourable office of one of her Trustees.

After he graduated, Mr. Romeyn felt it his duty to consecrate his talents and literary attainments to his Master, in the ministry of reconciliation. Accordingly he, in the year 1796, became a member of the Reformed Dutch Church at Schenectady, under the then pastoral charge of Dr. Romeyn and Mr. Sickles. He then commenced his course of theological studies, under the direction and tuition of the late distinguished and lamented Dr. J. H. Livingston, and completed it, in the company of his illustrious compeer and his intimate friend the Rev. Dr. John Blair Linn, with his own venerable father. The official paper of that Professor of theology, delivered to his son over the date of June 18th, 1798, recommending him for licensure to "the reverend classis of Albany," certifies that "for more than two years he had attended his instruction in the sacred science of didactic and polemic theology;" that during that time he had "applied himself with every commendable diligence to said sci-

ence, history, composition, and the sacred languages; and had given such specimens of improvement and good judgment as to afford a well-founded hope, that with the blessing of God he would be of much use in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of much advantage and consolation to the heritage of God."

On the basis of this certificate, and after he was examined by the Classis of Albany, "in the sacred languages of Scripture, in didactic and polemic theology, in all which, they certify, he gave good proof of his knowledge and talents," he was licensed by that reverend body, on the 20th of June, 1798, as a candidate for the office of the ministry, at the early age of twenty-one. The commanding talents he displayed, for a man so young in years, soon attracted the attention of the various congregations he visited: but being of a feeble constitutional frame, and desirous of recruiting his health, after the inroads made upon it, in the arduous prosecution of his previous studies, he declined all the offers made to him for settlement, until May, of the following year; on the 17th day of which month, he was examined at New-Paltz, by the Classis of Poughkeepsie, and arrangements were made for his ordination and installation, in the pastoral charge of the Reformed Dutch Church, of Rhinebeck, in Dutchess county, in this state, whose call he had previously accepted. That people were honoured and blessed with the first fruits of his ministerial labours. And the consequence was a mutual confidence and attachment, which lasted till the day of his death, and which led him there *annually*, as the place of his most pleasurable resort, and of his earliest and fondest ministerial associations. He continued his labours among this people of his first charge, with growing reputation and usefulness, until November, 1803, when he accepted a call from the Presby-

terian Church in the city of Schenectady. I shall here trouble you with an extract from the classical certificate he received on his removal, as it is in a form altogether unusual in the Reformed Dutch Church ; and shows the deep impression of his worth thus early made upon the minds of his Presbyterian brethren. " We, the Classis of Poughkeepsie, feel sensibly affected at the loss of so worthy and useful a member, as the Rev. John B. Romeyn. Trusting, however, that the great Head of the Church hath inclined his mind to accept of a call from one of the congregations under your care ; and prevailed upon by the weighty reasons for his conduct ; we have, with the deepest regret, been induced to grant him a dismissal. We recommend him to you as a gentleman of distinguished abilities ; sound in the faith, and exemplary in his moral deportment, as a preacher of the peculiar doctrines of grace, and a successful labourer in the Gospel vineyard."

The reasons for his removal to Schenectady are worthy of notice, as they are honourable alike to his zeal for the cause of the Redeemer, and to his filial piety. They were two : the distracted state of the Presbyterian Church in that city, which had, for the first time in years, become *united* in their call to him ; and his desire to be in the company, and to smooth the declining years of a father. Hear them in his own words, recorded after his settlement at Schenectady, and after the death of his sire. " The reasons which brought me here, were principally the distracted state of this congregation, and the declining health of my estimable father. He was dear to me as a parent, but especially as a man of merit, and of piety. Under God he had been the former of my character and standing in life. No earthly sacrifice, on my part, was too great to be made *for him by me.*"

It was there I first knew him ; not as a friend, or even an ac-

quaintance, but as an attendant on his ministry, when I was in college. But even under these circumstances I learned to venerate his character, to admire his eloquence, and to place the purity of his principles, the simplicity of his manner, and the perspicuity of his style, before me, as my model, should God ever honour me with *his* holy calling.

His ministerial course at Schenectady, was brilliant and useful, but it was short; for in November 1804, he received a call from the first Presbyterian Church in the city of Albany, which he deemed it his duty to accept; for reasons with which I would not on another occasion trouble you, but which on this, I deem important, as they develope the consistency and piety of his character. "My father," said he, "is no more! my duty to him is ended. The church here is preserved; the former breach is so far healed, that if this people remain united, they may decently support a Gospel minister. From the character, size, and respectability of Albany, the field of usefulness is greater *there* than *here*. I have sought for wisdom from above. I have consulted my brethren in the ministry; they have recommended a removal. Lord, thy will be done! Send me with thy blessing! glorify thyself in me for Jesus' sake."—The issue was his settlement in Albany; and when I name to you his immediate predecessor, the Rev. Dr. Eliphalet Nott,* whose unrivalled eloquence is the praise of the American churches, you will perceive the fearful risk he run, and the weighty personal responsibilities he assumed in becoming *his* successor. Yet with this association to deter

* It has been intimated to me, since the preaching of this sermon, by several of my friends, that it would have been, perhaps, as well if I had said less about the living. It may be so: and I would willingly have gratified them by the omission of all this, in the printed copy, had they convinced me that my opinions were incorrect. It is due, however, to the gentlemen named, to state, that not one of them knew beforehand what I intended to say respecting them.

him ; with the fact, that the First Presbyterian Church in Albany, was *at that time* one of the most intelligent and respectable in the United States ; being composed of the officers of the State Government, the late distinguished chancellor and jurist, James Kent, the able occupants of the bench of the Supreme Court, and the members of the Legislature ; and with this additional fact, that he had to compete with one of the finest models of pulpit eloquence that ever graced the American church, the then pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church in Albany, Dr. John M. Bradford ; he sustained his well-earned reputation to the entire satisfaction and the laudable pride of his people and the whole community, during a period of four years.

The high standing and popularity, to which he deservedly attained at the seat of our State Government, naturally attracted your attention to him, when you felt it your duty to separate from the collegiate Presbyterian churches of this city. Accordingly a committee of this church offered him a call to become their pastor, in the month of May, 1808. Concerning that call, and his motives for its acceptance, I find this record among his papers ; and I introduce it as a record of motives alike honourable to his ministerial, his conjugal, his fraternal, and his filial obligations. “ I discouraged the idea ; but they made out the call and prosecuted it, notwithstanding that discouragement. It was offered to me because *they knew* I was not in good health, and a change might be of service. The Cedar-street church bids fair to be large and respectable ; and from the character of the subscribers, a Gospel ministry, if successful among them, will have the most salutary effects upon a large portion of the inhabitants of the city. The members are unanimous in the call made on me. My wife’s health will, I believe, be

benefited by sea air. My mother and sister approve of a removal. These considerations, added to my health, seem to make it my duty to remove."

Accordingly he *accepted* your call; and the fact of that acceptance introduced a new era in the history of the churches in this city, which I trust has passed away with him—an era of *enormous prices* for pews. Those *you paid*, indeed proved the high valuation you placed upon a seat under the ministry of the man you had selected. Yet if your example (and you set it first) was to be generally followed, it would produce evil; as it would exclude from a seat in the sanctuary *the poor*, whose souls are as precious as those of the rich.

He came to you in November, 1808, and he came in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. I need not dwell in this place on that profound and solemn attention with which listening hundreds hung habitually upon his lips; on the rapid growth and the speedy establishment of this congregation; on the strong, and tender, and merited attachment which subsisted between you till 1813, when the state of his health rendered it necessary for him to go to Europe; when at your separation you furnished him with munificent means for defraying his expenses; watered your couches with your tears, and followed him with your benedictions and your prayers. Nor on the incidents of 1814, when on his return you and this whole community hailed his arrival with acclamations of joy! But I *must* dwell a little, not for his sake merely, but for the honour of his Master, upon the *measure of usefulness*, with which that Master honoured him.

At your first sacramental season, thirty-six persons joined in your Communion; and that number continued, by successive additions, to swell like a stream from the spring, until your register furnishes a list of six hundred and fifty names; (three

hundred and twenty-one before he went to, and three hundred and twenty-nine after he returned from, Europe,) received during the sixteen short years of his ministry among you. His labours among the young, composing his Catechetical and Bible classes, were peculiarly blessed; seventy of his catechumens having joined the communion of the church. And there is one prominent fact on this subject, which, while it consecrates his memory, is now blessing the churches. It is this—that thirty of the young men who joined your communion, have devoted themselves to the Ministry of reconciliation; one of whom had gone before him to heaven, to bid him welcome—a few are now pursuing their studies preparatory to the ministry, and the remainder are publishing on earth the glad tidings of salvation.

This brilliant adorning of his crown of rejoicing with jewels, will, by some, be considered the test of his faithfulness. This was not his creed. It is not mine. To me the test of his faithfulness, was *the fact of his faithfulness*; and that *success* which, I hope, they may have the magnanimity and consistency to ascribe in this instance to *faithfulness*, I must in my consistency pronounce a most condescending proof of superabounding grace to sinners, through his honoured instrumentality.*

* I once listened to a grave argument from the text, Acts xi. 24, designed, from the case of Barnabas, to prove, that *ministerial success*, is the proof of piety and faithfulness. In this case the failure was complete. There is no evidence that Barnabas was ever the instrument of converting a single soul. There is *positive evidence*, from the previous context, that he *was not* the instrument of the work of *converting* grace at Antioch. The awakening, and the additions to the church, took place before he went there. On the arrival at Jerusalem of the news of the outpouring of the Spirit at Antioch, through the preaching of *others*, Barnabas was sent there: and there proved that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost," by his rejoicing in the manifestation of *the grace of God*, and exhorting the subjects of the work to "cleave unto the Lord." All good men will rejoice at the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the churches.

That assemblage of qualities which entered into the formation of his *personal character*, was rare and excellent. He was, what has been pronounced "the noblest work of God," an *honest man*; an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile. And never was his comely visage more clouded with blackness, than when he expressed abhorrence of duplicity, discovered to have been practised on himself or his friends.

As a man of a noble, independent, liberal, and magnanimous spirit, he furnished a specimen of the moral sublime in human character. I could record instances without number: but shall content myself with naming his meekness, humility, and gratitude, when apprized, in a friendly manner, of any thing in his conduct, which was supposed to be wrong; his magnanimity and liberality, in yielding his pulpit to the Rev. Dr. Mason,* when he found the limits of his first place of

And such rejoicing is, by the pen of inspiration, recorded as a proof of the piety of Barnabas. But that pen does not record a single iota that has the most distant likeness to the idea, that he was pious, because he was successful. The last clause, "and much people was added unto the Lord," is not in the order of effect from the cause, but of mere juxtaposition. It is mere repetition of cause and effect, which existed before the arrival of Barnabas; a repetition of the historical fact previously stated in the 21st verse.

* In August, 1810, a combination of circumstances wholly providential, being unsought and unexpected by all concerned, led the third Associate Reformed Church in the city of New-York, then recently formed under the ministry of Dr. JOHN M. MASON, to hold their assemblies in the house belonging to the church under the pastoral care of Dr. JOHN B. ROMEYN, a minister of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North America. As the hours of service were different, the one congregation succeeding the other in the same place on the same day, the first effect of this arrangement was a partial amalgamation of the two societies in the ordinary exercises of public worship—the next, a mutual esteem growing out of mutual acquaintance with each other, as united in the same precious faith; and, finally, after a very short time, invitations on both sides to join in commemorating, at his own table, the love of that Saviour who gave himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour. The invitations were as cordially accepted as they were frankly given. The bulk of the members of both churches, as well as some belonging to correlate churches, mingled their affections and their testimony in the holy ordinance. The ministers reciprocated the services of the sacramental day; and the com-

worship too small for his admirers ; and in selecting his particular friend, the Rev. Dr. Alexander M'Leod to supply his pulpit during his absence ;* thus practically declaring, in the spirit of the Master, they may increase, though I may decrease ; and thus offering his own reputation a sacrifice, to the preference of public opinion, if they chose to give it, in favour of his friends. But the sacrifice, though offered, was not immolated. For although in those instances, he came in collision with the most gigantic intellects which have ever been consecrated to the service of God in any church, nation, or age, he sustained the ordeal in a manner, honourable at once to the powers of his own mind, and the attachments of his people.

As a *friend* he was sincere, confiding, permanent. He gave all his heart, or he gave nothing. To a highly valued female, who on his death-bed asked him, " If he knew her ? " he replied, " May my right hand forget its cunning, if ever I forget my friend." And, beside the range of his own immediate relations and acquaintances, there was one current in which his friendships delighted to flow—towards *young men entering the ministry*. He was not like some older ministers, whose spirits hold no communings with their juniors ; who treat them as beings of another world—between which and them there is a fixed and immeasurable gulf ; but he admitted them to the intimacy and confidence of brothers, and animated, fostered, and encouraged them in their arduous undertaking. Among a multitude of others, I know *one*, whom, when

munion, thus established, has been perpetuated with increasing delight and attachment, and has extended itself to ministers and private Christians of other churches.

Mason's Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic Principles.

* Dr. M'Leod supplied the pulpit in the morning, as stated above ; the Rev. Dr. Selah S. Woodhull, the able successor of Dr. Romeyn in the office of Domestic Secretary of the American Bible Society, supplied the pulpit in the afternoon, at the request, and to the entire satisfaction, of the congregation.

in Albany, and to him comparatively a stranger, he took by the hand ; to whom at his settlement he gave the most affectionate advice, and who had done better, if he had punctually followed it ; whom he did not forget to name on his dying pillow ; and who in the sorrow which in this bereavement has swept over his heart, like the desolations of the Sirocco, can only express his gratitude, by the determination to cherish his memory as long as life and breath remain.

Of his character as a *son* and *brother* I need say no more, after the instances of filial and fraternal affection which have been already adduced.

As a *husband*, his conjugal fidelity and attachment was evinced, in making the *health* of his wife a prominent item of consideration in the motives of his removals. I have witnessed his solicitude for that health, under her severe and repeated attacks of illness. And on his last earthly day he proved his attachment, by endeavouring to sooth anticipated sorrows with the declaration, “ whom the Lord *loveth* he chasteneth.”

As a *father*, he had little opportunity to show, what are the tender overflowings of the parental heart, having lost his only son in his Infancy. But it was, in more than parental solicitude, for the son of his adoption, that he prostrated his bodily strength, and invited the disease which carried him to his grave.

And though I might continue this enumeration of excellencies ; yet I do not assume for your pastor, as some do pretend to assume for their friends and pastors, an immaculate character. Like others, in similar prominent stations, he did not escape the tongue of slander—for *who*, “ *who can stand before envy ?* ” And like others he had his foibles and his faults. I knew in him a restlessness of habitude, and an occasional irritability of temper ; I knew in him a credulity in the honesty of the in-

tentions of all who approached him, which sometimes made him the prey of the designing; and I knew in him a sensibility, which at times degenerated into weakness. But notwithstanding all I knew, and I knew him well, having for years had the most unreserved access to him at all hours, and in all companies, I fearlessly pronounce him "a man more sinned against than sinning."

As to his literary acquirements, they were extensive and various. His reading was unlimited; and his information on almost every subject very general. In the department of ecclesiastical and *civil* history, his knowledge was profound; and the minuteness and readiness of his recollection of events, which took place under different kings, in different ages and countries, exceeded that of any other man with whom I ever conversed. This might, indeed, in respect to his literary attainments, properly be called his forte; and the circumstances which turned his mind and his reading, in this particular direction, he has stated to me to have been the finding in his father's library, while yet a child, a mutilated volume of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, with cuts—descriptive of the sufferings of the victims. The pictures struck his fancy, and then he was led to read the description: a fact of which Tract societies do well to avail themselves, in accompanying their tracts with emblems, which through the medium of the eye will fix the attention of the mind, and control the wanderings of the heart.

As an *author*, he published several excellent Discourses, delivered on public occasions; a variety of Essays in the *Christian's Magazine*, in the conducting of which he was associated with the Rev. Dr. Mason; the first Report of the American Bible Society, which he was influentially instrumental in forming, and of which he was the first Secretary for domestic correspondence; and besides his Report to the General Assembly

on baptism, and many other Essays published in the *Evangelical Guardian* and other periodical journals—two volumes of Sermons which have been reprinted in Great Britain, and of which several of the Magazines of that kingdom have, in their Reviews, taken respectful and flattering notice.

The high reputation he had acquired by his talents and labours, induced several congregations besides those in which he successively ministered, to invite him to become their pastor; and several public Institutions to offer him their Professoral Chairs. While at Albany, overtures were made to him to become the Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Theological Seminary at Andover, in the state of Massachusetts. A call was presented him by the Reformed Dutch Church at Schenectady, to succeed in their pastoral charge his own venerated father. Simultaneously with your own call, he received one from the Reformed Dutch Church of New-York, to become the colleague of those two sound divines, Drs. Livingston and Kuypers, and of the yet lamented and still longer to be lamented, able, amiable, and persuasive Dr. John N. Abeel. Since his removal to this city, he was offered a call from the Park-street church, in Boston, which had been previously supplied by the Rev. Dr. Edward D. Griffin, the praise of whose eloquence is in all the churches. Some time after his return from Europe he was offered the Presidency of the Transylvania University, in the state of Kentucky; and more recently the Presidency, (with the privilege of selecting his own Faculty,) of Dickinson College, Pennsylvania, to which the Rev. Dr. Mason was afterward called, and over which he presided, till declining health compelled him to resign.

The reasons for declining the calls of the churches named, are assigned in his papers; and are perfectly satisfactory. And his reasons for declining the several Professoral and Presiden-

tial chairs which were offered him, were, that he considered the pastoral office, and the privilege of regularly preaching the Gospel, as far more honourable ; and his attachment to his people.

The station he occupied in the councils of the General Assembly was high and influential. He has successively received all the honours that reverend body could heap upon him ; they having chosen him their Moderator ; put him on the committee to revise our present book of psalmody, and in collecting materials for which he had made considerable progress ; placing him on the standing committee of missions ; and at their Sessions in May last, electing him as a Director for three years, in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. In the establishment of that Seminary he had a very prominent agency. He was solicited by some of the leading men in the Assembly, to be a candidate for the Professorship, now so ably filled by the Rev. Dr. Miller ; but his reply to those who made the overture, was like himself—" That he would never give any one an opportunity of saying, that in his efforts to establish the Seminary, he had been working for himself."

In the Literary Institution at Princeton, under the patronage of the General Assembly, he held the office of Trustee ; and from that institution he received, at the early age of thirty-two, the degree of Doctor in Divinity : a degree which some affect to despise, and which has lost something of its value, by the want of discrimination with which the minor institutions sometimes confer it ; but which is ever a token of worth, when, as in this case, it emanates from so highly respectable a source.

In this case it was richly merited. For Dr. Romeyn was a profound and orthodox divine, " able to teach others also." And there are now several clergymen, in the occupancy of

distinguished stations in the church, who prosecuted their theological courses under his tuition.

But it was as a *preacher* that he peculiarly excelled. His matter was "the truth as it is in Jesus." His order of discussion was systematic and lucid. His style was plain and simple. His manner was ardent and powerful. And being blessed with a full-toned and melodious voice, and an uncommon distinctness of utterance, his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew. In *prayer* he was blessed in an almost unprecedented manner, with the gifts of utterance—of copiousness and appropriateness, as to time, place, and circumstances. And when either in the exercise of prayer or preaching, he poured out floods of light from his highly cultivated understanding; or floods of tenderness from his sanctified heart, and threw the whole energy of his manner into his matter; methought I witnessed at times a halo around his countenance, which marked him as a peculiarly favoured "messenger of grace to guilty men," and awed the most careless among his listening crowds, into the most breathless attention and thoughtfulness.

In the discharge of these delightful duties, he continued to instruct and edify, until a constitution which was always feeble, became exhausted. But amidst his late growing debility, I have marked, and so have you, his solicitude to omit no one of his duties. His attendance upon your Catechetical and Bible classes, your prayer meetings, and your Sabbath services, has been, during the winter, unremitting and laborious. You will not forget the difficulty and feebleness which marked the performance of his last public service in this place two weeks from to day; when from the words "IT IS FINISHED," he held up to your view the finished Redemption of his and your Master, and when he dispensed to you the emblems of the

Bread and Water of Life. Nor will you forget the remarkable coincidence between his repeated declarations, that "that would be the last Communion he would ever administer," with the fact, that after his work was "finished," he "gave up the ghost." These declarations prove, that though his death came upon us with the suddenness of lightning, yet it was no unexpected event to him. Accordingly he earnestly looked to Him, from whom is the preparation of the heart, for the great and solemn change. During the whole of the day preceding his decease, his prevailing exercise was prayer—audible and silent—for you—for his shortly to be stricken family, and for himself. The last words he uttered were, "Blessed Jesus, while passing through the dark valley of death, do thou spread underneath me thine everlasting arms. Come, Lord Jesus! receive me into that kingdom which thou hast prepared for thy chosen ones; that I may there join in singing hallelujahs for ever and ever." A few hours after this, he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, on the twenty-second day of February, in the forty-eighth year of his age, and the twenty-sixth of his ministry. He is gone! The bones of your Pastor recline in the gloom of the grave. He is gone! And a marble monument to him would be a useless expense; for he has left an enduring monument to his memory in your bleeding hearts. He is gone! But his worth is enshrined in the fondest recollections of his numerous friends.

I. The melancholy event which has led to this range of discourse, in the first place reminds the Officers of this church, that a new, a solemn, and a responsible duty devolves upon them, viz. the selection of a new pastor. I say *the officers* of this church; because it is incumbent on them, and particularly those of them who constitute *the Session*, on every principle of propriety and of Presbyterial Ecclesiastical or-

der, to take the lead in such an important procedure. And our Sessions will find, that if they discreetly exercise their powers, in duly consulting the wishes and feelings of those they represent; their constituents will cheerfully yield what *of right* belongs to them. And they may safely yield to the Session the recommendation of names; so long as they have the power of refusal or approbation.

In alluding to this subject, I know not, and I am as reckless as I am ignorant, of the motives which may be imputed to me; so long as I deem the solemn occasion imperiously to demand it of me; and so long as I feel, that the advices and the facts I shall furnish, will have substantial existence, when I and my motives shall be alike forgotten.

I will not on this subject, sicken you with such addresses as have sometimes been delivered to congregations bereaved of mere ordinary men; and who would ever have been so considered, but for sectarian purposes;—stating the almost insurmountable difficulties of supplying their places; and thus magnifying the worth of the dead at the expense of the living. But in an address to a congregation, bereaved of *no ordinary* man, I state that his place can be supplied—unless you look for *perfection*. And if this be your standard, you may as well lower it at once; for after all your search, you will have to choose a man of like passions and infirmities with yourselves.

My first advice to you then, is, that you select as his successor, a man who holds the same system of theological sentiments, as that of your late pastor. You owe this to your respect for his memory; and to your allegiance to the church to which you belong; whose Confession of Faith and Catechisms you have adopted as your Creed. Choose then one, who like your late pastor, and who in accordance with those standards, shall derive his doctrines from the pure fountain of

sempiternal truth ; not one who is fond of novelties ; who dislikes long received opinions ; and who starts some new idea, in order to be considered a *reformer* from old errors : Or who, if he has no *new idea*, will, rather than not be considered a reformer, coin some new expressions, and attempt to pass off old notions under the guise of an improved phraseology. Mankind are too wise in these days, not to consider *words* the index of *ideas*. And as new words do not always express the same idea as those formerly in use, the evil of all such innovations, and particularly in respect to scriptural truth, is, that they lead to error. This may not be the design, but it is very often the effect, of innovations. Affectation of novelty in the things of God, is either wittingly or unwittingly the lure, by which the churches are drawn away from the simplicity which is in Christ.

My second advice to you is, that you select neither a young man, nor an old one, but one in middle life.

However brilliant may be the talents, and however respectable the attainments of *any young* man you might select, yet in a City like this, where there is such collision of popular intellect ; and in a congregation like this, which has now by prescription, so many and arduous duties devolving on its pastor, you would run the fearful risk, that without an ample stock of previous materials, he would sink under the ordeal. In the principal cities of Europe, such as Amsterdam, London, and Edinburgh, they seldom think of calling a man who is not over thirty-five years of age ; who has not previously been trained in a more retired for a more public sphere. And however respectable the standing, various the learning, and ample the prudence and experience, an *old* man might have acquired ; you also in such selection run the hazard, that after the expenditure of his physical fires, he becomes the inanimate and uninteresting occupant of your desk.

The result is, that you should select one, who having acquired a *respectable* standing in the church, and a good portion of materials for the building of scriptural instruction and experimental religion, he should rear among you, would be able to spend ten or twelve years of the vigour of his days in your service : which, in a City like this, whose *Athenian* inhabitants are ever looking after something *new*, is perhaps as long as most men will be able to sustain a reputation, honourable to themselves and their people.

My third advice is, that for the sake of your own interest, you make such a selection, without unnecessary delay.

In a metropolis like this, which is at some seasons of the year a place of Clerical resort ; and in a congregation whose pastor invited to his pulpit the most distinguished ministers of the Presbyterian Churches, you cannot fail to have become acquainted with their respective talents and standing. You are therefore just as ready to make a selection in three months, as you will be in as many years. And you may do it in the former period, with far more security of a satisfactory result. While you delay, you divide ; parties are formed ; the influence of favouritism towards a particular friend or relation interposes ; distraction attends your councils ; your people leave you ; your pecuniary resources are diminished ; and other congregations who better know their interest, will accumulate your spoils. It is a mean and pitiful policy, (and which I dare not and cannot name in its application to you,) which adopts delay, because the Gospel can be obtained cheaper by occasional supplies, than by a stated ministry. And that also, is in ordinary cases a stupid and deceptive policy, which sends from Dan to Beersheba for Candidates. Any man you send for, may, for the sake of your place, give you a few good sermons ; but after his stimulus has evaporated with his settlement, you may find too late that his resources are exhausted. I there-

fore repeat that you may with greater unanimity and safety obtain an able and suitable successor to your late pastor, in three months, than in as many years.

And the reasons why you should thus, without delay, attempt the settlement of such a man, are very simple and obvious.

1. I have lived to see, in the short space of my settlement in your vicinity, the funerals and the removals of some of the ablest ministers which ever served any church,—beginning with the venerable Rodgers and the eloquent Linn, down to him who is the *last*, though not the least. I have lived to see the places of some of them supplied with able and faithful men; but I have also lived to see the places of others filled with those who *had* found the post of honour to be, a more private station. By such examples be warned; and venture not upon a man, whom you might shortly wish to exchange.

2. In the second place, the relative importance of this Metropolis demands the course I recommend. The ministry of *this city* has been honoured, more than that of any other in the Union, by the selection from its number, of men, to fill the Professoral chairs of our Theological and Literary Institutions. It will, I trust, thus continue to be honoured.—Choose a man then, who after he has filled the measure of his usefulness among you, may be honourably transferred, if the providence of God should so direct, to some one of those honourable and useful stations.

3. Thirdly, the peculiar location of your place of worship demands of you such selection.

The habitations of this part of the city are becoming warehouses. The population is receding before the indispensable and desirable accommodations of commerce. The few inhabitants who remain, will be among the wealthy and most re-

spectable. They will consequently give a tone to the religious sentiments and sects of the rest of the city. Choose then a man who will aid them, in extending the influence of orthodoxy and piety.

4. In the fourth place, the standing of this congregation, and of its late lamented pastor, in the General Assembly, demand the selection I have named. By his decease, several of the most important stations in our Literary and Theological Institutions are vacated ; and if your selection be judicious and speedy, you may hope that his successor will be honoured with some of those stations.

And as you would cherish the reputation for learning, of the man you shall thus select ; as you would cherish your own respectability and profit, permit me to suggest that you secure for him the well selected Theological Library of his predecessor. You have already honourably commenced this good work ; carry it on to consummation ; that your future ministers may draw information from the same sources with your late pastor ; and in thus becoming learned and intelligent himself, diffuse the lights of religion and science among yourselves, and your children after you.

Having thus discharged what, under the circumstances, I deemed a duty in respect to your choice of a future pastor, I proceed to remark :

II. That the event of the last week teaches you to endeavour to profit by the labours of your ministers ; because you are not to enjoy those labours long.

“ Our fathers, where are they ? and the prophets, do they live for ever ? ” Certainly not—and therefore we should profit by them while we have them. So did Elisha. He was apprized that his master Elijah was to be taken up to heaven ;

and therefore would not leave him until he received all the counsel *he* was ever to impart—until he caught a double portion of his spirit; until he received his falling mantle! Were ministers and righteous men to remain with us permanently, we might get good from them, whenever we pleased. But as they are here only for a season, it is to be lamented that so little use is made of their counsels and example. I have known it to be a source of great distress to survivors, that they did not more assiduously attend to the advice, and prayers, and examples of their deceased pious relations and friends. They thought they would always have them; and therefore postponed the advantages they might have received, to some future period. Thus, a people sometimes give more attention to a preacher who labours occasionally among them, than they do to their own pastor. He is continually among them they think, and can be heard any time; whereas the stranger is heard but once, and therefore heard with more anxiety! Thus persons make a difference between their own books, and books which they borrow. They can read their own, any time, and therefore leave them on the shelf: But the book they borrow they read, because they know it must soon be returned. And thus should persons use their ministers and Christian friends,—as things that are only *lent*, and will soon be reclaimed by the great Proprietor. Yes, brethren, our days are numbered. We must soon cease from our work, and follow our deceased friend to his grave. Yet a little while and you shall not have a minister now existing in this city, to expound the Scriptures—to solve your doubts—to warn you of your danger—to point you to Jesus, or persuade you to new obedience. Therefore improve by us, as by those whose breath is in our nostrils; and who must *shortly* appear, either for or against you, at the judgment seat of Christ. Though your minister be dead, the word

he preached remains in God's Register. You must account for all his admonitions, counsels, and prayers. You will know at the bar of God, that "there was a Prophet among you;" and his ministrations will be to you eternally, either "a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death." And Oh! that when he and you meet to render up your account, it may be his blessed portion to say of his hearers, "Here Lord am I, and the souls committed to my care."

III. By the death which has occurred in the midst of us, surviving ministers should be urged to greater diligence in the discharge of their duties.

If it were possible for godly men and ministers to grieve in heaven, this would doubtless be one source of their sorrow, that they had done so little for their Master while on earth. Let us, by our diligence, activity, and faithfulness, leave no cause for such regrets. Let the fact of our being short-lived, cause us to listen with greater solemnity to the charge given us before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom, "that we preach the word—that we be instant in season and out of season; that we reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." Our opportunities for doing good to the souls of men will soon be at an end; we should therefore do what we can for them *quickly*, or it will be too late—we should deal with them faithfully, or their blood will be required at our hands.

IV. Feeling the solemnity of these considerations, I would now point you to the last use to be made of the subject before us. I would urge you to seek the Righteousness of Christ.

The Righteous, you have heard, and they alone, are safe at

death. They *enter into peace*—their graves are quiet beds, in which they sleep in Jesus; and from which they will shortly awake to everlasting joy and felicity. Be ye followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. *Follow* them to their graves you must—follow them also in the path of life. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for righteousness before God; and as the fruit of your faith, account yourselves indeed dead to sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And engage in this all important business without any delay. Your time is not *so long*, that you can spare any considerable portion of it to vanity. It is not at *your disposal*, that you should promise yourselves even *to-morrow*. It is not of *so little value*, that you should any longer throw it away upon sinful practices and pursuits.

“*Throw time away?*
 Throw *empires* and be blameless. Moments seize;
Heaven's on their wing. *A moment* you may wish,
 When *Worlds* want wealth to buy!”

“*Now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation.” Give yourselves therefore immediately to God in Christ; trusting to *the merit* of his blood, to wash away your guilt, and to the Grace of his Spirit to sanctify you from your pollutions. So shall you be prepared for that solemn hour, which will try every man's hope. So shall yours be found in that dreadful ordeal, not the hope of the hypocrite which shall perish—but the hope that shall be crowned with the full enjoyment of a blessed immortality. And so shall you add for the consolation of your surviving friends, what is now the consolation of the friends of the deceased—your testimony to the truth of Jehovah's declaration—“Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

THE END.