

A

DISCOURSE,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE

REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.,

LATE PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT PRINCETON,

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALBANY,

ON

SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 27, 1850.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

MINISTER OF SAID CHURCH.

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TO THE
REVEREND PROFESSORS
IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PRINCETON,
THIS DISCOURSE,
DESIGNED TO TESTIFY OF THE
GIFTS AND GRACES,
THE EXALTED WORTH AND EMINENT USEFULNESS,
OF THEIR LATE HONOURED,
AND NOW LAMENTED, COLLEAGUE,
IS RESPECTFULLY
AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

DISCOURSE.

II. KINGS II, 12.

My father, my father!

It was a scene of incomparable tenderness and sublimity that drew forth this pathetic and reverent exclamation. A man of mark, well known in all Israel, venerable for character and office, had now just accomplished his mission on the earth. The grave had waited for him, as it waits for other men; but God, by a splendid miracle, disappointed it. Death, which has passed upon all men, came not upon him; for the Heavens opened, and the veteran was changed in the act of going up. Many a grateful and wondering eye was fastened upon him, as he took passage in his chariot of fire and rode majestically in the whirlwind. But there was one individual who sustained a more intimate relation to him than the rest; — who was not only his disciple, but destined to be his successor in the prophetic office; who finally inherited his mantle, and with it a double portion of his

spirit. It seems to have been Elijah's wish that there should be no witnesses of his glorious departure, other than the celestial company who had him in charge; but Elisha, who had been divinely apprized of what was about to happen, resisted the repeated and importunate requests of his master to leave him alone, and actually stood by his side, when the Heavens bowed to receive him. Can imagination paint a more sublime or surprising scene than was there exhibited! Two prophets, an elder and a younger, a teacher and his pupil, are holding their last conference upon earth, and anticipating the splendid termination to which a few moments will bring it; while many sons of the prophets to whom the secret has been disclosed, have stationed themselves on the distant hills to catch a glimpse of the wonderful transaction. And now the chariot of fire and the horses of fire have appeared; and the whirlwind is there too; and Elijah has started upon his upward course, leaving nothing but his mantle and his example behind him. "MY FATHER! MY FATHER!" exclaims the astonished Elisha. It was an expression of reverence; for he honoured him as not only an eminent prophet, but an eminent saint. It was an expression of gratitude; for he recognized in him a faithful friend, a wise teacher, a beneficent patron. It

was an expression of grief; for how could such a man be spared from Israel, when his labours were so much needed to stem the current of idolatry and corruption.

The history of Elijah is not very minutely given; and yet enough is recorded to show that he was eminently favoured in both his character and his life. He was evidently a man of superior natural powers: his movements were marked by a force and majesty which bespeak something above the common mind. He was richly endowed with both the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. He lived at a period which demanded, while it was fitted to awaken, vigorous impulses in the cause of reformation. He was not only a prophet, but an associate of prophets, and of other great and good spirits of his time. He performed services for Israel which must render his name a household word in the church throughout all generations. And last of all, when he had finished his course, he was excused from taking the common dark passage to Heaven: without feeling the death-struggle,—without casting off, by the ordinary process, the garments of mortality, he became at once instinct with immortal life, and took his place in the shining ranks of the glorified.

This exclamation of Elisha, as he gazed after his ascending master, is, I doubt not, a faithful expression of the feelings of a large portion of the church in this land, on hearing that the venerable and beloved Doctor Miller is no more. Many a useful minister whose character his instructions and example have helped to form; and many a private christian who has experienced the quickening and edifying influence of his labours both in the pulpit and through the press; and many a missionary who has gone to live and die on Pagan ground, to whom he used to speak words of encouragement as well as of instruction;—aye, and many of the great and good of other nations, who never saw his face, but have learned to venerate his character in his works;—these, constituting an innumerable multitude, have felt or have yet to feel, the sentiment of mingled reverence and sorrow, in contemplating his departure. You will not, therefore, I am persuaded, think it inappropriate that I endeavour to present before you some estimate of his character and services. In doing this, though I cannot forget that I am paying a tribute to the memory of an honoured instructor and beloved friend, yet I am chiefly influenced by considerations not of a personal nature; particularly by the fact that he has, for almost sixty years, occupied some of the

highest places of influence and honour in our denomination, and has been a professor in our Theological seminary, during the whole period of its existence. I may advert too without indelicacy to the circumstance that the occasion that brought you and me into the sacred relation we bear to each other, was honoured by his presence and services; and the edifying counsels which he delivered to us then, still remain among us as a monument of his devotion to the best interests of the church.

I have said that Elijah was eminently favoured in his life and character; and I am sure that I may, without the fear of contradiction, say the same of our venerable friend. It is not my design to institute a formal parallel between the two; and yet the view which I shall necessarily be led to take of the one, can scarcely fail to remind you of some traits in the character, and some events in the history, of the other.

I. Our departed father was eminently favoured in respect to *original constitution and educational influences*.

His mind was distinguished rather for that admirable harmonious blending of all the faculties, which generally secures the highest amount of usefulness, than for the striking predominance of some one quality, which often attracts more

notice and admiration. You could not say that he was deficient in any faculty; you could not say that he exceeded all others in any; but you could say that he exceeded most others in the symmetry and completeness of the intellectual man. His perceptions, if not remarkably quick, were remarkably clear; he hated intellectual as well as moral darkness, and knew how to distinguish between profound investigation and the wild sallies of an ambitious and dreamy philosophy. He had a ready and retentive memory, in which were carefully treasured the results of his study and observation. He had a sound, discriminating judgment, which never leaped in the dark, and usually reached its conclusions by a legitimate process. If his imagination was not strikingly prolific, his taste was uncommonly exact; and every effort of the former was subject to the rigid control of the latter. He possessed in a high degree that admirable quality, — common sense; which is so eminently a discerner of times and seasons, and which, even in the absence of what are usually considered the higher intellectual endowments, may be a security for an honourable and useful life. He had an unusually safe mind; a mind that moved luminously, effectively, yet cautiously; — a mind that you could trust amidst agitating and even convulsive scenes, and not be

afraid to read the report of its opinions or decisions. I remember to have heard that the celebrated Dr. Joseph Priestley was much struck with the character of his mind, while Dr. Miller was yet a very young man; and little as he sympathized in his views of Christian doctrine, predicted that, if his life were spared, he would attain to great eminence in his profession.

But we must view the intellectual in connection with the moral, if we would do justice to the character of his mind; though it may be difficult here to draw the line between what was originally conferred by the Creator and what was superinduced by education or even by grace. But I think all who knew him will admit that he was constituted with a large share of benevolent feeling. It shone in his countenance; it breathed from his lips; it found expression in his bland and kindly manner. Still he had a strong natural sense of right and wrong; and when he was deeply impressed with the idea of evil doing, he could sometimes utter himself in solemn and indignant rebuke. Though he was prudent and conciliatory in his intercourse with men, I never heard him charged, even in a whisper, with any unworthy concealment; with aiming to reach his end by a designedly circuitous or equivocal course; with seeming to be intent on the accomplishment of one object,

while his efforts were really directed towards another. Nor do I believe that he was justly chargeable with any lack of firmness, — however his christian courtesy and love of peace may have sometimes carried him to what some would regard an extreme of forbearance or lenity. His firmness certainly never degenerated into obstinacy, but existed as a twin sister to that charity which thinketh no evil, and which hopeth all things; nevertheless he felt his convictions strongly, and valued them highly, and adhered to them in all cases which he deemed important, with unwavering fidelity.

Dr. Miller's person, though not above the middle size, was uncommonly symmetrical and dignified. His countenance spoke in no equivocal language of the benignity and generosity of his spirit. His manners were the simple reflection of the fine qualities of his intellect and heart. He might pass you in the street as a stranger, and yet you could not fail to recognize in him the polished gentleman. Perhaps his rigid regard to all the forms of polite society, so far as they were justified to his conscience and sense of propriety, gave to his manners an air of more than common precision; but there was nothing that was designed to inspire awe, or fitted to produce embarrassment. Always self-possessed and per-

fectly at ease, and on all suitable occasions cheerful and abounding with anecdote, he was welcome to every circle; while yet he never forgot, or suffered others to forget, the decorum that was due to his character and office. Persons of every age and profession, the oldest and the youngest, the most intelligent and the least informed, were edified by his wisdom, entertained by his humour, and charmed by his bland and attractive address.

We must look now at these admirable developments in connection with the influences by which they were mainly secured. Dr. Miller was the son of an excellent clergyman of Scotch extraction, who was born and educated and ordained in Boston, but spent nearly his whole active life in the State of Delaware. His mother who was a native of Maryland, was a lady of rare accomplishments and high moral qualities. The first unfolding of his mind, therefore, must have been under the most auspicious influences. At a suitable age he was sent to the University of Pennsylvania, where he enjoyed excellent advantages, while, at the same time, he had access to the best society of Philadelphia. Having gone through the prescribed course at the University, he commenced the study of theology under his venerable father; and subsequently, after his father's death,

put himself under the instruction of the celebrated Dr. Nisbet, then President of Dickinson College, Carlisle. I need not say that, from the time he commenced his ministry, his situation in life was, in the highest degree, favourable to the culture of his various faculties. His opportunities for study, for reflection, for general improvement, were perhaps scarcely exceeded by those of any individual of his day.

II. Our departed friend was greatly distinguished by his *Christian attainments*.

The foundation of his religious character was laid in a deep, reverential and abiding sense of the importance of divine truth. What his views of the doctrines of the gospel were, is sufficiently indicated by the fact that he was honestly and thoroughly a Presbyterian: he received the Confession of Faith in its legitimate and obvious import; while, at the same time, he regarded the Bible as the ultimate standard, and revered the former only because he thought it conformed to the latter. Redemption by the Blood and Spirit of Christ he considered as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity, — the central point of its glory, — the leading element of its power. He studied the Bible earnestly, constantly, not merely as a source of theological knowledge, but especially as a means of spiritual culture; and

no doubt it was under this influence chiefly, that his spiritual life became so vigorous and all his graces so mature.

He possessed, in a high degree, the devotional spirit. No one could hear him pray without being struck with the humble, grateful, child-like temper that marked his supplications. There was a reverent freedom, an elevated fervour, in his approaches to the throne of grace, which showed that he was engaged in his favourite employment; and we felt that the fire which was burning so brightly in the lecture-room or the sanctuary, had been kindled in the closet. It was not necessary that one should be personally acquainted with his private religious habits, to feel perfectly assured that he was eminently a man of prayer; for his public devotional services proved it, as truly as the shining of Moses' face proved that he had been on the Mount. And what he exemplified so well in his own character, he affectionately and impressively urged upon others, and especially upon his pupils. Many a student can testify that the last interview which his revered professor held with him, previous to his leaving the seminary, was concluded by his offering up a fervent prayer that God's blessing might attend him in all coming time, and throughout a coming eternity.

Dr. Miller was distinguished by a benevolent spirit, in connection with a well directed christian activity. I have already said that he possessed a large share of *natural* benevolence; but I refer here to that higher quality which is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and is habitually controlled and directed by christian principle; and of this, I may safely say, he was a bright example. He walked constantly in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good. He watched for opportunities to do good;—good to the bodies and souls of men;—good to those near at hand and to those afar off. Without very ample pecuniary means, he was still a liberal contributor to the various objects of christian benevolence that solicited his aid; and, in some instances, I know that he volunteered the most unexpected and generous benefactions. His benevolence, however, did not reserve itself for signal occasions; but was manifested in his daily intercourse with society and in connexion with all the little affairs of life. Indeed he seemed always to be acting in obedience to the impulses of christian good will; and if an opportunity presented to confer innocent pleasure, much more substantial benefit, upon any of his fellow creatures, even the humblest,—provided no paramount interest required his at-

tention, he deemed it an occasion not unworthy of his consideration and his efforts.

It was one great advantage that he possessed above many other good men, that his christian life was ordered with the strictest regard to system. His purposes of good were formed, and his means of accomplishing them arranged, so as to occasion no perplexing interference. You would often find him greatly pressed with engagements which, with his feeble health and advanced age, he scarcely felt adequate to meet; but you would never find him thrown into an inextricable maze and not knowing what to do next, for want of due forethought and calculation. It was surprising to many that he accomplished so much, in various ways, in his last years: the secret of it was that he worked to the full measure of his strength and did every thing by rule.

It was the natural result of his uncommon regard to system, in connection with his strict conscientiousness about even the smallest matters, that he was remarkably punctual in fulfilling his engagements. He made engagements cautiously, and generally subjoined the condition, — “if the Lord will”; but when once made, they were as sacred as an oath. I have myself recently had experience of this trait in his character in a way which has awakened at once my gratitude

and admiration. Sometime ago I had occasion to ask of him certain services which I deemed important, and a part of which none but himself could render. He answered me with his usual kindness, expressing a wish to do what I had asked, and an intention to do it if his waning strength should permit; but would not absolutely promise, lest he should disappoint me. The result was that, from time to time, as he felt able, he tasked himself to comply with my request; and one of the latest efforts of his pen was to finish what he had not dared to promise that he would even undertake.

He was remarkable for self control,—for the subjection of his appetites and passions to the dictates of reason and religion. He was proverbially temperate in all things; and during many of his latter years, from a regard to his own health as well as the influence of his example, he scrupulously abstained from all intoxicating drinks. The passion of anger no doubt belonged to his constitution; I think I have seen it once or twice flash in his countenance; but I never heard of its blazing forth in bitter or unseemly expressions. On the other hand, I have known of his sustaining himself in dignified tranquillity, when most other good men would have been wrought into a fever of excitement; and I have heard him utter kind

and forgiving words, when he had been the object of marked personal indignity. An instance which I can never forget, occurred in one of my last interviews with him; in which he took special pains to give me a favourable opinion of a man who, I knew, had done him an injury; and when I adverted to the fact, he acknowledged it, but added, — “He was a good man notwithstanding.” In short, he was a noble example of christian magnanimity. You saw reflected in his whole life the true greatness of religion.

III. The man whose death we lament, *enjoyed unusual opportunities for doing good*; — opportunities connected with both the period in which he lived and the places he was called to occupy.

There are no circumstances in which you can place a truly good man, but that he will render himself, in a greater or less degree, useful. For the ruling passion of the renovated nature is to do good; and where opportunities for the indulgence of this passion do not otherwise exist, it will itself create them, and that in spite of the most powerful opposing influences. But there are many cases in which the amount of good which an individual performs, seems to fall greatly below not only his aspirations but his capacities; and we are ready to say, — ‘What might he not have accomplished, if he had found

the place for which his Creator fitted him? And, on the other hand, there are cases in which we feel that a noble and sanctified mind has fallen directly into its appropriate sphere; is surrounded with influences most favourable to the development of its powers, and is cast upon a field in which its efforts will accomplish the most important results. Of this, a glance at the life of our departed friend will show that he was a striking example.

He was born in the year 1769, — by a singular coincidence, a few months before his intimate and illustrious friend, the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, and a few months after another very different and more startling character, — Napoleon Buonaparte. It was just when the political elements were combining for the storm of our revolution; and his earliest education, as well as his more advanced training for active life, fell into the period in which our country was convulsed by war, and afterwards distracted by internal dissensions incident to the organization of the government; — a period full of interest indeed, but most unfavourable to the successful exercise of the ministry of the gospel of peace. And then again, it was just when the din of party strife had in some measure died away, and the new order of things with which Heaven had crowned our efforts, had come up,

that he began his professional career. While the influence of a faithful ministry was greatly needed to repair the waste of christian principle and christian feeling which the preceding years of conflict had occasioned, the comparative quietude which then prevailed, allowed the ambassador of Christ to discharge without molestation his appropriate duties. The grand design of the ministry was then, as ever, to save the souls of men; but it accomplished incidentally another important end, in giving that tone and direction to public sentiment during our infancy as a nation, which should constitute the best pledge of the permanence of our institutions. That was the period also in which Protestant Christendom began to receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost; in which the command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature began to press upon the conscience and heart of the church; in which, in our own country especially, spiritual religion began to be revived, and to urge itself not upon individuals only, but upon masses, as the paramount concern. And in proportion as the evangelical spirit, the spirit of missions, the spirit of an enlarged and active piety, has since increased, so also have the advantages for effective efforts on the part of the ministry increased, resulting from a more extended

fellowship, a more cordial and vigorous co-operation. The machinery which this spirit has brought into existence, has long since become vast and complicated; and to keep it in successful motion has required all the wisdom and watchfulness and vigour of the church, and especially of the ministry; and when its movements have nevertheless sometimes become discordant, there has been work for the greatest and best minds to restore it to harmonious action. There have been, during the period to which I refer, some most agitating and painful scenes in the church; but even this fact does not form an exception to my general remark; for these scenes have furnished opportunities for doing good, not merely by direct labours in the cause of reform, but by setting an example of christian forbearance and charity. Never, I may safely say, since the world began, has there been a period so fraught with facilities for ministerial usefulness, as that in which our lamented friend has exercised his ministry.

I may mention also the unusually long period in which he was permitted to labour. From the time that he was licensed to preach till his death was about fifty-nine years;—that is, from 1791 to 1850;—more than double the usual active life of ministers in this country. And notwithstanding his health, during a considera-

ble part of this period, was by no means vigorous, yet, by a most careful regimen, he succeeded in keeping himself almost always in a condition for labour. Even in his old age his faculties were kept bright by exercise; and until within a few weeks of his death, if you had called upon him, though he would have given you a cordial welcome, it is not improbable that you would have found him with his pen in hand, or making his preparation to meet his class.

Now let us view his opportunities for usefulness in connection with the places which he occupied. Any man to whom it is given to preach the gospel to his fellow men,—no matter how humble may be the sphere of his ministrations, enjoys a precious privilege; for he has the honour of being, in a high sense, a co-worker with God, and is in the way of gathering jewels to his own immortal crown. Still it is, on some accounts, a higher privilege, to dispense the word of life to a large and intelligent congregation; because there his influence is more widely felt, inasmuch as he speaks to those who have the chief agency in moulding public sentiment and giving a tone to public morals. It was Dr. Miller's lot to occupy such a place as this. His early and only settlement as a pastor was in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of New-York; which,

probably, at that time, embraced more wealth, talent and influence than any other church in our connection. In addition to this, it was the general resort of strangers; and while Congress held its sessions in that city, most of the members were accustomed to attend it. The minister of such a congregation must of course preside at a great fountain of public influence; many of his stated hearers are among the men who give character to a city and a country; and every sermon that he preaches, falls upon the ear and tells upon the destiny of some, whom he will never meet till he meets them in the judgment.

Having served here for twenty years, he was appointed to the professorship of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. And great as his opportunities for usefulness were before, they were, by means of this change, rendered much greater. Though at first he had but a little band of pupils around him, yet he lived to see the number increase many fold; and every theological student, so far as he fulfils the design of his education, becomes a radiating point of evangelical influence. He who forms the character of the ministry, forms also the character of the church; and thus his influence pours down in an ever-widening and ever-deepening current to the end of time. What

an opportunity for doing good has he to whom this high interest is confided! And then the fact that he holds such a place, gives additional authority to his opinions and counsels and acts in all his public relations. He can scarcely open his lips without touching some spring that will vibrate, perhaps to the inmost heart of the wilderness, perhaps to the other side of the globe.

It is interesting to note how the providence of God sometimes throws a great and good man into his proper place by what are often regarded accidental instrumentalities. I lately heard Dr. Miller say that he was brought to both the places which he had occupied as a minister without the least design on his own part; that he was on his way to a comparatively obscure parish on Long Island, when his labours were put in requisition by the Wall-street Church; and that his election to the professorship was as unexpected as it was unsought, and only filled him with painful anxiety. Thanks to that beneficent Providence which led him by a way that he knew not into places of the highest usefulness.

IV. He was not less distinguished for the *services* he rendered than for the opportunities he enjoyed. A man may have the means of doing good to any extent, and yet may use them to little purpose; nay, he may live and die a mere

cumberer of the ground. Quite the reverse of this was true of him whose character we contemplate.

Dr. Miller, as a preacher, certainly ranked among the best of his time. His sermons were not mere frigid essays on the one hand, nor declamatory harangues on the other. They were marked by the most rigid regard to method, by simple and beautiful analysis, by a perspicuous and classical style, and by a serious and impressive exhibition of evangelical truth. His voice was mild and pleasant rather than forcible, his utterance deliberate and distinct, his gesture appropriate but not very abundant, and his whole manner bland, affectionate and dignified. Of the degree of visible success which attended his ministry in New-York I am not informed; but I take for granted that the gospel could not be preached for a series of years as he preached it, without producing, sooner or later, important results. He contributed too not a little to elevate the character of the American pulpit; and if there were others who had a wider popularity and more control of the passions of the multitude, there were few whose pulpit productions had in them so much of weighty and well digested material, or would so well abide the test of an intelligent criticism.

But it was no doubt as a professor in the Theological Seminary, that he gained his brightest honours, and reached his highest usefulness. In the discharge of the various duties belonging to this important trust, he was remarkable for diligence, punctuality and efficiency. As a lecturer he was singularly clear, natural, full of apt illustration, and if reasoning was required, generally cogent and convincing. His three departments were Church History, Church Government, and the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon: in each of them he showed himself a master; and if he had less vivacity of manner than some other lecturers, it was more than compensated by the richness and variety of his matter, and the simplicity and purity of his style. His lectures on the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon, were, I doubt not, among the best that have ever been written on that subject; and as they have done much for the improvement of our American preaching already, it is to be hoped that they may do still more by being given to the world through the press. He was a most judicious critic; and those were not the least valuable of his criticisms which related to the minute details of composition and public speaking. His exquisite taste instinctively detected the smallest faults, and suggested the appropriate corrections.

But we can form no adequate estimate of his usefulness as a professor, without taking into account the influence which he exerted upon the students by his general character and example. I have already spoken of his courteous and dignified bearing in society: in this respect he was a fine model for the young men; indeed he was a practical exemplification of his own invaluable work on "*Clerical Manners and Habits*;" — a work which eminently bears the peculiar characteristics of his own mind, and which few ministers can read without finding themselves at once reprov'd and benefitted. But it was his moral and religious character which had the most vital bearing upon the interests of the institution. Every one felt that he was a shining example of all the christian graces; and by the general tenor of his life, as well as by his more direct efforts, he kept himself in benign and effective contact with the minds of his pupils. His own personal religion was a delightful compound of wisdom, purity, meekness, fortitude and love; and those who were privileged constantly to walk in the light of such an example, certainly enjoyed a most important means of moral and spiritual growth.

Dr. Miller accomplished much by his labours as an author. His publications are numerous and

relate to a great variety of subjects, showing that he was a vigorous student and that his mind took a wide range. His first work of any considerable extent, was a "*Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century*," written in quite the early part of his ministry: it acquired for him great reputation not only on this side of the water but in Great Britain; and it is not invidious to say, even at this day, that it is, on some accounts, among the most valuable contributions to History of which our country can boast. Several of his works were controversial; at least were designed to defend what he regarded important truth: they are all perspicuous, logical and well considered, and have a high rank among the ablest works on the subjects of which they treat. Two or three of his larger productions are biographical, commemorating faithfully and beautifully some of the illustrious dead to whom he had been intimately allied and specially endeared. His work on the "*Eldership*" is in great and general repute, at least throughout his own denomination; and I have no less authority than that of Dr. Chalmers for saying that it is the very best work that has been given to the church on that subject. He published a large number of occasional discourses which are worthy of a more permanent existence than, I fear, from the form in which they have appeared, they are likely to

have. I think it will be generally conceded that few, if any, of his contemporaries in the American church, have done so much by the pen to perpetuate their influence as himself; and if a list were to be made out of a very small number of our writers who are most known and most respected abroad, his name would undoubtedly have a prominent place among them.

I must speak of him also as a counsellor. Here his calmness, his prudence, his sound judgment and excellent spirit and inflexible integrity, were all brought into exercise to the best advantage. In ecclesiastical judicatories he was always heard with attention and deference. His love of peace was too strong to yield to any thing but the love of truth and of God; and even when he felt constrained to appear temporarily on the arena of party conflict, he never forgot what was due to an adversary; he may sometimes, like other men, have mistaken his duty, but he never sacrificed his courtesy or lost his temper. In the management of the more general interests of the church, especially in her benevolent operations, he bore a prominent part; and for this his familiarity with every thing pertaining to ecclesiastical rule, as well as his uncommon aptitude for business, abundantly qualified him. He was not only one of the wise men but one of the working men of

the denomination; for while his mind was fertile in expedients for the promotion of all that was good, he never shrunk from the labour which was requisite to carry them into effect.

Estimate now, in view of these several particulars, the amount of service he has rendered to the church, and say whether he must not, in this respect, be ranked among the most favoured of her ministers.

V. He was signally blessed in his *social relations*.

It was his privilege, during his whole life, to be able to associate every thing endearing and beautiful with the idea of home. Not only were his parents distinguished for intelligence and piety, but his brothers and sisters were worthy of their parentage and their advantages: two of his brothers were devoted to the legal, and two to the medical profession; and though, with one exception, they were cut off almost at the commencement of their career, yet they severally gave promise of great eminence in their respective professions, and the one who survived the longest actually attained it. And from the time that he became the head of a family himself, nothing ever seemed wanting to him that could adorn or dignify the domestic constitution. Some of his children have indeed been removed by death;

but he had the comforting conviction that they died in faith. The wife of his youth was spared to minister to him under the decays of age, and to witness the tranquillity and triumph of his departing spirit.

Then if we go beyond the circle of his domestic relations, we shall still find him associated with the wisest and the best. Nisbet, his theological instructor, was known and venerated equally on both sides of the Atlantic. His capacity for acquiring knowledge, and his power of retaining it, and his facility at imparting it, together with his intense devotion to labour and almost matchless wit, rendered him one of the wonders of his time. Rodgers, his colleague in the ministry, was an eminently wise and good man. He had a heart that could with equal ease kindle with devotion and melt with charity. He had been the companion of Whitefield and Davies, the Tennents and the Blairs; and the history of the Presbyterian church, from almost the earliest period, was with him a matter of personal recollection, as it had been, to a great extent, a matter of personal experience. And on his accepting the professorship at Princeton, his most intimate associate was a man of whom, if it were not so unnecessary, it might yet be deemed unseasonable, to speak, inasmuch as, (thanks to God's preserv-

ing goodness,) he is still waiting for his change. I may say, however, that the two have lived, during this long period, in unbroken harmony, each delighting to aid and to honour the other; and the newspapers have informed us how, the other day, the venerable survivor stood over the remains of his friend, and rendered, in a way peculiarly his own, an affecting and faithful tribute to his memory. Indeed I very lately heard Dr. Miller express his gratitude to God that, from the first establishment of the Seminary to the time when the remark was made, there had never, to his knowledge, existed, for half an hour, the least unpleasant feeling on the part of either of the professors towards any one of his colleagues.

But besides the men with whom he was thus more immediately associated as a student, a pastor, a professor, there were a multitude of others, both in Church and in State, among the brightest ornaments in their respective spheres, with whom he was thrown into relations of various degrees of intimacy. Witherspoon and Smith and Kollock; the Wilsons and the Linns; Ewing and Green and Rice; Livingston, Mason, Abeel, Romeyn and McLeod; McWhorter, Griffin, Richards and Chester; Dwight, Morse and the elder Buckminster, — are but a sample of the greater lights in the ministry, with whom he was more or less

familiar. Many who were most honoured in civil life, such as Dickinson, Jay, Spencer, Boudinot, Rush, Hamilton, and above all, the Father of his country, were on the list of his personal friends. Indeed he has always been associated with the ablest and best men; in the early part of his life they were the great and good spirits who had mingled in the scenes of the Revolution, — not to speak of other stirring scenes of a yet earlier date; in later years, they have been the illustrious men of a succeeding period; and at the time of his death, notwithstanding he was a man of another generation, he could probably reckon among his acquaintances as great a number of individuals distinguished for character and rank, as almost any of his contemporaries. Though he never crossed the ocean, he maintained a correspondence with several learned men in Europe, who duly appreciated his great attainments and his exalted character.

Surely it was a high privilege that he enjoyed in being thus, throughout his whole life, the associate of men eminent for wisdom and virtue. It was a privilege to become familiar with the habits of so many great, accomplished and sanctified minds. Nor was it less a privilege to contribute his share to the common improvement; to help mould the intellects that were active in

moulding his own; to be a co-worker with those who could do most and best for the benefit of the race.

VI. I remark, in the last place, that Dr. Miller was eminently favoured in respect to *his death, and all the circumstances preceding and attending it.*

The Presbyterian Church he cherished with a solicitude truly paternal. Had he died a few years before, he would have left it agitated by violent dissensions; but the storm had passed away, and even those who had been widely separated, had begun to feel the mutual attraction of christian love. The Theological Seminary seemed to be the home of his best affections, as it had been the scene of his untiring and protracted labours. Had he died a few months before, the chair which he had occupied so long, and with so much dignity and success, would have been left vacant; but before he was taken to his rest, he was privileged to know that it was filled, and by the very man whom his deliberate judgment not less than his warm affection would have placed in it. The inauguration of his successor, though justly hailed as a jubilee to the institution, was nevertheless invested with a sort of funereal gloom; for while the Church was opening her arms to welcome the young professor, she knew that

the chariot was making ready to bear the spirit of his venerable predecessor to Heaven. And his family too, — he could leave them, thanking God for the abundant favour He had shown them, and for the promise they gave of future usefulness in their various relations. And while his dying eye could thus contemplate with perfect composure the world without, there was nothing to agitate or terrify, but every thing to sustain and comfort, in a view of the world within. I do not mean that he rested upon his own inward goodness as the meritorious ground of his salvation; for he had not language strong enough to express his sense of his own unworthiness and his entire reliance on the Saviour's merits; but I mean that he had the witness within to his own adoption: he had evidence of having complied with the terms of salvation, that cast out all painful apprehension; in short he *knew* in whom he had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which he had committed to Him.

It was my privilege to have a brief interview with him, but a few weeks before he received the summons to enter into the joy of his Lord. I saw him in his study, where he had first given me his hand thirty-three years before. He was sitting in a posture designed to facilitate his labouring respiration. He received me with all his accus-

tomed cordiality, and the usual smile of welcome passed over his countenance, which seemed even then to be touched by the finger of death. His whole appearance was a compound of the deep solemnity that becomes the dying man, and the joyful tranquillity that becomes the dying Christian. He had no breath to waste on mere worldly matters, but began immediately to talk of the goodness of the Master whom he had served; of the great imperfection of the service he had rendered; and of the glorious eternal home, which, through grace, he was about to enter. It is my sober conviction that I never heard such words from the lips of mortal man; and yet his spirit seemed struggling with thoughts and feelings which he had no words to express. When I intimated a wish that, if it were God's will, he might be spared to us yet a little longer, — he replied, — “I am not conscious of having any wish on that subject. I think I can say, Blessed Master, when thou wilt, where thou wilt, as thou wilt.” I came away convinced that I had been listening to a dying man; and yet such an impression had he left upon me, that I could not think of him in connection with the grave, but only with the glorious world beyond it. Several others who saw him about the same time, have assured me that his chamber seemed to them like a conse-

crated place, "quite on the verge of Heaven." The venerable Dr. Janeway, who had been his intimate friend almost from early life, told me that, in a brief but most solemn interview which he had with him shortly before his death, Dr. Miller requested, before they parted, that he would kneel down by his side, that they might once more join their supplications at the throne of grace; and when he had knelt, and was just about to commence the prayer, his revered friend, with what seemed almost literally dying breath, led off in the exercise with the utmost appropriateness, tenderness and fervour. These incidents, it is understood, were but a specimen of what was constantly occurring during his last weeks; and when I have said that his sun went down, not only without a cloud, but in full orb'd glory, I have given you an epitome of the history of his departure.

And he was richly favoured not in his death only, but in his burial. His funeral was no mere matter of solemn form: it had in it every element of substantial and honourable mourning. The great and the good were drawn thither from a distance to testify their gratitude for his services and their reverence for his memory; and words of truth and tenderness were responded to in tears of sorrowful remembrance and deep affection.

And if there is a grave yard which the saints of all coming generations will delight to honour, — nay, at which the angels, from their reverence for redeemed dust, sometimes pause, surely it is the one in which they laid that beloved man of God ; for his companions in the slumber of the tomb, as doubtless they are also in the ecstasies of Heaven, are Burr and Edwards, Davies and Witherspoon, Smith and Green ; and who shall say how many more of the wise and the venerable shall hereafter be gathered to that illustrious brotherhood ? I love to think that his mortal body will repose in a bed of so much honour, till, having slept out its long sleep, it shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth ; and in the act of coming forth, shall become incorruptible and immortal.

Enough surely has been said to put it beyond all doubt that our departed friend was one of the most favoured of men ; and yet we have contemplated him hitherto only in connection with the life that he lived and the death that he died. What then shall we say of him when we remember that this favoured life and death, were only the preparation for, and the entrance to, a glorious, immortal life ; that the services in which he found so much delight here, were but the appropriate training for the infinitely nobler services of the higher state ; that the blessings which were so

profusely showered upon him here, were only the shadow of those good things to come which are treasured up in Christ to be the everlasting portion of the saints! As long as his lips could move, he kept on testifying of his Redeemer's love and grace; but who shall describe the rapture which the same exalted theme now kindles in his soul, as he bears his part in the song of the ransomed! His mind which here scarcely knew any rest from the labour of discovering or illustrating, of vindicating or applying truth, is now renovated in its entire constitution, and pursues its inquiries amidst all the advantages of a residence in the third Heavens. And ere long his eye, that used to beam so benignly upon us, will open with fresh lustre from the sepulchral sleep; and his venerable form, which we saw at last bowed under the palsy of age, will re-appear in the vigour and bloom of perpetual youth. Here is the reward of a good and faithful servant. Here is the principle of spiritual life matured into the life eternal. Here is a perfect being passing rapidly onward from glory to glory. I acknowledge that I speak of things of which I can form but a feeble conception; and perhaps it were better to fall back upon that significant, yet mysterious declaration of the Apostle, — "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when He

shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

What an impressive view has been furnished by the character we have been contemplating, of the majesty of true religion! I do not say that religion had done its perfect work for our departed friend, so long as he was in the body: doubtless his heart, even in its last pulsations, was, in a modified sense only, a clean heart; and it was not till he had reached the connecting point between earth and Heaven, that the Spirit could smile upon his finished work, and pronounce all very good. But I do say that religion shone in his character with rare attraction; that it invigorated and elevated his intellect; that it consecrated his heart as a temple of benevolence and purity; that it made his life fruitful in deeds of magnanimous import; that it brightened his path in the hour of sorrow; that it brought down Heaven to his death bed, and was the pillow on which he rested as he languished into life. Come, ye votaries of a cheerless and bewildering skepticism, some of whom would banish my Redeemer, and others my Creator, from the universe; come, ye who would expel from Christianity the supernatural element and thus neutralize its healing virtue; come, ye who are willing to tolerate religion in others, provided you can be excused from it

yourselves; come, especially ye young men, for whom the infidel witling has spread his snare, and who are already walking unwarily on perilous ground,—come, one and all, and not only become convinced of the reality, but surrender yourselves to the power, and bow before the majesty, of religion. Here is a character that I am not afraid to submit to your scrutiny; and when you have hunted out all its imperfections, and thrown them into the light of noonday, enough of moral purity and sublimity will remain, to establish, beyond a peradventure, the divinity of that religion by whose influence it was formed. You cannot be an infidel while contemplating the achievements of christian virtue, and especially while walking among the graves of the saints.

Who shall fix a limit to the influence of a great and holy man? Who shall say how much a single mind acting steadily, patiently, resolutely, in its appropriate sphere and through a long life, shall accomplish for the improvement and exaltation of the race? We are apt to judge of a man's usefulness by what falls within our immediate horizon; we forget that, beyond the range of our vision, there may spring up innumerable plants of righteousness from seed which his charities or prayers have wafted thither; that thousands of monuments of his beneficent acti-

vity may rise, on which his name shall be inscribed in a character that is legible only to the eye of God and of angels. Oh, if we could contemplate the life of our lamented friend, in all its various and luminous details; could we see how, as the habit of doing good strengthened, and the means of doing good multiplied, the good influences which he exerted waxed bright and powerful and numerous as the sun beams; could we see how one benevolent action sent joy and life in one direction, and another in an opposite direction, and how, like separate streams moving in circuitous courses, they have ere long met and mingled in a common tide of blessing; above all, could we behold the fruit of his long life as it will be eternally gathered in Heaven, and mark how his unostentatious labours on earth took hold of the destinies of the glorified, and even quickened the joys and the songs of seraphs;—I say, could we realize this sublime vision, then might we have some adequate idea of what it is for a good man to live; then should we know better how to honour the memory of such a man after he is dead; then should we feel that the grave had not gained more than half a triumph, inasmuch as he is still represented here by influences which are essentially immortal.

My friends, the tomb has not rendered the example of our departed friend less impressive, nor has it rendered our obligation to heed it less imperative. I would that it might come like a baptism of fire and love upon the whole church. I would that its lessons in respect to the value of christian truth and the purity of christian ordinances, might be written, as with the point of a diamond, on the door posts of every sanctuary. I would that it might hang as a sacred directory in every theological seminary, to lead to diligence, prudence, fidelity and devotion. I would that it might be as a presiding genius in all our ecclesiastical judicatories; encouraging all well directed efforts for the promotion of truth and piety, and frowning into silent shame those who would produce needless discord among brethren. I would that every minister of the gospel would press it, as a thing of life and power, to his heart; and that, in the devout study of it, he might become more and more a workman that needs not to be ashamed. I would that every private Christian might bend over it in reverential contemplation, till its beautiful lineaments of heavenly grace are fully reproduced in his own character, and he realizes a new auxiliary in the labours of the christian life. Know you, every one, that the grave of God's departed servant is preaching

to you; and by such a ministry can you, will you, refuse to be admonished and instructed?

There is one effect which this dispensation of Providence ought to have, — I trust will have, — upon our denomination at large; — I mean, that of awakening a yet deeper interest in our Theological Seminary. The fact that it has been the immediate theatre of the labours of so large a part of such a life, conveys, of itself, no equivocal evidence that it is worthy of all the confidence, and more than all the support, which has hitherto been extended to it. I honour the wisdom of the Head of the Church in appointing men first to give character to that institution, to whom the momentous office might be so safely and advantageously entrusted; and I say unhesitatingly that the debt of gratitude which the church owes to them, is second to that only which she owes to God. At no period, perhaps, since its first existence, could the Seminary afford so well to mourn a professor's death as now; for not only has it, under highly favouring auspices, reached a vigorous maturity, but the prudence of the church in connection with the magnanimity of the now departed professor,* had made provision for the

*It is well known that Dr. Miller had, for some time, been desirous to resign his chair, to some younger, and as he thought, more efficient person; but it was not till the meeting of the last General Assembly that he was permitted to carry this desire into effect. The Assembly, on accepting his resignation, voted the continuance of his full salary to the close of his life, but he could be persuaded to accept of only one half of it.

exigency, and each chair was ably and honourably filled, so that no part of the machinery has stood still for an hour. And besides, it was no premature departure, no striking down of a great man in the vigour of life, that has caused the mourning; but it was the very gentlest loosing of the silver cord, after the almond tree had long flourished; it was the removal to a nobler sphere, of a man, whose faculties had been exerted here to their utmost measure of time and strength, so that they needed to be re-cast for higher services in the mould of immortality. And now, as the church venerates the memory of her lamented professor, let her know that the most fitting monument she can build to his honour, the most fragrant wreath she can lay upon his grave, is the liberal and faithful fostering of that institution with whose interests were identified the most important labours of his life. Let her remember that though one professor has passed into the Heavens, whither also Jesus the great forerunner has gone, others remain to be sustained and cheered by her bounty and her prayers; and that she cannot be wanting in suitable regards to the living, without offending against the memory of the dead. Let her remember especially that one venerable father still lingers there in remarkable vigour and perhaps undiminished usefulness, who

has himself formed a vital part of the institution from the time of its birth to the present hour; and let her thankfully appreciate his continued activity, and by every means in her power, accumulate benedictions upon his old age. I say again, let that School of the Prophets live in the benefactions, the prayers, the best affections of the church. "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"

In giving to the services of this evening their distinctive complexion, I have not been unmindful, my brethren, of the fact that this day has been sacred with us to the commemoration of a nobler life and death than that of any mere mortal. And yet I could not feel that it would be a violent transition to pass from the death of the Master to the death of one of his servants; especially as from the shame and agony of the former sprang the peace and triumph of the latter. Has not our waiting at the cross this morning been the very best preparation for our lingering at the grave this evening? And, on the other hand, how could we better estimate the worth of our Redeemer's sufferings, than by closely and minutely inspecting one of the brightest gems in his Mediatorial crown? Go then, Christian, under the combined influence of all the solemn services of this

day, and address yourself earnestly, cheerfully, perseveringly, to the whole circle of your duties. Hold to your mind the love of Christ, in all its matchless expressions, in all its amazing results. Hold to your mind the power of the cross, in changing sinners into saints, and exalting saints above angels. Hold to your mind the transcendent beauty of a christian life, and especially the placid triumph of a christian death. Thus will it be good for you not only that Christ has died, but that the saints die also; for while, in the blood of the former your robes will be washed and made white, in the death of the latter you may catch some quickening view of immortal glory, as the Heavens open to receive them.

LIST OF DR. MILLER'S PUBLICATIONS.

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4. Memoirs of the Rev. John Rogers, D. D., 8vo. .... 1813.
5. Letters on Unitarianism, 8vo. .... 1821.
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2. A Discourse before the Grand Lodge of the State of New-York, ..... 1795.
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10. A Sermon for the Benefit of a Society in New-York, for the relief of Poor Widows with Small Children,..... 1808.
11. A Sermon preached in New-York, on the Divine Appointment, the Duties and Qualifications of Ruling Elders,..... 1809.
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14. A Sermon delivered at Baltimore, at the ordination and installation of Rev. William Nevins,..... 1820.
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17. A Sermon entitled "The Literary Fountains Healed," preached in the Chapel of the College of New-Jersey,..... 1823.
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22. A Letter to a gentleman of Baltimore, in reference to the case of the Rev. Mr. Duncan,..... 1826.
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