

The Faithful Minister's Course finished :

A FUNERAL SERMON,

Preached AUGUST the 4th, 1773, in the MEETING
at MIDWAY in GEORGIA,

AT THE INTERMENT OF

The Rev. JOHN OSGOOD, A. M.
MINISTER of that CONGREGATION,

By J. J. ZUBLY, Minister of an English and German
Congregation at Savannah.

John was a burning and shining Light. John v. 35.

Bene vixit bene qui latuit.

S A V A N N A H :

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MDCCLXXIII.

“ *Corinthian* races only one obtains the prize; in the
 “ *Christian* race every one that runs well, and holds
 “ out to the end, receives a crown; *they* a corruptible
 “ one, but *we* one that is incorruptible.”

THE *Christian's*, and especially the *Christian Minister's* task, may be irksome; in his course he may meet with difficulties, many enemies and obstacles may obstruct his passage, his very life may be in danger, but, saith the Apostle, “ *None of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which the Lord Jesus has given unto me,*” Acts xx. 24.

To behold this race as it is run by the good man is an animating and profitable spectacle; it becomes more and more interesting as it draws nearer and nearer to its conclusion, for *the path of the good man is as the shining light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day*, Prov. iv. 18. A close regard to this may have a very happy influence; the zeal of those who run before may quicken our own tardy pace; the crown of righteousness, given by the righteous Judge to those who have fought the good fight, finished their course, and kept faith, may excite us also to press forward toward the mark, the prize of our high calling. Hence we are exhorted to “ behold the good man, and to mark the upright, for their end is peace.” And with regard to such as have spoken unto us the word of God, we are expressly directed not only to follow their faith, but also to “ *consider the end of their conversation.*”

To comply with this exhortation is the design of our present mournful meeting. The words I read unto you are spoken of *John* the Baptist; but on this occasion you naturally applied them in your minds to a man of God sent among you, whose name also was *John*; he appears (alas for the last time!) among you, not in this desk, but in a coffin; he can speak to you no more, except by the sight of his breathless corpse now before us; this
 affecting

fecting sight at last realizes what we long feared, Our friend sleepeth, *John* has finished his course.

THAT we may reap some lasting benefit on this melancholy occasion, I propose to speak on the course which *John* the Baptist run and finished. I shall a little characterize our deceased friend, and dismiss you with some practical remarks on the whole, earnestly wishing that as formerly *Sampson* did more hurt to the *Philistines* in his death, than ever he had done in life, you may so improve the death of your worthy Pastor as to receive equal or more good from his speaking to you now he is dead than ever you did by his Ministry and exhortations while he continued alive.

THE name of *John* is famous among the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*. It was the name of that Disciple whom *Jesus* loved more than any other, and the name of his forerunner, to whom moreover it was given by an express divine direction. Of this *John* it was foretold that he should be "*great in the sight of the Lord*;" and our Lord assures us, that "*among them that are born of woman there has not risen any greater than John*, *Matth. xi. 11*. He comes nearest unto *Jesus Christ* himself, but all the singularities of his character and life center in this, that he was the messenger sent before *Christ* the *Messiah* to prepare his way, and to make him known in *Israel*. *He was not the light, but was sent to bear witness of the light*, *John i. 8*. That he might be looked for in this new and important office it had been foretold in the Old Testament that a person like him should appear; before he was conceived the Angel assured *Zeckariah* that *he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias*, *Luke i. 17*. and hence also his mother "*received strength to conceive, and was delivered of him when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised*." His birth, at such a time and under such circumstances, might serve as a hint unto those who waited for the redemption of *Israel* that the promise so long looked for

was now beginning to be accomplished; in the womb of his mother he had already been filled with the Holy Ghost, and that his nativity was looked upon as an extraordinary event we are expressly informed, "*fear came upon all that dwelt around them; these things were nased abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea, and all that heard it laid it up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be?*" Luke i. 65, 66. We may look upon him therefore both as a Prophet and more than a Prophet. His appearance falls into a most remarkable period; he concludes all the prophecies of the Old Testament; and may well be considered as an able Minister of the New. He is frequently called *Elias*, because he came in his spirit and power, and in many things resembled that Prophet. He was in the wilderness "until the day of his shewing unto *Israel*," and even afterwards he chiefly preached and baptized in the wilderness of *Judea*. His dress was rough and coarse like that of his predecessor, "camel's hair and a girdle of a skin about his loins;" "he did eat locust and wild honey;" he came as a preacher of righteousness; his conversation was so blameless and holy that *Christ* himself calls him "a burning and a shining light," *John* v. 35. and though he wrought no miracles, yet such was his fame that "all men mused in their hearts whether he was not the *Messias*," *Luke* iii. 15. Even they that sat on *Moses*'s chair at *Jerusalem* sent Priests and Levites to ask him who he was, and discovered no aversion to own and receive him as the *Christ* of the Lord, would he have assumed that character, but "he confessed and denied not, but confessed I am not the *Christ*." Far from assuming a character not his own, when his Disciples informed him "he to whom thou bearest witness behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him," he appeals to them, "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the *Christ*, but sent before him, he must encrease but I must decrease," *John* iii. 26, 30. Thus his humi-
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ity and faithfulness are equally conspicuous, and just as he was fulfilling his course he declares, "Whom think ye that I am? I am not he, but he that cometh after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose."

This course which *John* is here said to have fulfilled may be understood either of the course of his life, or of his office and Ministry, as he finished both at the same time; it seems however most probable that the latter is here chiefly intended.

It is observable that he began his course very late; he had attained his thirtieth year before ever he appeared in his publick character. Some are of opinion that Priests and Levites never entered upon their office until that age; certain it is that our Lord himself began his publick Ministry no sooner. I would not infer hence that no man ought to enter upon the sacred office before that age, but we may with great propriety conclude that care should be taken that the Ministry may not become contemptible by youth, and that a Preacher ought not to be a novice, lest he fall into the condemnation of the devil, 1 *Tim* iii. 6.

THE sum and substance of the Ministry which *John* had to fulfil was to make *Christ* known in *Israel*. This was and is the main business of the servants of God in every age, but it was that of *John* in a particular manner: As he appears at a very extraordinary period so he enters upon a very extraordinary office: He saw the conclusion of the Old and the beginning of the dispensation of the New Testament; in some respects he is the Minister of both, the last that foretells a Redeemer to come, and the first that points him out as come already. Though as the son of a Priest he had a right to the Priesthood, and to serve at the altar, yet he continued in the desert until his shewing himself to the children of *Israel*. We do not find that he ever offered any sacrifice, but he pointed out the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. No other ever run the course that he

run,

run, and if Ministers are the stars whom *Jesus* holds in his right hand, he may emphatically be called the new and uncommon star that preceded the appearance of *Christ*, and that was to direct men to the new born King of the *Jews*. As the morning star goes before and disappears with the rising of the sun, so *John* went before *Christ*, and finished his course when the sun of righteousness was now risen with healing under his wings. As he came upon a new and uncommon errand, so he legitimates his mission in a very solemn manner. The Prophets of the Old Testament, and all that were ever sent in an extraordinary manner, gave proofs of their being immediately sent of God. *John* did the same; he wrought indeed no miracles, but he did what is more important, he turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, and many of the children of *Israel* to the Lord their God; yet, when he was formally asked, *Who art thou? what sayest thou of thyself?* he said, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias, John i. 22, 23* It would have been the highest presumption in him thus to run if he had not been sent; he never would have been owned and approved of God in an office to which God had not called him. “*No man taketh (or ought to take) this honour unto himself but he that is called of God,*” and “*even Christ glorified not himself.*” If men will walk out of the common road they ought to have an uncommon authority for so doing; and so careful was *John* that his authority and mission might clearly appear, at least among his own Disciples, that, when he was already cast into prison, he sent two of his Disciples to *Christ*, not so much to ask him: Art thou he that was to come? of which he had already the clearest assurance; but to obtain the sanction of *Jesus Christ* to his mission and to all that he preached and taught concerning him; and although he was sanctified from the womb, declared to be the messenger of *Christ* before he was born, though he
grew

grew and waxed strong in the spirit while he was yet a child, yet he did not pretend to preach, or enter upon his office, till God (possibly by an immediate revelation) ordered him to begin, for the period when he so began to appear in publick seems very carefully marked; *Anas* and *Caiaphas* being High Priests, the word of God came unto *John*, the son of *Zacharias*, in the wilderness, and he came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, *Luke* iii. 2, 3. *John* does not barely assert his being sent of God, but his character and carriage is also such as must have convinced every reasonable man that he answered the character given of the forerunner of *Christ* by the Prophets, and that he was indeed sent of God.

As he was very solemnly sent, so he was very eminently qualified. All those whom God sends on any particular errand he also qualifies for the errand on which he sends them. Whatever difference there may be in the gifts and graces of his servants, and though all are not sent on a service equally important with that *John* went upon, yet 'tis no unreasonable supposition, nor an uncharitable one, that God sends no man to talk nonsense in his name, or to be disorderly under pretence of serving his cause. Whatever extraordinary call, superior zeal or success, a man may boast of, if he plainly does not appear qualified for the work he pretends himself called to, it may well be doubted whether his boasting is any more but the effect of a heated fancy or of a dangerous delusion. *John* does not only appear immediately called, but also eminently qualified; he begins a very uncommon work, but gives very sufficient proofs of his extraordinary commission.

In the Ministry of *John* the Baptist there are several things very remarkable, but the principal two are his being sent to preach and being sent to baptize. Since the time of *Malachi*, for the space of about four hundred years, no Prophet had risen in *Israel*, never had they
greater

greater cause to complain: "We see not our sign, there is no more any Prophet," *Psal. lxxiv. 9.* But now *John* came to preach, hence he is called the voice of one that crieth; and as the manner and subject of his preaching so greatly differed from those who then were the established Teachers, no wonder that his preaching caused such great commotions. The course of *John* being a course of preaching, what was the sum and substance of his doctrine naturally becomes the subject of our enquiry.

THE Teachers of the law that then were "*taught for doctrines the commandments of men;*" the pure and scriptural precepts of love to God and man were forgotten, and as it were buried under the rubbish of human traditions; the spiritual meaning of all the external rites required by the ceremonial law was utterly neglected; empty formality was placed in the room of the religion of the heart; though they had the key of knowledge, yet they were unacquainted with him to whom all Prophets bore witness; a very considerable party had even adulterated the religion of reason and nature, by denying the immortality of the soul and the certainty of future rewards and punishments; the *Pharisees* went about to establish a righteousness of their own, and grounded their acceptance with God on the performance of a variety of rites and a fair external appearance; the *Sadducees* denied the resurrection of the body and any life to come; the morals of the nation were corrupted to the highest degree. To such a people was *John* sent, and at such a period did he begin the course of his Ministry to preach unto them *Christ* and repentance. I have observed that the main design of the Ministry of *John* the Baptist was to prepare the way for the reception of the *Messiah*, and to make him known to those to whom he preached; it may be very proper to take a nearer view of what *John* taught concerning him.

1. *He made him known as the eternal son of God; that God has a son, and that he, once as a child, was born unto us, and as the son given; that the eternal Father said unto him, Thou art my son, Psalm ii. they might learn from the writings of the Old Testament; but that Jesus of Nazareth was this son of God, flesh and blood could not reveal unto them; John swears high, "I saw and bear record that this is the son of God," John i. 31.*

2. *He testified that Jesus Christ came from Heaven unto earth. Every other good man and messenger of God still is of the earth, but only Christ is the Lord from Heaven. He represents him as being much prior to himself; though John was born into the world some months before Christ, he declares: "He that cometh after me was before me," John i. 15. In all things he has the pre-eminence, he that is from Heaven is above all, John iii. 31. It is he whom the Father loveth, and has put all things in his hands, John iii. 30.*

3. *JOHN very clearly speaks of the design of Christ's coming, and of his great business among men. He speaks of him not only as of one of superior dignity, whose shoes he was not worthy to loose,---as of one who came to judge the people, and "who would thoroughly sift his floor," but repeatedly points him out---as "the Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world," John i. 29. And thus the capital doctrine of the reconciliation of men with God, and that it was to be brought about by a sacrifice, was openly declared, as soon as he made his publick appearance by whose means it was to be brought about. John very clearly and fully informed them that Christ was not come as a worldly Prince to deliver them from the Romans, and to rule over them as an earthly King, which was the common and false notion they entertained of his person and office. He speaks of him not as one that appeared in majesty and assumed a worldly state, but as a lamb to be slain for the sins of the world.*

4. THE Baptist does not only assert that the *Messias*

is actually come, and that *Jesus of Nazareth* is the man, but *he also enlargeth on his ability and perfect sufficiency for that purpose.* He represents *Jesus* as anointed with the Holy Ghost and power, “who testifieth what he has heard and seen,” “who speaketh the word of God,” and who has not only “received the spirit without measure, but who will also bestow the same spirit upon all his followers,” and “baptize them with the Holy Ghost and fire;” whom to receive, and in whom to believe, is a matter of that consequence that *he that believeth on him has everlasting life, and he that believeth not the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,* John iii. 36.

5. THE whole design and drift of the Ministry and preaching of John is evidently to engage men to become the Disciples of Jesus Christ: For this purpose he not only preached, but, by the solemn and visible ceremony of baptism, as it were listed men under the banners of *Jesus Christ*. Because he administered this baptism unto thousands he is called the Baptist. This baptism which he began being something new was more notice taken of than even his preaching; it would seem as if it was expected that whenever *Elias* or *Christ* should come they would baptize; hence the Jews ask John: *Why baptizest thou if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet,* John i. 5. and thus gave him an opportunity to declare that the express design of his so doing was to make *Christ* known as come among them, *that he should be made manifest in Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water,* John i. 33. He did not baptize any, that they thereby might become his own Disciples, but *that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Jesus Christ,* Acts xix. 4. His views and intentions were by no means to make a party for himself, but to gather men unto *Christ*; hence, when he was informed that “*Jesus himself baptized, and that all men came to him,*” he reproves the jealousy of his followers, and establishe

the sole and superior authority of *Christ*: *He that has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled;* John iii. 29. This baptism of *John* was not only of God, and resting upon divine authority and command, but also essentially the same with that of the New Testament and a baptism unto repentance and forgiveness of sins. Great multitudes came to it from *Jerusalem* and all parts, and thus the most important and necessary truth of that time, viz. that *Christ* was actually come, that all that would obtain pardon of sin must apply unto him, and that himself would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire, became publickly known; they that received it became his happy followers, and they that rejected it were rendered inexcusable; *John* came in the way of righteousness, though many believed him not, *Matt.* xxi. 32. It appears that even his being cast into prison (which some suppose happened twice) could not divert *John* from his zeal and fidelity, and it is very observable that his course was a very short one; it was so whether you refer it to his whole life, which did not much exceed thirty, or to his Ministry, in which he was not employed above three years. Useful lives seem necessary, and we would wish them long; but God's thoughts are not like our thoughts; as *Christ* encreased *John* decreased; when it was universally preached and known that *Christ* was actually come the design of the Baptist's Ministry was fully answered. The morning star disappears after the sun is risen in his full strength. We are immortal till our time comes. *Herodias* long sought his life, but even while he continues in prison the word has free course; doubtless and in his bonds also he begot some in the gospel; he preached *Christ* while he was at liberty, he glorifies him also in bonds, in a day least expected he finisheth his course. If his life was remarkable his death is not less so. The manner in

which he finished is one of those dispensations of Providence which are past finding out, one of those judgments which are a great deep. The faithful reproofs of *John* had long been intolerable unto *Herodias*. *Herod* had a liking to *John*, but for that wicked woman he had a greater. Some have thought the whole a plot contrived between him and her to get rid of a man whom it was impossible to take away under any colour of justice. This gains weight, because it is expressly said, *he would have put him to death before, but he feared the multitude*, Matt. xiv. 6. *Mark* also seems to hint this, by calling the King's birth-day "*a convenient day*" for that purpose, when possibly it was all agreed before between *Herod* and *Herodias* that *John* that day should fall a victim to her resentment, and that her daughter, on such a promise to be made by the King, should ask the head of *John*. However this be, I would conclude that *Herod* added this to all the evils he had done with some reluctance. A wanton lascivious girl, at the instigation of a cruel and adulterous mother, demands his head; the King with an oath had promised to grant her request; a false paint of honour weighs down every other consideration; deaf to every dictate of reason, conscience, or justice, and open to the allurements of his unchaste connexions, he grants her a request as wicked and cruel as unreasonable and inconsistent with the festivity of his birth-day: None of those that sit with him at table interpose; truth and innocence have few or no advocates at Courts; "*he sent and beheaded John in prison*;" a proof that where the word of a King is there is power, and that if wicked men bear rule religion and integrity are without protection. *Herod's* birth-day is the dying day of *John*; but here also the day of death is better than the day of birth; no sooner is the order given but it is also executed, "*his head was brought in a charger*:" So ghastly an aspect, so shocking a sight, as the bloody head of a righteous man, taken off in an instant, does
not

It seem to spoil the mirth of this feast; cruelty and revenge extirpate even natural softnets,---equally void of the feelings of humanity or conscience, a wicked daughter with her own hands carries the still bleeding victim to her still more wicked mother. Unhappy sitting, where the head of a righteous man and martyr is the most remarkable of all dishes.

Thus *John* finished his course.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, and happy all they that have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony. Among these the Baptist will hold a very shining rank. The first saint of the New Testament is also the first martyr. The servant is not above his lord, nor the disciple above his master. It is a great honour to be a servant of *Jesus Christ* in life, to spend and to be spent in his cause, and to promote the interest of immortal souls; but it is an honour still greater to shed our blood for him in death, having preached the truth in life, to seal our conviction of it with our blood in death. At any rate, *they* must be very happy who have well run their race and happily finished their course; but it seems a superior degree of happiness to finish life and service at the same time, to be serviceable even in death and in the conclusion of a race run with patience, to be made conformable unto *Jesus* himself, “who for the joy that was before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.” The sufferings of a *John*, and the sufferings of all *Christ’s* people, are short and but “for a moment,” but they work an exceeding and eternal weight of glory to them that look not to the things which are seen, but to those which are not seen; his life was short, his death was sudden and ignominious; but what a change! the prison door opens to execute an unjust command, but the prison door never shuts upon him any more; the news of his death is also the news of his deliverance; he falls into the hands of wicked

wicked men, but he falls into the hands of his Father; he is released from a body of death in an unexpected moment, he is translated where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; his death appears untimely, but how can *his* death be premature who finished his course? In the manner of his death he seems among the unclean, but the souls of them that were *beheaded* for the witness of *Jesus* sit on thrones, *Revel. xx. 4.* and they that are come out of many tribulations, and made their garments white in the blood of the Lamb, stand before him, where the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto the fountain of living waters, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes. Once more happy they who have finished their course with joy, but happy also all those who press forward and are in the way, they go from strength to strength till every one of them appears in *Zion* before God.

Among those who thus finished their course, and already rest of their labours, we must now also reckon our dear friend and brother your late worthy Minister, whose remains we are now going to commit to the dust, in sure and certain hopes of the resurrection to eternal life. Could our wishes have prevailed, this painful service must have been performed by our posterity, or at least his useful life have been extended to a later period. It pleased God otherwise, who, having thus far enabled him to bear the heat and burden of the day, has now signed his discharge; dust is returning unto dust; while we weep over the breathless corpse, the spirit has joined the kindred spirits of just men made perfect; while we bewail our loss, he rejoices in his gain, and sings the praises of God and of the Lamb.

I SHALL say nothing of his character but what is written of him in all your hearts; he was not only known unto God, but also in your consciences. Adulation and flatteries to the dead are a disgrace of the pulpit
you

you will not even suspect me of, but were I to use flattering words I should be the more inexcusable, as I am persuaded in this case plain narrative is the greatest panegyrick.

He sought God while he was yet very young, and we may truly say of him that he feared the Lord while he was yet a child. I have heard him say that before he was ten years old he had very serious thoughts about the great concern of man; that even at that time sin appeared unto him exceedingly sinful; that the unavoidable alternative of being saved or lost forever made very deep impressions on his mind, and was a happy means not only to restrain him from youthful follies, but also to engage him to remember his Creator in the days of his youth, and to seek the favour of God in the earliest part of his life.

THOUGH he was thus soberly and religiously inclined from his infancy, he was not hasty to join in the Church by making a publick and solemn profession; he had too just a sense of the importance of that matter to engage in it without great thought and searching of hearts; empty vessels make the greatest sound, but still waters run deep; those that have the most of religion on their tongue are not always the most religious in heart; some men are as fond to talk of things that can be known only to God and their own souls as the "*fool that uttereth all his mind,*" while others are constantly afraid lest the kingdom of God should be with them "*in words rather than power.*" Our friend was one of these, under difficulty to speak of himself, his worthy Tutor * advised him to express his sentiments and difficulties in a private letter, which he did so much to the joy and satisfaction of that good man that he greatly encouraged him to become a partaker at the Lord's Table, and thus he became a Member of that Church over which the
Holy

* Rev. Mr. Hugh Fisher of Dorchester, South-Carolina.

Holy Ghost afterwards made him an Overseer and the worthy successor of this faithful guide of his truth.

UNDER such hopeful circumstances he was devoted to the service of the Sanctuary, and for his greater improvement was sent to *Cambridge in New-England*. He thought it necessary to learn, before he attempted to teach, and accordingly went through a regular course of academical studies, and made very considerable progress in the languages and sciences before he took his first degree, and then returned to his native country, and continued in it till his removal into our province an exception to the common rule, *No Prophet is accepted in his country*, Luke iv. 24.

SUCH was his conviction of the necessity of entering into the Ministry in a regular manner, that, though he had made the best of his time at College, and was a Graduate,---although the congregation he had always belonged to was then destitute of a Minister, yet he would not be the judge of his own ability, nor take this honour on himself, without being properly called; he would have thought it a very sinful presumption to preach and act as a Minister of the Gospel without a regular admission from concurrence and approbation of those who were Ministers of the word before him; it was some time before he could conveniently obtain that, but till he did obtain it he only read printed sermons in the congregation. As it is a glaring absurdity for men to pretend to teach what themselves never learnt, so this absurdity encreases in proportion of the importance of the things which self confident and untaught pretenders would attempt to teach others. Every thing in the Church of God ought to be done decently and in order, but this should be more particularly observed in matters of the greatest moment, such as admitting men to preach the word of reconciliation; without rule and order no society can subsist long, and when these once are thrown aside nothing but division and confusion is to be expected.

AFTER

AFTER his entrance into the Ministry he gave himself unto reading and meditation, and continued a close student all his life; he thought before he spoke, he digested all he intended to say; the Preacher sought not only out acceptable words, but chiefly sound speech, which cannot be condemned; he had too great a sense of what it is to speak in the presence of God and Angels, of the importance of speaking for God to immortal souls, to put off his hearers with rhapsodies and sound; to such as were better pleased with solidity of thought than vivacity of action, who admired sound speech more than a musical voice, who were more affected by gravity of deportment than theatrical gestures, your late Minister was a most acceptable and useful Preacher.

In the course which he fulfilled he neither affected popularity nor party, but only to be useful to man's best interest, to awaken careless sinners in time to consider, and to be a helper of the joy of all that walked in the faith and order of the Gospel. Popularity and usefulness are not synonymous terms, nor is their respective pursuit the same thing; if the former be of any service, it can be in no higher proportion than as it is subservient to the latter; we need not be displeased with the one, but with all our might ought we to study the other. He was entirely free from all party zeal, and loved good men of all denominations; he received all whom he believed *Christ* received; as a proof of his free and generous principles, he was ever ready to keep an open communion with all that hold the truth as it is in *Jesus*, without any regard to their difference of sentiment in the lesser matters of the law, and without the most distant attempt to bring men over to his own persuasion, or to make them desert their own in order to encrease his party. With many the plea of moderation, and of a catholic spirit, is the successful preface when they attempt to bring unsuspecting men off from others and to list them under their own banner.

CHRIST and his salvation was the sum of all his preaching; the natural sweetness of his temper, improved by the grace of God, effectually led him to preach up love to God and men rather than the controversial points of religion; he had determined not to know any thing but *Christ*, and him crucified, and him he preached not in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. He was truly a Minister of the GOSPEL, his principles and doctrine evangelical, every duty he pressed from evangelical motives; his discourses (which he always wrote at length) were all plain and practical, seasoned with salt, and such as might administer grace to his hearers. He has given it in charge to me to put you in mind in a particular sermon of the things you heard and received of him, and, with the help of God, I shall not fail to comply with his request as soon as possible.

His moderation was known unto all men; he disliked, and upon every occasion advised against all violent proceedings; his cool dispassionate temper would moderate every appearance of heat, and quickly disarm any sudden sally of passion in others.

THERE was a peculiar sweetness in his more familiar conversation, he was chearful but not light, solid but not sad; "his discourses were seasoned with salt;" he made no shew of his religion, but a city on a hill cannot be hid; he always spoke as he thought, but he was too prudent to speak all his thoughts; he had the happiness to please and to edify at the same time; his discourses were religious but unaffected; if religion was his greatest ornament he was also an ornament unto religion, and, without ever having such an aim, the general justice done his character proves a possibility of being truly good and yet universally beloved.

THAT greatest of virtues, charity, he was possessed of in an eminent degree; this would make him ingenious to put the best construction on what was said and done by

by others; he would not condemn while it was possible to excuse; he was strict with regard to himself, and kind and gentle to all others. He also knew it is more blessed to forgive than to receive; when he saw any in distress he would not send them away with the cold comfort, "*Be ye warmed, be ye clothed,*" but his heart devised liberal things; that he might have to give, he guided his affairs with discretion, he was a lover of mankind, ever ready to do good and to communicate, he wished well to all men, and, as far as it was in his power, he might truly be called every man's friend.

He was clothed with humility; he never said, because he never thought, much of himself; he was not mean, but condescended to men of low estate; of pride and ambition he seemed equally void, as one that had in an uncommon degree learnt of his Master to be meek and lowly of heart; meekness, humility, and a serious cheerfulness, were the most striking features in his character: Great was his contentment; few men have so happily attained the lesson of being content in every condition; in him godliness and contentment met together; he never sought high things, or to make a great figure: With what cheerful disinterestedness he served you in the Gospel you all know, and will doubtless long remember: * His tender regard for his congregation, and his anxiety that they might be kept together, engaged him to remove into this province, and to share with them all the difficulties and inconveniences that attend the settling of a wilderness, and he lived to see their endeavours so blessed as to turn this wilderness

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* From the year 1745 to 1749, when produce sold almost for nothing during the war, goods being excessively dear, and his people in general rather in straitened circumstances, he proposed to his congregation to lower his salary (then about 400*l.* Carolina currency) a fourth, and told them, while the war continued he would endeavour to live upon less than they had hitherto given him, rather than making his support a burden to them, and accordingly did so till better times succeeded.

ness into a garden, and the desert place into fields which God has blessed.

In his Ministry as he obtained mercy to be faithful, he longed after you all; his prayers for you were constant; he exhorted and warned every man that he might present every man perfect before God; he preached as long as he had any strength left, and, to leave you a pattern when he could preach no more, he still met and prayed with his people, and attended to hear a sermon read where he had so long been a Preacher; even when his disorder * had reduced him to a skeleton, to arm and fortify himself against approaching death, he had a great desire once more publickly to commemorate with you the death of his Redeemer, and this was the last time he appeared in publick; on the *Friday* before he still spoke and prayed at the admission of some new members, and was then so reduced that he could not have continued in the place of worship to hear and celebrate the sacrament without relieving himself by lying down sometimes in his bed, which he had brought hither for that purpose; and it was a very affecting sight to see him, with death in his countenance, struggling once more to shew forth the death of his Lord, whom he expected to be just a-coming, and from necessity to be in that posture in which the sacred ordinance was first instituted and celebrated by our dying Lord and his beloved Apostles.

NEAR forty years (a very uncommon period in our climate) did he continue to minister in holy things among you; all this time you were in his heart to live and to die with you, because he greatly loved you. He was the father and friend as well as the shepherd of his flock. A mutual endearment subsisted and encreased all that time, it may with great justice be said no congregation was happier in a Minister, and no Minister happier in a congregation, for he was gentle among
you.

* A diabetes and hectical fever.

you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, willing to have imparted not only the Gospel of God unto you, but also his own soul, because ye were dear to him.

THERE was a serious pleasantness in his conversation which immediately gained the respect of all that became acquainted with him; he was given to hospitality, and as every one was happy in his company, it was much their own fault who did not return from it wiser and better.

IN the midst of human frailty and imperfection, "Ye are witnesses, and God, how holily, justly, and unblameably, he behaved himself among you, how he exhorted and charged every one of you (as a father does his children) that you would walk worthy of God, who has called you by him unto his kingdom and glory."

THERE is a circumstance in his character which is very singular; as far as I ever heard, or could learn, "*No man was ever known to speak ill of him.*" A good man, and never spoke ill of! Astonishing indeed; yet it is the real case; he was a truly good man, and in him goodness was so respected, that no man, good or bad, spoke otherwise than well of him. *

AS his life was so was his death. He lived as one would wish to die; the same even calmness, equally distant from raptures and despondency, from boasting and fear, that he was always remarkable for, attended him to the last; he was in no ways terrified, but also thoroughly sensible of the greatness and importance of the change to which death opens the inlet; a very long and tedious disorder, which gradually wasted his constitution, never impaired his patience; as he preached faith and repentance in life, so he no less powerfully preached patience and hope from his own example in his last sickness; never did he appear to me more venerable

* *It has been pleasantly said Mr. Osgood had a great voice against him: Woe unto you if all men speak well of you: But this case is so very uncommon that it abates nothing of the generality of our Lord's declaration.*

nerable than in the last stage of his life; his mind was much taken up with the great prospect before him; humility ripened him for Heaven; he much bewailed his infirmities and imperfections, but the promises of the Gospel which he had preached were the support of his last moments; he applied them to himself with a lively faith: "*One would not think (said he once) that so many promises were to be found in the Bible, and so suitable to all circumstances.*" The words of the Apostle being mentioned to him: "*When Christ who is our life shall appear you shall also appear with him in glory,*" he said: "This is all my hope, even so come quickly, come, Lord Jesus." When he was put in mind, "*Yet a little while and he that is to come will come and not tarry,*" he replied: "Why are his chariots so long a coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots so long?" He frequently expressed his longing to be dissolved and to be with Christ, and would often ask whether we perceived his change coming on any faster: "*It is my earnest desire (said he) that neither death nor life may separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; but, absque DEO nihil possumus, without God we can do nothing.*" His humility appeared, that when it was prayed for him, "that he might be filled with the greatest joys and raptures, so as to be obliged to say: Hold, Lord, thy servant cannot bear it," he observed that we had no right to expect or ask for such great things; that the support and comforts which God affords his children in general are sufficient. Thus did he go out of time into eternity through the valley of humility, and you may be assured there is not a safer passage.

THE afternoon before he died he seemed sensible that his dissolution was now just at hand, and appeared to have no other concern but for his dear people; he asked me whether on the whole I did not think there was a hopeful prospect of success in the application made for another Minister, and, when I answered in the affirmative,

re, he blessed God for it and was contented. I have
 alone to think the thought of a bare possibility of a di-
 vision among his people after his decease gave him some
 pain; hence he so earnestly wished and prayed you
 might be soon and well supplied. These desires he has
 taken with him into eternity, and desires like these I
 verily believe do not lose their activity, but urge with a
 holy vehemence in a world of love, bliss, and perfecti-
 on.

He desired to be prayed with, and after prayer would
 have us sing: *Sing again* (said he) *the hymn that has the lines*
it, "Religion never was design'd to make our pleasures
its." This he repeated twice, and professed himself
 greatly refreshed and comforted. After prayer and
 singing he added: I will now conclude with a short
 prayer myself. In this, in very few words, he thanked
 God for all his unspeakable mercies, and prayed that
 goodness and mercy might follow him to the last; he
 was too much exhausted to say much, but turned him-
 self to the partner of his love and affliction, took an af-
 fecting leave, assuring her the separation would not be
 long: Compose yourself, said he, and added, (turning
 again) I will endeavour to compose myself in God.

AFTER this his senses gradually failed, till, under the
 tears and prayers of his friends, he fell asleep, so gently,
 that I, that stood close by and prayed, never perceived
 his departing, till we found the spirit had actually for-
 saken the habitation of clay, and, by the manner of his
 death, also left us cause to wish, Let me die the death
 of the righteous, and let my latter end be like *his*.

AND now he is taken from us, has fulfilled his course,
 and finished his labours, it highly becomes them who
 are alive and remain to pay due attention to so remark-
 able a stroke of Providence. "When the candles are
 put out it grows dark," say the Rabbies. It is matter
 of lamentation if the righteous dieth, but it is still more
 so when no man takes it to heart. As it would be highly
 sinful

sinful on this occasion to sorrow as men that have no hope, so in the midst of our grief we ought not to forget to be very thankful that God ever gave and so long continued him a blessing to his Church and people. This long continuance is a very important, and I may say uncommon blessing; but, besides this, there are many other things which even in his death ought to awaken our gratitude. It is matter of thankfulness that his labours were not in vain in the Lord; as God distributes his gifts as he pleaseth, so the success of the best meant endeavours entirely depends on him alone; it is not of him that willeth or runneth but of God that has mercy. A *Paul* himself may plant, and even an *Apollon* water, nothing will do till God giveth the encrease, and this God giveth to whom, when, and how he pleaseth. Your Pastor did not labour in vain or run in vain, to many of you we may say, "*The seal of his Ministry are ye.*" It is a matter of gratitude whenever any good is done, but those who are conscious that he was their father in *Christ*, and begot them by the Gospel, have double cause to adore that goodness that made him unto them the happy instrument of so much good; and no doubt but many that now sleep in the dust will rise with him from this burying-ground and call him blessed in the resurrection of the just. It is matter of gratitude also that he was enabled to hold out to the end, that his last works were equal to his first, and that with unabating steadiness he served God in his day and generation till he had fulfilled his course and fell asleep. It is cause of thanksgiving that he lived till he saw the people of his charge settled again in a hopeful way in this new province, and a Church gathered in a place that but a few years ago was a howling wilderness. We ought to be thankful that he was able to honour God on a dying bed, edify his hearers by his patient sufferings, and to exhort them with his latest breath to continue in the faith which he had preached, and to walk in love and according to the order of the Gospel.

has given full proof of his Ministry and fulfilled his life. We shall never hear him any more; all his labours, trials, and difficulties, are at an end; long has borne the heat and burden of the day; many wearisome months, tedious days, and painful nights, has he spent on a sick-bed; where he now is none of the inhabitants are sick, and death itself is no more; he was faithful unto death, and now he has received the crown of life.

He has *finished* his course. My dear friends, have you begun yours? This is the most important question of the day, this is the awful consideration which ought most to affect our minds upon this solemn occasion. Faithful Ministers live and die in the service of their hearers; he spent and was spent among you; he was in travail that *Christ* might be found in you all; it was his great concern that in the day of *Christ's* appearance he might give his account with joy, and none of you be found missing. To whom much is given of him much will be required. Great is your guilt if under his faithful Ministry you continued impenitent, and fearful will be your condemnation should you at last die unconverted. We begin to die as soon as we begin to live, we advance towards death at every step we advance in life, we are under way now, every one that hears me runs a course; you are either getting forward towards Heaven, or you are still settled upon your lees; you either run the race which is set before you, or else your feet, though swift unto mischief, do not know the way of peace. Near forty years did he labour among you, and more than forty years was God grieved with some of this generation, and his ways have they not known.--- What an alarming thought! Your Minister, by preaching and his example, run his course for the space of near forty years among you, and was taken away at last without prevailing with you to begin yours. Every sermon you neglected or made light of, every exhortation

tion you slighted, every resolution you broke, every conviction you stifled, all his entreaties to and all his prayers for you, stand upon record against your own soul; if after all the word he preached did not profit not being mixed with faith in them that heard it, how will you answer it to God and your own conscience, how will you be able to bear to see your own Minister, of whose faithfulness and love you never could doubt, to arise as a witness against you on the last day? I entreat you therefore in the most solemn manner consider your ways. Whence do you come, and whither do you go? You have no doubt your Pastor lived in the midst of human frailty as he ought. Consider whether you do not live as you ought not. He preached you the good and right way, but are you not still, even in your own judgment, agoing the wrong one? He laboured, wished, and prayed, that you might be saved, and can you be content to be lost? He often told you that to be saved man must be converted. Are you not convinced he spoke the truth? Convinced, alas! and unconverted still. Conscious that this is your case, and unconcerned though it is so, he frequently, even upon his dying-bed, expressed his sense of the awful importance of dying, of the danger of man's deceiving himself, and taking up with a mistaken delusive hope, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?" Can you expect to meet at the same place at last while you follow a direct contrary road? Your Minister, by not being slothful in well-doing, obtained the *promise*. Can you expect to go on in sin and escape the *threatning*? Will carnal security and thoughtlessness in life fit and prepare you for death? Will wickedness and sin be of that advantage to you that faith and holiness was unto him? No, my friends, without holiness no man shall see the Lord; unless you are renewed in the spirit of your mind, unless you follow his steps as he followed those of *Jesus Christ*, you will never see your Minister.

Minister again with any comfort; unless you are made holy in all manner of conversation you will never see God but to sink beneath his frowns, and to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. This his faithful lips have often told you, and if you have taken no warning, while his corpse is still in sight I must declare your blood on your own head. O how dreadful would it be on the last day to see him at the right hand of *Christ*, but yourself on the left!--to see some of your friends, relations, acquaintances, that with you attended the same Ministry at this place, blessing God that ever he was their Minister and they his hearers, they his glory and he their joy, but yourselves, by your own fault, excluded, for ever excluded from the happy number! O what a distressing thought! infinitely more so whenever it becomes a reality. Flatter not yourselves, my dear hearers, it can be well with you while you run a contrary race; do not presume to hope for salvation in any other way but that in which believers in every age have obtained it, repentance towards God and faith in our Lord *Jesus Christ*; no outward professions will do, no sobriety of life will be found sufficient, nothing short of a new creature. Every course that is not a course of holiness is a race towards destruction, and even if a man strive for mastery he is not crowned unless he strive lawfully. Awake then and consider; your faithful Minister is taken away from you, but you may still remember his admonitions; there is joy with those in the presence of God at the repentance of one sinner; in Heaven his soul will praise God whenever he hears of the conversion of any that were so near and dear to him while he was with us on earth. Resolve this day, I will begin to think on myself, I will consider my ways, what I have been doing, whither I am going, I will lose no more time, I will no longer trifle with my immortal interest;---too long run away from my father's house

and fed upon husks, this day I will arise and go to my father, this day I will turn from the folly of my way, this day I will begin to stretch out my hand unto God.

O THAT God would put this last honour upon his departed servant, that at his funeral some still dead in sin and trespasses might be awakened into life, sincerely to begin that course of duty which he has now so happily finished.

THE hope of the dying Christian is also the hope of the living. Every instance of the kindness of God to his people in their last moment, as it effectually shews the value and importance of religion, should also powerfully animate those that survive to persevere until the end, and to press forward towards the prize, the prize of our high-calling in *Christ Jesus* our Lord. Every friend taken away from us should take away some of our affections from time and sense; every friend gone to Heaven before us should give unto Heaven a greater power of attraction. How selfish are our wishes; were it left to us, the good man must continue on earth for ever; had we the disposal of life and death, those that are unfittest to die probably must die soonest, and those that are ripest for Heaven be kept out the longest; but our race is appointed, and the swifter we run it the sooner we may expect to reach the end. Let this comfort you who now mourn, that *John* fulfilled his course; he is at rest. Be ye also ready. He that enabled him to hold out to the last will not be wanting in his aid and assistance to you. Look at all those even within your own acquaintance who once ran well, and since finished their course with joy, all these died in faith; the same crown they received is set before you, and you also shall receive it if you are not weary in well-doing. Seeing your Minister, in the way which he preached and lived, had peace at last, and is now for ever with the Lord, be ye followers of him; nay, seeing we are compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every

every weight and the sin which easily besets us, and with patience run the race which is set before us, looking unto *Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. You run for an incorruptible crown, a few difficulties in the way should not deter you, but rather animate your zeal to be steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. You are running a race, no loitering, no trifling, no standing still; remember *Lot's* wife; rather let us fervently pray that we may be kept from falling, that instead of fainting we mount on eagles wings, that we may be preserved from flaging in the last stage of our career. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; let us wait on him continually; thus far hath the Lord holpen us; be of good cheer, he will never leave you nor forsake you; in every difficulty he will place beneath you everlasting arms; in every trial you shall be more than conquerors; death will finish your course, and open you an abundant entrance into a kingdom which cannot be shaken. How many shall we meet above whom we tenderly loved here below! You will get into company with every *John* that fulfilled his course; they that went before will be glad to bid us welcome; when once we shall be admitted to follow, our work will soon be at an end, our rest will never be interrupted. How happy will the day be when all that fulfilled their course will meet in the joyful presence of the Captain of their salvation, and then be for ever with the Lord and for ever with one another. Comfort yourselves with these words: Only little children abide in him, that we may not be ashamed, but have confidence before him at his coming. Now to him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you before him with exceeding great joy, to him that only has immortality, the only wise God, be glory for ever.

The HYMN which at Mr. OSGOOD's Desire was sung a few Hours before his Death. Watts's Hymns, B. II. 30.

COME we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

The sorrows of the mind
Be banish'd from the place;
Religion never was design'd
To make our pleasures less.

Let those refuse to sing
That never knew our God,
But fav'rites of the heav'nly King
May speak their joys abroad.

The GOD that rules on high,
And thunders when he please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas;

This awful GOD is ours,
Our father and our love,
He shall send down his heav'nly pow'rs
To carry us above.

There shall we see his face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.

Yes, and before we rise
To that immortal state,
The thoughts of such amazing bliss
Should constant joys create.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below,
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heav'nly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,
And ev'ry tear be dry;
We're marching thro' Emanuel's ground
To fairer worlds on high.