

XV. CONCLUSION.

We have thus sketched the history of a good man lately passed from our midst—we have given an outline of his labors, and perhaps now we should endeavor to delineate his character; but this will be better exhibited by the above memorial of his life, imperfect as it is, than by any thing we can say here. Nor do we feel it necessary, to say much in the way of describing his intellectual powers. We by no means place Dr Keir in the first rank as to talents or original genius. And yet he occupied a place in our Church, such as no other man has done for some time. We are safe in saying that for a number of years, there has been no member of our Synod who had the general esteem and veneration of his brethren, to the extent which he had, or whose words carried greater influence. To what was this attributable? In part no doubt it was owing to his years and long and faithful services in the Church; but there must have been something in the man himself to win such a position. We can barely enumerate what we regard as the leading qualities of his mind, by the combination of which he became so honorable among his brethren. In the first place, he possessed, if not extraordinary powers of mind, yet good talents, among which predominated that mysterious faculty, or whatever it may be called, in which men of great talents are sometimes deficient, generally known as good common sense. To this may be traced that practical prudence, which through life distinguished him, and which rendered him so useful as a practical man in the Church. But secondly, he was characterized by great diligence, all his powers were well improved, and whatever his hand formed to do he did it with his might. And thirdly, his whole conduct bore the impress of deep piety. In his presence, we felt "how awful goodness is." His religion especially manifested itself in the kindness and affection of his disposition. His whole intercourse with men seemed to be guided by the command of the Apostle, "Giving none offence, either to Jew or Gentile, that the ministry be not blamed." And lastly, he was distinguished by great devotedness to his work. This in one view, may be regarded as a part of piety, but in another it is one peculiar form in which it manifests itself. It is now universally acknowledged, that no man will excel in any profession, or department of business, without a spirit of devotedness to it, and this spirit will supply in a good measure, the lack of other qualifications. The predominant quality of Dr Keir's mind was "*devotedness to the service of God in the gospel of his Son,*" and we believe that