

S E R M O N .

"I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."—*Rev.*, xiv. 13.

THERE must have been something very remarkable in the fortitude and constancy with which the first Christians met various and dreadful deaths: their conduct often exacted from their bitterest enemies,—their most cruel persecutors,—both admiration and respect. In the Heathen world death was no strange sight, splendid self-devotion no uncommon thing; yet such was the lofty and noble bearing of the Christian martyrs, that men maddened with the thirst for blood looked on with wonder. Apparently there was nothing to inspire or support the sufferers; nothing to work up the passions to stern endurance; no proud feeling of defiance; no fierce spirit of rage and hatred; no crowds of admiring and encouraging friends; no superstitious belief that the