

guide and sanctifier of his church to the end of time.

All the acts and teachings of Christ while on earth, tended to one distinct object—the greatest good of his people; for this end, He assumed our nature, revealed the great truths of God and eternity, and made atonement on the cross for human transgression. He taught his disciples the truths of human depravity, God's merciful plan of redemption by a propitiatory sacrifice, the necessity of repentance, faith, and holiness, and the certainty of a future state of being, where rewards and punishments will be equitably dispensed. It was for the completion in heaven of that great and good work for the redemption of the lost, which He had begun on earth that He was now about to ascend up thither.—“I go to prepare a place for you.” O how merciful, faithful, and persevering was the blessed Jesus, in accomplishing the benevolent work He had taken in hand! No labour could weary Him, no difficulties discourage Him, no opposition, human, or infernal, could arrest the great purpose of his soul—to save a world of sinners from the misery to which they were condemned. For the completion of his purposes of mercy, the divine plan required that the blood of a holy victim should be offered on the altar of Justice to atone for sin, and that the merits of that sacrifice should be pleaded before the throne of God in heaven. That sacrifice was now about to be offered on earth in the person of the immaculate Jesus; and when that should be accomplished with all the circumstances of public infamy, which would have attended our punishment, had we been forced to suffer the penalty we had incurred:—and when He shall have conquered the last enemy—Death, by his own resurrection, then will the everlasting gates of heaven be opened to admit the conquering Lamb; for He enters there to complete his labour of love, and to prepare places of honour and felicity for his redeemed ones.

But the enquiry may arise, what preparation can be necessary to be made for them in that spirit world, where all is already pure and perfect. It is not indeed to build a house, for God's house is already there, “not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” It is not to erect mansions of blessedness, for Jesus said that “many mansions” were already there in his Father's house. It was not to make any new arrangements or regulations in a place, where “Order is heaven's first law;” nor to embellish with any new adornments, where all is, and ever has been perfect in splendor and magnificence. But, He prepares a place in those mansions of bliss for his redeemed ones by exhibiting to the Father the Body that had suffered, the mortal wounds whence the life blood had issued,—the human form that had lain for three days in the tomb of Joseph, now rescued from death by his own divine energy—as proofs of the completion of his sacrifice, and the completion of the atonement: The demands of Justice are now satisfied; the door of mercy is opened, and He presents the claims of every true believer in Him, to a seat in those mansions. He prepares a place in those seats of blessedness, by taking possession of them, as the Head and representative of his spiritual body, for Christ is the living head, and all humble and devout Christians are the members of that body. The resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven of Christ their living Head, are pledges and earnest of theirs also, for where the Head passes, the members of the body united with it are sure to follow.

He slept the sleep of maternal death, in the tomb of Joseph, the counsellor of Aramathia, as all the human dead sleep in their graves, and He arose from death to signify his victory over the king of terrors. He arose as, “the first fruits of them that slept,” and we know that where the first fruits are gathered, the general harvest is soon to follow. When He shall come again to fulfil the promise made to his disciples, to take them unto himself, all will be raised from the dark prison of the grave in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, all will ascend in the likeness of his ascension, to appear before the throne of God, “whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.”

And when the solemn trial of the Judgement day

shall be over, and the separation made between the just and the unjust, and the sentence of acquittal pronounced by the Judge. “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” then will the sheep of Christ on the right hand, know again the voice of their beloved shepherd, and follow Him; the heavenly bridegroom will lead the way, and the ransomed bride, affianced by faith, purified by sacrifice, and adorned with a robe of spotless righteousness, will follow Him in to the marriage supper. If such were the objects of Christ's ascension to the Father, what glorious prospects does that event open before us. Sin pardoned; the sentence of condemnation cancelled—divine Justice satisfied—an offended God reconciled—the stains of guilt purged from the soul—and a union and inheritance with Christ which will continue forever. The fact of his ascension may be considered one among the few essential truths, which constitute the foundation of all our hope, for if He in whom we trust has not ascended up on high, how could we meet the Judge without our advocate. As his ascension into heaven is a proof to all the world, of his divine mission, and of the completion of that portion of his work, which was to be accomplished on earth, so also his retirement from the field of his labor and suffering gives us assurance, that He has gone, as He said to occupy that higher station in heaven, where He can fully complete and carry into effect his labor of love.

But lest the weak faith of his disciples should cause them to despond at his departure from them, He consoled them with the promise, “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” When the Jewish High Priest entered the holy of holies to offer incense within the veil, his prescribed duty was then to come forth into the outer court, “to bless the people.” This clearly typified the holier ministry of our great High Priest. He has now entered heaven, the *sanctum sanctorum* of the divinity, the veil of our flesh conceals him from our view, He is there offering to the Father, the incense of his own meritorious sacrifice, and at his second advent, in the fulness of time, He will come forth from heaven to crown his people with blessings indeed. Then his reward will be with Him, “and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.” The object of his next appearance will be to take his people unto Himself, to dwell with Him above, that where He is there may they be also. This He had promised to his disciples as a condition of their engaging in his service, and for their encouragement He frequently repeated the declaration, even in his memorable prayer. “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.”

O what a bright and blessed prospect is here unfolded to the view, and to the participation of all sincere Christians! To keep the eye of faith steadfastly fixed upon this bright destiny, will be an effectual antidote against despondency, under the toils and sufferings of this momentary state. How wonderful have been the mercy and condescension of Christ! My Christian brethren, never let the sound of those cheering words of your Saviour cease in your ears,—“I will come again, and receive you to my self; that where I am, there ye may be also.” And see also that ye are ready for his coming; that ye stand watching day and night for his appearance, with your lamps replenished with oil, trimmed and burning—that is, in the active exercise of every duty of piety to God and charity to man—that ye may be prepared to enter with Him, and with all the company of the sanctified, into those mansions of blessedness prepared for you.

But let not the careless and unrepenting sinner think that he shall thus meet the Saviour of the world. The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and his judicial seat will then be on the great white throne of judgment; there He not only dispenses mercy and blessedness to the humble penitent, but the scales of equity and the sword of justice are in his hand, to award strict retribution to those who have despised or neglected his great salvation. Terrible, indeed, my thoughtless friends, will be your meeting with Him, unless you take timely

warning, and awake from your lethargy, and flee to the Saviour's cross for protection, and have your souls morally changed from sin to holiness, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and exhibit in your lives the fruits of holiness.—Then indeed having renounced the world, and acknowledged your allegiance to the Saviour, you may hope in his mercy; and meet Him in joy. This serious inquiry into the religious state of our own souls, is forced upon us individually by the solemn event which has assembled us at this time,—the decease of an old and valued friend, in this community. The dissolution of that mysterious partnership between the flesh and spirit, imposes on us the duty of committing the inanimate form of our aged brother to the bosom of our common mother—“earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” resigning his material part to that valley, whence there is no return to the busy scenes of mortal life, to await the summons of the last day. Death is God's messenger which severs those human ligatures which bound heart to heart, and soul to soul, and causes them to writhe in anguish, and death is God's voice, which speaks to the living, conveying lessons which must be understood and learned; and his voice my sorrowing friends, has in this afflictive providence, been heard among you by every ear, and felt by every heart, in your domestic and kindred circle, and be assured, that many other hearts feel for you the deepest sympathy.—I would fain seek for you an antidote that can heal the deep grief of the widow and the fatherless, or, at least mitigate the anguish, “that earth can not assuage.” But it is not to the world, nor to any of its false nostrums that I would guide you; but I would confidently refer you to that holy heaven where we trust his spirit has fled, from whence alone effectual consolations can be drawn—to the God of heaven our common Father, who hath for wise purposes sent this affliction upon you—to the Lamb of God, the Saviour, who, in the days of his humanity, was a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;” and “who is touched with a feeling of your infirmities. He will send down the holy Spirit the comforter, if you seek Him in your sorrows. God's purposes are often mysterious to us; He seeth not as man seeth, for he is wiser than man and he doeth all things right and well, though we may perceive it not. He may have seen that in all your earthly affections, there lurked a hidden danger to your souls. He may have discovered some latent idolatry which deprived Him of the first place in your hearts, which is his due. To save you from so grievous a sin, this may be his admonishing voice—not uttered in displeasure, but in love, He hath transplanted the spirit of Him you loved, we trust, to his own garden above; and in the chastening sorrows you feel, He calls you to be also ready to join him there, in a perpetual union with the blessed.—The influences on the community, of individuals in the common walks of life, seldom demand extended obituary notice. The position, however, which has been held by our departed friend, has never been an obscure, but a prominent one, and the reminiscences of more than forty years, during which I have had his acquaintance, and I may say his friendship, have enabled me, I think justly to appreciate his character.

Born and bred an Englishman, he brought with him to the country of his adoption many traits of character and manners, which distinguish the middle and higher classes of English society, which he preserved through life. Frank and social in disposition, polished, courteous, and gentlemanly in manners, he rendered his home at all times the seat of a generous hospitality, and though he may have been strict and even rigid in matters of business, his heart and his hand were open to the claims of the needy, and in Him the poor have lost a truly sympathizing friend. Though not strictly speaking, a religious man in early life, he always expressed respect and veneration for the Bible, the church, and its ordinances; and more recently, he had manifested a deeper interest for his soul's salvation, by seeking the grace of God in the sacraments of the gospel. In his approach to the termination of life, the insufficiency of all worldly dependence—all human trust became