

SERMON.

"A MOTHER IN ISRAEL."—*Judges v. 7.*

"HER CHILDREN ARISE UP AND CALL HER BLESSED."—*Prov. xxxi. 28.*

THESE two inspired sentences are taken, both of them, from portions of Scripture which have manifest appropriateness to this occasion, and to the character and life-work of the beloved and revered one whose memory we have met to honour and embalm. The first has reference to Deborah, a saintly and eminent woman of the olden time, who during a portion of that interval of Jewish history, which intervened between the theocracy and monarchy, "judged Israel." She seems to have acquired this position from her having been a "prophetess," and a person singularly gifted with mental vigor, sagacity, and wisdom. She was the only woman who ever held the high place of judge in Israel, and she seems to have filled it admirably. The times were eventful, and the state of the nation critical; but under her prudent and effective guidance, the nation was delivered from its perils, and established in peace and freedom. The sentence I have chosen, is found in a noble ode, composed and sung by Deborah on the occasion of Israel's deliverance from its enemies. It is a grand triumphal hymn, containing some very sublime passages, and closing with a striking outburst of pious feeling, which, for impressive beauty and force, is unsurpassed even in sacred poetry: "So LET ALL THINE ENEMIES PERISH, O LORD; BUT LET THEM THAT LOVE HIM BE AS THE SUN WHEN HE GOETH FORTH IN HIS MIGHT!"

The name, Deborah, means "a bee;" and an old writer quaintly remarks, that she was well-named, since she had honey for the friends, and a sting for the enemies of Jehovah and his people. The phrase, "*a mother in Israel*," in Scripture, sometimes describes simply the maternal relation, which was highly esteemed and honoured; but in this place it expresses more, and refers to Deborah's functions as a judge. In that capacity she cared for the nation,—sought its good,—nursed it,—and watched over its welfare, as a mother might do.

Several points of resemblance between this great and good woman and our dear departed relative, cannot fail to present themselves. A