

## A DISCOURSE,

*Commemoratory of the late CHAS. F. ALLISON, Esq., Founder of the Mount Allison Wesleyan Academy, delivered in Lingley Hall, Sabbath Evening, May 29th, 1859, at the request of the Students.*

BY REV. H. PICKARD, D. D.

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—*Hebrews*, vi., 12.

FORGETFUL of the bereavement which so sadly marks the history of our community for the year which is now closing, we can this evening but look around us for him who has ever been on all our previous public occasions the cynosure of all eyes; but, alas! we look in vain—the Father of the Academy is not with us to-night. He whose quiet presence here was ever felt by all the cause of gladness—a ground of encouragement, a source of joy—his whose approving smile and whispered congratulation we have been wont to receive at the close of each year's toil, as our most earnestly coveted prize, will never again grace by his presence our Anniversary Exercises. His place is vacant, not only in this our Hall of Academic gathering, but also in yonder House of God and in that now desolate dwelling place, where his widow weeps and his daughter mourns.

As we notice this sad vacancy the question, "Where is he now whom we knew only to admire, to love, to revere, but who has disappeared from our sight?" must urgently press itself upon our consideration. Whither shall we turn to successfully seek the answer so importunately demanded by our smitten hearts? Shall it be to memory, or the reports of human observation? They might testify of the ebbing out of life,—of a motionless body arrayed in the habiliments of death,—of a closed coffin,—of a long procession winding its way slowly to this Hall, and after brief pause here, hence again sadly to yonder resting place for the dead;—they might tell of the narrow gloomy opening into which that closed coffin was reluctantly lowered, and then of the harsh grating sounds of the falling cloths as the grave was filled;—they might dismally talk of the darkness and dreariness of the spot over which the fierce winds of winter had been howling through all the long months since there was buried "our dead out of our sight." Such answers—the only ones authorized by the observation of human eyes—might be listened to until we should feel the very pall of death gathering so thickly about our own spirits that every pulsation of joy would expire within us, and we should be left to tread on, sorrowing and despairing, our weary way in existence.

Shall we consult the oracles of nature or invoke the teachings of science? Alas! our laboratories may exhibit to us the processes of disintegration, decomposition, and decay—of the destruction of the body, but not of the life of the spirit. Our observations may reveal to us glorious suns and countless systems of worlds—spectacles of overwhelming natural grandeur—but not the course of a single soul which has forsaken the mortal body.

Shall we turn to the schools of philosophy? Here we may collect eloquent sentences, but embodying only vague conjectures, indefinite guessings, imaginary and contradictory speculations, which constitute the best results of the most earnest investigations, conducted by the noblest masters of philosophy, and which make it apparent that there is a chance, a possibility—and, some have been bold enough to hope, a probability, that existence spiritual may continue when the body dies.

But answers such as these are, to a mind awakened to inquiry, and excited to anxiety upon the subject, only tecturing. Is there then no true source of light—no clear fountain of knowledge? Must we let our friends depart from us into an utterly

unknown world of gloom, and must we soon follow them tremblingly groping our way through the terrible valley of death without one ray of light? No: we may turn to the Volume of Inspiration—God has in great mercy spoken, "*Life and Immortality are brought to light through the Gospel.*" Here we may find the sure word of testimony which the heart craves, when, as now, we mourn the absence of those who will return to us no more forever. I am profoundly convinced that we can think rightly and feel properly about those who are absent from the body only as we submit to the teachings of God, I would therefore, in attempting the discharge of the duty which this evening devolves upon me, feel secure for my own mind, and for the mind of every one who listens to me, the guidance of needed Divine Wisdom. Hence the selection of the already quoted passage as furnishing a suitable text for a discourse upon the life and character of the ever to be honored CHARLES F. ALLISON of precious memory.

Our text leads us to notice

I. The present position of some who were once as we are now. "They inherit the promises"—*they are in possession of the things which God promised.* In order that we may obtain as clear and definite a view as possible of this position let us employ a moment or two in noticing the inspired record of a few of these promises. According to that made by St. Matthew some "shall inherit everlasting life—a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, life eternal;" according to St. John, Christ declared to his disciples, "*In my Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so I should have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also,*" and that he willed that "*those who had been given unto Him should be with Him where He is that they may behold His glory.*" From the Acts of the Apostles we learn that the Proto-Christian martyr "*Being full of the Holy Ghost, and having looked up steadfastly into Heaven and seen the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*" when he was stoned, called upon God, saying, "*Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*" In the Epistle to the Romans we are told "*God will render to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor, and immortality, eternal life;*" and that "*the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together;*" and the writer, in view of this glorious prospect, exclaims "*I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" The Apostles, under Divine inspiration, wrote of an "*incorruptible crown*"—"A far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory"—of "*life everlasting*"—of being "*absent from the body and present with the Lord*"—of "*departing and being with Christ, which is far better*"—of "*the inheritance of the saints in light*"—of "*the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*"—of "*a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*"—of "*the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*"—of "*the salvation which is by Christ Jesus with eternal glory*"—of "*eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world was*"—of a place "*within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus*"—of "*coming unto Mount Zion and into the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprin-*