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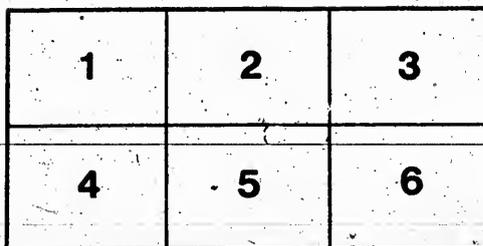
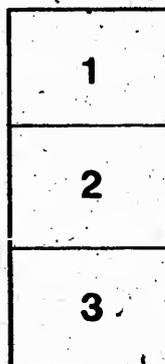
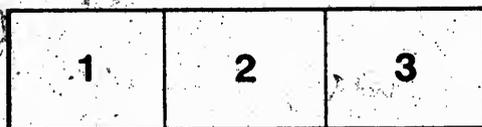
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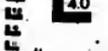
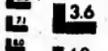
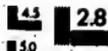
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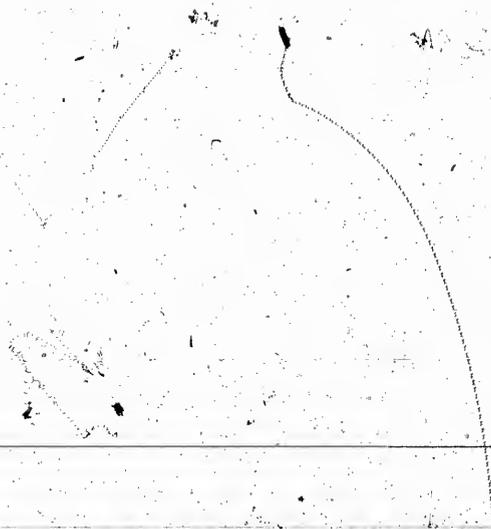
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THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL,

AT

PORT-DE-GRAVE and BAY ROBERT'S

FEBRUARY 15TH AND 22ND 1835

ON THE DEATH OF

MR. GEORGE VEY,

FORMERLY OF PORT-DE-GRAVE,

BY

GEORGE ELLIDGE.

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of Heaven."
Young's Night Thoughts.

CARBONAR, NEWFOUNDLAND :

PRINTED BY J. T. BURTON.

1835.



A SERMON &c.

2ND TIMOTHY 4TH CAP. 7TH & 8TH VS.

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid
up for me a crown of righteousness, which the
Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that
day: and not to me only, but unto all them also
that love his appearing.*

THIS declaration was made by the Apostle Paul, formerly called Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a young man of good natural parts, which were greatly improved by the education he received under Gamaliel a learned Jewish Doctor, but his education being Jewish, he naturally imbibed those prejudices against the religion of Christ which were common in his day; and as he thought he did God service by opposing it, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, haling men and women, and casting them into prison; and still breathing out threatening and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, he obtained authority to bring those of other cities bound unto Jerusalem; but he was arrested in the midst of his persecuting career, while near to Damascus; a light more glorious than the light of the sun shone round about him; and he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He enquired, who art thou Lord? The Lord answered, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; plainly intimating, that what

was done to his despised followers on earth, he considered as being done to himself though in heaven.

Saul was filled with trembling and astonishment; seeing he had been fighting against God; and for three days he neither eat nor drank, so great was the anguish of his mind. But it pleased God who comforts the distressed, to comfort him; he was encouraged to wash away his sins, while he called upon the name of the Lord; and having received consolation; he preached Jesus, and the doctrines of the Christian religion, and continued his course of unwearied and unparalleled labours and sufferings for upwards of thirty years. When he wrote this second epistle to Timothy, his son in the faith, according to those who write on Church history, he was for the second time imprisoned at Rome, and as some think, under the sentence of death; but, he, nothing terrified by his adversaries, exultingly and triumphantly exclaimed, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also, that love his appearing. In speaking from which words we shall, trusting on the promised aids of the holy spirit:

I.--First, Notice the reward of the Christian.

The first remark we make on it is, that the Christian's reward is in reversion; "There is laid up for me a crown;" it is laid up in Heaven, in the safe keeping of Almighty God; where moths and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal. Hence, the grateful exclamation of the Apostle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptable, and undefiled and that fadeth not

away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."— While in this life, the Christian may be robbed of his property; deprived of his liberty and good name, and lose his life; but, his enemies cannot take away his crown; and as the reward of the Christian is in Heaven, having fixed his eye upon that recompense of reward, he faints not; but, continues patient in well-doing; and if the Almighty is pleased of his goodness to make the way of duty, the way of pleasantness, he regards his spiritual enjoyments, not as the reward, but as the earnest of his purchased possession; as the fore-taste of that happiness the Saints enjoy in Glory; and as he commenced a life of piety to obtain Heaven, he will not be turned aside from the holy commandment given unto him by reason of the offences and troubles of the way, while there is any hope of obtaining it; as he began his course not to please men, but God, so neither will he turn back, because they are offended.

Secondly,—The reward of the Christian will not be fully enjoyed till the day of judgment. That "the souls of the faithful on their deliverance from the burden of the flesh are with God, in a state of joy and felicity;" as the Church of England well expresses it, is the doctrine of holy Scripture, for such, on being absent from the body, are present with the Lord, and the Apostle had a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better. That the wicked on their removal from this world, are so far miserable as to have a sense of their awful destiny impressed on them, we may readily believe; nay, one is represented as lifting up his eyes in torment; but, they are not so miserable as they will be after the day of judgment; of this, the fallen angels appear to be fully conscious, for one of them knowing the Saviour who he was, and looking forward to the day of judgment, to which they are reserved in chains of darkness, asks, art thou come to torment us before the time?

And that the righteous are not as happy as they will be in *that day*--*that day for which all other days were made*; is plain from such Scriptures as represent that to be the time of the Church's espousals, and of her complete redemption. In that day the characters of the Saints, will be vindicated from those foul and false aspersions, which a slanderous and mistaking world had cast upon them. In that day, the scattered tribes of the spiritual Israel, of every age and nation, will be brought home to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the great King, and constitute one general assembly, the Church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven. In that day, the bodies of the Saints being raised from the dead, and made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ, will be re-united to their former companions, and formally welcomed into Heaven, in the presence of assembled worlds; and there, they will enjoy that fullest consummation and blessedness, of which their glorified natures will be susceptible; and basking in the beams of the Divine effulgence, shall find themselves lost in adoring wonder, holy love, and fervent praise.

Thirdly,---It is a gift. The greatest archangel is indebted to God for his being, his holiness, his happiness and his glory; and the heavenly choir may well sing:--"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise O Lord, for thou hast wrought all our works in us;" and how much more shall they that dwell in houses of clay, and are surrounded with a thousand infirmities, refrain from laying claim to merit. If indeed any had had reason to glory before God, the Apostle Paul was such an individual, who was in labours more abundant than the rest of the Apostles; but no, he laid his glorying at the Saviour's feet, and constantly testified; "*by the grace of God I am what I am,*" and when about to receive his reward, he looks upon it as the reward of grace, to be received at the hands of a bountiful God.

Fourthly,—It is a *righteous* reward. It is designated a *Crown of Righteousness*. There are three reasons on account of which it may be so called; first, as it is the reward of righteousness; thus in the Grecian games to which there is an evident allusion in the text, as well as in other parts of the New Testament; the reward of a successful combatant would have been called the crown of a combatant; and of a successful courser, the crown of a courser. Secondly, it may be called a crown of righteousness as consisting of an increase of righteousness. God is sometimes pleased to punish one sin by another, as he did the Gentiles whom he gave over to a reprobate mind, because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; and it is reasonable to believe, that he will make his faithful servants partakers of a higher degree of that righteousness which is intimately connected with happiness. Thirdly; it may be called a crown of righteousness, as being given in righteousness, and on righteous grounds; if some parents, foolishly fond, prefer one child above the rest, concentrate their affections in him, and heap all their favours upon him to the exclusion of the others, we are not to suppose the Father of all acts so capriciously. As a Benefactor, he does, indeed, what he will with his own, giving five talents to one, and to another two; but as a Judge, he is no respecter of persons, but proceeds in righteousness to reward each according to his work. Saint Paul could not presume on getting to Heaven, merely because he was a chosen vessel; but brought under his body, and kept it in subjection, lest by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should become a cast away; and now on the prospect of being introduced into the presence of the righteous judge, he rejoices as being entitled to a reward from him who is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.

Fifthly,—It is a crown. A crown denotes the approbation of the giver, victory, honour, and dominion

The plaudits of Heaven must fall with pleasing accents on the ears of the faithful. Are we not authorised to believe that the worthy judge himself will say to such a one, I saw thee in yonder world when surrounded by its snares ; I beheld thee opposed by satan and enticed to sin ; and in the hour and power of darkness, thou hadst to maintain a sore conflict ; but, thou didst stand firm, according to thy baptismal engagement ; thou hast well done ; thou hast acted the part of a faithful servant ; and of a good soldier ; thou hast obtained the victory ; I remember thy work of faith, and labour of love ; come up hither ; enter into the mansions of the Blessed ; and wear this crown of unfading glory as a token of the approbation with which I have viewed thy humble, loving, obedient, patient, zealous, and persevering conduct while in a state of trial.—Angels catch the approving sound, and hail with fraternal and holy delight one who receives the honour that cometh of God.

As a crown is a token of dominion, so the Saints are represented as kings and priests unto God. The faithful and true witness hath said, to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne ; and it is a faithful saying, if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him ; nor is it right to conceive that the crown of the Christian is a mere sign of empty honour, unconnected with that, of which it is a pledge ; nor shall we find it difficult to believe ; that as the Holy Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of Salvation, and some of them have been designated Princes of certain districts of this world, Daniel 10, 13 & 12, 1. so the righteous may be called to reign and exert a holy influence over other worlds that have been, or shall be called into existence ; for though we are not acquainted with the inhabitants of any other sphere, it is not unreasonable that he who made this world in six days, has made many worlds besides it, to the glory of him, who worketh all things

according to the council of his own will. Having thus noticed the reward of the Christian; we are

II. Secondly, to point out the persons, to whom it will be given; they are

First, such as *love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*. That he will appear the second time to those who look for him, without sin unto salvation; is a most consolatory truth of our holy religion; but his second appearing will not be like the first. At his first coming, he appeared as the babe at Bethlehem, born in a stable, and cradled in a manger; at his second coming he will appear as the Almighty's Fellow; as the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father; at his first coming, he was despised and rejected of men; at his second coming he shall be admired in all those that believe: at his first coming he was attended by a few poor fishermen, characterized as unlearned and ignorant men; at his second coming he will appear, and all the holy angels with him. At his first coming there was no form nor comeliness in him that we should desire him; at his second he shall appear in his own glory, and in the glory of the Father—in all his regal pomp, and majesty; at his first coming, he stood arraigned at Pilate's bar, and was condemned as a malefactor; at his second coming, he shall appear on the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him, that each may receive his destiny at his hands.

But all men do not desire his appearing; those who have done wickedly and continue impenitent, are afraid of his righteous judgements; and were he to appear, would call upon the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from his wrath; but they who love and fear him, are in the morning of the resurrection, to be waked from their long sleep, and to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; for he shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God: and coming that he may be glorified in his saints: they

desire his appearing ; and when the Saviour saith behold, I come quickly, the Church answers Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus : and such shall receive the reward of the inheritance.

2nd.—It is to be given to the faithful. “ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. This leads us to notice, the threefold representation of the faithfulness of the Apostle ; he had fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith.

First, he had fought a good fight. There is only one way for the Pastor and the flock ; none will get to heaven because they have held high or honourable stations in the Church : no, it is required of all, that they act the part of good soldiers, and maintain a successful warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. This, the Apostle had done. Though on being called into the fellowship of the saints, he had to sacrifice ease, honour, and pleasing worldly prospects ; and to encounter toil and pain, poverty, disgrace, and want ; he reasoned not with flesh and blood, but hastened to unfurl the banner of the cross, and to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and being crucified to the world, keeping his body under, and resisting the devil, stedfast in the faith, he maintained a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, and was unmoved by the prospect of bonds, imprisonment, and death itself. Here my friends is a character worthy of your imitation. But alas ! though you have been baptized in the Name of Christ, and the Church has expressed a hope that as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, you would fight faithfully under his banner ;—you have proved cowards ; you have turned your backs on the enemy, you have yielded to the flesh, been ensnared by the world, and led captive by the devil at his will. May the time passed in which you have acted foolishly more than suffice ; acknowledge your rebellion before God, fall prostrate at the Saviour’s feet, crave his pardoning mercy, gird you with strength to the battle, take to yourselves the whole armour of God, go forth

in the power of his might, trusting, not in yourselves, but in the living God; hasten to the conflict, and the victory shall be yours. Secondly, he had finished his course; his course of Christian and ministerial duties. He had run the way of the divine commandments, which is exceeding broad, comprehending whatsoever duties we owe to God; whatsoever duties we owe to our neighbours; whatsoever duties we owe to ourselves: and these the Apostle had faithfully discharged. Some there are, who begin well, who begin in the spirit, but end in the flesh; they are turned aside by reason of the difficulties of the way: but he was stedfast, unmoved, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that he might at the last, lay hold on the hope set before him. Thirdly, he had kept the faith. He had kept it first as a Christian. Saving faith, for all faith is not saving, in one of the homilies of the Church of England is defined to be "a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God." It is called in Scripture "faith in Christ," "faith in his blood;" and such faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul had; hence he says I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. This faith he maintained; and it can be maintained only by a humble, holy, walk with God. We cannot hold sin in one hand, and faith in the other; as when Samson yielded to the entreaties of his wife and fell into the hands of the Philistines; his strength departed from him, and he became as other men; so if we yield to the temptations of the devil, and fall into sin, our faith will depart from us; the light of Heaven will be obscured; and our sins will separate between God and us. An individual of whom we have heard, being in dying circumstances, was repeating the declaration of the Apostle, I have fought

a good fight, I have finished my course, I have—but, at the third member of the sentence, he was stopped short; remembering that since he first obtained a sense of pardon, he had once fallen from grace, and so lost his faith. But the Apostle, walked in the light, he maintained the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end, and his path shone more and more unto the perfect day.

Secondly,—He kept the faith as a Minister of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God; for as by faith in some parts of Scripture we are to understand the grace of faith, so, in others we are to understand the doctrines of faith,—the creed,—those truths to which the mind of the Christian assents on the evidence of Divine testimony. Thus it is said he preached *the faith*, meaning the doctrines which once he destroyed; and, it is said *there is one faith*, that is one chain of connected truth; and the first Christians had to “contend earnestly for *the faith*”—the doctrines once delivered to the Saints. And Paul, viewing the importance of a correct faith, free from false doctrine and superstition, to the Church of God, which is the pillar and ground of truth, and in its bearings on the spiritual and eternal interests of men; exhorted Timothy to “hold fast the form of sound words, which he had received of him in faith, and love which are in Christ Jesus:” and again, “the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” And what he exhorted Timothy to do, he rejoiced that he had done himself, that he had kept the faith uncorrupt and in this he was an example to all Christian Ministers.

This subject, presents to our view, First, A conflict, in which it is impossible for us to remain neutral. We must range ourselves either on the side of God, and goodness, or on the side of sin and Satan. And, it cannot be deemed improper for me to enquire on

which side do you stand, not by profession, but by practice; not by words, but by deeds, for by your fruits you are to be known. If you obey sin, you are the servants of sin; and on the side of Satan. And can it be supposed that any are so unwise and so regardless of their own interests as to be waging war against Him who made them, against Him who has fed and clothed them all their life long, against the Bountiful Doner of all they enjoy? Against Him who has designed them to be happy for ever; and sent his Son to retrieve them from the bitter pains of eternal death? Oh! think on the termination of a course of wickedness, and the fruits of rebellion against Him who is the avenger of evil doers.

Secondly,—It lays before us an exemplification of practical christianity. And let it be remembered that though we are saved by faith, it is a faith which works by love; for faith without works is dead, and cannot save us; and that system which would teach us to expect the crown without fighting for it, or that we shall obtain the prize without running for it; only teaches us to build our house upon the sand, that it may be washed away by the coming storm.

Thirdly,—It is full of encouragement. The timid Christian looking to his own weakness, his dangers and liability to fall, to the number, subtilty and power of his adversaries, fears that one day he shall fall by the hand of the enemy. But we are directed to *lift up the hands that hang down, to confirm the feeble knees, and to say to them of fearful hearts, Be strong.* And how can we do this more effectually than by presenting to their view one,—who, though he had to wrestle against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places, had surmounted every difficulty, weathered every storm, successfully resisted every assault, and gained the victory, —just about to enter the celestial city, that in the presence of Angels and happy spirits he may enjoy

his holy triumph! You fight my brethren, in the same cause, and under the same Captain, hope and be undismayed; more are they that are for you, than they that are against you, your enemies shall flee before you, conquest shall crown your strife, and as you trample the last enemy under your feet, you shall shout victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb.

This subject presents us with an opportunity of saying to the worldly and the wise; come, see a Christian die, he dies not as the fool dieth, asleep in his sins, to awake in Hell; he dies not as the philosopher, who folds his arms while he is carried in his little bark on the rapid stream of time to the utmost verge of life's short voyage, and sinks into the abyss beneath. No, he has committed the care and guidance of his soul to the Captain of his salvation and by him he is safely conducted through the dreary valley; and as the world recedes from his view, the music of Heaven falls upon his ears, and the visions of eternity open before him.

In reverting to the character of the late Mr. GEORGE VEY, whose removal from the troubles of this life, as we trust, to a happier state; we are called to improve; it is pleasing to be able to trace any correspondence to that of Saint Paul, however humble, and far below the elevation of that of an Apostle, it might be. To those who knew him in early life, no doubt his conduct presented too many proofs that as a fallen son of fallen Adam he was possessed of a sinful nature. Under a sermon preached by the late Mr. STRETTON about the year 1791, he was convinced of sin; and led to turn to God: and from that period till his death, a period of upwards of forty years, you know with what firmness, consistency, and zeal, he maintained the profession of a holy and religious life; some of you from your own acquaintance with him, and observation of the good work which it pleased God through his instrumentality to effect, the fruits of which, in some remain

until this day; but others in whom they were manifest are fallen asleep. He, like Saint Paul finished his course of duty, and like him he zealously fought under the banner of Christ. Some there are who would go quietly and unobserved to Heaven, without letting the world know that they are on the side of God and godliness; but can they expect to fight the Lord's battles while they remain in the enemy's camp? No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel; nor doth the Almighty light up the lamp of piety in the heart of any man that it may be hidden from the view of mortals; but that he may let his light so shine before men that they may see his good works and glorify his Father who is in Heaven. And this Brother VEX did, endeavouring by a holy and happy life, by exhortation, and a faithful and affectionate enforcement of the truth, to persuade men to be partakers of like precious faith. And, as like a Christian he lived, so, like a Christian he died. Every triumph of the Cross over the fear of death, is to be regarded with joy and thankfulness; but the happy death which is connected with a death-bed repentance, rather than a holy life, is liable to exception. And a good and wise man would almost infinitely prefer dying what may emphatically be designated *the death of the righteous*. When we have the opportunity of bringing before you the particulars of such a death, we do it with unmingled pleasure.

The following particulars are furnished by his son, Mr. CHRISTOPHER VEX, whom you have frequently heard in this place.

"As my dear Father had for a length of time lived in the almost daily expectation of his change, and even longed to depart that he might be with Christ; it is not surprising that when death approached it was not as the king of terrors, but as a welcome messenger. He received it as his deliverer from a body of suffering and pain, and his introducer to everlasting life.

"It was not until New Year's day that we had any apprehension that his end was so near; though, for several days previous he had been gradually sinking; on that day, with my assistance, he was enabled to sit up for a short time; and it was evident from the little he said, as well as the expression of his feelings while I was reading, that he was ripening for glory. When I again assisted him to his bed, he said with some degree of anxiety, "Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming?" I answered, Father they will come, yes, he said, with emphasis, "and they'll soon be here." The next day he seem'd to manifest still greater anxiety, so that I thought it well to check it, Father I said, you must not be too anxious, your time is in the Lord's hand. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come," said Job, and you must do the same, wait the Lord's pleasure. He said, "I do my Child, I do, I have committed all to the Lord, His blessed will be done. After this, he rapidly declined, and as his body sunk, his speech failed, so that for the last two or three days of his life, we could understand but little of what he endeavoured to say, but that little, was truly satisfactory.— Several times he said to my Mother, "I want to speak my experience, but I cannot." In his restless slumbers, as well as when awake, his thoughts were in eternity, and his theme was religion. At one time he would be preaching Christ, exhorting sinners to come to him, telling of his willingness to save them; then he would praise the Lord, distinctly naming Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saying "Abba Father, yes, we will call him Abba Father." At another time, he would be praying for his children, that they might be a seed to call God blessed, when he should be mouldering in the dust. After one of these slumbers, my Mother asked him "if he had any fears of death, "Oh no," he said, "death has lost its sting." On the Sunday following, he was taken up for the last time, as soon as

he had recovered from the fatigue it occasioned he said to me, "my child I am happy." My Mother having wiped his face, he said to her with an expression of grateful feeling, "the Lord will reward you my dear, for all your kindness and the trouble you have taken with me." My Mother saying some thing about getting to Heaven, he said, "it is a plain path, yes, I find it is." On his being taken again to bed, he began to praise the Lord, saying "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name, bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." I said, Father the Lord is gently taking down the earthly tabernacle. He said "yes, blessed be his name." What a mercy that you have not religion to seek now, "O yes," as you are about to tread the gloomy valley, do you fear any evil? "No." He was making an effort to speak and I caught the words "*good fight*." I repeated the whole of that passage. "yes" he said, and sunk composedly on the pillow. On Monday morning he thought he was going off, and said to Mother, "give my love to the dear children; tell them all is well, and to meet me in Heaven." Towards midnight as we were watching by him, with difficulty we understood that he called for prayer, I went to prayer with him, and he responded heartily to all the petitions.-- On Tuesday morning about nine o'clock, I prayed with him again, he appeared to join heartily with me; audibly saying Amen, Amen. After prayer, I asked him if he felt his soul sweetly stayed on God, he said "yes," No doubts or fears? "No," you have the port in view? "Yes, ble." Here his voice failed him, he meant "blessed be God." These I believe were the last words he articulated. A few hours before he died, my Mother said to him, "as you cannot speak, if you still are happy, lift up your hand; he immediately raised it; and thus he continued evidently in perfect sensibility, until forty minutes past one o'clock, when the weary wheels of life stood still, and

the liberated spirit took its flight to the mansions of bliss."

To the relations of the deceased, such a testimony must be highly satisfactory; and it is pleasing to add, that we have good reason to hope that his example will live in their memories, and be copied in their lives.

"I the good fight have fought,
O when shall I declare?
The victory by my Saviour got,
I long with Paul to share.

O may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past;
And, dying, find my latest foe
Under my feet at last!

This blessed word be mine
Just as the port is gain'd,
"Kept by the power of grace divine
"I have the faith maintained."

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