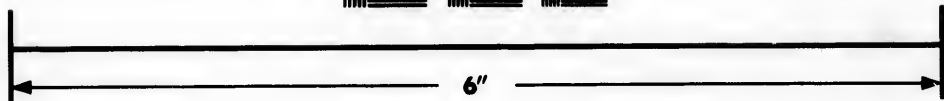
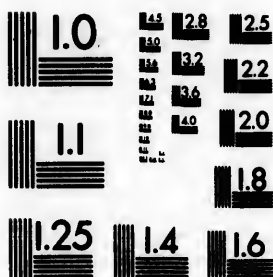


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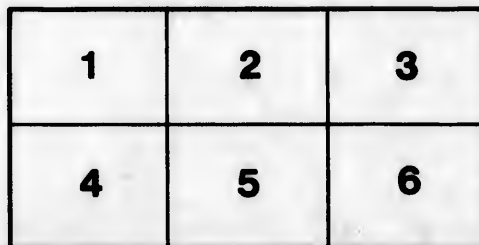
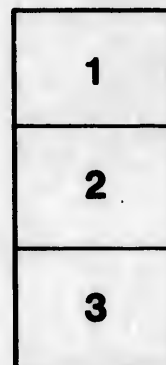
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# TRIBUTE OF RESPECT

To the Memory of a Good Man.

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## A SERMON,

PREACHED IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MONTREAL,

On the occasion of the Death of

HUGH BRODIE, ESQ.,

(LATE ONE OF THE ELDERS OF THAT CHURCH)

BY

ALEXANDER MATHIESON, D. D.

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MONTREAL :

PRINTED BY J. STARKE & CO.

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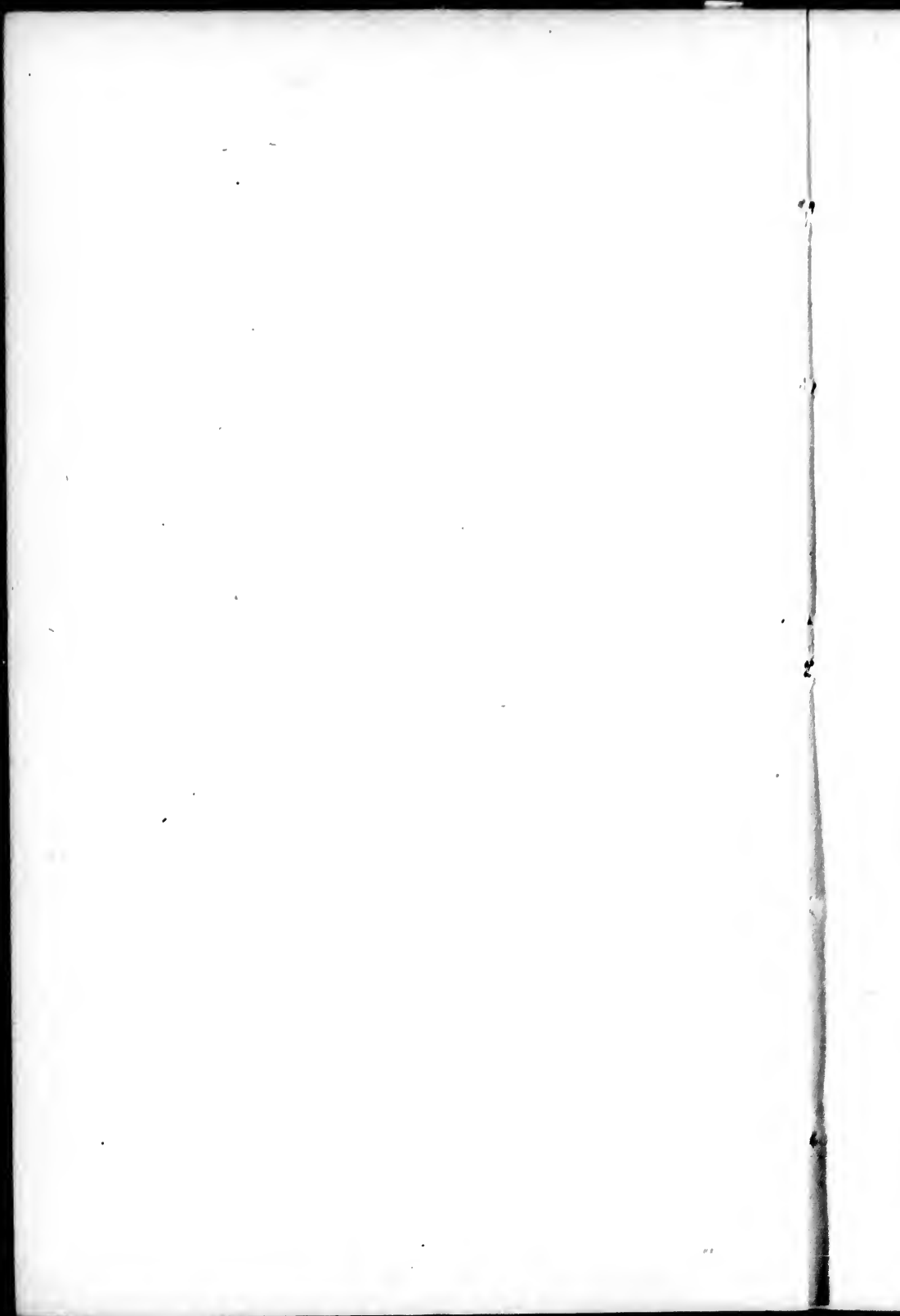
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1852.



TO  
THE MOURNING FAMILY

*Of the Lamented Dead,*

AND TO

THE ELDERS OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MONTREAL,

*This Discourse*

(PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,)

IS, WITH AFFECTIONATE SYMPATHY, RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED,

BY THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR.

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# SERMON.

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Acts, 11. 24.—“For he was a good man.”

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THIS is the testimony, borne to the character of Barnabas, by divine inspiration. The historical notices of his life that have come down to us, are in admirable keeping with the amiable and philanthropic dispositions ascribed to him in the text. He was a Jew, of the tribe of Levi—born in the Island of Cyprus, and “brought up at the feet” of the shrewd and cautious Gamaliel. Paul was his fellow disciple. Probably it was while they studied under this learned Rabbi, that the ardent friendship was contracted, which distinguished the future lives of these illustrious men. Barnabas was some years older than Paul, and had evidently caught more of the conciliatory spirit of his tolerant Master, than his intrepid and enthusiastic associate; for we find Paul with furious zeal taking a prominent part in the martyrdom of Stephen, who, it is believed by some, was also a disciple of Gamaliel. Probably, it was in the school of this eminent Doctor of the Law, that the seeds of Christian knowledge were sown in the hearts of these young men, which, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, were afterwards

ripened into the most delicious fruits. Gamaliel himself, has been supposed to have had a secret leaning to the Christian faith; but there is little evidence for this opinion, further than a presumption founded on his calm and temperate address to the Jewish council, when they were proceeding to violent measures, in order to silence the Apostles. From the peculiar constitution of his mind, we may, however, reasonably suppose, that in his prelections, he would state with much fairness and candour, those points in the law, on which the Jews and Christians were at issue, and bring forward all the weight and authority of Rabinnical lore to confute the new Sect. We can easily imagine, that these young men, after their daily lessons were done, would frequently review the all-engrossing questions, thus brought under their notice, and, assuming different sides in debate, would discuss them with all the fiery zeal of undisciplined youth. We can also imagine how, from such discussions, the light of divine truth would slowly and gradually break in upon the minds of the generous Barnabas, and enlightened Stephen,—while all the Jewish prejudices of the ardent and energetic Paul would be more and more confirmed. From the peculiar constitution of their minds, they would patiently and prayerfully watch the progress of the new religion, and imbibe more and more of its gentle and affectionate spirit,—while the zealous, intrepid and inflexible Paul would have all his pharasaic notions stirred up from the monotonous depths of a mere ritualism, and

converted into active, persecuting principles. The sphere of his knowledge was, no doubt, widening. The truths with which he had daily to grapple, were striking their roots firmer and deeper in his mind. He would not permit himself to think so—nor would he surrender himself to the impressions they were fitted to make. For a time he successfully resisted them—not, as we may well conceive, without many a struggle in his truth loving mind. But the religion of his country was sacred in his eyes; and they who were opposed to it, he looked upon as the enemies both of God and man; and he set himself to resist them with all the fury of a zealot. What he could not accomplish by argument, he determined to effect by persecution. Thinking he was doing God a service, he followed the scattered Christians into the “strange cities,” whither they had fled for safety, that he might imprison them and put them to death. But he was suddenly arrested in his mad career. The knowledge of Christian doctrine which he had acquired in many a hard conflict of argument, and in many a painful mental struggle—but was overlaid by strong Jewish prejudices—was at length to be drawn prominently forth and consecrated to the service of God. A light from heaven—brighter than the noon-day sun—suddenly burst upon him, revealing to him Jesus, who commissioned him to go forth, to preach the faith he had formerly denounced as an execrable heresy. This outward manifestation of the divine glory was accompanied with an inward consciousness that the truths he

had so long reviled were the "light and righteousness of God."

Upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, the Saints were scattered abroad. Many of them travelled northwards, and came into Phœnicea,\* and Antioch,† and Cyprus.‡ They carried with them their love for Jesus, and their zeal for his gospel; and thus the seeds of divine truth were early scattered among the heathen. They preached Jesus unto the Greeks, unmixed with the observances of the Mosaic law; and thus unimpeded by Jewish prejudices, many gave the gospel a hearty reception, and were converted to the Christian faith. Says the Sacred Historian, "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."

When the tidings of this large accession to the Church was brought to the Apostles and believers in Jerusalem, it excited the deepest interest in the spiritual welfare of the converts; but it was not unmingled with a certain feeling of distrust, arising out of the freer developement of evangelical truth. An attachment to the ceremonial law, clung with amazing tenacity to the minds of the Jewish believers—and even lingered long in the minds of the Apostles themselves, notwithstanding their heaven taught views of the Spiritual nature of the

\* Phœnicea, the country north of Sidon, lying along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, on the Slopes of Lebanon. Some suppose, that Phœnicea, a sea port town in the Island of Crete, is here meant, but without good reason.

† Antioch, at that time the capital of the Roman Province of Syria. It is delightfully situated on the Orontes—was long the residence of the Syrian Kings, and afterwards the seat of the Roman Governors of Syria. It is distinguished as the place where the name "Christians" was first given to the followers of Jesus; and as the centre point from whence issued the light of Christianity among the Gentiles.

‡ Cyprus, an island lying at a little distance off the Syrian Coast.

Redeemer's kingdom. Accordingly, when they learned that the Gentile believers conformed in nothing to the Mosaic Law, they indulged a suspicion that all was not true, that they had heard, of the purity of their faith, and the ardour of their religious affections. Taking the subject into their serious consideration, they resolved to send Barnabas to Antioch to enquire into the state of the converts. The selection of Barnabas for such a mission was most judicious. He enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all the members of the Church in Jerusalem. He was, as we have already said, a native of Cyprus; and may have conversed with, and seen many of those "who had turned unto the Lord." He was, from the similarity of his early mental culture and habits, better fitted to enter into the peculiar feelings and views of these men, than one brought up with the selfish and narrow notions of a zealot. Besides all this, he was a man of the most amiable and gentle disposition—of fervent piety, and enlightened zeal. He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

On his arrival at Antioch, Barnabas rejoiced exceedingly, on finding not only that the Gospel had been preached in its simple purity, and with much success, but also, with the blessing of God, it had been accompanied with its genuine effects. Instead of attempting to persuade them—as some teachers afterwards did—that it was essential to salvation, to incorporate with the doctrines of the gospel certain observances of the Mosaic Law, he commended the simplicity of their worship; and,

with all the power of his persuasive eloquence, he exhorted them to cleave unto the Lord,—*e. i.* to rest entirely on him for salvation,—and resolutely and perseveringly to maintain the purity of their faith, without any admixture of Jewish ceremonies. This advice might seem strange, coming as it did from a Levitical Jew, and the delegate of the Church at Jerusalem. But the sacred Historian accounts for this peculiarity in his teaching by his enlightened and liberal spirit. He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith;—*e. i.* he was a pure, spiritual minded man,—a man of great candor and moderation, combined with inflexible firmness in his adherence to the simple testimony of the Spirit of God, concerning the person and offices of Christ. And this testimony he had himself received immediately from the Eternal Fountain of light and truth. He was full of the Holy Ghost—*e. i.* he had a divine spiritual discernment of the truth, and a full and clear apprehension of the scheme of salvation,—“God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their trespasses and sins.” And he was full of faith,—*e. i.* he had a perfect confidence in the efficacy of this scheme, in its own inherent transforming power, and without any foreign admixture or addition whatsoever, to sanctify the sinner and to reconcile him to God.—He did not first try to make them proselytes to the Jewish faith, and then to convert them to Christianity. No; he went at once to the point; with a loving earnestness he directed them at once to the only remedy for sin. He testified to

the corruption of human nature, and to the universal need of redemption. He affectionately appealed to their own consciousness of these truths, and pointed to them the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. With a holy joy he had witnessed the elevating and sanctifying power of the grace of God. And he appeals to their own experience for its efficacy; and he exhorts them, with undeviating steps, to be followers of the Lord, and continue in the faith and practice, on which they had so recently and so hopefully entered.

A bright prospect was opened, at Antioch, to the view of Barnabas; and an important field of labor was presented, far more extensive than he could singly cultivate. Paul was labouring in the neighbouring District of Cilicia. Barnabas immediately went to Tarsus, the capital of the District, and Paul's native city, to procure his assistance. Having persuaded the great Apostle of the Gentiles to accompany him to Antioch, they laboured together with the most affectionate sympathy and holy zeal, for a whole year, and with much success. Afterwards, they proceeded in company, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the people of many nations. No jealous spirit of rivalry disturbed the intercourse of these good men. Glowing with zeal for the honor of God and the spiritual well-being of their fellow men, they went forth, bearing the torch of truth into a dark world, and animated with the generous resolution of expending their noblest energies, in bringing sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Without following the history of Barnabas to its close, or attempting to trace the various incidents in the active and beneficent life of this great and good man, that justify the ascription to him, of the noble and generous qualities implied in the words of the text, we will, for a little, consider what these qualities really are, that we may not misapply the terms, "he was a good man," in respect to any of our fellow men, and that, smitten with their beauty, we may earnestly endeavour to be possessed of these qualities ourselves.

It is, my friends! a very common way of describing the character of an individual—distinguished more for moral worth than brilliant intellectual qualities—to say of him that he is a good man. But it must be confessed, that there is often great indefiniteness of meaning attached to these words; and that they are applied to many, whose character bears no resemblance whatsoever to that of the man, whom the Spirit of God acknowledges to be good. Not to speak of that numerous class, whose conduct is upon the whole, blameless, whose dispositions are amiable, whose actions are generous and kind, but whose hearts are supremely set upon the world,—upon its pleasures—upon its honors and wealth, and not upon the things that concern their peace—who, indeed, have no concern for religion, further than a decent, and it may be a punctilious regard to its external forms—who are called good,—and why?—simply because their mental refinement, or indolent good nature, leads them to be affable and courteous unto all men—to be indulgent to their



follies, and by their silence to sanction their vices. But, however inappropriate the term "good man" may be in respect to any of this class, in whatever form their heartless complacency may appear, it is surely much more so, when applied to those, in whose character scarcely a single feature is visible, that has any pretention to goodness. Yet, how often do we hear the vain and frivolous, who have not a thought in their minds beyond the things which minister to their sensual pleasures, or which tend to gratify their vanity and self-conceit—called good, kind creatures, for no other reason than an incessant flow of gaiety, and a lively and agreeable wit,—that has more in it of the selfish than the benevolent—more of tact than natural sweetness of temper. How often do we hear the abominations of the licentious, or the low and disgusting practices of the dissipated, paliated and even excused by those who are compelled to execrate their vices, and mourn over the sad results of their folly. Instead of reproving with fearless honesty, the moral outrages of the intemperate, the impure, the unjust and malicious, they blunt the edge of rebuke, when they venture to administer it, by winding up their vague lamentations, with the equivocal laudation—"well, after all, they are good hearted—they are charitable,"—and perverting the truths of God;—"charity," they continue, "covers a multitude of sins." But in what does this good heartedness consist? Wherein is this charity displayed? In nothing, but in the inconsiderate folly, or heartless ostentation, with which they squander the

bounties of Providence in the gratification of their sensual and selfish passions. Their good heartedness has no connection whatsoever with the high and holy purposes, for which the Almighty called them into being. These, clearly sprung from a natural aversion to witness human misery, and not from a deep sympathy with the sufferer, and a benevolent desire to set him above the ills of poverty. When they gave, it was not to make the indigent to feel, that God was the Giver, and that they who ministered the gift, were merely the stewards of his bounty, but it was to get rid of clamorous importunity, or gratify an ignoble feeling of ostentatious vanity.

We fear, my Brethren! that the goodness for which many are applauded, and for which they take credit to themselves, is of the same spurious kind,—the mere result of refined selfishness. But the goodness which Christianity requires, flows out of the very depths of the soul, from a sacred regard to the will of God. “There is none good but one, that is God;” and no man, with propriety, can be called good, but he who is renewed in the spirit of his mind, and is a participator of the divine nature. Godliness, is the great element of goodness. The movements of the divine life in the soul, externally manifested, in unwearied acts of love and beneficence, constitute evangelical goodness. Man was good, when he came from the hands of his Maker,—pronounced to be good by the infallible judgment of Jehovah. God formed man in his own image, crowned him with glory, and blessed him with His

love. The image is now defaced. The crown has fallen from his head. The godlike faculties of his nature are perverted. Man is thoroughly depraved. The same unerring authority that pronounced him good, affirms, that now, "there is none good—no, not one." This is the condition in which men are universally placed. Yet all the original elements of humanity exist—mutilated and ruined, it is true, and buried beneath a superincumbent mass of ignorance and sin; but still, they are there, otherwise, man would be something else than man. What are these elements that are essential to humanity? What are these great moral and intellectual powers, that originally, in their beauty, harmony, and action, presented man a visible image of the invisible God, and fitted him for accomplishing the godlike purposes of his being? Are any of these nobler powers now visible, amidst the deep surrounding darkness? Are there any of them still traceable, in the broken and crumbling fragments of ruined humanity? If we see them not in man in his ruined condition, we may see them gloriously displayed in the Son of Man, as he moved upon the earth, in all the majesty and grace of the infinite God. If we cannot trace them amidst the fearful enormities of human guilt and crime, yet we may see them clearly revealed, in the character and work of the Son of God, who proceeded from the depths of eternity to transform us into his divine image. And we may perceive their rudimental outlines, deeply engraven in the lives of his followers, in every age, who have largely drunk of his Spirit. We see them exem-

plified in the fervent piety—in the expansive benevolence—in the warm disinterested zeal—in the integrity, and candour of Barnabas. The spirit and temper of his mind is beautifully exhibited, in the joy which he felt, on his arrival at Antioch, when he beheld multitudes, to whom the gospel had been preached, exhibiting in rich abundance, the genuine fruits of the Spirit,—“For he was a good man.”

The natural tendencies of the renewed heart, are, to conform ourselves to the will of God, and to carry forward in our respective spheres, the great designs of his Government,—in a word, to work the work of God. Barnabas was devoted to the service of God. The great end and aim of his life, was to do the will of God and glorify his name—He was a good man,—*e. i.* a pure, unpolluted man—a single minded man—a man who had one object in view, and followed it steadily and perseveringly. The quality ascribed to him in the text, as we have already remarked, had a special reference to the earnestness, with which he exhorted the infant Church at Antioch, to receive “the truth as it is in Jesus,” in its native simplicity and purity, and to reject every thing that would impair, or destroy its life-giving power. But the same earnest spirit displayed itself in every other part of his conduct—its peculiar developement, being determined by the circumstances which called it prominently forth.

By attending to its varied forms of goodness, we will be able to ascertain what the constituent

elements are, that enter into this idea of a good man. To some of these, as illustrated in the character of Barnabas, we will briefly advert, viewing them under the aspect of Nature, Culture, and Religion.

It is not my intention, however, to fetter our illustrations (by what I apprehend would be an un-availing effort,) viewing the elements of christian goodness, with a prismatic precision, under each of these aspects. The distinct lights, from these several points, necessarily, every where converge and commingle in the human character, beyond the power of separation, for any useful or practical end. It will be enough to our purpose, to preserve a general distinction, without attempting minutely to delineate the characteristics of each.

1.—The first, and chief element in the character of every good man, is sincere and genuine piety. All true goodness is determined by the motive of our actions—determined, as we have said, by their approximation to the will of God. Man was formed to love God—to carry forward the grand designs of His Government, and to find his happiness in doing so. But, when he fell from his original condition, he shunned communion with God—hated his service—and experienced all the wretchedness that necessarily results from being afar from God, the Fountain of Life and Light. But whenever he experiences the grace of Christ, the powers and faculties of his nature again receive a right direction. The films of ignorance and sin are removed from the intellectual eye, and he is made capable of perceiving the beauty of the Lord. He is attracted to

the contemplation of his character by the glorious excellence of his attributes ; and he turns to Him, as the supreme object of love and veneration. In the perpetual consciousness of the all-pervading presence of Jehovah, the good man lives in an atmosphere of love, and peace, and joy. Even the consciousness of his guilt, augments his happiness. He has been led intimately to feel, that sin is an evil of enormous magnitude, and to perceive the danger that impends over him as a transgressor of Divine law ; but he has also been led to have recourse to the only remedy—to fling himself with unreserved confidence on the mercy of “ God in Christ.” Feeling in himself from what misery he has been rescued, and to what heavenly hopes he has been called, he “ rejoices with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.” He loves God, who first loved him, and cherishes that affectionate gratitude, which is due unto Him, to whom he owes his deliverance. But his piety rests not within the circle of his own relation to God.—It enlarges his heart.—It expands his views.—Its inward fire manifests itself outwardly. It finds a befitting sphere for its operations in the vast family of mankind.—It makes him, what nothing else can make him, “ a good man,”—a man, in whose conduct and character is reflected, the visible image of the invisible God. Such a one was Barnabas, of whom our text affirms that he was a good man : he loved God. The original tendencies of his nature were restored, and his faculties directed by the Spirit of God to their proper object. He became in Christ a

new creature. Glowing with zeal for the honor of his God, he devoted himself to His service, and went forth with the holy and benevolent desire to bring all men within the elevating and sanctifying power of divine truth.

2.—Another essential element in the character of every good man, is sincere benevolence. This was pre-eminently a distinguishing element in the character of Barnabas. Above the narrow and illiberal spirit, which was cherished by many of the early Christians, who, not sufficiently enlightened, would limit the blessings of salvation to those only who submitted to the Mosaic Law; his benevolence took a wider range. It embraced, as brethren, all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and he loved them with a purity of affection, which diffused over every part of his conduct towards them, a winning sweetness. But his benevolence was not merely of a negative character; it was an influx of the Spirit of his Heavenly Master, who went about doing good.

Barnabas appears to have been a man of rank and fortune; but the honors of the world he abandoned, for the higher honor of becoming an Ambassador for Christ. His wealth he devoted to the service of Christ, preferring the riches of his grace to the treasures of the earth. "Having lands he sold them, and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet." "A good man," sayeth the Psalmist, "sheweth his favour and lendeth—he is gracious and full of compassion." Never is he so truly happy, as when he is dealing out his bread to the hungry—

relieving the distressed—and wiping away the tears from the eyes of the sorrowful;—and more especially is he blessed, when he is the instrument of bringing them bread from heaven to eat; or kindling in their hearts an earnest desire, for an inheritance in that land, where the tears of sorrow are wiped from every eye.

The benevolence of the good man is specially displayed to his family and friends. “A good man,” says the word of inspiration, “leaveth an inheritance to his children.” He regards it as a sacred duty, to make a liberal provision for his family, and those whom Providence hath committed to his care; and, actuated by this feeling, while he is “fervent in spirit, he is diligent in business,” and, “the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” But it is a richer inheritance than the possessions of this world, that he leaves to them. It is the sweet influences of holy remembrances—the transforming example of gentleness, of beneficence, of purity, and of love.—It is the prevailing power of prayer; and the never to be forgotten moments of religious instruction, when the lessons of piety fell from a parent’s lips, like the dews of Hermon on the hills of Sion; and God commanded his blessing, even life, forevermore.

But the benevolence of the good man, extends far beyond the narrow bounds of the domestic circle. It is enlarged as well as generous. It comprehends in its embrace, the men of every nation and country. The forlorn outcast, whom the world pities not,—the wretched profligate, who seems to have



lost every trace of humanity but the form—the malignant, spiteful being, who calumniates the purest actions of his benefactor, and requites his generosity with ingratitude—not one of them all, is beyond the sphere of his beneficence. They are of the race, whom Christ came into the world to redeem. They are of those, whom he would have to come to the knowledge of the truth, that they may be saved.—They are of those, whom he hath commanded us to love with an affection akin to his own. “I say unto you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.” “And whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.” However obdurate they may be, or insensible to his kindness, the Good Man will not cast them off, nor cease to strive to promote their temporal prosperity, and spiritual improvement, until their everlasting doom is sealed, and the “blood of sprinkling,” all-gracious, and all-powerful as it is, in their behalf, pleads for mercy no more.

3.—Another element in the Good Man’s character, is sweetness of temper,—that compassionate, mild, humble, earnest yet unobtrusive solicitude for the welfare of others, which is not discouraged by difficulty, nor repressed by opposition,—that tenderness, which makes due allowance for human imperfection—that meekness, which resents not injuries,—that enduring affection, which is ever merciful and forgiving.—In a word, he is distinguished for the wisdom that cometh from above, which is pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be

entreated and full of good works. This feature in the Good Man's character, is not distinct, and different from the one we have last considered. It is merely the form, in which his benevolence is displayed,—the holy and beautiful garb, in which it is arrayed. There may be much benevolence in the severe demeanour, and harsh censures of the cold tempered, and unfeeling zealot, but there is no goodness,—there is nothing fitted to win the heart, and change the conduct. Vehement indignation, and unhal- lowed bitterness, even when they have in view the reformation of the sinner, will fail in effecting a moral change. Instead of attracting the affections, they repel them. Instead of softening and subdu- ing the heart, they harden it. But the sweetness, and gentleness of pure Christian philanthropy, melts the hardest, and wins the most obstinate heart. Even when it comes forth to reprove and condemn, it secures respect. It is the soft, mild, loving spirit of Jesus, (and although inferior in intensity,) pre- sented in the same engaging form, which was dis- played in all his actions, and which has been thus beautifully delineated, by the pen of one of His Apostles, who had deeply imbibed his Spirit: “Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseem- ly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoic- eth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

But, Brethren! this gentleness of temper, is widely removed from that indolent softness, and pusillani-

mity, which shuns the path of duty, lest its own tranquility may be disturbed. Christian goodness, is as firm, and decided, as it is gentle,—it seeks repose only in the consciousness of doing the will of God. Regardless alike of the praises, or censures of mankind, the Good Man rebukes, admonishes, or condemns, with honest intrepidity, but the fullness and disinterestedness of his affection, imparts a winning sweetness to the harshest tones of rebuke, while his faithfulness, conciliates the esteem of those, whose vices he reproves.

4.—Another element in the character of the truly Good Man, is a calm and discriminating judgment. This quality, as you may perceive, my Brethren! is also a modification of Christian benevolence. It is that quality which distinguishes it from the inconsiderate profuseness, of the thoughtless spendthrift, and from the benefactions that are extorted by clamorous importunity.—A good man, “sheweth favour and lendeth,—he will guide his affairs with discretion.” He bestows unremitted attention, and observes perfect order in the management of his business. He is strictly just in all his transactions. There is an honest straight forwardness in his social intercourse, that secures for him the confidence of all men. By the observance of these virtues, “he obtaineth favour from the Lord.” His goods increase, and his heart expands. He delights to help forward the industrious poor, by aiding them in their struggle for an honest independence. “He sheweth favor and lendeth,” but his benefactions, are the fruits of calm and thoughtful delibe-

ration. He considers well, where, and how, and to whom he shall give. He seeks to promote the highest and purest happiness, which the means at his disposal can produce. While his discretion, enables him to scatter his favours far more extensively, than if he bestowed them with thoughtless generosity; it makes the fountain from whence they flow, inexhaustible,—perennial as well as refreshing.

5.—There are several other qualities, to which I might direct your attention, as constituent elements in the character of a good man; but the last I shall notice, is the peace and tranquility he enjoys in the prospect of eternity. The Good Man, like all others, has his disquietudes. The ills of life are the means by which his piety, his benevolence, and prudence are tried, strengthened, and confirmed; and from these, his gracious Father exempts him not. But it is in the day of trouble, and in the furnace of affliction, that his goodness shines with the most brilliant lustre. He has been accustomed to regard every thing in this world, in connection with the eternal destinies of mankind, and he looks forward with ardent hope, to the consummation of his labours and his sufferings. Knowing that all things are made subservient, to the perfecting of God's work in his soul, he bears his sufferings meekly, and waits patiently for his Deliverer. When Death approaches, he welcomes him with joy, as the bearer of good tidings from his heavenly Father. He is prepared to obey the mandate—"arise, depart, this is not your rest." He hears in it, the voice

of his Father calling him Home. He has a desire to remain, and yet he longs to go. He has nothing to detain him. His work is done. He has fought the good fight; he has kept the faith; he has finished his course. He quits the field of conflict for the triumphs of the conqueror—for an immortal crown and kingdom, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to him, and give unto all who love his appearing. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

Such, Brethren! are the rudimental elements, that essentially enter into the character of every truly good man,—a character always interesting—always desirable,—a character which we would earnestly exhort you, to strive to make your own. But, remember, these qualities do not spring up spontaneously, and vigorously in the human heart. The soil is too barren, the climate is too cold, for their healthful production. The seeds are indeed there,—implanted by the hand of God himself, but they are buried, deep, deep, beneath ignorance and sin. The storms of a desolating winter, hath swept fearfully over the scene, and blighted, and destroyed, all that once was so lovely. It requires the genial influence of the Spirit of God, to cause these seeds of goodness to germinate and spring up. It requires, that we bestow the utmost pains, and patience upon their culture, before we can expect them to flourish in primeval beauty. Let us, for a moment,

II.—View the Good Man’s character in this aspect.

It seems, my Brethren! to be a law of our constitution, that however noble, however amiable and

gentle, our moral and intellectual faculties may be, they can only be developed, by assiduous culture. If we embrace not the means committed to us by Providence, for their improvement, they will lie utterly dormant;—or, if with the progress of our physical nature, they strengthen, and by necessity are forced into action, they have been so weakened and distorted by the fall, that they become hateful passions and propensities, pregnant with death. But behold in the character of the Good Man, to what purity and elevation they may be brought, through the benign influences of the Spirit of Truth and Holiness, on the patient toils and industry of the sanctified and renewed mind. The work is God's work, and his alone. But He works by instruments, and the willing hearts of men are the chief instruments he employs in the moral government of His kingdom.

If it be a law of our constitution, that the "graces of the Spirit," can only be developed by human instrumentality—it seems also to be a law of God's Spiritual Kingdom, that the talents and the tempers, that have been most carefully prepared by human culture, are chiefly selected for the establishment of that Kingdom, by Him who guideth all things, and determineth all things, to accomplish the good pleasure of his will. When He determines that any great work shall be done on the earth, he raises up Agents that have been disciplined and prepared, by an apparently fortuitous concurrence of circumstances,—but circumstances, evidently, all graciously and wisely ordered by Him, to effect the

ends he designed. Even when the most feeble instruments are employed, there is such a combination of incidents, all different—all happening in the ordinary course of providence—and yet, all tending to one point, as clearly to mark the operations of a divine invisible power.

Unnumbered instances illustrative of these remarks might be adduced, were it necessary. Every part of history is a verification of them, whether it be a good man, or a wicked man, that is the instrument employed.—For the present, let it suffice, again to advert to the apparently accidental circumstances that brought Stephen, and Barnabas, and Paul together;—the men, to whom, of all, next to the immediate disciples of our Lord, we are most indebted for the promulgation of the gospel.—And brought them together, too, under the teaching of the enlightened, and learned Gamaliel, where the facts of Christianity would be tested and tried by all the ingenuity, and learning, and eloquence of that Mighty Master of the Law,—and where its sanctifying truths, would have to battle their way to the hearts of these future preachers of the word, through the opposing phalanxes of national prejudices, and natural corruptions; but where, when once established, like the gnarled oak, rooted by many a storm, no human influence could turn aside, no power of earth or hell could destroy. How fitted were the men so trained, and disciplined, to go forth into the world as the Messengers of God, with the overtures of reconciliation through faith in Christ, and from their own practical knowledge of

Christianity in its theoretical aspect, to meet with, and overthrow the prejudices of the Jew, and the learning of the Greek:—and from their own intimate experience of it, as an inner, spiritual, transforming power, to enter with the tenderest sympathy into the very depths of the human heart, and to bring peace and consolation, to the tried and sorrowful.

III.—Let us now for a moment, view the essential elements of goodness, under a religious aspect. We have found them in the human heart; implanted there by the hand of God. We have found them there, dead, and buried deep beneath ignorance and sin. We have found them there, utterly inefficient to any noble purpose, till they are raised up, out of this dust of corruption, by the patient, persevering, God-directed exercise of self-culture. But something more is still wanting. Bone may be said to have come to his bone,\* and sinews, and flesh, and skin, to have covered them,—but, as yet, there is no breath in them. The Spirit of the Lord must breath upon them, ere they can live. Without His gracious influences, all human culture and science, were utterly vain. Even, when by his overruling Providence, and constraining Spirit, He has “opened their graves,” and they stand forth as the “children of the resurrection”—He must infuse his own life into them, ere they can be a true type of his goodness. The moral qualities that enter as constituent elements into the character of the Good Man, are not only implanted by the hand of

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\* Ezek. xxxvii. 7. 8.



God, and educed, and prepared by the trainings of His Providence, but they are also quickened into life by His indwelling Spirit. The Good Man is a new creation. His whole nature is the immediate production of the Spirit of Christ. He lives: but it is not he that lives; it is Christ that liveth in him. All his faculties, sanctified, harmonized, and united, are directed to one grand object—the accomplishment of the plan, by which, Christ “lifted up, draws all men to himself.” He works the work of Christ. He is a member of his body,—that body, by which as the Spirit of Holiness and Truth, he comes in contact with humanity,—and through which, he is now, as the Invisible, but ever present Spirit, bringing to bear on the hearts and consciences of men, the transforming influences of his death, as the great Sacrifice for Sin.

Is it asked, did all these qualities, and in their full perfection, distinguish the conduct of Barnabas? Was there no speck, no blemish, found in him? Do they enter into the religious character of any man, in all their purity, and with all their efficacy? Brethren! we can not, and we do not say so. In the conduct of the holiest, and best men that ever walked upon the earth, there is much to blame, much to mourn over; much, that the ungodly scoffer will note, and exaggerate, and turn to his own wicked purposes,—much, that will fill the heart of the individual himself, with deep penitential sorrow. The purity of the divine life, in man, is darkened with many imperfections,—and why?—Because this is earth, and not heaven,—because the

present, is a state of training and discipline ; and not of purity and enjoyment. Yet, in spite of all the imperfections and blemishes, that attaches to the good man's character, the conviction is forced home upon us, that in him, "the power of an endless life" is exhibited in much brilliancy and beauty. When we contrast his life, with what it once was—but, above all, when we contrast it with that of the man of the world ;—when we look to his piety, to his benevolence, to his gentleness, to his prudence, to his calm and tranquil mind, and elevating hopes, like the morning light, ever increasing and ever brightening, what reason have we to say, "truly the finger of God is here." How much is there to admire! How much, to animate us to pursue a course so noble, so fruitful in blessings to ourselves, and so fitted to bring glory to God!

Let it be our holy ambition, brethren, to deserve the encomium, recorded in the text. It is immeasurably more desirable to be a good man, than a great man. Let love to God be the great motive of your conduct. Imbibe it, at the foot of the cross. Strengthen it, by frequent contemplations of His character, who loved you, and gave himself for you. Carefully cultivate the graces of the Christian life. Touched with the calamities of your fellow creatures, weep with them, suffer with them ; but rest not in a negative expression of your sympathetic feelings. Extend to them a helping hand. Demonstrate the sincerity of your feelings by your active benevolence. With gentleness, and kindness, and singleness of heart, endeavour to build

up the Church of God. And, in the earnest, loving spirit of your heavenly Master, rejoice in every manifestation of the grace of God, wherever and in whomsoever it appears. Thus it will be said of you as it was said of Barnabas, "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

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My beloved Flock!—whom it is my desire to present unto the Lord, holy and unblamable, and unprovable in his sight—let me earnestly urge you to cultivate the christian virtues implied in the words of the text, enforced, as they are, upon your practice, by the will of God, and silently commended to your attention, as they have long been, by a bright, living Exemplar, recently removed from you. I have no doubt, from the nature of our preceding remarks, you have concluded—and you have concluded justly—that they had a specific reference to the character of that venerable, and truly Good Man, so long a zealous and respected Office-bearer of this Congregation, whom it hath pleased God, to remove from this sinful and suffering state—we humbly trust—into the bliss of heaven. It is not my practice, as you are aware, my Brethren! to advert on every occasion from the pulpit, to the decease of our friends, and fellow-worshippers, unless in very general terms, and that, only, at the close of the year, when reviewing the incidents that have distinguished its course, and that affect us as a Christian Society. The few ex-

ceptions to this, for various reasons, necessary rule, will be found in those striking occurrences, that have presented the graceful, and matured piety of some young member of the Church, in the most impressive forms before us.—Or when the long tried, and faithful services of some aged “Man of God,” widely distinguished, and generally beloved for his public benefactions, and personal worth, exhibit lessons of Christian virtue, pressed home upon our hearts and our consciences, with no ordinary persuasive power. My friends! such a lesson, God is now giving us, either in love, or in anger. Let us receive it in meekness and fear. Bowing in holy resignation to His will, let us learn righteousness, and strive to convert that, which, humanly speaking, we must all acknowledge to be a heavy blow, into a means of higher spiritual life and comfort.

However reluctant I feel, to pass beyond the usual track of exhortation, on this occasion,—however conscious I am, that I can but very imperfectly delineate the true character of the lamented Dead, and but inadequately express that sympathy with the bereaved family, which your own intense feelings would dictate,—however willingly I would leave you, in solemn silence to pay the tribute of a tear, to the memory of the departed,—I feel it to be a duty which I owe to myself;—I feel it to be a duty which I owe to you, to call your attention for a moment, to the loss, which this community, and which the Church of Christ, has sustained, (in so far as we are permitted to judge) by an event which we all deplore.—I feel it to be a duty, which, as a

Minister of Christ, I owe to this congregation, to bid you recall (while they are yet fresh on your minds) those christian virtues and graces, which, so eminently distinguished our departed friend, and to beseech you to be followers of him, even as he was of Christ Jesus. I will not in this place claim your respect to his memory on account of the many excellent social qualities, that made him universally loved and respected. I do not hold him out, as a spotless example of Christian excellence. There were specks, and blemishes in his character, as in that of all other men. But no one, was more deeply sensible of his imperfections and failings than he was of his; and, while he humbly acknowledged the corruptions of his heart, and his frequent estrangements from God, he aimed at higher things, and by the grace given to him, he was—when compared with the mass, of what is commonly called the “Christian world”—“as a light shining in a dark place.” There were, in his conduct, many external manifestations of the inner power of a living faith; yet, no one was less sensible of his good qualities than he was himself, while he honestly, and sincerely acknowledged, that whatever virtues adorned his character, it was to the grace of God that he owed them.

But, without pronouncing any eulogium on departed worth, I feel, I would not be in my duty, did I not avail myself of the solemn impressions left upon your minds, by the recent affecting removal of this Good Man from amongst us, to give decision to your piety, and a fresh impulse to your actions,

—did I not press home upon your consciences, the necessity of being actuated by the same high Christian principles,—did I not press home upon your hearts, his holy and uniformly consistent conduct, as a pattern for you to imitate,—did I not bid you, behold, in this mournful occurrence, the end, on earth, of all men, and entreat you, as rational and immortal creatures, not to expend all the energies of your imperishable nature, on the perishable objects of this world,—did I not beseech you to remember, that you were made for eternity—made to love and serve God, and enjoy his favour for evermore—and warn you, that, if you frustrate this great end of your being, you will entail a calamity on yourselves which no language can describe; you will fling away an immortal crown, for the loss of which no earthly happiness can compensate.

He, whose absence this day, we lament, had been, from its organization, (now nearly half a century ago) an upright, and consistent member of this Church, and for more than half that period, a respectable Office-bearer. In looking back to the events of the last few days, and recalling to mind the venerable appearance, the unostentatious piety, and genuine worth of that truly good man, it is natural for us to feel, and to express our regret, for the loss we have all sustained, by the removal of so exemplary a follower of Christ, and so valuable a member of society.

As a community, we have much cause to mourn; for, at a humble distance he followed the steps of his Heavenly Master, who went about doing good.

Nothing gave him greater pleasure, than in being employed in benefiting others. This, was the distinguishing characteristic of his mind. During the latter years of his life, more of his time and labour were expended in this way, than in his own affairs. There are many who will acknowledge with thankfulness, it has been chiefly to his prudent advice, and helping hand, that they owe, under God, their earthly success and prosperity,—and they are not a few, who will ascribe to his pious counsels, their commencement, or continuance in their christian course. In the sphere in which he moved, perhaps, there has not been a man, in this Province, the instrument of so much good to his fellow men; for though he was a man without guile, humble, earnest, sincere,—of comprehensive benevolence, and wide generosity,—yet, his deep toned piety, his keen sagacity, and discriminating prudence, taught him to guide his affairs with discretion.

As a congregation, we have much cause to mourn; for few took a deeper interest in the welfare of the church, or more earnestly desired to see it prosper, both in its temporal and spiritual affairs. At the same time, we have much reason to thank God, that he hath spared to us so long, One, who, both by his influence and example, contributed in no small degree to its advancement. Of that useful and morally influential class of men—the Elders of the Church of Scotland,—although not without his deficiencies, he was most exemplary in the performance of the duties of his office. Were I to express, my sense of personal obligation to him, language would fail me. His

counsels were the counsels of sincere friendship, sanctified by the most delicate sensibility, and warmth of christian affection. His encouragement in the hour of trial, was, the animating support of unbending rectitude, and the deep sympathies of a generous heart. Although like the Apostles, an unlearned and unpolished man, he was a man of much information, and true politeness. Never shall I forget the shrinking delicacy, with which, he would remind me of any duty I had omitted, or suggest any measure, he conceived, would tend to the advancement of the Church of the Redeemer: and the sincere delight he felt, when he beheld the grace of God displayed, in any of the professed followers of Jesus. In so far as respects human agency, I may truly say, my right arm was shorn of its strength, on the day, that "God took him."

He was a pious man, but his piety, was not the noisy piety of vain profession. It was the piety of the heart, all-pervading, mingling with, and sanctifying the pursuits of life. It was the animating principle of his conduct through his life long,—habitual, practical, cheerful. He was no Ascetic. He was a shrewd, observing, cautious man. There was an air of innocent pleasantry in his discourse,—a joyousness in his actions—a hale, sound vigour, in his piety. He was a hater of hypocrisy, a contemner of ostentation, but a sincere lover of all good men. While he took a lively interest, in every institution fitted to advance the religious interests of his fellow men, it was not of that bustling sort, which is all, in all, with some men. To judge of



the influence of religion on his character, you required to know him,—to see him at the family altar, or within the house of God,—to witness the uniform tenor of his conduct. How earnest, how devout, how regular was he, as a worshipper of God. He “walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.”

Firmly attached to the Church of his Fathers, he was distinguished by a candour, and simplicity of mind, that led him to respect the opinions of all who differed from his own. While he perceived, and appreciated the high advantages which that Church possessed, as an efficient, and a long honored instrument, for publishing the gospel of Salvation, he did not claim for it exclusive merit. His soul was grieved with “the cruel mockings,” and false reproaches of her enemies, but he maintained her cause, by meek and patient endurance, more than by the vehemence of controversy.

He was benevolent,—and his benevolence was kind, and discreet. God was pleased to prolong his days to a good old age, and to bestow upon him in every stage of his pilgrimage, many comforts and blessings. These gifts he received with thankfulness, and enjoyed with a grateful heart. But he did not regard them, as the chief tokens of the Divine favour,—nor did he seek after them as his chief good. In him, was happily combined, the feelings and sympathies of humanity, with the holy affections and desires of the spiritual minded christian.

By prudent industry, and a frugal economy, with

the blessing of God, he acquired a competency of the good things of this life; but these, as a wise steward, he managed for the good of others, as well as those, for whom, by the ties of nature, he was bound to provide. His house, was the home of the stranger. To the deserving poor his hand was ever open. To those who required assistance his help was extended.—Even the unthankful, and improvident, shared in his sympathy and generosity. He was, in the emphatic language of the text, a Good Man, amiable, kind, beneficent. Diligent in the work given him to do, as a dweller on the earth, and as an expectant of heaven. But he ever looked beyond the means, to Him who blessed them.—Looked to God, the “treasure of the soul and source of lasting joy.”

We forbear to draw aside the sacred veil that conceals from public gaze the sanctities of domestic life. A stranger cannot enter into the joys, nor fathom the sorrows of a Christian family, when “the Lord taketh away their Master from their head.” In the day of bereavement, “the heart knoweth its own bitterness,” and there are consolations, experienced by them, which the world can neither know nor appreciate. But, without incurring the charge of officiousness, or “intruding into those things which *we* have not seen,” we may remark, that the peculiar excellencies of the character of the deceased were most fully displayed within the domestic circle. A devout recognition of God in every blessing, and a calm and tranquil happiness in their enjoyment, distinguished the

long period of his conjugal union,—a period undisturbed by family bereavement, and hardly marred by family affliction. Tender and affectionate in all the relations of life, and with a growing solicitude for their spiritual interests, his decease cannot but be felt by them as a heavy blow. We give them our sympathy—we give them our prayers. We bless God for the support vouchsafed to the aged Companion of his long pilgrimage, “in this, the day of her visitation,” and for the calm peace with which she looks forward, in humble hope, of soon rejoining him in the Assembly of the Saints on high. We pray that an abiding sense of the presence and favor of God may cheer the residue of her earthly pilgrimage, and bless her through all eternity.—And we also pray that grace may be given to the other members of the household, to imitate the example of their revered parent, distinguished, as it was, in his public intercourse, by sincere piety, social kindness, and moral worth; and in private life, by uniform tenderness—without weak indulgence; by rigid discipline—without capricious severity. They have received much, and much will be required of them. In all their future conduct may they honor his memory, by imitating his example, and being all, and doing all, that he would have had them to be, and to do.

The suddenness of the dispensation, that called him from the cares, and duties of this world, would have been appalling, had he not left with us the evidence, that he was, through the merits of the Redeemer, “made meet for the inheritance of the

saints in light." His faith was strong. He had long looked forward to the time of his departure hence, with calm, and humble hope of acceptance in Christ. He had not his work to begin, when the "King of Terrors" presented himself for the last conflict. With the abatements, and interruptions, from which, no man on earth is free, preparation was with him the business of every day: and when the hour of his departure drew on, he was ready. He knew Him, in whom he had believed; and he closed his eyes in peace, having, as we hope to believe, seen the salvation of his God.

Thus, another of the old stock of citizens has gone forth from us;—men, who were trained in the rules of a rigid morality, and whose religious feelings were deep and devout,—men, whose like, (I fear,) we will not soon see again. Their contemporary survivors, are now like the leaves on the trees in Autumn, when the first wintry wind hath swept through the forest. They are few and feeble, and hang to life, as on a dried stalk, ready to be swept away by the next passing breeze. To them, the summons that hath called him away, addresses an emphatic note of preparation. To us all, it imparts the most impressive lessons. It teaches us to cultivate the virtues of them, whose memories we revere,—that like them, we may "fulfil our course," and be had in remembrance as Good Men.

He has gone forth from us,—soon, we must all follow him;—how soon, we know not. Let us be prepared. How short has been the time, since we beheld him, full of years, but full of intellectual and

physical strength, moving in the midst of us, with all the generous sympathies of the Christian,—with the dignity, the moral calmness, and peace, of a man who “feared God from his youth and served him!” How short has been the time, since we met with him within these walls! Three sabbaths ago, he filled his accustomed place, a humble, an earnest, a devout worshipper of his God. Deeply did he feel, the solemn import of the question then propounded,—“what is your life.” Seriously, did he then express his sentiments on the vanity of human life, and in a way, that seemed almost anticipative of the sad event, that so shortly afterwards occurred. Since that time—short as it has been—his spirit has left its earthly tenement, and mingled with kindred elements in eternity: and we have consigned his body to the grave; but not without the “well grounded hope,” that, that body, whatsoever may be the forms it shall assume, in the process of dissolution, and however insensible it is now, to our sympathy, shall hear the voice of the Son of Man—shall rise from its bed of dust, and fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body, shall be made susceptible, of the joy of gratitude which springs from the consciousness of the Redeemer’s love, and having been washed in his blood.

My Brethren! endeavour to feel that you are dying creatures, that you may appreciate aright the important privileges you enjoy, and value, as you ought, the time afforded you to work out your salvation. Let the lesson now given you be deeply engraven on your memories. Let not the relics of

your much loved friend depart from your sight, without being admonished of your duty and your destiny. You have all a most important work to perform, and a short time given you to accomplish it. The night of death will soon come upon you, when no man can work. Other enemies may be bribed by riches, or moved by flattery, or mollified by tears, but Death is inexorable. His eye pities not—his hand spares not. Remember that you must encounter him,—that you must all fall beneath his arm. What time he will assail you, you know not. It may be unwarned, and in a moment. Be upon your watch-tower. Let no day pass by, without some act of preparation being done, for your departure hence. I speak to you all. I speak to you as dying creatures. I speak to you as creatures for whom is reserved an Eternity of weal or of woe. I speak to you as creatures who have yet an opportunity of securing an interest in the Redeemer's righteousness,—to whom is given the gospel of Christ, and the promise of His Spirit. Despise not your privileges. How long they may be yours you cannot tell. It is folly to delay making application for pardon. It is true wisdom to prepare for death by sincere repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are the only principles of a holy life. That blessed Saviour, who was manifested to take away sin, is now exalted to give repentance, and the remission of sins, to all who come unto him. O! it is the glory of the gospel, that salvation is from God alone—that it is His work, and His only—that no part of it is left to frail

man to accomplish—that it is God's work, and therefore perfect! It is the glory of the gospel that the messengers of Heaven are sent forth to proclaim its fullness and freeness, and in the name of God, to offer its rich promises, and inspiring hopes unto all men. Ah! feeble would they be, could they only offer the consolation of human affection; but they are commissioned, in the name of God, to speak of mercy and peace through Christ to every penitent sinner,—to tell them of the infinite love of God in Christ,—and that his power may savingly operate on the cold, polluted heart of the very chief of sinners. But though all things are possible with God—though in the very last moments of mortal life, and in the very hardest heart he may be experienced as a “just God and Saviour,” O! who would until that hour defer preparation, and scorn the offers of his love! These offers are now made unto you, Brethren! They may never be made to you again. The work of salvation, it is true, is God's work; but He works by means—and the means he employs are your willing, subdued, penitent, believing hearts. If you refuse to give him your hearts—if you disobey his laws, profane his ordinances, and neglect his worship, you have no reason to expect that he will incline his ear, to the voice of your supplication, when you cry to him from the bed of death.

Brethren! let me beseech you to commence in time that christian culture, which, with the co-operation of divine providence, will develop the nobler principles of your nature, and earnestly employ

the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, to make them shine in the beauty of holiness. Let the business of preparation, be an every day business. Let the Spirit of the gospel pervade, and hallow all your secular duties. Remember you are all pilgrims on the earth; seek your Home in Heaven. It is the hope of immortality that can alone support the soul, amidst the bereavements of life. Let this blessed hope now cheer your hearts. While you mourn for departed worth, give evidence of your sincerity by being followers of him, even as he was of Christ Jesus. You will soon be called to follow him into the grave. Fear not. Jesus hath gone before you. It is dark and dreary, but it conducts his people, to light and life and immortality.

Go forward in the path of duty, and soon you will rejoin those Good Men who have preceded you, who were "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," in the Assembly of the blessed, and in the presence of your Lord. O God, give them thy grace to enable them thus to act now—give them thy redeeming mercy, that they may be of the Assembly of the Saints in the sanctuary above.—Amen.



