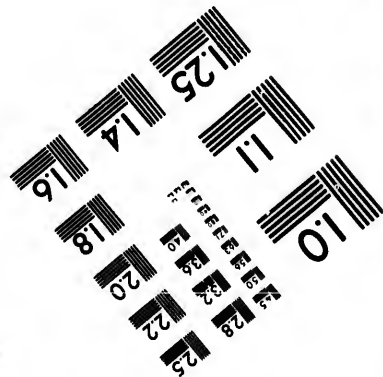
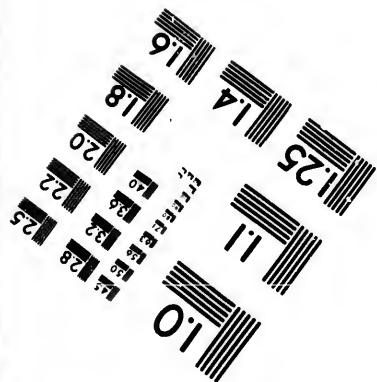
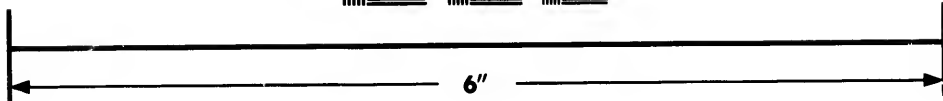
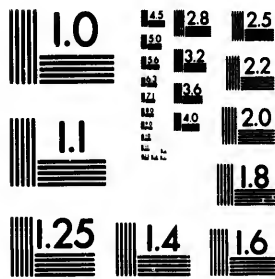


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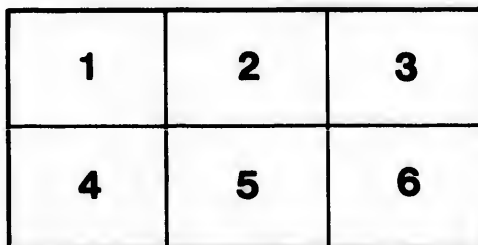
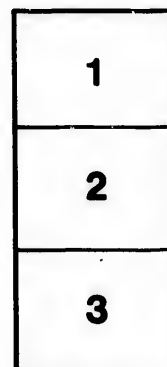
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IN MEMORIAM.
JANE CHISHOLM.
OB. 30th SEPT., 1865.
AET. 19.

SERMON,

PREACHED AT WEST BRANCH EAST RIVER, PICTOU,
ON THE 1ST DAY OF OCTOBER, 1865,

BY

THE REV. S. MCGREGOR, A. M.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST,

AND

DEDICATED TO THE YOUNG OF HIS CONGREGATION.

PICTOU, N. S.:

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Sermon.

“AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GIVE PLACE; FOR THE MAID IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH.”—Matt. ix. 24.

It seems easy to comprehend this death-scene in the house of Jairus. In so far, at least, as some of the circumstances attending it are concerned, the event might have been one of yesterday, and the dead one of our acquaintances and friends. We can, in thought, easily cross that threshold darkened by the shadow of affliction, mingle with those mourners that have, long ages ago, slept in their turn the sleep of death, understand their sorrows, and comprehend their joys. Standing by the side of the couch where lies the lifeless maiden, we can gaze upon that brow ennobled by death—calm and motionless as the chiseled marble, and more dignified and august, by far, than that of any living queen. And, as we stand by that couch and gaze upon that upturned, motionless face, resting in the strange depth of the marvellous calm of death, we certainly do feel, that throughout the ages, there is a singular sameness in the existence and causes of human sorrow, and the sources of human joy. Time, mighty though it be, is not omnipotent. Centuries, in their onward march, may lay low and destroy the works of man, but they change not the work of the Almighty. The ages, as they roll onwards, witness human customs strangely altered, but they leave human nature unchanged. The house of the ruler has long ago crumbled to decay; those who dwelt beneath its roof have passed out into the land of forgetfulness and silence;—but the death-scene there witnessed, the emotions there experienced, the wail of sorrow that has thence risen heavenward, are such as constantly reappear, and may be witnessed in a thousand homesteads, and heard around a thousand hearths.

But, what a strange interest clusters around that home where Death has entered, and around that member of the family whom he has summoned away! Truly, however poor and insignificant men may be in life, there is at least one day coming when they shall appear great and noble, and bear upon their brows a majesty more august and imposing than the greatest of princes. Their homes may be sufficiently lowly and humble; they may die in a poor hovel or in a lonely garret,—but, no sooner does Death enter than the house becomes a palace, and men enter it reverently with uncovered heads, and speak softly and tread gently, for they feel

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that a greater than they has passed the threshold before them, and has left the impress of his hand upon one of the inmates, and that his dread presence still hovers around the darkened room. Such was the case in the house of the ruler, as his only daughter lay calm and motionless beneath its roof, and the mourners moved about the house with muffled footfall, and everything was hushed except the notes of grief. That dwelling was now consecrated by sorrow, and dignified by death. Groups of anxious neighbours and sympathizing friends clustered around it. Faces, however thoughtless on ordinary occasions, became grave and very serious as they entered. The loudest voices became mute, as they caught up the strange influence of that atmosphere, and men appeared afraid to break the sacred silence of the place; by talking over the ordinary affairs of life, for all such conversation seemed strangely out of place in that chamber of death. And, what is the source of that peculiar influence which rests upon all who enter that dwelling, damps ordinary conversation, makes the most careless appear serious; the most thoughtless, thoughtful; the rudest, tender; and the most turbulent, calm? Strange, yet true, we must seek for it in that pale young face, with its closed eyelids, and its sealed lips and calm features, which, nevertheless, are a thousand times more eloquent than the greatest of human orators, and more august and commanding than the greatest of kings or conquerors. And, oh! how powerful and ennobling is Death! But a few days ago that same face might have been seen mingling with those of her companions—all rosy with health, all instinct with life, all beautiful as a summer rose, and fresh as the dewy morning. Still, there might have been nothing about it to draw special notice. We might pass it on the street or the highway, as we pass anything of beauty,—a butterfly skimming the landscape, or the shadow of a bright cloud in the silent stream,—but still not feel much of its power. Yet, there, as it lies calm as the waveless sea, and unimpassioned as the cold marble, it has that quiet power and strange dignity to which the strongest are willing to bow with reverence. The peals of merry laughter are hushed in the deepest silence, and the sparkling eye is dim and closed, yet those sealed lips and closed eyelids preach a more eloquent and impressive sermon than has ever been preached from human pulpit. The daughter of Jairus has received from the hand of Death that august nobility and strange, cold dignity, which always attends the dead. The aged approach her couch with reverence; and the youthful with sorrow and awe, and they place their warm hands on her cold brow, and let fall their hot tears, and are forced to leave the side of

the couch,—but the cause of all this emotion weeps not, moves not, but still sleeps on in the strange, deep, inscrutable sleep of death.

At length, the great Comforter comes, and enters that room where weeping mortals bewail their dead. The light of His presence breaks upon that darkened dwelling, like a burst of sunshine breaking from behind the clouds on a dark and tempest-tossed sea. He came into that atmosphere, heavy with grief; and, into that chamber, noisy, in all probability, with the demonstrative lamentation of hired mourners. How gentle and compassionate, and yet how full of self-possession and firmness He appears! Beneath that roof, there are but two perfectly calm and undisturbed brows. Death and Life—a happy death and the highest life—here met, and seemed to possess something in common. Both our Lord and the daughter of Jairus rested calm and undisturbed—as two rocks amid the beating of the waves—in that wild sea of human unrest, and doubt, and perplexity, by which they were surrounded. Yet, how different the composure in each case! In the one, it was the absence of life and the negation of thought, feeling and emotion. In the other, it was the presence of the highest life, and the consummation of being, and the blending and glorification of thought, feeling and emotion,—so as to render the countenance of the God-man more peaceful and calm than anything merely human. In His presence, there could scarcely be unrest. Before Him, discord changed to harmony, and confusion to order. It was He who walked on the Sea of Galilee, and spoke to the wild, tossing waves, and “immediately there was a great calm.” It is He who enters the human heart, and says to the waves of doubt and fear, “be still;” and peace reigns in the spirit, and the wild waves are at rest. It is the same Lord of Peace who here again speaks: “Why make this ado, and weep? the maid is not dead, but sleepeth;” and so saved the faith of the father from dying at the sight of his dead child. And, indeed, if we are fully to understand and appreciate the conduct and words of our Lord on this occasion, we must always view them in relation to this father’s faith. What the precise measure of that faith was, we know not; yet, we know that true faith he really *did* possess. It probably was faint and flickering, and consequently our Lord guards it tenderly, lest it should become extinct in this “night of fear” and uncertainty. Thrice, we see Him stretch forth a helping hand to save the ruler from sinking in the waves of doubt and fear. First of all, we find our Lord ready to go with him *at once*, for He knew that delaying for some time, as He did in the case of Lazarus, might be fatal to the unexercised faith of this new disciple; and so He encourages

him to hope, and goes with him immediately. But again, when on their way to the house of the ruler, when the messenger met them with the sad tidings, "thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Master"—our Lord again speaks to the father in words of encouragement, saying, "fear not, only believe." Probably, while the ruler believed that the Great Physician could fan the smouldering light of life in the soul of his child, he did not yet realize the great power of our Lord, so as to believe that he could rekindle the lamp of life after it had become wholly extinguished. And He who knows the heart saw the danger, and checked any doubt that might arise from the message which he just heard, by turning to the father and saying: "fear not, only believe." But, a more trying time was still before them. They had now come to the house where so great a change had taken place during the father's absence. Here, whatever encouragement the words of our Lord might have afforded, it was in danger of proving too weak in the presence of all this lamentation, which filled the house as they entered. Yet, how anxiously and tenderly does the Lord watch over and defend the faith of this man! Not more anxious was the father for the life of his daughter, than was the Saviour for the faith of this ruler. Hence, He immediately speaks to those present, words well fitted to reassure the father: "why make ye this ado, and weep? the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Oh, strange words! Oh, Holy Comforter!—not "dead," but "sleepeth;" He rejecteth the harsher expression, and makes choice of the milder and more joyous one,—for the Lord of life looks forward to an awakening, and consequently asserts: "she sleepeth." Strange words they must have truly been to that unbelieving multitude assembled in the house of Jairus. "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth," asserts the Great Physician. Idle and wild words they certainly must have been to those unbelieving friends of the departed, and to such of them as did not comprehend our Lord's true meaning. Did He mean to mock their grief? was He deceived Himself? or did He simply mean to deceive the father for a little, and thus break the shock of the sad truth? What! not "dead," but "sleepeth;"—surely no sleep was ever so deep—so calm—so peaceful, as this deep and awful slumber! Did they not stand by the side of that couch, watching and witnessing the fearful struggle between Life and Death, until the latter gained the victory and triumphantly bore his prize away? True, they saw not the spirit pass; and no more can we, however anxiously and intently we may gaze to catch a glimpse of its upward flight as we stand expectant by the side of the dying. Yet that slight shudder—that stopping of the pulse—

that cessation in breathing, all told the tale that life's struggles were over, and whisperings passed through the room, "she is gone, she is dead!" Nor are we to suppose that our Lord means to assert that the spirit had not fled, or that the daughter of Jairus had fallen into a swoon or a deep and quiet ordinary slumber. The succeeding part of the history would condemn such an assertion, for the spirit undoubtedly had flown, and this was no ordinary sleep. Our Lord uses the same term as he used in the case of another, when he said "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*," when we know that he had already been some time dead. In both cases, He who knows the end from the beginning knew that Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus would awake from their slumber, and consequently, He speaks in both instances of death as a sleep. And, indeed, throughout the Word of God, we may find very many instances in which the term "sleep" is substituted for the term "death"; for what, after all, is death, but a slumber? The patriarch Job says, "For now shall I *sleep* in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, and I shall not be found." Daniel also declares, "And many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." With the Apostle Paul it is a favorite expression. In that chapter of surpassing grandeur (1 Cor. xv.) where Faith, eagle-like, has mounted upwards above storm and darkness, and, far up above death and dying, flaps its wings triumphantly on the heights of immortality, he tells us, "Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed." Again, in encouraging the Thessalonians to live godly lives (1 Thess. iv.), he points cheerfully to the sublime doctrine of immortality, and says, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him." St. Luke, when relating (Acts vii.) the martyrdom of Stephen, does not say "he was put to *death*," but "he fell *asleep*." St. Peter (2 Pet. iii. 4) refers to the time "since the fathers fell *asleep*." St. Paul, in speaking of those who saw the risen Lord, says, "Of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen *asleep*." And so, also, in many other passages of the Word of God. And it is interesting and instructive to find that when we go back to the earlier stages of Christianity—when we search among the records of ages of greater faith and more spirituality than the present, we shall discover that departed friends are consigned to their last resting-place with this idea of an awakening ever uppermost in the minds of their surviving friends. In those strange Catacombs beneath the city of Rome, where so many

Christians sought a hiding-place during the early persecutions, and where so many thousands of them have been buried, we are told that the word "death" or "dead" never occurs in any of the inscriptions which point out their last resting-place, but, in every instance, the word "rest" or "sleep" is inscribed. Oh! glorious light of Truth divine, that could illumine even those dark caverns! Oh! happy Faith, that still could soar and sing over the dust of the departed, and consign it cheerfully to the custody and the safe keeping of Him who is "the resurrection and the life"—who stood once by the couch of the daughter of Jairus, and declared, in his own peace-giving words, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth!"

But further: so striking is the resemblance between Death and Sleep, that it has not escaped the notice even of heathen nations. So wonderful is the analogy, that, it has been observed in all ages, and has found expression in every language. Poets have described Death and Sleep as brothers. Philosophers have been led, by their similarity, to investigate their relationship more closely. Moralists have, in every land, held them up before the gaze of mankind, and fully shewn their points of similarity as well as of contrast. Many of those points of resemblance lie upon the very surface, and may be seen at a single glance. Thus, for example, there is in each state the personification of deep composure and of calm rest. The quiet slumber of the innocent specially resembles the sleep of the dead, which is disturbed by no dreams, but who sleep on in deep calm slumber through the whole long night of time, till the breaking of the resurrection morn.

Again: in both states there is the same apparent disregard of what is being done in the world by which the sleepers are surrounded: However anxious we may be as to matters of self-interest, or human opinion, or the movements of human society, no sooner do we sink to sleep than they are forgotten or disregarded much as they seem to be disregarded or forgotten by the dead.

Again: both states are induced by weariness and exhaustion. The laborer returns home after the long and wearisome toils of the day are ended, and, with exhausted energies and weary limbs, stretches himself upon his couch, and "tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," soon seals his eyes in slumber. So, also, at the end of life's day: the energies of the laborer are exhausted, and the sleep of death comes on, and the sleeper slumbers through the long night of time.

Again: they resemble each other in the certainty of their approach. Both are alike inevitable,—arising from the laws of our

constitution,—warded off by no exertion, submitting to no conditions, listening to no remonstrance, conquering all our energies, prostrating all our puny power. By no exertion of ours can we keep constantly awake. Sleep gradually creeps upon us with ever-increasing power, until at length we are obliged to submit and close our eyes in slumber. So, also, with death. However anxious we may be to avoid it; however much concerned about our health and continued life; and however comparatively long that life may be,—still, it must end in death, just as sure as our waking hours are followed by sleep.

Again: they resemble each other, inasmuch as their power alike is limited to the body and the physical organisation. The mind—the soul, can never slumber, as it can never die. Never for a moment is the spirit inactive. The eyes are closed in slumber, and the senses lulled to sleep, while the active, busy, immortal spirit traverses the universe—explores the past and contemplates the future—crosses, with the rapidity of thought, the mighty expanse of ocean—brings objects the most remote near to each other, and almost completely annihilates all distance in time and in space. What mighty feats are performed in our dreams! What seemed impossible in our waking moments, then appears quite easily performed: distance presents no difficulties, and time is a matter of little consequence. The mind, at such moments, seems to have cast aside the shackles of all material laws and all mere earthly conditions, as it revels in its own magnificent power freed from the clogging influence of a material body and the restraining barriers of material laws. The mind never slumbers; it never can sleep. That spark of the Almighty's kindling burns always, and must burn on forever. From the moment of creation, down through the countless ages of eternity, those spirits must live co-extensive in duration with the lives of angels and of God. And during the whole of that period it is never inactive; it never can sleep: nay, while the body sleeps, the mind is most active, and seems to enjoy most perfectly the full exercise of its own sublime and magnificent powers. And so, also, that other sleep—the sleep of death, gains its triumph over the body, but not over the mind or spirit. Deep as the slumber may seem, it does not affect the life of the soul, for it still lives; yea, lives more fully and perfectly a spiritual life than ever it did during its most wakeful earthly moments. What a profound mystery is that sleep of death! You stand by the side of the sleeper, and yet feel that he is as far removed from you as eternity is from time. You suppose you can place your hand upon him— that he still lies beneath the old roof

where his spirit passed away, and that you will soon follow him to his last resting-place, and consign him to the narrow house appointed for all living. Yet how small a portion of your friend is really left in that darkened room which "the last enemy" has entered, and where he has left the visible manifestations of his power! All that the eye can see is not your friend. The intelligent, thinking, loving, active being who was here with you before death came, is here no longer. All that you can see before you, and all you can follow to the grave, is but the frail body—the house in which your friend formerly dwelt, or the clothing in which he robed himself during his earthly sojourn. Through those sealed eyes he once gazed out upon the material universe. With those hands he labored and accomplished his earthly purposes. Through this material and bodily organization he was fitted for spending some time among material objects; but when life's labors were accomplished, he cast them all aside without losing his personal identity, much as we cast aside our garments without losing our power of thought, feeling or emotion. Death and Sleep alike chiefly affect the body. The slumber in neither case extends to the soul, or damps the ardor of the spirit, or checks the activity of the immortal mind. The storm of sickness may come; the night of death may arrive, and the tenement of clay fall prone to the dust; yet the tenant escapes unhurt from the falling ruin, and exchanges his abode for a land where death shall never enter. You cannot see the departed; no more can you see the soul of your friend when resting in calm sleep; still, you know that his mind is active as ever, and that sleep cannot control its activity or arrest its operations. Oh! let us not regard the day of our death as the end of our life! If such were a true estimate of our being, then were life less solemn, and life's responsibilities less overwhelming in magnitude, than they really are. If there be no life beyond the grave; if the lamp of life be forever extinguished in the cold waters of the dark Jordan; if the life here be not continued in the hereafter;—truly man is a paltry, short-lived, and unimportant being in the universe of God! But how different must be our estimate of life when we regard death merely as a slumber, and that a slumber of the body; when we consider that our life now is part of a life that shall never end; when we remember that our habits and pastimes are moulding our existence and destiny for countless ages after the heavens and the earth shall pass away—that every sin committed is an eternal evil, and every step in the pathway of holiness an everlasting gain—that the future is the result of the present, and that the "now" is the parent of the

hereafter! How strikingly, also, does the light of the Gospel and the sublime doctrine of immortality light up the darkness of the tomb! Is not death deprived of his greatest terrors to the surviving friends who can triumphantly say—

"The dead are like the stars by day;
 Withdrawn from mortal eye,
 But not extinct, they hold their way,
 In glory, through the sky:
 Spirits from bondage thus set free,
 Vanish amidst immensity,
 Where human thought, like human sight,
 Fails to pursue their trackless flight."

But again. There is another point of resemblance between Death and Sleep, and one pre-eminently joyous, which robs death of much of its terrors. Both Sleep and Death shall end in waking. And perhaps, indeed, it was this point of analogy which our Lord had specially in view in the house of Jairus, when He spoke those peace-giving words, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Those who stood by that couch where lay the remains of the maiden, bewailed the *lasting* separation caused by death between them and their departed friend. They realized that she was gone from among them, and that no power or entreaty of theirs could ever call her back. They knew that the world, in its changes and its stability, would still continue, as of old. Summer would fade into winter, and winter merge into summer, but the changing seasons could never bring back the lost one, or restore the absent. Night would come, and the family assemble, as of old; but one place, formerly filled, would remain empty—one cheerful voice would be silent, and one happy face absent for ever. And this "never" and "forever" made up the most bitter ingredients in the cup of sorrow. Temporary separation they could well endure. A long sleep they could regard with calm composure. They might even separate themselves from their young friends until youth merged into maturity and maturity faded into old age—if age could restore her at last to her home and her friends; but that long, long separation—that deep and everlasting slumber—that absence "for ever"—how dark and gloomy and cheerless it seemed! Spring would come again and breathe upon wood and field, and call forth new life and beauty and music to gladden the face of nature, but no spring would ever bring her back to home and to friends. We say that it was probably this view of the lasting and permanent change wrought by death in the house of this ruler, and which he now

works among us, that most specially affected and still affects the living; and which our Lord means specially to meet and answer by the joyous, life-giving words, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth."

True it is that the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus was special and peculiar, and that we no longer can expect such a sudden transition from the state of the dead to that of the living. How long her spirit had gone ere our Saviour entered the room, we know not, but of this we are certain: upon that couch around which the mourners assembled, nothing remained but "dust and ashes." And, in so far as the miracle of awakening is concerned, the time during which she was dead seems to us but of little consequence. The fact of her resurrection is all that is necessary to prove the boundless power of the Almighty, and to give us the strongest confidence that the same power is still able to awake the dead. The creation of a grain of sand is an act of Omnipotence as well as the formation of a universe. None but He who gave life to the archangel who has lived from creation's morn and shall live for ever, could create the insect which dances away its few hours in the sunbeam; and He who called back the spirit of the daughter of Jairus, is equally able to raise our friends to life after they have slept the sleep of ages. And say you—"there is no joy for us in the declaration made by the Lord of life, ages ago, in the house of the ruler and by the side of his dead daughter"? Why, my hearers, the words are unspeakably joyous! Without such words, and destitute of that faith which may be firmly grounded upon them, Death would indeed be "the king of terrors," the grave everlasting darkness and silence, and our partings with our friends at the Jordan eternal farewells. Yet who has not felt their sacred life-giving power? It was only yesterday that many among us were called to stand by the lifeless remains of one of our own special friends. Like the daughter of Jairus, she was called away in the full bloom of youth. Death had indeed come; but as we stood by that composed and peaceful sleeper, we could scarcely realize that he had achieved any great victory. The spirit, it is true, had passed, and life's throbbings were over, and the weary had found rest, and the Lord of life did not appear in visible form as He once appeared in the house of Jairus to rekindle the lamp of life, and reanimate the lifeless frame; yet, could we not hear Him speak just as distinctly as He spoke long ago in that house at Capernaum, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth"? We all felt and knew that the slumber of our friend would not be broken so suddenly as was that sleep of the daughter of Jairus; but, at the

same time, we knew that the awakening would be quite as certain. We knew that with the Lord a thousand years are but as yesterday; and that the same Almighty power which raised the ruler's daughter after her short slumber, could raise our friend after the long sleep of ages, at the breaking of the resurrection morn. Does it seem strange to us that God should raise up the dead? With the Bible in our hands, we at least cannot doubt the *fact*; and with the analogy of nature before us, can we not understand the *possibility*, nay, even the *probability*, of the resurrection? Who that has never been a witness to the changes of spring and summer, could ever fully understand the awakening power of the seasons? Look around you, on field and forest, and observe how all things, lately so full of life and joy, seem rapidly dying, and shall shortly lie palsied, and at least seemingly dead, beneath the cold hand of winter. Each tree shorn of its leaves must stand bare and cold, and apparently lifeless, in the moaning winds and the driving storms. Not a single blade of grass shall spring from the cold, frozen, dead earth. The river shall stop its joyous flowing; and the brook its happy murmuring. The clouds must lose their golden gleam, and the skies their deepest blue; and over our heads shall gather the storm-laden clouds and the sombre gloom of winter, while beneath our feet shall be barrenness, stagnation and death. And who that had never witnessed the power of the changing seasons, would ever imagine that, in the course of a few months, earth and sky would reveal so great a change—that winter would be succeeded by spring, and brook and river again flow joyously, as of old, and glory be restored to the skies, and light and beauty to the landscape?

Or again. Observe those frail creatures of beauty that dance in the summer sunshine, and flit joyously across the summer fields. Winter comes, and they fold their glittering wings and remain quiet and motionless, and apparently dead, while the storm rages without, and the angry winds and the blighting frosts are roaming abroad, blasting and withering all things as they pass. Who that had never witnessed the fact, could indulge the fancy that those wings would again be unfurled, and that those gay and frail creatures could again flit from flower to flower, and revel in the joys of summer? Yet, what is the fact? Winter passes, and spring comes, and the death-sleep vanishes, and life, in myriad forms, starts up and throws aside the grave-clothes, and rejoices, as of old, in the warm sunshine and the full enjoyment of existence.

Or again. Observe that grain of seed, swept from the forest

tree, tossed by the autumn winds hither and thither until it has at length found a resting-place. Shall it die? Yes, truly—but only to spring up again a noble tree that can do battle with the tempest and brave the storm. But it is needless to multiply examples, for everywhere throughout the wide extent of nature we may find striking emblems of the resurrection. The great book of nature may enable us to understand and realize more fully the declaration of our Bibles, as the Bible enables us to understand and interpret many of the dark problems in nature. And while we thank God for the clearer light of His written Word, let us also be grateful for the fainter but still joyous light which His handwriting in nature throws upon His purposes and our destiny. In the duties of life, the light of the one is absolutely necessary, and of the other strengthening and consolatory. Upon the one we may build our hopes as upon a rock, sure and stedfast; but as the weak arms of faith grasp the support afforded by the other, we can stand securely amid the breaking waves and the tossing billows. And on the morrow we shall experience the joyous influence of both. As we follow, “to the house appointed for all living,” the earthly part of our friend, we shall remember the joy-giving words of our Lord, “The maid is not dead, but sleepeth;” and as we look around us, we shall certainly remember that death is but a sleep.

“There’s nothing terrible in death;
 ’Tis but to cast our robes away,
 And sleep at night without a breath,
 To break repose till dawn of day.”

To you, the young friends and companions of the departed, this change that has so suddenly come among us seems to speak with peculiar power. Your friend has left you, as the summer glory is fast fading from the skies, and light and beauty from the landscape. She has fallen asleep as the mellow fruits are falling from the trees, and the tinted leaves are fast but silently dropping from the forest. She has gone as the birds have ceased their warbling, and, like them, we hope—nay, we firmly believe—has gone to a brighter and more sunny clime, where the beautiful never withers, and where the winter never comes.

We shall all miss her, Sabbath after Sabbath, from this house of prayer, where she so constantly joined in our worship, and so joyfully in our praises. We shall personally and deeply feel her absence, when you, her young friends, shall meet, as of old, to promote the prosperity of our beloved Church in this country, and she who was so active—so cheerful—so useful, shall no longer appear among you. And you who knew her so well shall long miss her from the social circle where her presence always was welcome, and her brightness always gave joy. Yet we all know that there is a home where her loss shall be felt more severely still and for a longer period, and sure I am that you will all most fervently pray that this family, detained to-day from the house of prayer by their bereavement, be greatly sustained by the promises of Him who said, in another house of mourning, “The maid is not dead, but sleepeth.”

Our friend was called away in the full bloom of youth, and in

the midst of much usefulness. Time had as yet written no wrinkles on her brow. Life's rude warfare had brought her no bitterness or sorrow. She can scarcely be said to have come in contact with life's stern realities, or to have mingled with coarser natures, or to have struggled with life's difficulties, or contended with life's temptations, and, consequently, felt not their effects, and bore not the marks of their contamination, but fell asleep much as a child sinks to slumber, and passed out from among us as the rainbow melts from a summer sky. She is gone; and shall we murmur at this mysterious dispensation, and fret beneath the stroke? Oh, let us rather plead for resignation to God's will; and taking up, in the arms of faith, all this youth and usefulness and beauty, go directly to the foot of the Cross, and, on bended knee, thank Him who has lent them all, and, with unflinching faith and cheerful resignation, say, "the Lord giveth, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." It is to that Creator who gave her we wish to restore our friend. From that Saviour who loved her let us not, even in thought, wish to withhold her; but, on the contrary, cheerfully resign her to Him who loved her more than did all her earthly friends, and with whom she shall be infinitely more happy for ever. Oh, Death! we surrender her not to thy everlasting keeping. We bring our burden and place it down at the feet of the Lord of life, and as faith would willingly surrender it to Him, it knows full well how safely it shall be kept—how tenderly our friend shall be guarded during her slumber, and how certainly she shall be aroused when the conflicts of earth are over, and the night of time merge in the day of eternity.

We say "there's nothing terrible in death:" let us pause a moment. Is this true universally, or true only in special instances? Oh, let us not be deceived. True universally it cannot be, but true in special instances it certainly is. Death not terrible to the unbeliever!—why, he is emphatically to him the "king of terrors." Death not terrible to those whose sins are unpardoned, and whose souls are unsanctified, and who go down to the grave with all the black catalogue of their sins written against them, and there to remain for ever! Words of ours can only weaken the conception of such a condition. To feel that time, with all its opportunities of improvement, and all its free offers of pardon and mercy, are gone for ever! To realize that earth is fast receding, and that every anchor of hope to which the soul might cling is yielding, and the spirit drifting out further and further into the wide ocean, dark, terrible, and solitary! To do battle all alone in the thick darkness with the last enemy, with no friend to comfort or encourage the spirit onwards in the flight; to feel within the firstfruits of the terrible harvest beyond; to find the fluttering, trembling spirit ready to fly forth into the darkness!—Let us not try to describe it, for it defies all description. Yet, in some instances, the words are true, "there's nothing terrible in death," and we firmly believe that they were true in the case of your friend. To her, we have reason to believe that "to die was gain." And, let us ask, upon what is this belief founded? Is it simply upon the fact that her life was pure and unspotted; her disposition, amiable; her attendance upon the means of grace, regular; and her usefulness in the Church

and the world felt by us all? Do we consider that she thus *merited* heaven, and *purchased* everlasting happiness? If such had been the ground of our hopes, then, indeed, were they built upon an unsatisfactory and worthless foundation! Measured by the standard of the requirements of the divine law, and weighed in the balance of divine justice, even in her life there were imperfections and defects. Merit heaven she could not any more than you can, however blameless in conduct or unspotted in character. Oh, let us ever remember the words of our Lord to Nicodemus—words eternally true, however the mere worldling may regard them: "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Let us never forget that mere *morality* cannot save us—that a nature, however amiable, if unsanctified by divine grace, is unfit for heaven—and that a life, however pure and beautiful, unless it be a life of faith in the Son of God, cannot be regarded as the commencement of that life which the redeemed enjoy in heaven. Truly mere morality is a poor preparation for death, and self-righteousness a flimsy robe for the presence-chamber of the Great King and the just and impartial Judge. Trust not your immortal hopes to any such superficial preparation, and peril not your everlasting happiness by wrapping yourselves up in any such miserable garment; but rather go directly (as we believe your friend did) to Christ, and take from His own hands the pure robes of His own righteousness, and earnestly seek for the sanctification of the Holy Spirit and the purifying influences of heavenly grace. Rest not satisfied with anything short of reconciliation through the merits of the atonement, and a personal union with Christ as a personal Saviour. Go at once to the "fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness," and there having washed your robes, you shall indeed be pure in the sight of angels and of God. Seek your hiding-place in the "rock of ages," for every other stronghold is but "a refuge of lies." Make the Lord of life your friend; strive to copy His holy example; learn to submit to His government and to trust in His grace, and then it shall indeed be true in your case, as it has been in the case of her whose presence we this day miss from among us, "there's nothing terrible in death."

Think, then, of your absent friend, not as lost, but as gone before you. Cherish her memory faithfully and long. All that was excellent in her life, endeavor to copy. Whatever was "lovely and of good report," strive earnestly to imitate. Regard her departure as another link in that chain of circumstances intended by the Governor of the universe to lead your spirits heavenward, and another of God's impressive sermons upon the uncertainty of human life. She has gone before you to "the better land," and thither you hope, through God's grace, to follow. Rest assured that were she allowed this day to address you, such would be her most earnest entreaty. Remember, too, the great and general awakening—forget not that one day you shall meet her—that "the grave shall yield his ancient charge"—that the slumber of time shall be broken, and that the declaration of the Lord of life shall then be justified in her case, as fully as in that of the daughter of Jairus, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth."

