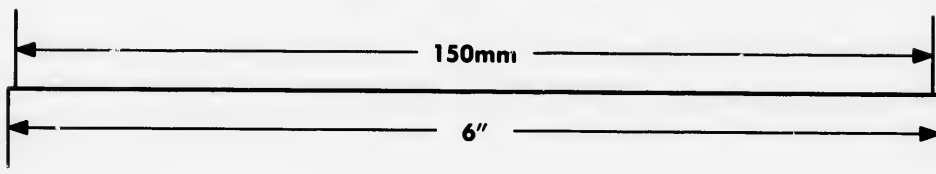
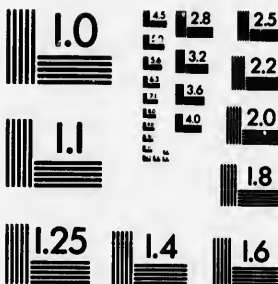
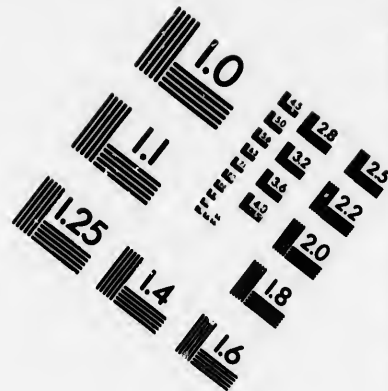
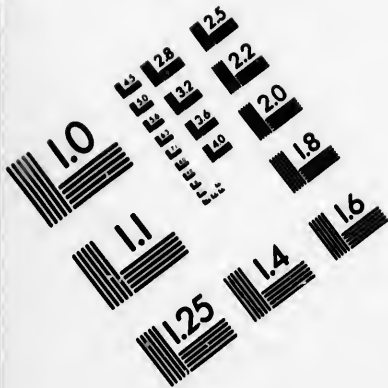


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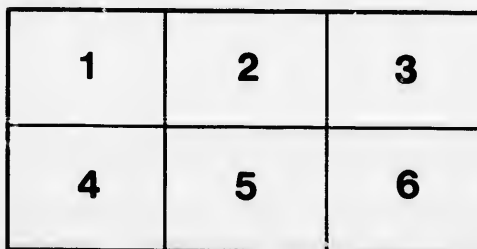
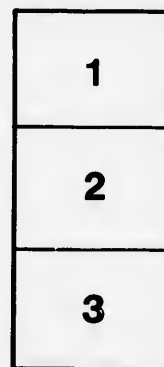
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Case 738.

A MEMORIAL SERMON

PREACHED IN

SALEM CHURCH, SUMMERSTOWN,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAMENTED DEATH

OF THE



Late RODERICK CRAIG, Esq.,

Third son of the late James Craig, Esq., M.P.P.

BY

NORMAN T. C. MCKAY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

1887.

Printed by J. Smith Kingston

SERMON.

SUBJECT:—YOUTH.

GEN. XLVII. 8.—“How old art thou?”

JER. III 4.—“Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?”

I. SAM. XX. 18.—“Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.”

“How old art thou?” Pharaoh asked this question of the patriarch Jacob. It was a king's question to an old man.

The old man was father of twelve sons, the head of a great and singular nation. Though as yet comparatively a poor man in earthly treasure, he was a more distinguished person than the king before him. His impress on the world's destinies is stronger and deeper than all the Pharaohs who lived to rule. His descent was from the greatest and grandest man of Jewish history. The younger son of his large family was second in authority only with the king himself.

It was a touching scene that introduction. The aged patriarch leaning on the arm of his noble son proceeding to enter the king's presence.

Already Pharaoh met the twelve proud sons of Jacob; the eldest showing marks of age, the younger second only to Pharaoh in authority and the most popular man in his vast domains.

Having these facts the king doubtless expected to meet a frail old man well stricken in years. But when the strong, dignified, majestic Jacob, a man of lofty stature and beaming countenance, one of the noblest specimens of the human race appeared before him, his astonishment could only find utterance in the words of our text. “How old art thou?” “How many are the days of the years of thy life?” “Surely you are an older man than you appear to be.” “The father of twelve sons, the younger of whom is prime minister in my kingdom, chancellor of my exchequer and the most popular man in the whole realm, you must be far advanced in life.” But really “How old art thou?” exclaims the astonished Pharaoh.

Although Jacob had already lived one hundred and thirty years on the earth, he considered them few in number, though many in experience in comparison to the days of his forefathers; and he pronounced

them all years of affliction through which his gray hairs were descending with sorrow to the grave.

"How old art thou?" is a common question. Prompted by vulgar curiosity it is an unreasonable one.

When we to-day address the question to you, we do not care to know how old you are by the calendar. How many the days of the years of your life are. You may keep this secret. But we would like to know your age by other standard than that of time.

We earnestly hope the words we may be enabled, by the aid of God's Holy Spirit, to speak to-day will be edifying for all, although they are especially intended for the young.

The occasion of this memorial service forces upon us with more than ordinary impressiveness the thought of our rapid passage to the tomb, the solemn and heartrending event which occasioned this discourse, the removal of one in the prime of life from the ranks of youth suggested YOUTH as the most appropriate subject for a memorial service in memory of our dear friend, whom we followed so lately to the narrow house appointed for all living.

Then, let us first begin this solemn and impressive service by addressing some words to the young around us, urging every one of you in the words of the wisest of Judah's rulers, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," and again in the words of Almighty God himself, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth."

In the whole career of a *human* life YOUTH is the most solemn period. This declaration, I know, clashes with the general sentiment of mankind. Let the old be grave, but let *youth* be gay; let the aged wrap their spirits in serious thoughtfulness, but let the young sport in the buoyancy of youthful vigor. This is the popular thought, but it is an erroneous notion, a popular error.

How many there are who regard *youth* sufficient guarantee for length of days; how many more take this as their only excuse why they can afford to trifle with its privileges and solemn duties, and treat with indifference the admonitions of age and experience.

To-day we will endeavor to fix deeply on your minds the solemnity of YOUTH.

First, one half of the human race die in infancy and a still greater proportion of the remainder die in the *prime* of life, when *youth* should be enjoying the full vigor of its endowments. Among all the diseases that attack the human frame consumption alone slays annually on this continent one hundred thousand human beings. With a very few exceptions these victims are from the *ranks of youth*.

Of the great mass of those who die in the large cities *youth* supplies the majority. In the city few attain a hail old age.

When we to-day address to you the question, "How old art thou?" our aim is to remind you that you are now at the most important and critical era in your immortal career. The vast number who go out of life in their early days makes it a period of solemn importance to all the children of men. Instead then of relying on *youth* for a guarantee of a long stay on earth, the uncertainties connected with it, and the unexpected circumstances that so often overtake the young through thoughtlessness and lack of experience and wisdom, prove it to be the most solemn time in earthly, yea, immortal existence.

Old age may venture to be gay and buoyant, for old age has already formed its character, made its mark and developed or degenerated its resources. Comparatively old age runs little risk. But *youth* with all its adventures and jeopardies must be steady and thoughtful, bearing in mind that every step taken in life's vicissitudes is a long stride in its career upward or downward.

For want of experience *youth* makes many experiments with life, experiments which age has already made, or profited from the experience of others. Life is a continual experiment. We must all experiment less or more before we realize, and that, too, in the face of the advice and experience of others. But when unskilled youth makes excursions in untried avenues of enterprise let them be few and cautiously made and in no case without first consulting the wisdom and experience of aged councillors.

It is a command of the apostle, "Let no man despise thy youth;" but this admonition was given to a young man engaged in a noble work. Let no youth dare despise the council and wisdom of the hoary head.

You must also see that *youth* is a solemn stage because so much depends on the conduct of this period. When we see one at this critical era of life whether in health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, joy or sorrow, disregarding all advice and disparaging the purpose of his existence, we may well ask, "How old art thou?" How old art thou in those various experiences of life which test and mature one's character much more than any lengthened period of time rolling over the head, that may be reckoned in so many days or years?

"We live in deeds, not years—in thoughts, not breaths—

In feelings, not in figures on the dial :

We should count time by heart throbs,

He most lives

Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

The sum of the years of the youngest or oldest who has spent none of them for the service of God is equal to nothing. Such a life is a

blank and its commentary may be written in one dark dash, "He died." A dreary spectacle is the *old* man boasting of a long life that has been squandered in vain, transient pursuits. An old man may with honorable pride boast of a long life, but if he has spent none of the days of the years of his life in the service of his Creator, then, in stern sincerity we would rebuke his wrong boastful measurement of life in the words of the poet Young :

"That life is long which answers life's great end.
The time that bears no fruit, deserves no name.
The man of wisdom is the man of years."

The wisest, the safest, the truest estimate of *youth*, yea, life, includes Reflection, Moderation, Religion.

The thoughts one expresses are the truest index of one's age, and the truest standard by which he can be assigned his proper place in time or eternity.

Moderation means, be temperate in all things. It is our duty to live as long as possible. We can only do this by being moderate in every act and passion. Avoid excess, for it will soon snap asunder the thread of life.

Above and before all, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." "For bodily exercise profiteth for a little time ; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

In all the aspirations of *youth* seek first the kingdom of heaven and God will add all else. Trust His almightiness for the rest. God alone can enable you to improve the many opportunities which only youth possesses. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Be followers of God as dear children," then, no man, not even the highest in human attainment, dare despise thy *youth*.

Again, *YOUTH* is the critical period in your pilgrimage here at which you are receiving impressions that will never be effaced, in which you are strengthening a character that is fitting you for heaven or hell. In youth temptations are more liable to subdue you. In youth you are more apt, thoughtlessly, to neglect opportunities of usefulness and improvement. Young minds are pliable, and the influence your surroundings and associations as well as your occupation are having on you is all contributing to mould a character that will decide the happiness of your present and future life. Now, when you know you are at a period of life so important, yet so uncertain in its prospects, how fit and natural it is at every step we take to seek the favor of that Being on whom the lot of every day depends ; to commit all our interests to His al-

mighty and wise Providence, to seek His blessing on our labors and His aid in temptation, and to consecrate to Him all the days of our youth.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Again, *youth* has its sins. In all periods of life men are liable to sin; there are principles within and influences without which contribute their force to prompt persons of all ages to do wrong. But there are circumstances connected with young life which make them specially liable to sin. For want of knowledge youth is at a great disadvantage and suffers if not forearmed by a Christian training. How ignorant and inexperienced youth generally is? In young life how ignorant we are of the treacheries of our hearts, the deceitfulness of our imaginations. In youth we look at the outward world through glasses stained with the wishes and wild imaginations of our hearts. It is a fairy land full of castles in the air. No sorrows, no disappointments, no death is permitted to darken the bright prospects of youth's horizon. It fills its prospects with ecstasies, splendors and achievements. But experience goes back and writes *fiction* across the whole span.

In Scripture the world is compared to a sea which is never at rest; its sleepless waves are ever ebbing and flowing in their mighty tides. Its voyagers are exposed to many perils. Hostile winds are continually sweeping over its waters lashing them into the wildest fury.

Youth is a vessel just launched on this ocean; it never ploughed its billows before, sounded its depths, or calmly studied its laws; it has neither the chart of knowledge nor the compass of experience to direct it. Without God it is at the mercy of an unmerciful world. The force of the passions is another circumstance in the history of youth which especially exposes it to sin. The aspirations, whatever they may be, are strung to their highest tension. The desires plead strongly for indulgence, and struggle hard against restraint. As we are at this period very much the creatures of sense, emotional impulse oftener than rational thought prevails. All this and much more conspire to make *youth* a critical period.

The susceptibility of receiving impressions from others in sentiment, language, and conduct is a characteristic of youth, and is a power in developing its own. The child most generally inherits the physical of the parent, but is moulded into the mental and moral through the disposition and propensities of the parent or guardian. We are developed to a certain extent on the principle of imitation. It has been well said, "The child is father of the man." What the youth is the man is sure to be. To those, then, advanced in life we would say give every young person who comes within your jurisdiction the benefit of

your experience and the weight of a good influence. It is your duty to watch over youth, care for it, assemble in the Sabbath-school, and help develop it into that which God intended it to be. If youth grew up in the society of angels, that society would tend to mould it into the transcendent character of its pure associates. But as the associations are different, that susceptibility is the occasion of immense evil. All these circumstances should serve to impress us with the solemnity of *youth*. Mankind is individually endowed with an immortal principle that is destined to develop into an angel or degenerate into an abject demon.

"Wherewithal," then, "shall a youth cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word, O Lord."

Each human being from birth to death is travelling over a road that is new to him. No where will we find life's road a beaten path where we have travelled before. It is altogether untried, untravelled by us, outside the experience gained from those who have gone before. We must wait day by day for the portion of life's journey assigned to that portion of time; we cannot see a day ahead. On one day we may advance farther than another in experience. Thus it is not by the day, the month, or the year we are to measure our age, but by the experience we have gained, the achievements we have accomplished, and the use we have made of all.

No man, therefore, can give the correct answer to the question, "How old art thou?" by simply stating the days of the years of his life by the standard of time alone, unless he has been an indolent being, who has lived a frivolous, useless life.

Let every active, energetic youth, when asked the number of the days of the years of his life by the standard of time alone, be prepared to answer from personal experience:

"They err who measure *life* by years,
With false or thoughtless tongue;
Some hearts grow old before their time;
Others are always young.

"'Tis not the number of the lines
On life's fast filling page,
'Tis not the pulse's added throbs
Which constitute their age.

"Some souls are serfs among the free,
While others most nobly thrive;
They stand just where their fathers stood,
Dead, even while they live.

"Others all spirit, heart, and sense,
Their's the mysterious power,
To live in thrills of joy or woe
A twelve month in an hour."

Here is a standard by which you can arrive at the true age of every man.

Our biography is our age, not the figures on the tomb.

Friends, there is a tide in the affairs of men if taken at the flood leads on to achievement. This flood is youth. Indifference to this critical period, we repeat, through indifference to the solemnity of youth, many have missed their footing, and have been carried down by the flood to ruin and destruction.

It is not the infant or child who is going headlong to destruction, nor is it old age; it is *youth*. Be persuaded youth is the proper time to form those habits, cultivate that disposition, mould that character, which combined build the mighty engine that will carry us safely along the narrow gauge of that straight and narrow road that leads to eternal life. But if the human, physical, spiritual engine has been improperly put together, through the unconcern and indiscretions youth is subject to, and certain to fall into without religion, then, soon, very soon the whole human mechanism will jump the track of the straight narrow road that leads to light and life, and course madly along the broad and dangerous highway of worldly lust and pleasure, and before it has lived out half its days plunge headlong to destruction.

Visit large cities and you will there find the great field of the devil's enterprise is *youth*. Beginning as early as evil will take hold, and that is early enough. The human frame of the most vigorous will not last long when subjected to all the tortures the pleasures of sin for a season entail.

Again, youth is the solemn stage in our pilgrimage when the battle for life rages fiercest and we are bound to bear the onset of the fight the steadiest. If the enemy of good does not gain victory over man in *youth*, for him and his evil genius, the contest is over and lost.

From my own experience, and I might include all I know of the experience of him who was called away from among us, though the years of our lives, reckoned by the standard of time, are not yet many, we know something of what *youth* has to contend with when a man desires to honor God; also something of what it means to endure in youth the burden and responsibilities of age in the midst of reverse and disappointments. O, friends, it is the grandest achievement of a man's life, the greatest moment of his existence, when he turns to his Creator in the days of his youth and cries, "My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth." Here is the crisis when youth begins to realize what he is made for, what the true realities of life are, the amount of spiritual energy lying dormant, and what with this awakened and aroused he is capable of enduring and accomplishing.

We know from bitter experience that it is not an easy thing for any

youth to step aside from old associates and calmly say, "I now purpose, God helping me, to be a Christian." But it is a bold and glorious thing to say, and an heroic achievement for any youth. You may bring down a cyclone of jeers and taunts and sneers, but your *youth* and *cause* are good for the struggle.

Every youth who comes through the bitterness of this experience makes a hero of his youth and attains the high position of him of whom King Solomon speaks when he says, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

We talk of high strung natures. Almost every youth is less or more high strung. In early life this climax is reached. In declining years the cords of life begin to relax, and man becomes more submissive to his lot and resigned to his surroundings, whether these be good or bad. When the die is cast and the impression once made it is more difficult to erase the stamp, and in after years change the disposition matured under wrong influences. Hence the few who turn to righteousness from the ranks of old age.

Again, you must recognise the solemnity of youth, the advantage of early Christian training, and the blessedness of bearing the yoke in one's youth, especially for high strung dispositions. There is divine truth and infinite force in that Scripture which saith, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart therefrom."

If we might be allowed to refer to our own adventures, we can say we know in the bitterness of our own experience what the sneers and taunts of sin mean. How hard it is for a man to bear the yoke in his youth and to "hope and quickly wait for the salvation of the Lord." But already we realize that it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth and thus learn how to hope and quietly wait for the deliverance of the Lord. The more a man patiently endures the better man it makes him. The heavier the yoke the stronger the character it develops and matures. Without the restraint of the yoke Christ your Saviour lays on you in your early days, you must see the danger of uncurbed youthful excesses. It is hard to change a heart that has gone on unrestrained for years cherishing sin and lived thus on to advanced years a life of indifference to culture and religion. It is in his early experiences every person lays the foundation for future eminence and prosperity in every sphere of human enterprise. If youth is squandered middle age is a failure and old age is lost.

We would urge you all to reflect and from this onward endeavor to acquit yourselves like true men and women, never for a moment forgetting the grave responsibilities of your age. To discharge faithfully your duty you must cultivate earnest attention and serious thoughtfulness.

ness. To be eminently successful in life a more serious demeanor and thoughtful behavior is necessary than even that becoming old age.

Again, *youth* is a period specially marked by God to receive His honors. It is particularly adapted to His purpose in developing human history. By selecting His agents from the young and not from the old, through their instrumentality He has made history. The men who have made those impressions on human history that will never die have all been men chosen by God while yet in their youth.

There was Moses and Samuel, and David and Jeremiah, and John the Baptist, and that disciple whom Jesus loved. Every one of them marked by God, in youth, for their especial work; and our blessed Lord Himself was only thirty-three when He accomplished the greatest work ever recorded, the redemption of a ruined race from the curse of sin. God especially blesses the efforts of *youth* and signally honors those who learn early to serve Him and do the right.

O solemn, O proud, O privileged youth, grand in experience, grand in reality, grand in life, grand in death; immortal even in ruins. In infancy and childhood death mows down the tender blade almost unfelt. In old age death has an easy task. The worn out frame easily succumbs to death. The infebled cords that bind to life snap without a strain. Old age lies down in peaceful submission to their lot, the days of the years of their life fully accomplished. But when death attacks youth both have a different task. In youth it is often a long, slow, wasting process. At first youth defies, then struggles, then refuses, and only when the whole physical is emaciated and prostrated with disease and all hope for recovery gone, will youth yield and give in.

Death enters first by some unguarded avenue. It may be a cold, or a fever, or a weak lung, but it gets a hold, and then begins a struggle with mortality, all, but too many for the young victim.

Youth with all its strength and vigor wards off the fell destroyer of human flesh until it realizes it must yield; even then it often matters not how well prepared for the great change it is a hard struggle in the prime of life to give up the seen and temporal for the unseen and eternal. Inspired as youth generally is to participate in life's battles and achieve something we need not wonder that it is hard to die.

God our maker has implanted in us a desire to live and achieve, which often no amount of reverse or disappointment will overcome.

With all these endowments and their possibilities of success why God should in the midst of all call anyone away in youth can only be answered by God. We must bow in submission to His will, believing that what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

Soon any one of us may be called upon to answer before the judgment seat of Christ, how old we are, not reckoned up by a standard

of time in so many days or years, but in the sum total of our life in thought, word and deed.

Let young and old, then live faithfully, seriously, thoughtfully discharging the responsibilities of the present hour, getting good and doing good. When your seat becomes empty you will be missed, missed in the family circle, missed in the social circle, and above all missed in the house of God, but present forever in the home where Jesus dwells.

Dear friends, each of us from our own experience re-echo the mournful words of David's friend, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty." When we were called upon to perform the mournful task of following to the last resting place appointed for all living the remains of our dear lamented friend Roderick Craig, a seat was vacated in this church which will never be occupied by him again. In all our acquaintance with him, we cannot recall a Sabbath during which his seat in this place was empty before. How easily we feel we can spare those who are seldom seen in the house of God, who do not hold a place in our affections, and who have never occupied a seat in our family or social circle. But the words of Jonathan come in all their force with a different meaning when we speak of those with whom "we took sweet council, and went to the house of God together."

Within the past year active and useful members have been compelled by the cold hand of Death to sever their connection with us. How much they are missed and what a lonely sight their vacant place makes is known and felt by all interested in the prosperity and up-building of God's cause among us, more fully known to their most intimate friends, but keenly felt in the secret depths of the hearts stricken and broken when a loved one was borne away from the family circle.

The last of these was a loving son, a devoted brother, a faithful friend and genial companion. The melancholy strain now for him is, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

A useful member has been lost to this congregation, a faithful son and devoted brother has been taken away from the family circle.

From the depths of our hearts do we his associates, who have lost a genial and warm friend, say, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

He was one of those happy dispositions who had a genial smile and kind word for all. We never heard him utter an unkind word against anyone. So far as we know he had not an enemy. All loved him and all miss him.

But the grandest commentary that can be written on the life of any man is, not only that he was always found in his place in God's house on Sabbath, but also, that he did remember his Creator in the days of

his youth and was enabled to say and realize "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth."

He was the child of prayers and Christian parents for generations. If there is anything in this life we should be certain of and comforted by, it is the assurance that when a prayer goes up from a good man for the salvation of those he loves it will be heard and answered. Because it is prayer according to the will of God, a prayer at all times well pleasing to Him, and a prayer we can always add, "Thy will be done." For it is always God's will to save the souls of the children of men.

He whom we will now see here no more well deserves anything we can say in his praise.

It was like parting with a brother to see him day by day wasting away. It was hard for us who are left behind to let him go.

Still harder must it be for those going in the prime of life to bid adieu to companions and friends. However well prepared we cannot blame *youth* for taking a long last lingering look at the life they have enjoyed and appreciated with only the zest which youth can feel, and bid a reluctant farewell to the mother and sisters and brothers, the companions and friends they loved so well. We must not blame them, it is human, it is earthly, it is deeply imbedded in every nature, and shows itself strongest in youth.

While these feelings have possession of us, let us again reiterate that one-half the human race die in infancy and the greater proportion of the remainder die in early life. Only a few reach old age. The vast majority of the inhabitants of heaven must then be young. An infinite number of those who people the realms of eternal day are of our own age.

Our appreciation of pleasure is highest and fullest in youth. To enter heaven then at this period is something like attaining a grand purpose early in life; our appreciation must be fresher and to youth the sight must be more astonishing and overwhelming. Think, then, how glorious it must be to join that great throng of youthful beings. Think, too, of the shout of celestial enthusiasm that shall go up from the buoyant spirits of those youthful hosts on the arrival of every new comer.

These glorious hosannas will ring through the glittering archives of heaven and resound again and again in the ears of the astounded youth just entering on eternal life and glory and light.

If he calls to mind his eagerness to remain on earth it will be only for a moment. No longings any more in that soul for earthly life. He is now saved and he would not take the universe to re-cross the stream and enter on the vicissitudes of temporal being.

Every angel in heaven can crowd around to gaze in rapture on the

beaming countenance of our Saviour, Himself only thirty-three years of age when He accomplished his magnanimous work, extending His loving welcome to the youthful spirit applying through faith in His cleansing blood and precious promises, to join the glorified throng of redeemed souls.

Our fathers and grandfathers will be there, and their matured spirits will join in the acclamations of joy and praise that shall resound and reverberate through the heaven of heavens. And above all the Father of our Redeemer and our great Heavenly Father will be there, and when we shall arise in His likeness we will see Him as He is and live forever in the light of His loving countenance.

Stretching far away out over the celestial landscape of heaven as far as the rebeautified eyes of a redeemed soul can see are groups of youths participating in the joys prepared for them.

Instead of it being a calamity to die young, it must be a glorious prospect and magnificent reality for *youth* to join such a company of buoyant spirits.

We mourn the loss of our dear beloved friends, while they are rejoicing with all the joy a celestial spirit can realize, in their infinite gain. Instead of mourning with us they are rejoicing over the regenerating effect our bereavements are having on us; their influence in directing our thoughts from earth to heaven. Who that has lost a friend does not the more often look heavenward. Such chastisements, laid on by a loving hand, excite in us a longing desire to be with them, which years only cultivate and mature.

The earthly seat of our brother and companion is empty, but he lives in the affectionate memory of friends as one who will never die while one remains on earth.

In conclusion, let us picture to your imagination what death has been instrumental in accomplishing for him. He has been removed from all the uncertainties and vicissitudes that attend even the most successful life on earth. Through the valley of the shadow of death his soul has passed into the benign presence of the God who gave it. He is now actually engaged in celestial achievements, and in full possession of eternal life. He dwells where God is. If you could only see the place he occupies, the grand possibilities and powers of the life now open to him, his early removal would have less anguish and more of consolation for us. To-day clad in the spotless robes of Christ's righteousness he converses with those friends who have gone on before, in a richer voice than has ever sounded in *mortal* ear, and adds a vocal strain to that grand anthem of heaven: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

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