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DISCOURSE,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE

REV. EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN, D. D.

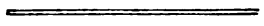
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CHAPEL OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE,

BY MARK HOPKINS, D. D.

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DISCOURSE.

Acts xiii. 36.

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers.

DAVID, the king of Israel, is perhaps the only man who ever sustained the three-fold character of the King, the Poet, and the Prophet. In each of these characters he was eminent. As a king, he united under his sway the jealous and factious tribes of Israel, and by his victories over foreign foes, extended his kingdom to those limits which had been designated by prophecy as the borders of the promised land. As a poet, he was original, tender, descriptive, beautiful, and often sublime. As a prophet, he "heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty," and scarcely in Isaiah himself do we find clearer delineations of the sufferings of the Messiah, and of the glory of his kingdom. In their double character of poetry and prophecy, his writings have elevated the taste, quickened the piety, and strengthened the hope of all ages. Next to the pride which a Jew cherished in having "Abraham to his father," was that which he felt in David as the illustrious founder of a long line of kings, and as the representative in his kingly office of the promised Messiah.

But notwithstanding these grounds for admiration and distinction, when an inspired Jew looked back over the space of a thousand years, what was the condensation and substance of all that he saw in him that was worthy of remembrance? It consisted simply in this—that he *served his generation*. They were made wiser, better, happier, through his instrumentality. He had, it is true, striking faults, and was guilty, especially in one instance, of departing very widely from the path of duty; but when his whole career is taken together, it must be conceded that he was a good and a great man, and that he served his generation. He did not merely benefit his generation involuntarily in the pursuit of his own selfish schemes, but he *served* it,—he devoted himself voluntarily and of set purpose to promote that end.

We find at this point, a striking difference in the characters of men. The mass of men have evidently had, and still have, very little regard for the general consequences of their actions. Prompted by impulse, or guided by self-love, each pursues his inclination or his interest, forming his own plans, and toiling after his own ends, little regardful of the effect which his labors may have on the general course of human affairs. The emigrant who sets himself down in the mighty forest, and opens over a little spot a path for the sunlight, has his arm nerved solely by the hope of his own future independence, and of the good of his children. One, and another, and another, incited by the same motives, and with the same circumscribed vision, follows his example, till the forest disappears, and villages, and cities, and schoolhouses, and churches spring up on every side; and there are perhaps thus laid the foundations of an empire that is to keep alive liberty and religion in the earth. Thus it is that the world goes on, and that God, by means of numberless separate and free agents who "mean not so," works out his grand designs.

In the pursuit of their distinct and independent objects, individual men hold the same relation to the great purposes of God which the separate workmen upon a complex and magnificent structure do to the original design, and ultimate effect of the whole. Of the busy multitudes who labored upon the rising walls of St. Peter's Church at Rome, each polishing his own stone, or shaping his own angle, how few had any conception of the grand result, or cared for any thing beyond the wages he was to receive at night! They toiled for their bread; and yet from their voluntary toil thus induced, and shaped by the controlling genius of Michael Angelo, there arose a structure that has astonished the world. True, it did not affect the result whether the workmen understood the design or not; but it does essentially affect the estimate which we make of them. In the one case they were drudges, and could never share in the glory and pleasure of the design; they were instruments as the saw and the axe. In the other they were fit companions of Angelo himself, their bosoms swelled with the same impulses, and shared the same anxieties, and their humblest labor, no matter how insignificant, was dignified and cheered as connected in their minds with an idea so grand and ennobling. They were no longer instruments, they were free intelligences in the likeness of the chief architect, and co-operating cheerfully with him. And

so it is in the works of God. Moved by benevolence, and guided by wisdom, he is rearing a structure that is going up without the sound of the axe or the hammer, and which shall stand forever. He whose heart has once throbbled with benevolence, and whose eye has caught the outlines of this building, is thenceforward no longer a slave, nor an instrument; but is an intelligent and cheerful co-worker with God, and shall be a participator in the joy and the triumph that shall wake the echoes of heaven, when the topstone thereof is laid with shouting, and they cry, "grace, grace, unto it." Thenceforward all labor connected with this result purifies and elevates the mind. There is no act so humble that it cannot be ennobled by its germination from this principle of action; and though what he may do, may seem to be, and may be, but as the drop to the ocean, yet he remembers that the ocean is made up of drops—the little he has to give, he gives cheerfully—and it is accepted. When the unostentatious widow goes to deposit her two mites, the Saviour is there to notice it. He who does this, whether he does little or much, is a *good* man. He *serves* his generation; he cooperates with God, feebly it may be, but intelligently and cheerfully in the promotion of his benevolent purposes. He who does this is a good man, and no other is.

But I have said that David was not only a good, but also a *great* man. We have seen what it is to be a good man; let us see what it is to be a great one. There are those who suppose that goodness is an essential element of greatness, but this is not in accordance with the common usage of the term, nor with the common apprehensions of men. Give to goodness that intelligence and power which we believe it shall, in every instance, one day possess, and it becomes great; but there may be great men who are not good. The designs of Providence respect the great masses of men, and great men, considered as distinct from the masses, are the instruments by which those designs are accomplished. Thus, though the course of society is generally uniform, yet as it flows on, it will occasionally happen that its embankments will give way, that "the waters will be out, and a new and troubled scene will arise." He who can then stop the rush, and repair the breaches, and cause the waters to flow again in their accustomed channel, is a great man. Again, it sometimes occurs that society outgrows its institutions, and for the expansion and moulding of its energies, demands new forms.

He who can then preside over the transition from the old to the new, and conduct it to a prosperous issue, stands at the head of a new epoch, and is a great man. Again, it has often happened that nations have attained a point in intelligence and civilization beyond that which they have reached in moral culture, and then society, like a building whose timbers have decayed, has fallen in upon itself, pressed down by its own weight. The mass has been tending to corruption, and there has been no redeeming principle. This always has been the case with cultivated nations where a pure christianity has not prevailed; it always must be. It is impossible that civilization and the arts should reach and maintain a high state of perfection without a corresponding progress of morals, and a stability of principle adequate to resist the multiplied temptations arising from a dense population, the increase of artificial wants, and the general diffusion of knowledge. But when society has become thus corrupt, then it seems necessary that it should be scourged, and perhaps thoroughly overturned. Then there has always arisen some ambitious conqueror, who has headed barbarous hordes under the impulse of want, or legions controlled by some overmastering principle, and who, when the time of those corrupt nations has fully come, has swept over them like the tornado, and made them as the chaff upon the summer threshing floor. Such have been the Nebuchadnezzars, the Alexanders, the Alarics, the Attilas, and the Buonapartes of the earth. These have been as the storm in the hand of God, and have fulfilled his purposes, though "they meant not so, neither did their heart think so, but it was in their heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." So far indeed, as they were great without being good, they were instruments, not with reference to their own ends, which they pursued in the exercise of all those powers of free-agency which good men possess, but with reference to the great purposes of God, which they involuntarily accomplished. Still, notwithstanding their wickedness, these too were great men. He, therefore, who in any great crisis of human affairs stands at the turning point, and whether by restraint or impulsion controls their course, or who in any way exerts a decided and permanent influence upon large bodies of men, whether for good or for evil, is a great man. The influence of the many, in their individual capacity, either to swell or to control the tide of human

affairs, is as that of the rain-drop upon the river; the influence of a great man can be distinctly traced.

He then, to class mankind very briefly with reference to goodness and greatness, who exerts the ordinary and comparatively petty influence in favor of evil principles, the common drudge and low mercenary of sin, is neither a great nor a good man; while he who exerts his little daily influence in an intelligent and honest endeavor to serve his generation, and further the benevolent designs of God, is a good, but not a great man. He on the other hand who manifests great talent, and under the influence of his ambition, or his evil passions, scourges, or corrupts the world, is a great, but not a good man; while he who exerts a wide influence under the control of benevolence, and in voluntary co-operation with God in his beneficent purposes, is both a good and a great man. The possession of such a character forms the highest object of ambition which this world presents. Such a man was David; and such, though on a theatre much more limited, was he who recently presided over this Institution and with reference to whose death we are now assembled. He served his generation, and from his distinguished talents, and the peculiar positions which he occupied, his influence for good may be distinctly traced. These assertions I proceed to confirm by some reference to his history.

“Dr. Griffin,” to adopt the language of an account which most of us have probably seen, “was born at East Haddam, Ct., the second son of George Griffin, an independent farmer of that place, Jan. 6, 1770. He graduated at Yale College in 1790, at the age of 20; and received his theological education under the second President Edwards at New Haven. He was ordained at New Hartford in 1795, and installed as Colleague of the Rev. Dr. McWhorter, then pastor of the second Presbyterian Church in Newark, in Oct., 1801.”

I have just intimated that it is often the juncture at which a man appears, no less than his talents, that places him in such a point of view that the world will recognize him as a great man; and it may here be remarked, that Dr. Griffin entered upon his career at an important period in the history of the world. Of this he was himself accustomed to speak. “In the year 1792,” he was often heard to say, “the blood began to flow; in that year the first missionaries, among whom was Carey, were sent out, and in that year began that series of revivals which has not ceased till the present time;”

and which, it was his full conviction, would not cease till the Millennium should be ushered in. These events were doubtless the commencement of mighty changes, and seem to give to that period the character of one of those transition points which is indicated in the language of prophecy by the opening of the seals, and the pouring out of the vials, and the sounding of the trumpets. It was then, perhaps, that the last Angel began to sound, when "there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

In saying that the blood then began to flow, reference was made to the opening of the French revolution, and the commencement of that series of unparalleled convulsions over Europe, which lasted with little intermission for four and twenty years. These convulsions have not, I think, resulted in any immediate change of old organizations so distinct as was generally anticipated both by the political and by the religious world. Still there was then wrought a great revolution in the opinions and feelings of men, and those events constituted a most important act, or perhaps I should rather say, the opening scene in the last act of the great drama of this world's history.

To the missionary movements of that day, as the commencement of a new era in the history of christianity, it does not appear that Dr. Griffin attached too much importance. It would seem that the Angel having the everlasting Gospel to preach, then plumed anew his pinions, and gathered his energies for a higher and a wider flight than ever before. These movements must form a prominent characteristic in the religious history of the times from that day to this; and so extensive have they become, that no impartial history of the world can be written in which they shall not find their place. The impulse is still onward, acquiring strength by progression, and there are no indications that it will spend itself, till the Gospel shall be preached to all nations.

The spirit of religious revivals, so intimately connected with that of missions, then first awoke after the time of Whitfield, and was most surprising in its manifestations, both in the eastern and the western States; and it is true that there have been revivals from that time till the present.

It was in this last great movement of the day that Dr. Griffin was particularly interested, and that he acted a conspicuous part. In 1795, as has been said, he was ordained at

New Hartford, Ct., and a revival immediately commenced. This I ascertain from a letter published by him in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, dated Aug 1800. This letter was written to give an account of a revival, which commenced in Oct. 1798; but in the commencement of it he says, "The work of divine grace among us three years ago," which was of course in '95, "by which nearly fifty persons were hopefully added to the Lord, had not wholly ceased to produce effects on the people generally, when the late scene of *mercy* and *wonder* commenced." Of this revival in '95, I find no other notice; but of the succeeding one in '98 and '99, he goes on to give some particulars. And here I shall introduce an extract from his account, which will be interesting, both as showing how revivals in those days commenced, and as recalling expressions which will be familiar to some who hear me. "Late in Oct 1798," says the account, "the people frequently hearing of the displays of divine grace in West Symsbury, were increasingly impressed with the information. Our conferences soon became more crowded and feeling. Serious people began to break their minds to each other; and it was discovered that there had been, for a considerable time, in their minds, special desires for the revival of religion; while each one, unapprised of his neighbor's feelings, had supposed his exercises peculiar to himself. It was soon agreed to institute a secret meeting, for the express purpose of praying for the effusion of the spirit; which was the scene of such wrestlings as are not, it is apprehended, commonly experienced. Several circumstances conspired to increase our anxiety. The glorious work had already begun in Torrington, and the cloud appeared to be going all around us. It seemed as though Providence, by avoiding us, designed to bring to remembrance our past abuses of his grace. Besides, having been so recently visited with distinguishing favors, we dared not allow ourselves to expect a repetition of them so soon; and we began to apprehend that it was the purpose of Him whom we had lately grieved from among us, that we should, for penalty, stand alone, parched up in the sight of surrounding showers. This was the state of the people, when, on a Sabbath in the month of November, it was the sovereign pleasure of a most merciful God, very sensibly to manifest himself in the public assembly. Many abiding impressions were made on minds seemingly the least susceptible, and on several grown old in unbelief. From that memorable day,

the flame which had been kindling in secret, broke out. By desire of the people, religious conferences were set up in different parts of the town, which continued to be attended by deeply affected crowds; and in which divine presence and power were manifested to a degree we had never before witnessed." Near the close of the letter, he says, "It is believed that the outlines of this narration, equally describe the features and fruits of this extensive (and may we not add genuine and remarkably pure) work, in at least fifty or sixty adjacent congregations." Of the numbers added to the church in this revival, nothing is said; it is remarked, however, that it was hoped that about fifty heads of families were subjects of the work, and if the proportion of other persons was as great as is usual, it must have been very extensive. In 1801 Dr. Griffin left New Hartford for Newark, so that he must have been, during almost the whole time he was there, in a revival of religion.

At Newark, Dr. Griffin was, as has been said, installed as the colleague of Dr. McWhorter in Oct. 1801. In the works to which I have access, I find no further mention of him till 1808. In a Panoplist of that year, is a letter from him to Dr. Green giving an account of a revival at Newark, still more remarkable than that at New Hartford. In July 1807, Dr. McWhorter died, and Dr. Griffin took the whole charge of the congregation. In the following Sept. the revival commenced. This revival began in much the same manner as the former. The letter states, that silent and unsuspected preparation for it in the providence of God, could be traced for near eighteen months previous. The death of Dr. McWhorter made a powerful impression; the seriousness became more deep, till at length, "at a lecture preached at a private house, it was no longer doubtful whether a work of divine grace had begun." "During that and the following week," says the account, "increasing symptoms of a most powerful influence were discovered. The appearance was as if a collection of waters, long suspended over the town, had fallen at once and deluged the whole place. For several weeks the people would stay at the close of every evening service, to hear some new exhortation, and it seemed impossible to persuade them to depart until those on whose lips they hung had retired."

"I never before," he observes further on, "witnessed the communication of a spirit of prayer so earnest and so general,

nor observed such evident and remarkable answers to prayer." And again, "This work in point of *power* and *stillness*, exceeds all that I have ever seen. While it bears down every thing with irresistible force, and seems almost to dispense with human instrumentality, it moves with so much silence, that unless we attentively observe its effects, we are tempted at times to doubt whether any thing uncommon is taking place. The converts are strongly marked with humility and self-distrust. Instead of being elated with confident hopes, they are inclined to tremble. Many of them possess deep and discriminating views, and all, or almost all, are born into the distinguishing doctrines of grace." "I suppose," he continues, "there are from 230 to 250 who hope that they have become the subjects of divine grace, and many remain still under solemn impressions, whose number I hope is almost daily increasing. We have had but one sacrament since the work commenced, at which time we received 97 new members who had been propounded a fortnight before." Such was this wonderful work, and no doubt it continued till he left Newark.

In the early part of 1809, he accepted a call to the Professorship of Pulpit Eloquence in the Theological Seminary at Andover, and was inaugurated in June of that year. His inaugural discourse was published, and spoken of in terms of much commendation. Dr. Griffin had already acquired reputation, and now entering upon a prominent station, in the full maturity of his powers, and under the influence of a recent extraordinary revival of religion, he seems to have made at once a strong and favorable impression in the eastern part of this State. That he was an able and a successful teacher in his department, there can be no doubt; and what he taught by precept, he illustrated by example, for he soon acquired the reputation of being, if not the most eloquent, yet certainly among the most eloquent men in New England. I have understood that the classes under his instruction had for him a strong personal attachment.

At Andover, however, Dr. Griffin remained but a short time, having been called in 1811, to occupy what was then a more conspicuous and important station. The position which he occupied in Park-street Church, Boston, was peculiar; and to present it fully, it would be necessary to go more at large into the history of that period than time will now permit. Suffice it to say, that there had there been recently manifested, and after a painful period of hesitation, had been publicly

avowed, an alarming defection from the faith and practice of the New England Fathers. In this defection the wealth and fashion of Boston, and the learning of Cambridge, were involved. It was suddenly discovered that the Pilgrim Fathers had been amazingly bigotted and prejudiced and narrow-minded; and their sons were proud of having descended from them, only as a rich man will sometimes boast that his father was poor, the better to show what he has done for himself. It was understood that an age of light had commenced, and this light was so *very* plain, and so *very* obvious, that no sensible man, much less any man of literature and refinement, could help seeing it. The old foundations seemed to be giving way, and only a single orthodox congregational church, the Old South, remained firm. In this state of things, a few individuals, after much prayerful deliberation, determined to erect in a conspicuous place, a large church, and procure an able and popular man, who should there defend, in that day of rebuke, the despised and ridiculed doctrines of the Bible; and who should rekindle that flame of experimental piety, which, for want of its appropriate nutriment, had already begun to wane and flicker to its final extinction in the socket of rationalism. After many sacrifices, this house was finished, and was dedicated in Jan. 1810. The dedication sermon was preached, and the dedicatory prayer offered, by Dr. Griffin. This sermon was published. In July, 1811, a year and a half after the dedication, Dr. Griffin was installed as pastor of that church, and entered upon a course of labors, the moral effect of which upon the community, was great and lasting. It was here probably, that his most powerful efforts were made. He felt that he was standing in the breach; a large portion of the community at a distance, felt so too, and he had their sympathy, while he wielded the force of a giant. Many who hated his doctrines, were drawn in by his eloquence, and it not unfrequently happened, that those who "went to scoff, remained to pray." As he was the only orthodox congregational clergyman in the city except one, his church was much resorted to by members of the legislature, and by strangers, and he thus became extensively known throughout this State, and indeed throughout the country. It was not uncommon for persons who dropped in casually, to have their attention riveted, and to have impressions made upon their minds, which did not leave them till they found peace in believing. Many striking instances of this kind are related. It was in this way that

Mr. Taylor, the well known Bethel preacher, then a rough sailor, was converted. I met, when recently at Andover, with a man who said he never heard him but once, but that he remembered the sermon as distinctly as if he had heard it but yesterday. It was here that he preached his celebrated Park-street lectures, which produced a powerful effect at the time, which were afterwards received with so much favor by the community, and which will remain as a standard theological work. These lectures gained him reputation in Europe. By these efforts a decided effect was produced. The tide began to turn; men again began to ask for "the old paths;" and from that day to this, the cause of truth has been gaining ground in Boston. There are now in that city, nearly or quite as many congregational churches that are orthodox, as there are that are not, and other orthodox denominations have greatly increased. I have been surprised when at Boston, at the warm affection with which, after so long a time, many persons there still speak of Dr. Griffin. They all say that the battle in Boston was fought by him. He was their first pastor; he carried them successfully through their struggles, and they can never forget him.

It was while Dr. Griffin was at Park-street, in 1812, that he assisted at Salem in ordaining, and laid his hands upon the first five missionaries from this country. These were Messrs. Newell, Judson, Nott, Hall, and Rice; of whom Messrs. Hall and Rice were graduates of this College.

Of the causes which induced Dr. Griffin to leave Boston, I have no knowledge. I only know that in June, 1815, he returned to Newark, "at the invitation of the second Presbyterian Church, which had been but recently formed out of the congregation in which he had before presided." After his return to Newark at this time, he remained there a little more than seven years. I have no access to sources of information that will enable me to state much that is of interest respecting him during this period. It was during this time, however, that he completed and published his book on the Atonement; a work of much labor and research. He was, also, during this period, as he had been indeed during the former, much engaged in originating and promoting the various benevolent societies, which have since had so much influence upon the world.

Of his agency in forming and promoting these societies some account should be given, and as that agency was more distinguished during this and the preceding period than at any

other time, it may not be out of place to notice it here. There seems, so far as I have information, little reason to doubt, that with the exception of Samuel J. Mills, he had more to do with bringing those societies forward than any other man. Mills was a native of Torringsford, and had been known to Dr. Griffin from a child. It was in the great revival of '98 and '99, already noticed, that he was converted; and he, doubtless, during that time, often heard Dr. Griffin preach. He would of course, after coming into the ministry, more naturally and freely lay open his plans to him than to any other man, especially as he could find no person more suitable to bring them before the public. Accordingly, Dr. Griffin says in his sermon at the dedication of this building, "I have been in situations to *know*, that from the counsels formed in that sacred conclave," alluding to a society formed by Mills and others in this College, "or from the mind of Mills himself, arose the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Bible Society, the United Foreign Missionary Society, and the African School under the care of the Synod of New York and New Jersey; besides all the impetus given to domestic missions, to the Colonization Society, and to the general cause of benevolence in both hemispheres. If I had any instrumentality in originating any of these measures, I here publicly declare, that in every instance I received the first impulse from Samuel J. Mills." It is then added in a note, "It was at the request of Mills and his associates, that I carried the proposition for an American Bible Society to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the spring of 1814. On my return to Burlington, I first proposed the subject to Dr. Boudinot, the great instrument by which the society was formed. Mills went from my house to lay the project of a missionary society before the General Assembly, at the time the United Foreign Missionary Society was formed. And the letters of his correspondents, addressed to me, by an understanding between us, were the engines that swayed the Synod to the establishment of the African School." Standing in such a relation to Mills, it is easy to see that though these projects may have originated with him, yet the agency of Dr. Griffin in shaping them, and especially in commending them to public favor, must have been all important. His eloquent voice was never withheld when the cause of these societies was to be plead; and with the exception, as I have already said, of Mills, probably the cause of benevolence is as largely

indebted to him, through these societies, as to any other man.

We now come to that period in the history of Dr. Griffin, when he became connected with this College. This was in 1821. At the commencement in that year, Dr. Moore presided for the last time. It had for some time been the opinion of the majority of the trustees, that if there was to be but one College, and it was supposed there could be but one, in the western part of this State, Northampton would be a more favorable location, and Dr. Moore had accepted the presidency with the expectation that the College would be removed. A majority of the trustees had voted that it was expedient to remove it, and had petitioned the legislature for permission to do so. This petition had been met by a spirited opposition on the part of the inhabitants of the town, and of the county; and upon their own responsibility, they raised a subscription of \$17,000, which was laid before a committee of the legislature, and which was to be paid to the College in case it should not be removed. This subscription, raised against the wishes of a majority of the trustees, but which they could not refuse without a fraud upon the legislature, some persons afterwards refused to pay, and it was made the ground of much misrepresentation respecting the College. In consequence, however, of this subscription, and of the representations made from this part of the State, the legislature refused to the trustees permission to remove the College. In the mean time, strong expectations had been excited in Hampshire county, that there would be a College there. The people of Amherst, acting in concert with some of the trustees of this College residing in that region, raised large subscriptions and erected buildings for the reception of students, with the expectation of obtaining a charter. Having therefore, accommodations prepared in a region upon which his eye had been fixed, Dr. Moore was about to place himself at the head of an institution there, and to take a considerable number of the students with him. The trustees had already elected one or two persons as president, who had declined, when Dr. Griffin was fixed upon; and one of their number went to Newark to lay the subject before him. He had been interested in the College from its connection with missionary operations; and coming on immediately to meet the trustees, he arrived here commencement day at noon, and took his seat upon the stage. His appearance at that time revived the hopes of the friends of the College; and it was soon understood that he would accept the appointment.

He had precisely the kind of reputation which was needed for the College at such a crisis; a comparatively large class entered, and the College continued to increase in numbers and to prosper till 1825. In Feb. of that year, Amherst obtained a charter, and as it had been often urged against granting one that two Colleges could not be sustained in the western part of this State, it was supposed by many that it would be a death blow to this. This impression caused a number of the students to take dismissions, while a very small class entered at the ensuing commencement. It was now seen, that "to extract the seeds of consumption which had lurked in the College for eleven years, something must be done to convince the public that it would live and flourish on this ground."

The trustees accordingly resolved to attempt to raise a fund of \$25,000 to establish a new professorship, and to build a chapel. In the raising of this sum, Dr. Griffin was the principal agent; and strengthened by an extraordinary revival of religion, with which God in his mercy then favored the College, he accomplished what probably no other man could have done. In a time of general embarrassment, he raised \$12,000 in four weeks. The fund was completed; a professorship of rhetoric and moral philosophy was endowed; this building was erected, and Sept. 2d, 1823, standing where I now stand, he dedicated it "to the honor and glory of the ever blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." From that time it has been felt that the College is permanent; and it has been going on side by side with sister institutions, doing its part in carrying on the great business of education in this country. In estimating this effort of Dr. Griffin, it should be remembered that it was the first of the kind, and probably led to the more extended and the successful efforts of other institutions in the same way.

Dr. Griffin continued to preside over the institution with distinguished ability and success, till the spring of 1833, at which time he had a slight paralytic stroke, which affected his left side. The succeeding year he had some dropsical affection; and from that time it was evident that the infirmities of age and of disease were gathering upon him. He continued, however, to exert himself for the College till the fall of 1836, when, in consequence of his increasing infirmities, he was led to resign.

During his connexion with the College there were several powerful revivals of religion, especially that in 1825, which

for a long time changed the whole aspect of the College, and by which the hopes and destinies of many have been affected. Through these, and the ministers raised up in consequence of them, Dr. Griffin, though dead, may be said still to live, and to speak in the churches, and even to lift up his voice on heathen shores. He also took an active part in several revivals in the town.

In this brief sketch of the public life of Dr. Griffin, which may be said to have closed when he resigned the presidency of the College, I trust I have said enough to illustrate and confirm the position, that he was a good and a great man, and that he served his generation. Probably the labors of no preacher in his day were blessed to the conversion of more persons than were his; few if any did more to originate and give impulse to those benevolent movements which characterize the age; in a period of apparent peril to the church, he occupied for a number of years a post of peculiar difficulty on the walls of Zion, and by his writings he was an able defender of the truth. In his later years, when he had become extensively known to the benevolent, the influential and the wealthy, and from his services in the church held the key to their hearts, he devoted his energies to the building up of an institution whose existence was placed in peril, but which through his exertions and those of other generous and indefatigable friends, we trust and believe will stand to raise up other Millses, and Halls, and Rices, and Richards, and Harveys, till it shall not be needful for one to say to another "know the Lord."

In discussing the claims of any one to be considered great or good, it might be expected that some delineation would be given of the lights and shades of his more private and individual character; especially if he were one of those, who, while they excite warm feelings of attachment in some, excite in others a decided dislike. This, however, the limits of the present occasion will not permit. The friends of Dr. Griffin would be the last to deny that in connection with his peculiar excellencies, he had a share of those faults which are incident to a temperament like his. The gold was mixed with alloy, but there was still much gold; and those, if any there are, who would wish to hear his faults dwelt upon, must seek it from other occasions than this, and from other voices than mine. There is reason to believe that before his death, he who sits as a refiner to his people, purified him as silver, and tried him as gold is tried.

It now only remains to speak of the closing scene. It is said in the text, that David, after he had served his generation, fell on sleep. This is a consoling figure often used by the Jews, used by our Saviour, to denote death; and it suggests to the mind both a gentle manner of departure, and the hope of a happy resurrection. In both these respects it may be appropriately applied to the death of Dr. Griffin. His was not a sudden or an unexpected departure. In 1833, as has been said, he evidently began to fail. His moorings to the shores of time then began to be loosed, and the resistless tide to rise that was to bear him away. For a time he struggled against it, and his eyes and his wishes were towards these shores; but as chord after chord was sundered, and he perceived that the earth was receding, he turned his face towards the ocean, and he passed not from the view of those who were watching him, till they heard him say that his eye had caught a glimpse of the green fields and the glittering spires of that happy land to which he was bound. It appears from an extract from his diary, entered just before leaving here, that he felt it was time to relinquish his earthly cares, and that he set himself to prepare to die.

By a singular providence, he returned to Newark a second time, there, in the family of his son-in-law, and in the midst of a people who remembered him with affection and reverence to close his days. It was well said by a clergyman of that place in reference to his death, that "it was fitting that he who came in his youth to teach us how to live, should come when his head was gray to show us how to die. It was fitting that he should lie side by side till the resurrection, with those to whom he had so often preached the resurrection and the life." For the larger part of the year while there, he was able to take his accustomed exercise, and to preach some; but after the death of Mrs. Griffin, in August, he began evidently to decline. He was, however, able to attend that most interesting meeting of the American Board at Newark in September, and there, on the 15th of that month, before that Board whose first missionaries he had assisted to ordain, he was permitted to make his last public address and prayer. "On the week succeeding the meeting of the Board," I now quote from an account furnished by his daughter, Mrs. Smith, to his friends here, "his difficulty of breathing, indicating dropsy in the chest, returned. A general dropsical effusion soon followed. After Thursday night of that week, he never

attempted to lie down; he at once resigned the expectation of ever being any better, and said to me that night, "I never expect to lie down again, till I lie by your mother's side." "To the numerous friends, who," when his situation was understood, "flocked to the "privileged chamber," he would say, (while his breathing was such as to draw tears from every eye but his own.) I want to tell you, for the honor of God, and for your own comfort, (for you have yet to die) of his most merciful and faithful provision for a poor wretched sinner, so needful for an old man going down into the grave after his beloved wife. *Not one anxious thought* is left me from day to day about *the event or the manner*. I am taken up in thanking the blessed God for his wonderful mercy and faithfulness in thus dealing with me. That he should select this time to do for me, what he never did before, to remove every concern, and to fill me with peace—to make that most solemn event, and all its dreaded means no longer dreadful but delightful—is proof of mercy and faithfulness beyond the power of language to express." * * * To one of his brethren in the ministry who came in, he said, extending his hand, "you see me just going home." His friend said, It has often been your privilege to administer consolation to the dying; I hope you experience all those consolations you have offered to others. Raising his voice in the most emphatic manner, he repeated, "more, more, much more." In the evening of Tuesday, a beloved friend was introduced to him. "I do not recollect my friends now," he said. "You remember the dear Saviour who is by you?" she asked. "Oh, yes," emphatically, "he never so manifested his preciousness to me before." It was during that night that he ceased to breathe, without a struggle or a groan. He had preached the gospel 45 years.

Thus departed one who was long conversant among us, and from whose lips most of us have heard much solemn instruction, and many admonitions to prepare for that world to which he has gone. To those of us who have known him long, and heard him often, it must be a touching thought that that venerable head shall no more appear in our assemblies, and that voice be no more heard. That "tall and reverend head" now lies low in the grave, and that eloquent voice is silent in death. He is gone, and to you, and especially to me, does his death bring a solemn admonition to prepare to follow him.

To the students of this Institution, many of whom remember him as their President, and at whose request this discourse was prepared, it is my desire that this sketch of his life may teach true wisdom. Few of you, my dear young friends, can expect to attain to the age which he reached, and perhaps fewer still, to be as useful and distinguished. But notwithstanding he lived so long, and was useful and honored in life, you see that a time came when all the applause that had been bestowed upon him, and all the honors he had received could avail him nothing; and he felt himself to be, according to his own expression, only a poor sinner, and an old man going down into the grave. Oh the agony of that hour, if the life then past had been spent in the service of sin! But he had, we have reason to believe, when in College, given himself to the Saviour; he had spent his life in spreading his Gospel, and in that hour he had the support which was "so needful" to him. Will you not now give yourselves to the same Saviour, that *you*, in *your* trying hour, and in *your* old age, may find the same support?