

A
SERMON,

PREACHED JULY 22, 1807,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER MACWHORTER, D. D.

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

IN

NEWARK,

NEW-JERSEY.

BY EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, A. M.

SURVIVING PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

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TO THE

CONGREGATION

UNDER THE AUTHOR'S PASTORAL CHARGE.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE following sermon, preached in memory of a pastor justly dear to us all, and now published at your request, and for your special use, I affectionately dedicate to you.

In the biographical part, I have descended to a minuteness of detail, which I am aware would be uninteresting to strangers; but certainly not to you and the bereaved family, whose common gratification I have had chiefly in view. You will find several pages of narrative that were omitted in the delivery, and other matter which was necessarily reserved till the subsequent Sabbath. Neither the time nor the occasion admitted of presenting the entire sermon on the day of the

interment ; but I trust no apology is necessary for laying the whole before you in the present form.

That God may comfort you under your bereavement, and render this discourse in some degree useful to you, is the anxious desire and prayer of

Your affectionate Pastor,

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.

Newark, Aug. 10, 1807.

A SERMON.

PSALM CXII. 6.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING
REMEMBRANCE.

IT is with trembling and distress that I present myself under this awful stroke of the Almighty, to address my afflicted congregation, and to mingle my sorrows with our widowed church. Standing in the place from which our friend has so often addressed us, and oppressed with the sight of these solemn badges of wo, I have no heart to speak. But duty has assigned my task, and I will perform it as well as I can. It is not to utter my own complaints that I have entered this house of God; but to speak a word of comfort to my friends, and to execute the last sad office of respect and love to my departed father.

The words which I have read are susceptible of a double construction, as the term *everlasting* may be understood either in a limited or an absolute sense. They import either that the righteous man shall long be remembered with affection and reverence on earth, or that he shall be had in eternal remembrance before God and the inhabitants of heaven. Both positions may be supported as general truths; and from the double meaning evidently contained in many maxims, as well as predictions, of the Old Testament, especially in those which are couched in such indefinite terms, we may reasonably presume that both ideas are expressed in these words. We shall therefore dwell a few moments on each.

I. The righteous shall be long remembered with affection and reverence on earth. This however is true only as a general proposition, which admits of many exceptions. Piety is not the door to fame in the splendid circles of the great. Many of the excellent of the earth have been overlooked in their life, and forgotten in their death. Thousands have given their bodies to the flames to gain a martyr's crown ;—

“ Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown,
 “ Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,
 “ And chas'd them up to heav'n. Their ashes flew

“ —No marble tells us whither. With their names

“ No bard embalms and sanctifies his song :

“ And history, so warm on meaner themes,

“ Is cold on this.”—*

Yet notwithstanding this complaint of the poet, one of the wisest observers of human affairs has stated it as a general maxim, that *the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot*. Men of the world, by their intrepidity in vice and their impenetrable assurance, by the brilliancy and point of their wit, and their arts of address, may attract, while they live, more attention than the truly good ; but it is often otherwise when they are dead. The infidel himself, while he praises the living sinner, venerates the departed saint. It is not those who in the circles of profaneness can raise the loudest laugh against the religion of Christ, that posterity will most revere ; but the sincere worshippers of God, and the benefactors of mankind. While a thousand titled libertines, who once dazzled the croud with their stars and crescents, now sleep with vulgar dust, with names that have scarcely reached the ear of posterity, a Baxter, a Flavel, a Whitefield, an Edwards, a Tennent, and a Davies, live still in the af-

* Cowper.

fections of mankind, and are immortal. It was a saying of a Jewish Rabbi, founded on ancient tradition, "Whoever makes mention either of the just, and does not bless him, or of the wicked, and does not curse him, transgresses a positive precept." However this traditionary precept may fail to be observed towards the living, it is by the common consent of mankind observed towards the dead.

II. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance before God and the inhabitants of heaven. Ten thousand ages hence, neither their persons nor their works shall be forgotten. The smallest act of charity which they performed, the faintest sigh which they breathed for sin, the feeblest desire which they moved towards God, though long forgotten by themselves, shall then be remembered by Him. Their pious deeds shall be celebrated in the circles of the redeemed, and among the countless millions of holy angels, when the exploits of an Alexander, a Cæsar, and a Bonaparte, shall be forgotten,—or mentioned as we now mention the destructive feats of mischievous children; or rather as we mention the actions of a Cain, a Cataline, or an Arnold. When these heroes shall no longer fill the trump of fame, and the page of history which transmitted their names to posterity, shall long

since have perished in the general conflagration, the conflicts which these Worthies maintained with their own hearts in secret, and the victories which they obtained over themselves, shall make a conspicuous figure in the annals of heaven. Then, an *Alexander* who faithfully laboured half a century in the gospel of Christ, will have greater fame than the Alexander who conquered Asia.

But with the inhabitants of heaven we leave the fame of the righteous in *that* world; our business is to preserve their name on *earth*.—Not only is there a sacred *pleasure* in perpetuating in this world the memory of the great and good, but it is an essential *benefit* to society, as it gives continued force to their example, and awes vice by the majesty of their authority. But when one is removed who was not only great and good, but for a long course of years acted a conspicuous part in supporting the interests of literature and the Church, it is due to him, it is due to society, it is due to the Church of Christ, that the memory of his actions should be more circumstantially preserved. Such a one is fallen this day in our Israel:—and believing that the present is a proper time to sketch the outlines of his history and character, I must not detain you longer by abstract remarks, but must enter at once on this mournful task.

I am aware that funeral eulogies are prone to degenerate into blind, indiscriminate praise. To avoid the appearance of this evil, I shall be sparing of *general* encomiums,—content to let the history and character of my departed friend speak for themselves. Fidelity on such occasions does not indeed require us to hunt for imperfections. I shall only be careful that in drawing the picture of his virtues, I do not lay on my colours with so lavish a hand as to conceal the features I wish to present. I know the suspicions attached to one supposed to be prejudiced by affection: I shall therefore be cautious what I say. Standing as I do in this scene of death, and by the awful remains of departed greatness, I will hold myself bound as by the solemnity of an oath, and every word shall be true according to my best knowledge and belief.

DOCTOR MACWHORTER was of Scotch extraction. His maternal ancestors were among the first emigrants from Scotland to the North of Ireland; and the family of his father removed to the same country about the time of his father's birth. By his mother he had the honour of descending from martyrs. Both of her maternal grandparents fell a sacrifice to papal fury, in the great Irish massacre of 1641, while England was convulsed by the civil

wars of Charles I.* None of the family survived this horrid scene except her mother, who, at that time an infant, was concealed by her nurse, and preserved from impending death. On so minute a providence did the future existence of this luminary of the Church depend. His immediate parents, Hugh and Jane, lived in the county of Armagh, in the North of Ireland; where his father was for many years a linen merchant. The eldest of their children, whose name was Alexander, was a son of distinguished talents and piety; and being intended for the gospel ministry, spent two years at the university of Edinburgh. At his solicitation, the family removed to America, about the year 1730, and settled in the county of Newcastle, Delaware; where his father became a distinguished farmer, and an elder of the Church, under the pastoral care at first of Mr. Hutchinson, and afterwards of Mr. Rodgers, now Doct. Rodgers of New-York. Alexander died before he had completed his studies, leaving a most excellent character: and our future pastor, being born about a month after, bore his brother's name. But so affected were the family with their recent affliction, that his name was not suffered to

* They were hanged on a tree before their own door.

be pronounced in the house for six months after his birth.

The second Alexander, the youngest of eleven children, was born July 15, 1734. O. S. It was his happiness to be blessed with parents eminent for piety, and abundant in their labours to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It was their custom to devote the evening of every Lord's day, among other seasons, to this tender and interesting service;—a practice which was common among pious parents of that age; would God it were as common now! He remembered, till the day of his death, the tender solicitude of a father who would often take him alone into the woods, and of a mother who no less frequently would retire with him to a private apartment, to exhort him with tears, and to entreat him by all the anguish of a parent's heart to be reconciled to God. These faithful admonitions would often awaken him to temporary seriousness and prayer; and though they did not at once produce an abiding effect, they were not lost.

In February, 1748, when he was in his 14th year, he was deprived of his excellent father, who at his death left four children, all of whom were

so many proofs of the happy effects of parental faithfulness. They were all communicants in the church, and lived and died agreeably to their profession.* The three eldest being already settled in North Carolina, their mother, in the following autumn, removed into that State, accompanied by Alexander, who left his paternal estate, in Delaware, under the care of a guardian. Here first commenced his permanent religious impressions, under a sermon preached by Mr. John Brown, (one of those evangelical preachers who in that day were called *New Lights*,†) from Ps. VII. 12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready.* An arrow of a different nature reached his heart. The horrors of guilt, and the terrors of eternal judgment, from that moment assailed him, and for near three years filled him with indescribable distress. He used daily to repair to a copse of pines, near his brother's house,

* The eldest of these was Nancy, married to Alexander Osborne; the second was John; the third was Jane, married to John Brevard. They are all deceased. Some of them lived to advanced age; and their descendants are still numerous in North Carolina.

† Mr. Brown was afterwards a settled minister for many years in Virginia.

where he resided; and there, to use his own expressive words, *would dash himself on the ground, looking for the earth to open and swallow him up.* Thus the seed of truth, which had been planted by a father's care, and watered by a mother's tears, was preparing to shoot.

After spending two or three years in Carolina, he took his leave, (and, as it proved, his *final* leave) of his mother, to pursue his education under the direction of his guardian.* At first he was entered in a private school in a small hamlet in Delaware, which has since grown to a village by the name of Newark. Thence he was removed to a public school at West-Nottingham, Cecil county, Maryland, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Finley, afterwards President of the College of New-Jersey. Here the darkness which had long involved him, was dispersed; and he was enabled for the first

* Before his father's death, Doct. Rodgers, who had taken the charge of the congregation, had remarked the promising talents of this youth, at a time when he and the other children of the neighbourhood were assembled to be catechised by their minister. And now, after his return from Carolina, he received from Doct. Rodgers some affectionate attentions, which laid the foundation of that intimate friendship which ever after subsisted between them.

time to rest his soul on Christ, to a degree that gave him confidence, shortly after, to enter into communion with Mr. Finley's church.

Having continued two years in that school, in May, 1756, being in his 22d year, he joined the junior class in the College which was then in this town. Thus he began his publick career in science in the very place which was destined to be the scene of his future usefulness. The ground on which his youthful feet trod, was reserved to be the resting place of his weary limbs, after the labours of more than half a century.

It was already determined to remove the College to Princeton; on which account President Burr's pastoral relation to this church had the year before been dissolved. In October of this year the College was removed, and Mr. Macwhorter belonged to the first class which graduated at Princeton. He took his degree in the autum of 1757, a few days after the lamented death of Mr. Burr.

Having thus completed his academical studies, he was on the point of returning to North Carolina, to take his mother's counsel in regard to the future course of his life, when he received the afflicting news

of her death. This changed his purpose, and he entered upon the study of Divinity, under the instruction of the Rev. William Tennent, the pious and justly celebrated minister of Freehold, in this State.

In August following, (1758,) he was licensed to preach by the presbytery of New Brunswick, which sat at Princeton; and in October was married to Mary Cumming, daughter of Robert Cumming Esq. of Freehold, a respectable merchant, and high sheriff of the county of Monmouth. By this marriage he was introduced into a family connexion with his revered instructor, Mr. Tennent.*

* Robert Cumming, Esq. was twice married. By the first marriage he had three children: the eldest was Alexander, who was a minister of the gospel for several years in the city of New-York, and afterwards in the Old South Church in the town of Boston, where he died, 1763; the second was Lawrence; and the third was Mary (Mrs. Macwhorter.) He formed a second marriage with Miss Noble, daughter (by a former husband) of Mrs. Tennent. By her he had four children: the eldest was Catharine, married to the Rev. Philip Stockton; the second was Ann, married to the Rev. William Schenck; the third was John Noble, now General Cumming of this town; and the fourth was Peggy, who died unmarried.

Doct. Macwhorter had five children: the eldest was

This congregation, after the dismissal of Mr. Burr, fell into a state of unhappy division, which continued near four years; some blaming the Presbytery for removing their pastor; others, their neighbours for consenting to his removal. Certain unpleasant disputes which existed at the same time relative to the parsonage lands, were not calculated to allay the animosity. In the collision of interests and passions, too common on such occasions, the people were long divided between different candidates, until Mr. Macwhorter, on the 28th day of June, 1759, preached his first sermon to them. At once they fixed their eyes on him as the object of their united choice.

Mr. Macwhorter had been appointed by the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia to a mission among his friends in North Carolina; and with that view he was ordained by his Presbytery, at Cran-

Mary, married to Samuel Beebe, Merchant, now of New-York. She is deceased. The second was Ann, married to the Rev. George Ogilvie; the third was Alexander Cumming, now Counsellor at Law in this town; the fourth was John, who was a Counsellor at Law, and died a few months before his father; the fifth was Hugh Robert, who died in infancy.

berry, on the 4th day of July.* But Providence had formed other designs concerning him. At that very meeting of Presbytery, commissioners from Newark appeared, and by their solicitations, seconded by the influence of Mr. Tennent, obtained him for a supply. The people were so well satisfied with his ministerial qualifications, that they harmoniously agreed to present him a call, and he was installed the same summer, at the age of 25, within two years after he had graduated.

In the course of his ministry, he bore an important part in all the leading measures, which, for near half a century, have been adopted, to promote the order and interest of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

He was among the first subscribers to the *Widow's Fund*, which was established in 1761; and in later life, was for many years a director of that benevolent institution.

In 1764, the Synod renewed his appointment to

* Mr. Kirkpatrick, who had been appointed to accompany him, was ordained at the same time.

the mission into North Carolina ;* which gave him an opportunity to revisit his family friends, from whom he had been separated more than 12 years. But this mission came near costing him his life. While in Carolina, he was seized with the bilious fever incident to the climate, which left him with a hectic, accompanied with expectoration of blood, that for two years threatened to put an early period to his usefulness. Yet in this scene of affliction, it pleased God, in the winter of 1764, 5, to encourage him with a revival of religion in his congregation. In the following summer, he received a call from the united congregations of Center and Poplar Tent, in North Carolina ; which, though it presented him an opportunity to settle among the children and descendants of his father, he thought it his duty to reject. In 1766, the state of his health became so critical, that he was induced to try the experiment of a Northern journey ; and a tour which he made to Boston in the autumn of this year, proved the means of his sudden and complete restoration. From his first settlement in this place, he had been regularly subject to an attack of the pleurisy once

* In this mission, as well as in the one appointed by Congress, afterwards to be mentioned, Mr. Spencer of Trenton was associated with him.

or twice a year ; but after this return of health, he experienced no recurrence of the disorder as long as he lived. Except a few short periods of illness, and a paralytick affection in his hands, which he inherited from his father, and which grew upon him as he advanced in years, he enjoyed vigorous health even to old age.

Soon after his return from Boston, the congregation in that town, which had three years before became vacant by the death of Mr. Cumming, his brother-in-law, proposed to him to take a dismission from his people, preparatory to receiving a call from them ; as they had conscientious scruples about calling a settled minister. This preliminary step he refused to take, and the business went no further.

In 1772, he was elected a trustee of the College of New-Jersey, and continued a very important member of that board till a few months before his death.

The same year commenced the second revival of religion under his ministry, which proved more extensive than the former, and continued about two years. At the close of this period, in 1774, the congregation, under the animating influ-

ence of their pastor, engaged with a laudible spirit to erect a new church. A considerable sum was raised for this purpose by subscription, and a quantity of materials was collected;* but the revolutionary war, which commenced about this time, interrupted the design; and in the confusion which followed for several years, all the materials were lost.

This town, from its central and exposed situation, shared largely in the troubles of the war. Through the whole of that anxious period, Mr. Macwhorter was an active friend of his country, and partook with his afflicted congregation in the hardships and perils of the revolution. This same year, (1775,) he was appointed by Congress to visit that district of North Carolina in which he had been before, to employ his influence to bring over the enemies of the revolution to the American interest. But whatever zeal and abilities were exerted in this enterprise, it issued, agreeably to his prediction to Doct. Franklin, with little success.

In 1776, he was honoured with the degree of Doc-

* This design was carried so far, that early in 1775, the trenches were opened for the foundation of the new building.

tor of Divinity by the corporation of Yale College.

In the following winter, when the American affairs were at the lowest point of depression,—when Washington with a handful of half starved and half naked troops, had fled through Jersey, and abandoned the State to the ravages of the British arms, the warm patriotism of our venerable father carried him to the army, encamped on the Pennsylvania shore, opposite to the city of Trenton, to concert with Washington measures for the protection of this State.* And he was there on the memorable 26th of December, when the American troops crossing the Delaware, took the Hessians, and turned the tide of the war.

In the summer of 1778, at the solicitation of his friend General Knox, he accepted the chaplainship of his brigade, which lay then with the main army at White Plains. During the few months that he held this station, Washington was frequently his auditor, and he was often Washington's guest.

* The Rev. Mr. Vanarsdale, of Springfield, feeling the same glow of patriotism, accompanied him in this excursion.

While he was with the army, he was visited with a severe affliction in his family. In the month of July, Mrs. Macwhorter was struck with lightning, which scorching her head and body very considerably, left her without any symptom of life. Though she recovered her senses in a few hours, she was unable to go abroad till the latter part of the winter, and even then her life was for some time very precarious. From this shock, her constitution which before had been feeble, never recovered. The Doctor did not immediately take leave of the army, but finding at length that his attentions were necessary at home, he was obliged to quit his station, and return to his family.

This affliction also prevented him from noticing, as he otherwise would have done, an application received in the month of June from the congregational church in the city of Charleston, in South Carolina. But his attention was more seriously turned to this subject in the following November, by a regular call from that congregation. On this occasion it was suggested to him, that the friends of our College had fixed their eyes on him as the future successor of President Witherspoon: but notwithstanding this, his mind still inclined towards Charleston. He had the call under considera-

tion till February; but found at last that the state of his family, and the critical situation of Charleston, threatened at that time with an invasion, presented difficulties which it was impossible to surmount.

In the following summer, (1779,) he received a call from the congregation of Charlotte, Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, accompanied with an invitation from the trustees of Charlotte Academy to accept the presidency of that institution.

This was an infant Seminary, which promised, under the fostering care of such a President, to become an important seat of learning. It was situated in the midst of his relatives, and in a part of the country where he might hope to be removed from the alarms of war. His congregation too had become much deranged by the calamities of the revolution, and his salary was deemed insufficient for his support. All these things considered, he judged it to be his duty to accept the call: and his friends in the congregation, under existing circumstances, did not oppose his removal. His pastoral relation to this church was accordingly dissolved; and in October he took his leave of Newark, furnished, by the liberality of his afflicted people, with every article needful for his journey.

Scarcely was he settled in his new abode, when the troubles of the war found him there. The army of Cornwallis, scouring the country, entered Charlotte. The Doctor with his family fled. Upon his return, he found that he had lost his library and furniture, with almost every thing that he possessed. He remained in Charlotte about a month after this calamity; but apprehending new inroads from the enemy, he quitted the place in the autumn of 1780, and returned to Abington, in Pennsylvania, where he engaged to preach for the winter. The people of Newark, hearing of his misfortunes, and influenced by the mingled emotions of sympathy and respect, invited him to make them a visit. This he did in February, 1781. They soon after sent him a regular call; in consequence of which he returned in April with his family; and though he was never reinstalled, he was considered and acted as the pastor of the congregation till his death.

In the autumn of 1783, just at the close of the war, the trustees of Washington Academy, in Somerset county, Maryland, ignorant that Doct. Macwhorter was permanently settled, offered him the presidency of that institution, with a salary of £300 a year. But though the principal object of the

institution was the education of pious youth for the gospel ministry, and though the neighbouring country opened an extensive field for his ministerial labours, his attachment to a congregation which had recently given him such ingenuous proofs of affection, rendered it impossible for him to accept this invitation.

The termination of the war was an event not less happy for the pastor, than for the congregation. No where was the effect more sensible than in this place, which from that time commenced its rapid growth from a few dispersed ranges of farm-houses, to a large, beautiful, manufacturing town. The following year, (1784,) the long troubles of the pastor and congregation, were succeeded by a glorious revival of religion, which continued for two years. In no period of the Doctor's ministry, was he observed to be so deeply laden with a sense of everlasting things, and so ardent in his desire to win souls to Christ. Besides his labours on the Sabbath, he preached several times in the week, and spent a part of almost every day in catechising, exhorting from house to house, or attending religious societies. In this precious season, more than a hundred souls were added to the church.

This revival led to an important change in the practice and discipline of the church. One evening in the autumn of 1785, when the Doctor's mind was deeply impressed with divine things, he expressed to two of his friends, in a private conversation in which he was unusually tender and communicative, his concern for the want of discipline, and the looseness which prevailed in the church; which he attributed to what has been called, *the half-way practice*. It is still in the recollection of those persons, in what a solemn and indignant manner he deplored this practice, which he averred was contrary to the usage of the primitive church, and the opinion of the best fathers. He had found it here, he said, when he was settled;—but added with a sigh, how to get rid of it he did not know. He stated the necessity of drawing a line of separation between the clean and the unclean, and proceeded, in a distinct manner, to sketch the plan which he approved; which was precisely the same that the session afterwards sanctioned.

As the subject was in a measure new to his friends, they listened to it not without surprise: but the veneration which they felt for their pastor, and the influence of his opinion, roused them at once to serious attention to this matter. They soon became convin-

ced, and were the means of convincing others. Under the solemn impressions of that period, the practice which the pastor had condemned began to be contemplated in the congregation with increasing concern. Still the hazard of a change was dreaded, and the doubts of some were to be overcome. The more timid apprehended that a departure from long established usage, might lead to contentions and divisions. At length, however, after much inquiry and deliberation, the session, in 1790, took up the subject in earnest. The Doctor publicly advocated the proposed reformation, forcibly alleging that no half-way members can be found in the bible, that there are but two classes of men, and that they who are qualified to offer their children in baptism, are equally fit for the other sacrament. The decisive manner in which he treated these topics, and others less distinctly recollected by the surviving elders, removed every bar; and it was solemnly and unanimously decided, *that from that time, no persons should own the covenant with a view to offer their children in baptism, and to neglect the Lord's Supper; and that the examination of candidates for communion, which had been left to the minister only, should in future be conducted before the session.*—And this has been the practice of the church ever since.

While this business was in agitation, the design of erecting a new church, which had been interrupted by the war, was resumed; and met at once with so much encouragement, that in September, 1787, in less than a month after the business was moved, the Doctor had the pleasure of laying the foundation stone; not however on the same lot that had been selected before the war. Urged forward by the influence of some, and encouraged by the liberality of all, he himself obtained by subscription a large proportion of the sum expended on this spacious and elegant building. He went into other congregations to solicit money and materials; and so zealous was he to serve and animate the congregation, that, during the following winter, he was daily in the forests, selecting timber which had been given him, and encouraging the workmen. On the first day of January, 1791, the house was opened for publick worship, and was soon after elegantly completed: and it “stands,” in the modest language of your benefactor, “as a monument of the generosity and publick spirit of this society.” But *your* language will be: “It stands as a monument of the love and indefatigable exertions of our deceased pastor.” And *my* prayer is, that it may stand as a lasting remembrancer of his many warnings and instructions, which these walls have reflected upon your ears.

While the new church was erecting, the Doctor's attention was called to another subject of a still more important nature. He was one of those great and good men, who, in 1788, had principal influence in settling *The Confession of Faith*, and framing the *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; and in transferring the authority of the highest judicatory from the Synod to a General Assembly, which met first in May, 1789.—Ten years afterwards, when a board of trustees for the General Assembly was incorporated by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, at their session in the winter of 1798, 9, he was named in the charter as one of the board, and continued to hold this trust, until the growing infirmities of age induced him, in 1803, to resign it.

In 1796, he was blessed with another revival of religion in the congregation, by means of which 30 or 40 new members were added to the church. In 1802, the fifth and last revival under his ministry commenced. This continued two years; and in that period, 140 new members, besides those received from other churches, were added to our communion; of whom 113 were received in the course of 12 months.

In former years, Doct. Macwhorter had been

employed by the trustees of our College to obtain subscriptions in this town for the benefit of that Seminary: and when by the late disastrous conflagration the College edifice was consumed, they appointed him, in the spring of 1802, to solicit benefactions in New-England, to aid in the erection of a new College. Advanced as he was in years, his publick spirit would not suffer him to shrink from the task; and in the issue he brought more than 7000 dollars into the College funds. On very many less important occasions, his singular skill and publick spirit were called forth in a similar way; but these it is neither proper nor possible to enumerate.

My reverend father lived to a good old age. As I have heard him say, *he lived to see two worlds die*. He trod the path of life with those who have long since gone to rest. Your fathers knew him; and he helped to fit those for heaven whose aged dust now sleeps in that hallowed ground. He baptised most of you, and will shortly meet those faces at the bar of God which he covered with the sacramental water.—When I have heard him talk of the events of other times, and the well known characters with whom he acted on the publick stage, before I had existence,—and saw him a-

lone amidst a younger race,—I have often contemplated him as a venerable oak which once stood in the midst of the forest:—the ruthless axe of time has laid his companions low; and now he stands alone on the open plain, and every withered leaf trembles in the blast. That trunk which seventy winters had in vain assailed, must fall at last, like the companions of his youth. He *has fallen*,—and is gathered to his fathers! He no longer stands alone in the open plain;—he is surrounded once more by the companions of his youth, and stands, we trust, transplanted and renewed among the trees in the paradise of God.

Yes, he lived to a good old age, and saw what changes the current of threescore years will make in a transitory world. In the spring of 1806, at the close of the last General Assembly that he attended, he felt a desire to visit once more the place of his nativity, which he had not seen for more than 40 years. He made an excursion to Newcastle county; and when he arrived on the ground which had often been paced over with his infant steps, he knew it not. Every thing was changed. The information of strangers was necessary to tell him that there his father lived. A cellar, half filled by time, marked the spot where he first drew

breath. He could find none that knew him, and but one aged person that ever knew the family. He requested only to be supplied with a glass from the spring that used to slake his boyish thirst, that he might say, "I have tasted that spring again;"——and this desire fulfilled, he hastily turned and left the scene forever.

On the evening of the 25th of December last, he received an injury from a fall, from which he never recovered. He went to the house of God no more. In the first stages of his illness, he said little which discovered the state of his mind, except the often repeated sentence, *It is the Lord, and he does that which is perfectly right.* In February, when the dissolution of his aged consort was manifestly approaching, and his own nature was sinking under infirmities, his younger son was taken off by a disease, so rapid in its progress that his parents, though in the neighbourhood, knew not that he was sick till they heard that he was dead. At that awful moment, I visited the father with a trembling heart, expecting to find him overwhelmed with these complicated calamities. But I found him composed and submissive to a degree that told me, I had never known this man of God before. From that time, the submission and piety of his heart shone forth

with increased loveliness ; his constitutional reserve was in a measure gone, and his conversation often breathed the tenderness and sweetness of gospel humility and comfort. On the 2d day of April, the wife of his youth closed the long scene of her sufferings, with all the interesting tokens of child-like piety. He sustained the shock, as he had done his other afflictions, with submission and patience. He had now nothing to do but to make arrangements for his own approaching dissolution. He sent an affectionate and impressive farewell to his brethren of the Presbytery ; he distributed his volumes of sermons among his children, grand-children, and relatives ; and gave directions about his funeral. I could never discover in him any solicitude about death, except an anxiety to be gone. *I die slow ; I never expected to die so slow*, he would sometimes say. One day I ventured to suggest to him a hope that he might yet be continued with us, and begged him not to despond. *I have no despondency*, said he ; *death and I have long been intimates*. To a hint that I could not do without him, he replied with paternal tenderness, *God will give you strength according to your day ; only trust in him, and he will support you under every trial*. I never discovered any impatience in him, except when he was told that he was better, and might possibly recover.

When reminded that he was going to the companions of his youth, he replied with emotion, *Yes, there is a precious company of them ! O what a precious company !* When it was suggested that the God whom he had long and faithfully served, would not forsake him in old age, he answered with quickness and apparent uneasiness, *that he had no faithfulness of his own to rely on,—that a review of his life afforded him little satisfaction,—that it had been miserably polluted,—and that his only hope rested on the atonement of Christ.* He repeatedly lamented, in strong language, the imperfection of his life, and discarded every hope but that which the gospel affords. I said to him, about three weeks ago, “ You do not at any time find your prospects clouded ? ” He replied, *No, blessed be God ! I have a steady hope.* Always patient, and always composed, he sometimes appeared transported with Pisgah views. A few evenings before his death, he was observed wrestling with God for his release from the flesh. While he lay in the struggles of death, I asked him whether he still enjoyed the light of God’s countenance. He lifted his hands and eyes in a way of strong affirmation. The last word which he uttered, was expressive of a desire that we should unite with him in prayer. A few minutes before he expired, he gave his hands to two of his friends as a farewell token, and expressed by

signs a wish to unite with us once more in prayer. As the supplication was making that God would release him, and receive his departing spirit, he extended both of his arms towards heaven at full length, seemingly in the transports of faith and desire. It was the last motion that he made. His hands fell and moved no more. That moment the difficulty of his respiration ceased; he appeared perfectly at rest; and in five minutes breathed forth his soul, without a struggle, into the bosom of his God. He expired 37 minutes past 7 o'clock, on Monday evening, the 20th instant, aged 73 years and 5 days.

Thus lived, and thus died Doctor Alexander Macwhorter, after having served this people in the gospel ministry 48 years.

*The memory of the just is blessed! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!**

* A church has been established in this town 140 years; during which time eight ministers, besides the one now living, have been installed over it.

1. Mr. ——— Pierson, having been episcopally ordained in or near Newark, in Eng-

The aspect of Doct. Macwhorter was grave and venerable, and strongly expressive of the properties of his mind. His deportment was affectionate, paternal, and dignified; calculated to inspire respect

land, came to this town with the first settlers, in 1667; and died about the year 1680.

2. Mr. Abraham Pierson, son of the former, was for several years the colleague of his father; after whose death he continued to be the pastor of the congregation only a few years. He was dismissed, and afterwards settled at Killingworth, in Connecticut. His name is well known as the first President of Yale-College.
3. Mr. John Prudden was settled about the year 1686, and was dismissed about the year 1699.
4. Mr. Jabez Wakeman was installed in 1701, and died in 1704.
5. Mr. Nathaniel Bowers took the charge of the congregation about the year 1706, and was dismissed about the year 1716.
6. Mr. Joseph Webb was installed Oct. 1719, and was

and dependance, and to repel the approach of presumptuous familiarity: yet in conversation he was pleasant, and often facetious. At a great remove from assumed importance and supercilious airs, which

dismissed about the year 1737.

7. Mr. Aaron Burr was installed about the year 1738, and was dismissed in 1755, on account of the removal of the College over which he presided. President Burr was married to a daughter of the celebrated President Edwards; and was the father of Col. Aaron Burr, late Vice-President of the United States, and of Mrs. Reeve, wife of the Hon. Tappan Reeve, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court in the State of Connecticut.

8. Doct. Alexander Macwhorter was installed in the summer of 1759. He was dismissed in October, 1779; but returned, and took the charge of the congregation again; which he held till his death.

It is remarkable that all the ministers that were ever settled over this church were dismissed, except the first, and one other who died young.

never were connected with such a mind as his, he was much of a gentleman, and an uncommon instance of true dignity.

He possessed a powerful and scientific mind, with a most retentive memory. He was wise and discerning, and had an eye that could penetrate the characters of men, and look through the connexion and consequences of things. His apprehensions were not quick, but unusually just. He possessed little fancy, but a deep and solid judgment. His genius had no uncommon share of vivacity; it held a stately and even course. It had no wings; but it stood like the pillars of the earth. He never would have gathered laurels in the paths of poetry; but he would have filled with superior dignity the seat of justice. His passions, like his understanding, were strong; but ordinarily held by strong restraints. With far less imagination than intellect, he was no enthusiast in any thing. He was never sanguine; but cool, deliberate, and cautious, to a degree that approached even to timidity; inclined rather to contemplate the difficulties of an enterprise, than to calculate on success. Great as he was, he was a man of most unaffected and consummate modesty. It was impossible for a mind thus constructed to be rash. He used to say

that the *second* requisite in a minister of the gospel is *prudence*; and he possessed this virtue, I may say, almost to excess.

The furniture of his mind resembled its construction. He was more thoroughly versed in classical literature than in Belles-Lettres; and loved the Mathematicks better than Milton or Pope. He was a proficient in some of the Oriental languages. He had looked into the Syriack, had made considerable progress in the Hebrew, and was critically acquainted with the Greek and Latin. He was well furnished with theological and literary science in general. He was a firm supporter of the great doctrines of grace; as his discourses which you have heard from this sacred place, can witness; and as his body of sermons, left among you as a lasting monument of his love, sufficiently attest.

In the former part of his ministry, he was a pungent and popular preacher: and though the ardour of his addresses was necessarily abated by age, his sermons continued to be instructive, and were heard with affection by a people, who in his impaired voice still recognised the accents of a father. His preaching was solid, judicious, and often moving. It was not the transient glare of the comet;

but the strong and steady light of the sun. He regarded with sovereign contempt the pretty brilliancies and fustian declamation of those who show us how an apostle did *not* preach.

But he never appeared in his might so perfectly as in a deliberative assembly; especially when his cautious and penetrating mind had leisure to examine well the bearings of the subject. Thoroughly versed in all the forms of presbyterial business, with a skill at management rarely surpassed, he filled a great space in the judicatories of our church. His voice was listened to with profound respect, and the counsels suggested by his superior wisdom, enlightened and swayed our publick bodies.

In the services of the sanctuary, and in all his parochial labours, he added to faithfulness great method and punctuality; and, with a uniformity peculiar to himself, was always the same. He was a distinguished peace-maker; and by his skill in settling disputes, added to his other excellent management, he greatly promoted the harmony and strength of the congregation. A liberal contributor himself to all charitable designs, and possessing a happy talent to awaken the same disposition in others, he was the means of forming a ministerial

and charitable people, as well as a numerous and orthodox church. And though there are, in every place, some spirits which never can be excited by human influence to generous actions, he probably left as few of this description as can be found in any other congregation equally numerous. He was, I believe, in a great measure, the instrumental cause of the distinguished temporal and spiritual blessings which have been bestowed on the congregation, by keeping alive in them that publick and charitable spirit which God delights to honour.

In every point of view, he was a great benefactor of the congregation; and you in return loved and revered him in no common degree. The delicate respect which you paid to him in advanced age, the full support which you continued cheerfully to afford him, when his power to serve you was impaired, and even after it had totally ceased, and your anxious attentions to him in his last illness, were instances of justice and ingenuousness which you must now review with satisfaction. They were instances of justice and ingenuousness of which he himself was tenderly sensible. *I leave*, said he with tears, *the kindest and best people that ever minister had.*

Yes, you loved and revered him in no common

degree, as your countenances and conduct this day attest. But he is gone ! and you will see his face no more ! No more will his anxious soul weep over you and your children. You must go to him ; but he will not return to you.———Yes, he is gone ! He is removed from *you* !—alas ! he is removed from *me* ! *My father ! my father ! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof !* Oh ! that I might catch his falling mantle, with a portion of his spirit, and be to you, in some degree, what he has been !

The occasion calls for a word of condolence to the bereaved *children*.

With heartfelt sympathy, my dear friends, I partake of all your sorrows. The extent of *your* calamity is not hid from me while I consider *my own*. Few there are that could have lost so much in a single friend : but instead of repining, you have reason to bless God that you had such a friend to lose. You have reason to bless God for sparing him to you so long ; and yet more, that he has left you so rich a legacy in his examples and prayers. As Beza said of Calvin, and as Mather said of Flavel, *since your father is dead, life will be less sweet, and death less bitter to us*. Henceforth there will be less

to bind our hearts to earth, and more to draw them towards heaven. May the examples of your deceased father be set as beacons to direct your passage to glory. May the counsels of his love long sound in your ears; and the prayers which his quivering lips poured forth for you in the midnight hour, come up before the Lord as incense presented by the interceding Angel. Deprived of your earthly parent, seek, I entreat you, a Father in heaven who will never die. To His arms, who delights to be known as the Father of the fatherless, I affectionately commit you; and pray that you may find in Him a Parent, and an everlasting portion.

I turn now to my afflicted congregation.

The awful event which has hung this house with mourning, and covered with grief our widowed church, *ought not*, and *must not* pass off merely with a few sighs and tears. It *ought* to be, and it *must* be improved as one of those solemn dispensations of Providence which are intended to rouse a whole people from sleep, to crowd vast ideas through their minds, and to fix lasting impressions on their hearts.

This is the proper time, my beloved hearers, to

call to mind the instructions which your deceased father imparted to you ; the good examples which he set before you ; his manner of coming in and going out among you, for a long course of years ; and all the interesting intercourse which you had with him. If you would give scope to your thoughts, you might recall scenes that would awaken your tenderest affections, and truths that would render you as solemn as eternity. This is the proper time also to consider deeply the business on which God sent his servant among you ; the reception which his heavenly messages met from you ; the awful account which you must give of your improvement of them, when you shall meet your minister at the tribunal of Christ ; and the influence which his ministry will have on your happiness or misery, ten thousand ages after the funeral of this world.

Know, then, that he was sent among you as an ambassador of heaven, to offer you, in the name of his God, terms of reconciliation. He was not merely your father and friend, but your watchman,—an officer of Christ, whose commission was received from heaven, and whose ministry and its effects have been attentively noticed from the throne of the omniscient God.

How he executed this commission, God is witness; and you are witnesses against yourselves. *Wherefore, I take you to record this day that he is pure from your blood.* He opened to you the great doctrines of grace. He taught you the original fall and total depravity of man. He pressed upon you the absolute necessity of being born again, by the supernatural operation of the spirit of God on the heart. While in one hand he offered you *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, with the other he pointed the curse of a broken law against every unregenerate sinner. He confined not his labours to the pulpit; but watched those softer moments of speaking which promised him easier access to your hearts. He visited your chambers of sickness, and counselled and prayed by your beds of pain. With his paternal sympathy he soothed your griefs. While he wept for you, he wiped the tear that trembled in your eye. He warned and entreated you in private. He catechised you when you were children; and laboured, by prayers and tears, to imbue your infant minds with the love of Christ. These things he did; and these things are recorded in the rolls of heaven, to be preserved *in everlasting remembrance*, and to be exhibited on your trial at the last day.

The doctrines which he taught you he did not indeed seal with his blood; but he gave a confirmation of them in his death no less decisive. They were the truths which supported his soul in his slow approach to the shadow of death. They furnished the whole theme of his religious conversation, and his only comfort in a near view of eternity. Hume* and Voltaire, after spending their lives in disseminating their pernicious errors, shrunk at last from their own dogmas as from hell itself, and died in the horrors of despair. But your minister, after spending 48 years in preaching the doctrines of grace, left the world, triumphantly reposing on the blessed truths which he had taught. His dying eye said to us, in language not equivocal, “support these precious doctrines, and they will support you.” We saw his arms extended towards heaven, with passionate desires to depart, but five minutes before he expired. We saw, after motion had ceased, his still intelligent eye fixed with pity on a weeping child,—looking unutterable things, as though he wished to express what he discovered on the confines of the eternal world. In that precise

* This fact in regard to Hume is well known to the religious people of Scotland, though much address has been employed to conceal it from the world.

posture he lay, preaching all his doctrines over again from the very vestibule of heaven, until his eyes closed ;——and in one minute he was gone ! We had followed him so near the precincts of light, that imagination could almost see him fly and enter in ! He had looked back and spoken to us with his eyes, so near the heavenly gate, that we seemed almost to hear his voice, the next moment, among the choir of the redeemed ! We seemed almost to see the companions of his youth pressing forward to embrace and welcome him to glory ; and to hear their loud congratulations ! Then it was that I felt the reality of that separate state of conscious being of which he had so often spoken. “ There flies that soul,” said I, “ which but just now spoke out of those swimming eyes ! Yonder is my father, whose accents have been so familiar to me, and with whom I went *to the house of God in company* .”

Yes, while his body lies insensible before you, his soul still lives in a conscious state.—He loved you much ; and in the abodes of bliss will, I doubt not, often think of you. Perhaps he may sometimes pass this way, to mark how you improve the instructions which he left among you, and whether you are coming after him to glory. I

have a strong persuasion that his former family and flock will not be wholly excluded from his present cares. Perhaps he will sometimes visit our *assemblies*, to hear those truths repeated which he so often preached, and to observe their effects on you. Perhaps he may *now* be present!—Sainted Spirit! hast thou come to witness our griefs? Do I see thee hovering over our assembly? O! if thou wouldst speak to us now, thy doctrines would no longer be unheeded!———Alas! he speaks no more! His ministry among us is then forever closed, and sealed up to the judgment of the great day. Nothing can be added to it, or taken from it. He has done what he had to do, and has returned to Him that sent him.——But his ministry has not done with *us*. Think not, that, except tears and tender remembrance, you have nothing more to do with your deceased pastor. As the Lord liveth, you shall meet him again. When the dissolving heavens shall open, and disclose the Son of man, coming in clouds to judge the world, your father, we trust, will be in His glorious train. And when the convulsions of that day shall burst the dormitories of a thousand generations, his sleeping body will rise! Then, he who baptised you,—he who catechised you,—he who warned and wept over you,——shall stand with you in judgment. Then,

all the scenes which have passed between you and him shall be examined, and an account taken how you improved his ministry in general, and each sermon in particular. Every hour that you sat under the sound of his voice, shall be found to have been big with life or death. The effects of improving or resisting his ministry, shall be felt through every hour and moment of eternity!—— Oh! did you consider this while your minister lived? Did you consider this while his agitated soul was pleading over you? Did you consider this while you were bearing his clay-cold body to the house of God? Did you consider, that you were attending one who must be a witness, either for or against you, in the day that shall decide the destinies of all men, and whose ministry must either help you to heaven, or sink you deeper in hell? ——I see some of you tremble. But the half has not been told you. If a review of his ministry be so overwhelming at present, what will it be in the day of judgment! *If in the land of peace, wherein you trust, it has wearied you, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan?*

My dear hearers, I ask each of you what account your translated pastor has already given of you in heaven? What *had he* to relate? What im-

provement have you in fact made of his ministry? Have you embraced the Lord Jesus Christ through his instrumentality? Or have you rejected all his earnest entreaties? I suppose that the greater part of those who hear me, are either his spiritual children, or they who for years have slighted his invitations.

You (who are his) spiritual children, have lost a father indeed, and have good reason to remember him more than any other created being. Your case awakens peculiar compassion; for you have lost, (so to speak,) *your all*, and can never see his like again. *For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus he hath begotten you through the gospel.* And though all other men should forget him, by *you* he will surely be had in *everlasting remembrance*. Yet let your hearts be cheered with a prospect of enjoying a more perfect union with him in a better world. *The seals of his ministry* you are, and are reserved to be *his crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ*. And I doubt not, that after all earthly ties shall have ceased, between you and him will subsist a special and most tender union forever. You shall find all his predictions of good fulfilled; and when your happy souls shall feel their accomplishment,

“ high in salvation and the realms of bliss,” *then shall you know*, to your everlasting joy, *that a prophet has been among you.—Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.*

Others, I fear, there are, who, though he was to them *as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice*, have never accepted the message which he brought them from God. Content with loving the man, and weeping perhaps under his affectionate sermons, they have never repented of their sins, nor bowed to the sceptre of Christ. Such will yet know, alas! when it is too late, that more than a soother of their ear, *that a prophet of the Lord has been among them.* When they shall feel the curse which he denounced, forever fastened on their souls, —when every sermon which he preached shall be as a thunderbolt, riving the nerves of their hearts,—then shall they know, to their eternal confusion, *that a prophet has been among them.* In the regions of hell, equally as in heaven, our father and his ministry shall be had *in everlasting remembrance.* Oh! how will they look back to the days when they sat under the melting voice of their minister! —to seasons when tears of compassion choked his words, as he entreated them to have compassion on themselves! —“Ten thousand worlds,” they

will cry, "for one more sermon, for one more prayer, of our ancient minister!"——but it will be too late.

Are there not some in this assembly, who have lived ten, twenty, or thirty years under his ministry, who are yet unreconciled to God? Are there not some whom he baptised more than forty years ago, who still remain aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel? Are there not some who can remember the day of his instalment; who have sat under his calls during the whole course of his ministry; and instead of growing up for heaven, have grown grey in sin, and are now almost ripe for judgment? Almighty God! pierce their hearts with conviction, ere thou smite them with thy curse!

All those who remain uninterested in the blessings of the gospel, at the close of our father's ministry, I adjure, in the name of God, to make a solemn pause. Pause, I beseech you, at this awful crisis. Your minister is gone; and you are not the better for him! He came on God's errand, he delivered his message, he has done his work, and returned; and *you have rejected his ministry! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved!* ——Is there then no hope? Yes, blessed be God! one hope remains: set your anxious minds

to recollect the doctrines which he taught, and the duties which he inculcated ; and hasten to believe the one, and practise the other. O ! yield, for once, to the voice of anxious friendship ! Or, if the accents of your *living* pastor be unheeded, listen, I conjure you, to that reverend voice which seems to issue from the eternal world,—from a Soul which now has seen the amazing rewards or torments in reserve for you. Methinks I hear him cry, “ O my poor, dear people ! whom I laboured so long to save ; do not let my ministry crush you to the lowest hell ! ” Heard you not that voice ?——And *can* you resist it ? No, you *cannot*,—you *must not*,—you *shall not*, if prayers or tears can move you. I will deluge you with my griefs ; I will kneel and clasp your feet. By the shades of your pious fathers, who also stretch forth their hands to you,—by the bowels of Christ,—hear that voice from heaven, which on earth you disregarded ! Ye who have slumbered away an inestimable season, never to be recalled,—days that are now “ with the years beyond the flood,”—awake ! At this late hour, arise to improve his ministry : that when the radiant Saint shall bend his eye toward the earth, to see whether the seed, sown in this beloved garden, shoots, he may have the joy to see it springing up in your hearts, and not the grief, (if grief could be in hea-

ven,) to discover that his labours will prove an eternal curse to those whom he loved. Eternal Mercy ! grant that thy servant, like another Sampson, may do more execution in his death, than in his life !

And now, farewell, thou man of God ! my father ! my friend ! Sweet be thy sleep in the tomb ! and kind be thy thoughts of us in heaven ! Thou hast left me alone, and I am solitary and weak.——
 Yes, I am weak and solitary, O my friends ! Crushed by the weight of so great a charge, I cannot lift up myself. I need and entreat your prayers. I need your candour, your sympathy, your counsel, and your support. Entreat God for me, that I may sustain the weighty charge with prudence, fidelity, and success ;—that, like David, I may go forth, though it be only with a sling and a stone, in the name of the God of the armies of Israel. It comforts me to remember the prayer which Solomon offered in his distress, when left alone by his father to manage the affairs of Israel. He complained that he was as weak and unskilful as a little child. But he asked wisdom of God, and the Lord gave it to him. I will remember this ; and I will also press to my bosom the paternal words of my dear departed friend : *God will give you strength according to your day :*

only trust in Him, and He will support you under every trial. By the happy accomplishment of this tender prediction, may *I also* find that *a prophet has been among us.* Grant it, O my God! through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.