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# FUNERAL SERMON

ON OCCASION OF THE

DEATH OF MRS. HARRIET S. MCGUFFEY,

WHO DIED AT WOODSIDE, NEAR DAYTON, O.

JULY 3, 1850.

BY REV. PHINEAS D. GURLEY.

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DAYTON, O.:

PUBLISHED BY R. F. ELLS.

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“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”—  
PSALM CXVI. 15.

THE saints of the Lord are his redeemed people; those whom he has justified through the imputed righteousness of Christ, and renewed by the power of his Holy Spirit. They are a class of persons marked by certain peculiarities in their history and character, which distinguish them from the rest of the world.

They are *a consecrated people*. They have been called out from the mass of the ungodly and solemnly set apart to the service of Jehovah. In this sense they are holy, that is, devoted to holy objects, consecrated to holy purposes and pursuits. It was in the sense of such a consecration to God that the term holy, under the Old Testament dispensation, was applied to a variety of things, both animate and inanimate. In this sense the Hebrews, the Levites, the priests, the tabernacle, the temple, the various sacrifices, Jerusalem and Mount Zion are called holy. *They were set apart to the service of God*. And in the same sense the saints, all true christians, under every dispensation, are called a holy nation, or community. They are a people sep-

arated from the world, delivered from the controlling power of those low, earthly motives which govern men in their unrenewed state, and supremely dedicated to the high and sacred work of promoting the glory and advancing the kingdom of their redeeming God.

The saints of the Lord are holy in another sense;— they are not merely set apart to the *service* of God: *his moral image is enstamped upon their souls.* They have been made the subjects of a great moral change, a change of character, a change of heart. This change is called regeneration. It is the implanting of a principle of spiritual life in the soul by the power of God operating through the truth. It is an opening of the eyes which sin has blinded, to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is an enlightenment of the understanding which sin has darkened, so that it discerns the things of the Spirit of God. It is a subjugation of the will which sin has made rebellious, so that it bows in humble submission to the authority of God. It is a change of the affections which sin has diverted into forbidden channels, and fastened upon forbidden objects, so that they fix with supreme delight upon “those things which are above.” Or, in the forcible language of inspiration, it is a putting off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and a putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Such is the moral change which all real saints have experienced, and by which, both in the renovation which

marks its origin and in all its subsequent fruits, they are made to differ from an unregenerate world.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the saints of the Lord is *faith blended with repentance*. They have seen and felt the evil of sin. They have realized, to some extent, their own personal guiltiness in the sight of Him whose name is Holy, and their dreadful exposure, in consequence thereof, to the woes of the second death. In other words, they have been deeply convinced of their lost condition as sinners and their perishing need of a Saviour. Nay more, they have seen in Christ crucified just the Saviour which their case requires. With hearts burdened and bleeding under a sense of unutterable unworthiness and guilt, they have bowed themselves at the foot of his cross, and, looking up through tears of repentance, have humbly, heartily, thankfully, and by faith received Him as their Saviour and their Hope;—as made of God unto them “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” This distinguishing experience before the cross of Jesus belongs to all who have a valid Scriptural title to the appellation of saints. They have been deeply convinced of sin; they have felt godly sorrow on account of it: they have believed in the Son of God, and in believing have found that peace passing understanding which is an antepast of heaven.

Faith, however, as possessed by the saints of the Lord, does not relate merely to the act of receiving and resting upon Christ as a Saviour. It grasps all

the great realities of an eternal world as they are revealed in the Bible, and causes them, though unseen, to exert a steady and a mighty influence upon the character and life. Those who are saints *in reality*, as well as *in name*, walk by faith, live by faith. They fully credit the testimony of God respecting things unseen and eternal, and their faith as to these things gives shape and hue to their hopes, their purposes, their plans, their conduct—all that they design, and all that they do.

I will only add, on this part of the subject, that the saints of the Lord are distinguished from an ungodly world by a *pious, devotional spirit*. They love to lift up their thoughts in devout meditation, their voices in praise, and their hearts in prayer to their Father in heaven. They love to muse upon his wonderful works, and upon the precious revelations of his Word, until the fire of piety burns within; and then nothing will give them satisfaction, but the delightful exercise of bowing before the mercy-seat, and pouring out their very souls in adoring gratitude for all his benefits, and in earnest supplication, that amidst the rich and unwearied overflowings of his love, they may still be permitted to live and to rejoice. Such devotional intercourse with God and with his Christ is the highest, purest delight of those who are saints indeed. It is their meat and their drink; their sweetest resort in trouble; their most dearly-prized privilege in prosperity; their most effectual resource, and their surest defence in all that onward, upward pilgrimage which

they are prosecuting with labor and difficulty, but yet with the joyous expectation that it will terminate in heaven.

Perhaps enough has now been said to guard you against any misapprehension respecting the *character* of that class of persons whose death is spoken of in the text. We say their *death* is spoken of. It is even so: for the saints of the Lord must die, as well as others. Consecrated though they be to his service, renewed in heart by the power of his Spirit, interested by faith in the blessings of his redemption, and accustomed to commune with him daily in the exercise of devotion, as friend with friend,—still they are not exempt from the ravages of disease, or the chilling, withering pressure of the hand of death. Redemption by Jesus Christ does not exempt them from the pains which accompany, and the corruption which follows, the separation of soul and body. It does not open a passage by which they can pass around the dark valley, and thus avoid its gloom; though it does what is quite as well; it sheds a heavenly radiance upon the darkness of that valley, drives away its terrors, and enables the believing soul to send up from its lowest depths the triumphant exclamation,—“O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!”—It is, then, a settled fact in the economy of our salvation, that the saints of the Lord, however eminent their attainments in piety, or mature their preparation for glory, must yield to the power of the great destroyer, and lie down in the grave. By some sudden providential stroke, or

by the slowly-wasting influence of disease, they must be laid in the arms of "the king of terrors." There is, of course, power with God to take them to heaven in some other way: but, in his infinite wisdom, he has determined to take them in *this* way. In our present shortsightedness we may not be able to discover *all* the reasons which govern his procedure in this regard; but without speculating upon the subject, we may rest assured there *are* reasons, good and sufficient, and that the language which it becomes us to use in speaking upon this as upon some other features of the plan of redeeming mercy, is that employed by the Saviour, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

The text, however, makes an announcement respecting the death of the saints, which is full of interest and of consolation. "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*" Wonderful declaration!—made by inspiration of the Spirit of God, and recorded for our benefit. How soothing its tone!—how tender, and yet how comforting, the truth it reveals! It is one of those passages, which, in the midst of a hundred others, arrests special attention by its subject, commands special admiration by its beauty, and induces special thoughtfulness, if not by the obscurity, at least by the depth and compass, of its meaning. Let us pause, then, and inquire,—What are the ideas involved in this most beautiful and striking announcement—"*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*"?

I suppose that the word "*precious*" in this passage means *important*; and that the import of the whole declaration is this—*The death of a saint is, in God's estimation, a most interesting and important event.* This is the judgment of Him who sees the end from the beginning, and perfectly understands the various bearings, near and remote, of every event that ever did or will occur in any part of his boundless empire. However others may regard it, important, very important, in his estimation, is the death of a saint. His high estimate of its importance is manifested

1. In the first place, *by his ordering the time of its occurrence.* This is the thought which seems to have been uppermost in the mind of David when he penned the text, and the Psalm of which it is a part. He had been hunted by his enemies like a partridge upon the mountains. With fierce and unrelenting animosity they had sought to take his life. After many fearful exposures, and many hair-breadth escapes, he pauses to reflect upon the way in which he has been led and preserved. As he reviews the dangers which have compassed his pathway at every step, he is filled with astonishment that he is yet in the land of the living; and in accounting for his wonderful deliverance, he makes use of the language before us—"Precious"—important in its bearings and results—"in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." As if he had said,—“However fearful the dangers which surround them, or malignant the enemies which seek to cut them off, they are “immortal till their work is done;” they can not

die before the Lord's appointed time. He has meted out to them a term of years during which they are to abide upon the earth. That term of years they must and will accomplish: no power on earth or in hell can shorten it a single day or moment. Hence in the thickest dangers I have been safe; and hence I am yet alive. My death is too important an event in the estimation of the Almighty to be permitted to occur before his own appointed time." So it is in the case of *all* God's people. The number of their months is with him, and he has appointed bounds to which he will see that they are carried in safety, and then, in answer to *his* call, they will drop their tenements of clay, and depart to the world of spirits.

But this general statement does not meet the full merits of the case. There can be no doubt that the time when God's people shall die is fixed, with a benevolent regard to their spiritual interests. That is to say,—The provisions of the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son are such, that they secure the departure of the saints from this world *just at the time* when their highest spiritual welfare will be advanced by such a departure. If in the economy of redemption "*all things*" are so arranged as to work together for their good, then the time when they shall die is doubtless included in the benevolent plan, forms a part of it, and is just as truly a fruit of redeeming mercy, as the washing of regeneration, or the forgiveness of sins. It would seem, therefore, that in a high and peculiar sense life and death are

the christian's,—(i Cor. iii. 22)—a statement which certainly implies that the *time* when life shall terminate and death ensue,—that very time, is one of the arrangements of the covenant of grace, made with a wise and merciful regard to his best spiritual interests. No christian, therefore, however suddenly or unexpectedly he may be smitten down, dies prematurely. On the contrary, redeeming love, under the guidance of unerring wisdom, determines the hour and moment of his departure.

2. All the *circumstances* of the christian's death are ordered by the Lord, in covenant faithfulness and covenant love. The place where he shall meet the destroyer, as well as the modes and methods of his attack, are determined by his God and Redeemer. Is he cut down in the twinkling of an eye by some sudden and unexpected stroke? Talk not of accident. It is the Lord. Is he attacked by some acute disease, which baffles the power of medicine, and issues fatally in a few short days? That disease is God's messenger, and it comes on an errand of mercy. Is his complaint of a more slow and lingering character? Do long months and even years witness his sufferings and the gradual drying up of the springs of life? That too is the well-ordered procedure of his redeeming God—a fruit of that self-same mercy which paid the price of his salvation in the agonies of Gethsemane and the death of the cross. Are his pains numerous, severe, and protracted? He may say of them, as the expiring Payson said of his—“*These are God's arrows,*

*but they are sharpened with love."* The idea which I wish to impress upon you, my hearers, is this—That in the sight of the Lord the death of his saints is an event of so much importance, that he not only determines the time when it shall occur, but he orders all the circumstances, from the least to the greatest, which shall attend it; and that too, *not simply as the God of providence governing the world, but as the God of grace pledged by promise and by covenant to cause all things, both in life and in death, to work together for good, to them that love Him, "to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

3. Again—That the Lord Jesus attaches great importance to the death of his saints, is manifest from the fact, that *their departure from this world is a specific answer to a portion of his intercessory prayer.* Having ascended to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, he never loses sight of their condition in this vale of tears; he omits no service requisite on his part for the securing of their highest welfare. Their names are graven upon the palms of his hands, and their interests are as near and dear to his heart, as when he bowed in the garden under the burden of their sins, or expired as their surety on the cursed tree. Standing at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, he acts as their intercessor, and, by his all-prevailing advocacy, secures the advancement and the completion of their redemption. But for what does he plead? He asks that they may be kept through the Father's name, and made one;—but this is not

all. He asks that they may be delivered from the evil that is in the world ; but this is not all. He asks that they may be sanctified through the truth ; but this is not all. No : he winds up his suit with the thrilling entreaty, " Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me *be with me where I am* ; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." The granting of this petition requires that they should die ; because death is the way through which they *must* pass to the enjoyment of his presence and the vision of his glory. And if the death of the redeemed is really an answer to the Saviour's prayer on their behalf ; if it issues in the consummation of their best hopes and, so to speak, of his highest wishes for their happiness ; then we may well believe it is an event which he regards with peculiar interest, and to which he attaches a vast and a peculiar importance. Yes, every fresh instance of death among his people, presents him with a new trophy of victory over the powers of darkness — a new star in his mediatorial crown — a new accession to that unutterable joy which was set before him when he endured the cross, despising the shame. No wonder, then, that their death is precious in his sight — a most interesting and momentous event, which answers his last request on their behalf, and raises a louder anthem in heaven to the praise of his victorious grace. O, I have sometimes tried to imagine what must be the sensation produced in heaven, and the scenes enacted there, as a redeemed soul from this sin-ruined world is ushered

by attending angels into the presence of God and of the Lamb. "This," says the Father, "is one of the objects of my eternal love." "This," says the Son, "is a part of the purchase of my blood—one of the precious spirits for whom I groaned in Gethsemane, and expired upon the cursed tree." "And I," says the Spirit, "have renewed and sanctified this soul, and now, having delivered it from the last defilement of sin, I present it here as a part of my official work, as a monument of my redeeming favor and renovating energy, that, in this home of the saints, it may live, and rejoice, and sing, and shine forever." And then the myriad choirs that stand around the throne lift up their voice as the voice of many waters, and shout the welcome of the ransomed one into the Redeemer's presence to behold his glory. I look into that Redeemer's face, and see a smile of satisfaction there, which seems to say, "This is the reward of my humiliation in yonder world, and of my obedience unto death:" and as I gaze, and gaze, upon the wide-spread scene of joy, and listen again to those welcoming shouts and pealing hallelujahs, new light is shed upon the beautiful words of the text, and I wonder no more that it is written, "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*"

4. Again—The death of a saint is in God's estimation an important event, *because it is intimately connected with the promotion of his declarative glory.* The Evangelist John, in giving an account of what the Saviour said touching the future martyrdom of Peter, explains

the meaning of it in these significant words, "This spake he signifying by what death he should *glorify God.*" Peter then, by *his* death, glorified God; and, doubtless, every devoted christian, in leaving the world, to a greater or less extent, does the same. When the christian dies, a circle of relatives and friends are sorely afflicted. Their affliction, if sanctified, will make them more humble, more watchful, more prayerful, more spiritual, more prompt and conscientious in the discharge of every personal and relative duty;—and, in that case, God is glorified. Or, if some of the surviving relatives are impenitent, they may, as the fruit of their bereavement, be arrested on the high-way to ruin and led to the feet of the Saviour;—and in that case, God is glorified by the death of his servant. When the christian dies, a sad and memorable vacancy is made in the church of which he was a member: his death is a solemn warning to his surviving brethren;—and if they lay it to heart, if it makes them more earnest in supplication, more diligent in the Master's business, and more thorough in preparing for their own approaching dissolution, then, too, God is glorified. When the christian dies, there may be something very tender, and yet powerfully convincing, in his last testimony for Christ and for his religion—something in the spirit with which he enters the dark valley, or in the words he utters there, which is adapted to make a salutary and a lasting impression upon those who are with him in his expiring moments, or who may hear of his dying

experience;—and if any such are confirmed thereby in the faith of the gospel, or delivered from the ruinous thralldom of unbelief, then God is glorified in the death of his servant. When the christian dies, his holy example, his heavenly spirit, are called to mind with augmented interest, and every thing connected with his life of faith, with his entire history as a devoted servant of the Highest, is remembered with peculiar gladness and gratitude; and if any are stimulated by such remembrances to follow him more faithfully as he followed Christ, then is God glorified in the death of his servant. Time would fail us to enumerate all the methods in which saints by death may promote the glory of their God. It is to be presumed however, that by every instance of mortality among the redeemed, God's declarative glory, the quickening of his people, the upbuilding of his kingdom, and the salvation of sinners, is more or less advanced; and if so, then, as God prizes his declarative glory above every other object, loves Zion with an infinite affection, their death must be, in his estimation, an event of surpassing moment, and we can not be surprised at the record, "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*"—precious and important as an instrumentality, which, through the accompanying influence of his Spirit, may be highly promotive of his glory and of the interests of his cause in the world. Moreover, there are many remote bearings of the death of God's people, which we do not, and can not at present, understand, but which, in

the judgment of Him whose understanding is infinite, may be of the very first importance. And this leads me to remark

5. In the last place—That *we know not what bearing the death of God's people may have in its relation to the scenes and employments of eternity.* The kingdom of grace on earth, and the kingdom of glory in heaven, are but different departments of one great and growing empire, of which Christ is the Head. When the subjects of the kingdom of grace on earth pass up through death's portals into the kingdom of glory in heaven, they are but removed to a higher and a larger sphere of action and of usefulness. They are still the servants of Him who sits upon the throne, and like the angels, they delight to do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. They are active *there* in his service—for heaven is not the home of idlers—and their activity is, doubtless, intimately connected with interests of surpassing magnitude touching the holiness and the happiness of his great moral empire. If we could, for a moment, draw aside the veil which conceals the spirits of the pious dead from our view, and see with unclouded vision, the high position they now occupy, the holy employments in which they are engaged, the effective service they perform for their King, and how amazingly their sphere of action and usefulness, as well as their capacities and their happiness, has enlarged since they left the confinement of their clayey tabernacles,—then, perhaps, we should not

wonder at the visitation which called them hence, and we should be prepared to appreciate more fully the forceful and far-reaching import of the declaration before us—“*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*”

Doubtless these thoughts, viewed in connexion with the recent death in our midst of MRS. HARRIET S. MCGUFFEY, will be deemed timely and appropriate. Early in the summer Mrs. McGuffey came from her home in Virginia to visit her relatives in this city and its vicinity, in the hope that the journey, together with a change of air and scenery, would tend to the improvement of her health, which, for a considerable time, had been seriously impaired. But no such result was to be realized. In a very short time after reaching these familiar and fondly-remembered scenes of her early life, she became dangerously ill, and apprehensions were soon entertained by those most familiar with her case, that her dissolution was drawing nigh. Still hope blended with fear. Every remedy that skill could devise, every kindness that affection could suggest, was promptly administered, but the disease was not to be arrested. It baffled every counteracting agency, and steadily took away the strength of its victim, till on the evening of the 3rd of July the silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl was broken, and the spirit passed away. She died at Woodside, “the place of her birth and the place of her marriage, with husband and sister and brothers around her.”

Her character was sweetly charming and attractive; solid, yet finished; beautiful, yet without display. She was remarkably mild, modest, and humble. Her heart was the abode of kindness, and her demeanor was the outward expression of that kindness. Her benevolent and thoughtful attention to the wants of all around her will be long and thankfully remembered by those who have enjoyed the favor of her acquaintance and her society. The most humble were not overlooked or forgotten. "*Remember me to the servants,*" was among the dying messages she sent to her home in Virginia. Her friendship was warm, cordial, and reliable. It knew no diminution, nor change. When acquaintances met her, no matter when or where, they were sure of her mild and hearty welcome. Her voice, soft and emotional, was an index to her character. In all the relations of life there was a winning mildness in her manners which none could fail to observe and admire. She was gentle as a dove. Nor was the lustre of her character a fitful and meteor-like gleaming: it was a strong, a steady, and a uniform light. She *grew* continually in the admiring esteem of those who were with her the most, and knew her the best—and this is no ordinary encomium. More than this however may be said of her. She was a shining and a devoted christian. Now that she is gone, how precious to surviving friends and relatives is the assurance that she was truly numbered with the saints of the Lord. The evidence of this is spread over a long career of consistent and shining piety. Nearly

thirty years ago she devoted herself to the service of God, and was received to membership in this church. From that time till the day of her death, in all life's trials and changes, in all its toils and labors, in all its lights and shadows, she clung to Jesus as her Redeemer, to his word as her guide, to his glory as her aim, to his atonement as her hope, to his cause as her chosen interest, and to his service as her employment and her delight. Always and every where she endeavored to remember her high character and responsibilities as a trophy of distinguishing mercy, separated from the world and devoted to the Triune Jehovah. His moral image was enstamped upon her soul, and its outshining brightness shed a heavenly beauty and a charm upon her deportment and her life. She knew by sweet experience what it is to look through tears of repentance to the cross of Calvary and find peace in believing in Jesus. Nor was she a stranger to that devotional spirit which is one of the clearest evidences of christian character. For many long years her daily fellowship was with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. The mercy-seat was her favorite resort; there she found light in seasons of darkness, succor in seasons of temptation, strength for the discharge of duty, patience for the hour of sorrow, and peace passing understanding in the near prospect of death and eternity. Consecration to the service of God—a clear and steady reflection of the image God, the fruit of regenerating grace—appropriating faith in the Son of God blended with heart-

felt repentance—delight in drawing near to God in the devotional exercises of the closet, the prayer-meeting, and the sanctuary—these unmistakable marks of piety were long and manifestly her own. Though her *natural* qualities of mind and heart were peculiarly mild and amiable, these fruits of *grace* outshine them all. They are now the sweetest reminiscences connected with her life because they are the delightful and convincing proofs that she was a saint indeed, and that, therefore, her death was precious in the sight of the Lord.

The chamber where Mrs. McGuffey died, was a privileged place “quite on the verge of heaven.” From the beginning to the end of her sickness she abundantly realized the truth of the promise, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” She was calm, patient, confiding, and resigned. Her views of Christ, his character, word, and work, were clear; her faith was strong; and her hope, resting upon the sacrifice of Calvary as its foundation, and grasping the blessedness of heaven as its object, was as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast. She spake with tenderness of her family, especially of her absent children, but said she could leave them with composure in the hands of a kind and covenant-keeping God. On the day previous to her death she said to her husband, as she threw her emaciated arms around his neck, “Farewell, my dear husband. ’Tis hard to part, but our re-union will be joyful. Be faithful unto death, and the Lord

Jesus will give you a crown of life. Bid our *dear, dear* children farewell from their *dying* mother. The Lord will protect and guide them." All this was pronounced in a very feeble but distinctly articulate voice—and then she felt that her earthly work was done. She was manifestly ready for her change. The world lost its charms as eternity drew near. Heaven filled her eye and heart, and she longed to fly away and be at rest. She had "a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." She could say with the Apostle, "To die is gain." "She retained her consciousness to the last, and even after she had lost the power of speech, when portions of Scripture were read, and hymns were sung in her hearing, she gave intelligent signs of pious satisfaction and even exultation." As the eventful crisis came very near and she felt the cold arms of death around her, there was no struggle, no reluctance, no quivering dread;—but a ready yielding of the spirit into the hands of its Redeemer, a gentle falling asleep in Jesus.

"So fades a summer cloud away,  
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;  
So gently shuts the eye of day,  
So dies a wave along the shore."

Thus dies the christian,—and our text informs us that every such death is precious in the sight of the Lord. And what more effectual than this can be said for the comfort of surviving relatives? O, if my

voice could reach the weeping husband and children to-day I would say to them—Bereaved mourners, the death of your companion and your mother was precious in the sight of the Lord. He ordered the time and circumstances of it in covenant faithfulness to you and to her. He made all her bed in her sickness and enabled her to say, "I know in whom I have believed." It was in answer to the Redeemer's intercession that she was called away to be with him and to behold his glory: it was that God, in various ways, might be glorified by her departure, and that leaving the church militant on earth, she might enter upon a higher, wider sphere of action and enjoyment in the church triumphant in heaven. Bow then without a murmur before the unlooked-for visitation which has smitten your hearts so sorely and made your home so desolate, and remember, this very visitation, severe as it seems, is the fruit of redeeming love—the same love which first led that dear departed one to the cross of Jesus, and made her an heir of glory.

And shall not the fruits of this bereavement in the case of *all* the surviving relatives of the deceased, prove, that her death, in its relations to them, was a mercifully ordered and a most important event? Shall it not be important, my dear friends, in its bearings upon your characters and your eternal destiny? Shall it not lead you to more serious reflection upon the things which pertain to your salvation, and to a more careful preparation for your own exit

hence to the world of spirits? Ah, if this shall be the fruit of your bereavement—which may God in his great mercy grant—then precious hereafter in *your* sight will be the death of her whose loss has made so large a vacancy in your circle and sent such bitter pangs of sorrow through your hearts.

Friends and brethren—God by this and other similar visitations, places us *all* in a most solemn and responsible position. Every death we are called to contemplate, is, must be, an important event in its relation to each of us, because it will be to us spiritually a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Let us pause then, and consider. Hark! Our God draws near. His hand is uplifted, his summons goes forth,—and friends and brethren are laid in the sepulchre. What means it? From every new-made grave there comes a voice, and it says to each of us—“There is but a step between you and death. Sit loosely to the world. Be faithful to God and to his cause while it is called to-day. Do what your hands find to do with your might. Work while it is day: the night cometh.” God grant us grace so to hear and heed the admonition, that when our earthly career is ended, and we too have passed into eternity, surviving friends may be comforted by the remembrance that we lived for God, and may appropriately write upon the head-stone of our sepulchres—“*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*”