

"MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT; FOR THE END OF THAT  
MAN IS PEACE."

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# A DISCOURSE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

JAMES ELLIOT, ESQ.

Delivered in Jackson, Miss., February 4, 1844.

BY

LEROY J. HALSEY,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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## S E R M O N .

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“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”—  
PSALM xxxvii. 37.

IT is for no mere purpose of human eulogy, that we assemble here to-day. We come not into the house of mourning simply to pay a tribute of respect to the character of a friend, or drop a tear of sympathy over the memory of a brother, however lovely may have been his life, however peaceful his death, and however bright the example of virtue which, both living and dying, he displayed amongst us. No; if this were our only object, it would be as unprofitable to us as any services in which we may engage must now be useless to him; if this were all, such a meeting as the present would be as unbefitting the sacred solemnities of the Sabbath as it would be repugnant to all the principles and feelings of our departed friend and brother. But it is with a different view that this occasion has been appointed, and let us hope it is with higher purposes that we are now assembled in the sanctuary.

When one, whose education and sphere of action are such as to give him an extensive influence in society, and whose established character is such as to make that influence as salutary as it is extensive, is taken away in the midst of his usefulness, we who survive owe it to ourselves as individuals, to the community in which he lived, to the church of which he was a member, and to the rising generation of our country, to make the departure of such a man an occasion of good, by portraying the great principles of truth and righteousness by which his character was moulded. When a good man dies it devolves upon his survivors to perpetuate his influence, so that the good which he hath done shall

not die with him. When a good man dies he leaves his character, as a sacred deposit, to his friends, and his influence, as a rich inheritance, to his country; and we cannot better extend and perpetuate the influence of a good man, when he is gone, than by holding up his example before the youth of our country, for their careful study and imitation. Although in doing this we must look beyond the character itself to the plastic and Divine hand which moulded it—although we must look beyond the mere man to the eternal principles of truth and virtue which made him what he was—yet it is when we contemplate those principles personified, developed in the life, and illustrated in the death of one whom we all knew and loved as a friend, and brother, and fellow citizen, that we behold them with a livelier interest, and cling to them with a stronger conviction. It is when religion teaches by her living examples that she gives us her clearest and most impressive lessons.

There are two important results to be gained by the contemplation of such examples. The first is our renewed conviction of the truth and excellence of the Christian religion. Examples of this kind show us that pure, spiritual, evangelical piety is still extant in the world, and that the Gospel of Christ is as powerful now in moulding the human character into its own likeness as it was at the beginning. As infidelity has no answer to make, no plea to offer against the evidence of a holy life, so there is no argument for the truth of religion more convincing than that deduced from the life and death of a genuine Christian.

The other good result arising from the contemplation of such examples is the encouragement given to others to go and do likewise. When we see what religion could do for one of like passions, frailties and infirmities with ourselves—for one in the same walks of life, and with natural endowments similar to our own—for one who may have been our familiar friend, or relative, or fellow-citizen, we are ready to ask, “why may it not do the same for us?” When we witness the integrity of his conduct, the purity of his conversation, the serenity of his spirit, the humility of his life—when we stand by the couch of his sufferings and mark the triumph of his patience and fortitude—when in all his public and his private walks, around the fireside and in the streets, we feel the gentle uninterrupted flow of his cheerful-



ness, his benevolence, his hospitality—when at last we visit him in the chamber where he meets his fate, and behold his death so beautifully characteristic of his life—and when, after he is laid to rest, we call to remembrance his virtues, and know that it was Divine grace which so adorned him, and rendered his name “to memory dear, and dear to God,”—then do we go on our weary way of life, encouraged and resolved, saying, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

It was doubtless with something like these important ends in view, that the King of Israel, in the 37th Psalm, after drawing a striking contrast between the righteous and the wicked, calls our attention to the portraiture of the good man in the memorable words of the text—“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.” And with such objects in view, let us to-day contemplate the Christian character as it was so beautifully displayed in a living example which was here known and read by us all; let us mark the footsteps, and gaze upon the lineaments, in life and in death, of that good man, that “perfect and upright man,” who so recently went in and out amongst us, of whose wholesome counsels, of whose zealous labours, and of whose generous friendship we are now bereft as a church and as a community, but “who, being dead, yet speaketh.”

In reading the Sacred Scriptures, it must not be forgotten that those terms and phrases which are applied in common to the Almighty and to man, must be taken in two different senses, according to their different applications; in an absolute or unlimited sense if they refer to him, in a comparative or subordinate sense if they refer to us. When power and wisdom are ascribed to God, the terms have obviously an absolute sense, denoting the highest possible power, and infinite, incomprehensible wisdom. But when man is called wise or strong, the words are used comparatively, meaning to ascribe to man some degree of power and wisdom. So when goodness, or perfection, or righteousness, or holiness is ascribed to God, it can be no other than absolute goodness, sinless perfection, spotless righteousness, or infinite holiness, which is so ascribed. But when man is called good, or holy, or just, or righteous, or upright,

or perfect, the terms are clearly comparative, implying the possession of these qualities in some degree, as compared with his fellow men. Absolute, sinless perfection belongs to God; and in this absolute sense no man on earth can be called holy, upright, just, or perfect; but the very opposite is affirmed in the Bible. In this absolute sense David said, speaking of mankind, "I have seen an end of all perfection." In this sense our Saviour replied to one who addressed him as a man. "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." In this sense we hear Job saying, "If I justify myself mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." In this sense we have the declaration of Solomon, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." In this sense the apostle John writes, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." In this sense we read more than once, that "There is none righteous, no not one."

But there is a perfection which may be, and in the Bible is ascribed to man. It is a comparative goodness or perfection, derived from God as its source, and contrasted with the natural sinfulness of man. Thus, in this comparative sense, we read that "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God." In this sense the Almighty said to Abraham, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." In this sense it is recorded of Job, "That he was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil." In this sense Solomon said, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In this sense our Saviour said to the young man who was rich, "If thou wilt be perfect, come and follow me." And to his disciples, "Be ye also perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," thereby requiring them to strive for some degree at least of that goodness or holiness which the Almighty possesses in absolute, infinite perfection. In this sense the apostle Paul laboured "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." In this sense the people of God, both in the Old and New Testaments, are called holy, righteous, and perfect: and so says the Psalmist, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Thus, in the language of the Bible, the perfect man is not the man who is so wholly sanctified that he has ceased from sin, but

the man in whom, by the grace of God, the principle of depravity has been so far counteracted that the new principle of holiness predominates, moulding the character and guiding the conduct into some good degree of conformity to the law and perfection of God.

You perceive that this is a kind of perfection altogether different from anything known or recognized as such in this world's philosophy. There is a creed current in our day amongst men of the world, made up partly of poetry, partly of religion, and partly of philosophy, but mostly of fiction, which speaks much of perfection. It descants eloquently on the unsullied purity and innocence of childhood, on the unfallen, angelic amability and generosity of youth, on the radiant beauty, the snowy whiteness, the immaculate excellence of human nature, on the sunshine and bright skies, and fair Arcadian fields, and ever blooming bowers of human happiness—on the inherent grandeur, dignity, high nobility, immortality, perfectibility, and almost divinity of human reason; but this, you know, is not the perfection of the Bible. This is not the creed of any of its writers, nor the description of any of its characters. Nor was this the creed or the character of our departed friend and brother. He had attained to no other perfection, nor does the Bible ascribe any other to man than that which consists in recovery from sin, and which arises from Divine grace implanted in the human heart, and subduing its natural and inherent depravity.

What, then, are the distinctive characteristics of the good man of the Bible, “the perfect man in Christ,” as they are delineated in the Word of God, wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, and exemplified in the life of every child of God? With the Scriptures for our guide, let us mark and contemplate some of the most obvious traits.

First of all, it may be mentioned, as a characteristic of the good man, *that he takes the Word of God for his counsellor, and the law of God for his rule of action.* He is one who believes firmly that “there is a God, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Whatever he may call in question, he has settled that point, as a truth, once for all. With equal confidence, he has settled it as a truth, never more to be doubted, that God has given to man a revelation of his will, containing a



standard of all truth, a test of all excellence, a rule of all duty. If we hold these great truths as incontestable ; if we believe, as we must, from the most abundant proofs, that all nature around us is the workmanship of an almighty, all-wise, and beneficent Deity, and that the Bible is an authorized revelation of the character and will of that Deity, then it is manifest, that the fear of God and the knowledge of his will, as revealed in his word, must be the beginning of all human wisdom ; must lay the foundation for all correct moral character in man. It is as clear as the sun in the heavens, that virtue, wisdom, perfection or moral excellence in man, can be built upon no other true and enduring foundation than that which is laid in a correct knowledge of the character, and a conformity to the law of God. The law of God is to us the only sure and infallible standard of moral truth, the only sure and unerring rule of moral duty, the only sure and ultimate tribunal of right and wrong.

Now the perfect man in Christ is one who has been brought to stand upon this foundation. And upon this safe and solid foundation he is building the house of his present and eternal happiness. Like Abraham of old, he not only believes in a God, and in a revelation of that God, but he believes that God has indeed spoken to him in the Word of truth ; he believes *what* God has spoken there, every word of it ; and “it is counted to him for righteousness.” Other men may see, or affect to see, nothing true and good, nothing divine and lovely in the Bible, but it is with no common interest that he opens and reads that venerable book. For him it contains wondrous things, and glorious things. It is no dead letter to him, but a living testimony ; even the testimony of the living God. It is no dreadful, mysterious unknown handwriting on the wall, to harrow up his conscience ; but a beautiful, gracious, heavenly message from God his Maker, God his Redeemer. It is not some huge, uncouth, obsolete volume, to be neglected and despised, buried in rubbish or covered with dust in a corner ; but his sacred treasured charter of life—eternal life. “It is a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path.” “He has chosen it as an heritage for ever.” “The testimonies of the Lord are his delight, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” The Word of God is his constant counsellor ; the law of God is his infallible rule of action.

He searches the Scriptures day and night as for hidden treasures: in them he has eternal life, for they testify of a Divine Saviour, who is the great source of life, spiritual and eternal. To them he goes for comfort in distress, for direction in perplexity, for light in times of darkness, for support in affliction, for encouragement in adversity, for strength in temptation and for hope in death itself. They are the guide of his youth, the companion of his riper years, and the solace of his declining age. He reads them by day, and meditates upon them by night, in order by them to mould his character to virtue, and regulate his walk and conversation amongst men. He entertains no principle of morals, he forms no opinion in philosophy, he adopts no doctrine of faith, he cherishes no sentiment in religion, he engages in no pursuit of life, until he has first consulted this great depository of truth, and tried them all by the touchstone of its instructions. Both in theory and in practice, he brings everything "to the law and to the testimony," and if they agree not with these, it is because there is no truth in them.

With such a man as this, holding such oracles of truth and wisdom as these, it is a matter of small concern to have his principles or his conduct tried by man's judgment. It is a thing of comparative insignificance to him to be either censured or approved by any human standards, seeing he has in his hands the word, the law, the judgment of his God. Tell me if it is not a sublime position which he occupies? When for his creed, and his conduct, for every opinion and every practice, he has such a voucher as, "Thus saith the Lord," tell me if he may not then plant his foot as upon an everlasting rock? Tell me if he may not say, here will I stand fast, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea: here will I stand, for this is truth, though all else should prove to be false; here will I stand, for whatever else may be good or evil, right or wrong, the law of the Lord is holy, just and good for ever: here will I stand, for whatever besides may stand or fall, survive or perish, heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than one jot or tittle of God's word shall fail; here will I stand amidst all the changes of human opinions, amidst all the tumult of men and nations, amidst all the shifting schools and systems of human philosophy, amidst all the convulsions of the natural

and the moral world, and all the powers of earth and hell shall not dislodge me from this sure foundation which is laid in Zion?

Men have sometimes boasted of their philosophy, as a sufficient standard of truth and duty. They have referred to the light of reason, or law of nature, to the code of honour, to the customs of refined society, or to the law of the land, as an adequate guide. But what need has the Christian to come down from the noble, elevated position which he holds, to occupy any inferior ground? What need has he to abandon his divinely inspired, for any human guide? What need has he to walk by a rush light, when he can have the glorious light of the sun? Would you then aspire to the position and the character of the perfect man in Christ? Would you be one whose life shall be an example to imitate, and whose end shall be peace? Go, then, like him, first of all, and take for the man of your counsel "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."

In the life and character of our deceased friend, the truth of these remarks had a beautiful illustration. He recognized no standard of religious truth, and acknowledged no rule of religious duty but the Holy Scriptures; and these he had known, like Timothy, from his childhood. His early youth had been a verification of the text—"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy Word." The prime of life and manhood with him had only added another example, to show that "the Scriptures are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The experience of his age was but a commentary on that of the Psalmist, "Oh how I love thy law: it is my meditation day and night. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." And when, at last, leaning on the rod and staff of the divine Word, he was called to walk through the valley and shadow of death, in him was again fulfilled the promise—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall



the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

Few men, even in the ministry, had a more accurate and extensive acquaintance both with the letter and spirit of the Scriptures; and perhaps no one was better able than he to discern any deviation from the doctrine, or misquotation of the letter of God's Holy Word. This was the result, not merely of long-continued reading and study, in his mature years, but of that early discipline and committing of Scripture to memory, that thorough indoctrination in the standards of truth, that faithful catechising in the forms of sound words, and those religious habits to which he had been trained in his native land. To these, under God, more than to anything else, he owed the stamina of his character. And these, more than anything else, though it is now the fashion with some to decry them, are the means by which men are to be made; the materials, and the only materials, out of which the human character can be cast in its highest, sternest, noblest mould. Born and educated in Scotland, a land above all others proverbial for its piety, for its uncompromising attachment to sound doctrine, its deep reverence for the Sabbath, and its widely diffused knowledge of the Scriptures; blest with pious Presbyterian parents, whose earliest care was to consecrate their offspring to the service of Jehovah, and whose highest ambition was to leave them the legacy of a godly example; trained up under such counsels, to inhale from infancy the breath of parental prayer, to live in the very atmosphere of piety, under the very droppings of the sanctuary, in the green pastures and beside the still waters of salvation; habituated thus, from youth, to the Scriptures and to the catechisms and ordinances of the Scottish Church, he was through life not only a creditable representative of his native land, and a worthy son of his pious ancestry, but a signal and noble illustration of what pure primitive Christianity, in the form of Scottish Presbyterianism, could do for a man, and make of a man.

It is the glory of Scotland, that she brings up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that she makes public provision for their instruction in his Word, that she places in their infant hands the confessions and formularies of a pure faith and a simple worship, that she pours into their opening minds the



healthful influences of religious truth, that she nurses them, not in the lap of luxury and indolence, but of industry and virtue, and that, when she sends them forth to other lands, though she has no patrimony of silver and gold to give, she sends them out with a better patrimony, even the patrimony of a Christian education, which cannot be lost by misfortune, which cannot be alienated by debt, which cannot be wasted by time. Though she cradles them amidst the rocks and snows and storms of a northern clime, though she casts their lot on a rugged soil and amidst wintry winds, yet she wakes their earliest slumbers with the voice of prayer, she soothes their hardships with the songs of Zion, she atones for the asperities of nature by the amenities of grace, and reconciles them to earth by instilling into their young hearts the knowledge and the hope of heaven. And wherever they wander over the wide world, unless they have become recreant to the memory of their country, the children of Scotland will still be characterized by their knowledge of religion and reverence for the Scriptures. In that knowledge and reverence thus obtained, we find the foundation of the subsequent conversion, the life of usefulness, and the Christian character of our departed brother. When, therefore, in him we mark the perfect man and behold the upright, we find that he is distinguished by *his making the Word of God his counsellor, and the law of God his rule of life.*

The next leading and distinctive characteristic of the good man of the Bible, which must be marked, is *his fearless integrity, his uncompromising moral principle.* It is that principle which leads him at all times, and under all circumstances, to act from an abiding, conscientious sense of duty to God. The diversities of human character are as multiplied as the springs of human action. Some men act from impulse, others are driven on by ungovernable passions and appetites, others again are impelled by the cool calculations of selfishness; with some the love of pleasure, with others the desire of gain, and with others again the thirst for glory, is the main-spring of action. But the good man of the Bible, whatever may be his natural temperament, differs from them all in this, that the main-spring of all his conduct, the predominant and living principle of all his actions, is duty to God. It is obvious that he who is always impelled by this motive of duty to God, must rise up at once to an integrity of character,

which no human censure or applause can seduce, a strength of moral principle which no opposition can intimidate, which no flattery can undermine, which no self-interest can compromise.

This characteristic of the good man is the natural result of that which was first mentioned, his constant study of the Scriptures. For, let a man have the words of inspiration always before his eyes, let him have the law of God ever stamped upon his memory, let him have, as he must have if the Bible be thus received and regarded, an abiding impression upon his mind of the presence and protection of the Almighty, so that whatever he does, and wherever he goes, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in public and in private, he shall feel that God is the unceasing spectator of all his deeds, and the unsleeping inspector of all his thoughts and feelings, and you perceive at once that he has the highest incentive to duty, the strongest safeguard of virtue, and the noblest guarantee for correct, uncompromising moral principle, that can be brought to bear upon the human soul. What can shake the integrity of a man, once fairly ensconced in such a citadel of strength, behind such a bulwark of defence as this? Here is a motive to do right as powerful as it is lasting, as binding as it is universal. Neither the secrecy of solitude, nor the darkness of midnight, nor the applause of the multitude, nor the censure of the world, can destroy or diminish its perpetual and universal authority, when it has once taken possession of the soul. The man who cordially and fully adopts the Bible as his guide, who recognizes in every line of it the handwriting of Jehovah, who believes in a Divine Omnipresence, there revealed, as fully as if the words, "Thou God seest me," were written on the heavens over his head, will acquire a sterling integrity of character, as much above all others, as the fear of God is above all other motives. And such a character thus formed shall, one day, attain a position in the scale of moral and intelligent beings as immeasurably above that of the superficial worshiper of self and mere devotee at the shrine of human honour, wealth and pleasure, as the heavens are above the earth. The fear of God will so cast out every other fear, that he who fears him aright shall have nothing else to fear: and a sense of the Divine approbation will so absorb every other and inferior good, that he who has this pleasure, can be blest even in the

absence of all others. Let a man's mind be thoroughly imbued with the idea of an omnipresent and omniscient Deity, who is daily and nightly the observer, judge, and rewarder of all his conduct ; let this great idea grow into a vivid, habitual, and lasting impression, which shall go with him through all his hours of retirement, and all the cares of public business, and give a colouring to his very dreams ; let this grand conception of an all-pervading God become, as it were, his presiding genius by day and his guardian angel by night ; and do you not perceive that there must be a difference between such a man's character and that of others ? Do you not perceive, that a religious principle, founded on such a rock as this, must be a thing altogether purer in its elements and nobler in its rewards, than that of the world ? But if you have formed no conception of this vast difference, and have no consciousness of any such moral excellence in yourselves, still do not thereby conclude that none such exists ; for your want of observation or experience in this case, only proves yourselves, and not others, to be destitute of such virtue. Notwithstanding you may unfortunately be unconscious of any such feelings, still it is true that the good man of the Bible, who lives under an impression of the Divine presence, who aims to do right because it is pleasing to God, and to avoid doing wrong because he fears to sin against God, possesses a moral integrity which loses none of its beauty, because others may fail to appreciate it, which loses none of its efficiency where no human power can reach it, which loses none of its rewards where no human eye can see to censure or admire it. Its excellence, its authority, and its recompense are from God. And he who possesses them, may be said already to live in a new and nobler world.

The perfect man in Christ, then, who takes the Scriptures for his guide, and a sense of duty to God for his motive, will aim to do right in all places and under all circumstances. It is true, he may sometimes fall short of his own elevated standard ; and when he does so, he is the first to perceive and lament his own errors, striving ever afterwards to avoid or rectify them. But, as a general rule, the main tenour of his life will, by the promised grace of God, be right. He will "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God," whether he has the co-operation and approbation of others or not. Though all men should prove



perverse, he will not thereby conceive himself licensed or allowed to sin. If the multitude do evil, he will not, on that account, consider the claims of truth, virtue, honesty, justice, benevolence, humanity, honour, righteousness, and of God, as any the less binding on himself. His integrity will not desert him in the hour of temptation, but will come forth like gold, seven times refined, the brighter and purer from the fire. In cases of perplexity he does not stop to inquire, "will this be popular? is this expedient in the view of the public? will the world approve or blame me for this?" But the one question which he asks, and the only one is, "Is it right—is it duty—is it the will of God?" If there were not another man in existence who did right; if there were no human beings in the universe to praise or blame his conduct, the good man would still hold fast his integrity. As long as there is a God, whose favour is life and whose loving kindness is better than life, he would fear to sin; saying with Joseph in the hour of temptation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" His religious principle is founded on the Divine existence, and earth and hell cannot overthrow it. This is the principle by which every Christian professes to be governed, and which, indeed, is possessed by every genuine Christian. Without this there is no true virtue, or morality, or religion on earth. It is the intention that constitutes the essence of virtue. It is the motive or end in view which makes the life and soul of religion. It is this thing, hidden from human eyes, but open to the eye of God, this thing, called motive, or purpose, or intention, known only to the Almighty and the heart of the agent, upon which the Lord our Maker looks, as rendering all our actions right or wrong, good or evil, in his sight.

There may be a fashion of virtue, a species of morality, a form of religion, different from this, which passes current amongst men; but it will not pass before God, because the wrong intention vitiates all its glory. Built upon a selfish human basis, having for its object a selfish human praise, it shall reap its appropriate human recompense. Far be it from us to deny either its excellence or its reward. It may be good as far as it goes: it is better than nothing, infinitely better than vice: it passes current amongst men for at least as much as it is worth; and verily it



hath its reward. As it is of the earth, so its reward is earthly: as it looks not farther than this world, so this world rewards its possessor. If it is called perfection in this world, with this world its perfection must have an end. Our objection to it is simply this, that it cannot stand before God and bear his scrutiny: it will be worthless in eternity.

But the integrity of the Christian is of a style very different from this. As it comes from God, and relates to God, so with God it shall reap an eternal reward. Doubtless there are men who recognize no such distinction as this. Doubtless there are some who acknowledge no standard of virtue and religion but utility. And such will, no doubt, ridicule the idea of the elevated moral principle and integrity required by the Bible. But their reasoning on the subject is somewhat contracted. Because they are conscious of no such religious principle in themselves, because they have never yet acted from a high sense of duty to God, they profess to believe that no one else does, that self-interest rules alike in all hearts, and that but for the restraints of society, all men would be unjust, dishonest and selfish. But their mistake is that they make themselves the measure of mankind, and their own experience the disproof of the grace of God. For aught that appears to the contrary, it may be true enough that they are utterly devoid of this high and disinterested sense of duty to God, which the man of God professes. For aught that is known to the contrary, all unconverted men are destitute of this integrity, for this is the very thing which is received in conversion. But let no unregenerated man, arguing from his own defectiveness, conclude that this elevated moral principle does not exist in those who have been regenerated. Let him remember that the perfect and upright man has been born again, and is a new creature in Christ. Let him mark the character, as delineated in the fifteenth Psalm. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward

against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

This second characteristic of the perfect man in Christ has seldom been more signally displayed, in a living example, than it was in the life of him whose death we now deplore. It seemed to be true of him, if it ever was of any man, that he always had the fear of God before his eyes, excluding every other fear; and subordinating every other motive. If a man's outward conduct be any test of his inward character, if a man's daily walk and conversation amongst his fellow-men be any true index of the soul, we have good evidence to believe that the one grand object, which with him predominated over every other object, was to do his duty to God, and live without sin. During all that painful and lingering illness of years which closed his earthly pilgrimage, and so warmly elicited the sympathy of all our hearts, his own constant care, his strongly expressed desire, his oft-repeated prayer to Heaven was, that he might spend his days, whether many or few, without sinning against God. What is duty? what is right? seemed to be the one great question which determined everything for him. It was one of the remarks of his last days, expressed to an intimate friend with all the energy of his character, and indicative of his high sense of duty and uncompromising integrity of purpose, that "he could, feeble as he then was, without fear or hesitation, rise from his bed to perform any duty, to endure any pain, to make any sacrifice, which he saw to be according to the will of God." This was said with all that calm confidence and trust in God, which conveyed an impression to his friend that he was a man, who, under a conviction of truth and duty, could have willingly marched to the cannon's mouth, or, like Abraham of old, have laid his only son or himself, as a ready sacrifice, upon the altar of his God.

So settled was his purpose to do right, so implicit his adherence to the dictates of conscience, so firm his reliance upon God, that his piety was never known to assume the form of ecstasy, or ardour, or enthusiasm. It was not the piety of imagination, or of sympathy, or of animal excitement, or of superstitious credulity, but that kind of piety whose genuineness the world itself cannot deny, the piety of principle; so conscientious, so uniform, so unshaken, that it seemed to have become the second nature of

the man. It was, however, as he often expressed it, not nature at all, but the grace of God, ingrafted upon nature. He would not suffer any such moral excellence to be ascribed to himself, except as it arose from the implanting of Divine grace by the agency of a Divine Spirit.

This firm, unflinching moral principle, arising from a conviction of truth and sense of duty to God, was evidently the main-spring of all his conduct, the secret clue to his whole character. For example, it was this that endowed him with an unusual degree of patience, resignation, and fortitude in suffering; those three Christian graces which flourish most in the school of affliction. To say that he did not murmur or complain, would be but faintly to state the truth: he never would acknowledge that he had the slightest ground of complaint, but triumphed and rejoiced under his sharpest sufferings, as one who felt that it was a privilege to suffer, because it was part of the appointed work which God had given him to do. And the last sentiment, which he uttered with his dying breath, in reply to the question, "whether he felt supported in death?" was—"O yes, surely we can afford to bear our sufferings, since Christ has borne so many of them for us." It was this that gave him a remarkable degree of candour, sincerity and consistency of character. As the heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," so it would be wrong to predicate these qualities of any man in their absolute perfection. But, perhaps, of few men could it be said with greater propriety, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It was because it was generally believed that he acted from a high sense of duty, that he always acted in keeping with his profession, that his lips spoke out honestly and fearlessly the meaning of his heart, it was because of this impression, that men of all parties found in him a safe counsellor, and men of all creeds, a just and judicious friend. It was this that made him a man of great moral courage, decision and independence of character. Indeed it is difficult to see how a man, whose soul is fast anchored upon truth, and who acts from a high regard to the approbation of God, can be otherwise than brave, energetic, and independent. Rooted and grounded in the faith of the Gospel, and conscious of the reality of his own experience, he was never ashamed of his religious views, nor afraid to avow and defend



them, at any time, under any circumstances, or before the face of any mortal. It is true that no man's moral courage can be known until it is tried, but if the impression which a man leaves upon the minds of his most intimate friends be any test, it is confidently believed that there was not a man in Christendom, who, had it been required, would have gone to the stake as a martyr to his religion more cheerfully than our deceased friend. When, therefore, in this example we "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright," of the Bible, it is by his firm conviction of truth, his high sense of duty, his fearless integrity, and uncompromising moral principle, that we find him distinguished from other men.

Let us now pass to the consideration of another characteristic mark of the perfect man in Christ: and that is, *his benevolence or disposition to do good to his fellow-creatures*. The perfect and upright man, whose life and character we have been contemplating, as modeled after the Bible, impressed with the great idea of the Divine approbation, and governed by the high moral principle of duty, does not concentrate his feelings and exertions upon himself alone. He has other relations to sustain, besides those which he holds to God; and his duty to God requires him to discharge with fidelity all those duties which arise from his social relations to man. God has not made him to be a hermit, either on earth or in heaven; and for him to make himself one is as repugnant to the Bible as it is to nature. The God of nature and the Bible, who is the God of reason and common sense, has not given us a religion which requires any man to shut himself up, excluded from the world, in the caves and cloisters of monasticism; or which permits his purposes, labours and affections to terminate in selfishness, though that selfishness should take the garb of devotion. Such a religion would be as unworthy of a God as it is unsuited to the nature of man: and the character formed upon such a model, would be as different from the perfection of the Bible, as developed in the character of Christ, as benevolence is different from selfishness. The Christian religion is no narrow, partial, exclusive system, satisfied to be forever immured in the heart of its possessor; but, like its Divine Author, it goes forth on missions of love and mercy to all mankind. It is as diffusive as the air, as pervasive as the light, as bounteous



as the dews of Heaven. It must have a development in action. It is a plant which must grow, not only by striking deeply its roots, but by spreading widely its branches, in order to bear fruit. That development is exhibited in a life of benevolence and charity towards our fellow-men, a life of activity and enterprize in promoting, by all lawful and available means, peace, virtue, knowledge, happiness and salvation throughout the earth. The first rich, ripe celestial fruit, which the tree of Divine grace, when transplanted in the soul, bears on earth, is benevolence—benevolence in feeling and in action—that benevolence which has a heart to sympathize in the sorrows of the suffering poor, and a hand to labour for the temporal and eternal welfare of the perishing sinner. The perfect man in Christ, though he holds for himself a passport to the skies, and may read his title clear to a mansion there, is not satisfied merely with going to Heaven alone, leaving all others to perish in their sins. So long as there is a soul on earth without salvation, he has a heart to pray, a voice to plead, and a hand to labour, that *that* soul also may taste of the same grace which he has received. His religious humanity differs from that of the cold, unconcerned philanthropist of the world, who, from his elevation, looks down with lofty contempt upon his fellows, without moving a muscle or lifting a prayer to Heaven, that they might attain to his own superior felicity in religion. The good man proves the sincerity of his benevolence by striving to make his friends, his relatives, and all men as happy as himself; and thereby, if by nothing else, proves his religion to be from Heaven. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” As it was the meat and drink of his Divine Master to do good, and as his own character is but a reflection of the Master’s, so the life of the true Christian will be an illustration of the saying—“Freely ye have received, freely give.” “And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is more blessed to give than receive.”

This characteristic of the Christian was also exemplified in the case of our lamented friend and fellow-labourer in the Gospel. In all the relations of life which he sustained, in all the important spheres of usefulness through which he passed, in all the varied pursuits of business which claimed his attention, he seemed never to lose sight of the fact, that besides the care of

his own interests, he had a great work to do for God and his fellow men. He did not consider that because he was a layman he was exonerated from all concern about the interests of Zion, all responsibility for the spread and propagation of the Gospel, and all effort to save the souls of men. His whole Christian course was a signal proof of the vast amount of good, in the way of individual influence, private conversations, personal attention to the church, wholesome advice and counsel, as well as liberal hospitality and pecuniary support to the Gospel, which a single layman, even surrounded with business, could accomplish. His deep insight into human nature, his extensive acquaintance with men of all classes and parties, and his high but unsought reputation for sterling integrity, combined to give him many opportunities for usefulness; and many now living, both in the church and out of it, could testify with what fidelity and success these opportunities were embraced.

Having, at different times, lived in several states in the Union, having been about twenty-six years a member, and nearly twenty-one years an elder in the Presbyterian church, though he was cut off long before old age had dimmed his eye or abated his natural powers, yet at the comparatively early age of forty-four he had accomplished an important work, and exerted an extensive influence in favour of truth and piety, over the world, not less than the church, at every point where his lot had been cast.

Indeed, so thorough was his knowledge of ecclesiastical affairs, so accurate was his information respecting the moral and religious condition of the whole country, so sound was his discretion and so orthodox his faith on all questions of doctrine and polity, so strong was his attachment to all the principles of pure Presbyterianism set forth in the Confession of Faith, and at the same time so liberal, enlarged and conciliatory were his views towards all other branches of the Church of Christ, that his name was known, his judgment appreciated, and his influence felt in all the courts of his own church, from the Parochial Session up to the General Assembly, in all of which he had held a seat. Whilst no man was a more consistent and uncompromising Presbyterian, no man could be a more liberal and conciliatory Christian. He was as far from being a bigot on the one hand, as he was from being a latitudinarian on the other. And if there are

those who are unable to conceive how this entire devotion to his own church should be compatible with such cordial liberality to others, perhaps it is because they have not yet understood the real genius of Presbyterianism, *which, whilst it holds itself to be the truest and best system on earth, can at the same time admit others to be both true and good.* He whose mind can grasp this distinction will find no difficulty in comprehending the compatibility of zeal for one with good will for all. Whilst, therefore, his zeal for the church of his fathers led him to pray and labour for its prosperity, believing it to be the most spiritual and scriptural on earth, his Christian charity caused him to rejoice in the success of all evangelical sister churches that hold Christ the Head, and truth enough to save the soul. He loved all who loved Christ, and desired to see all men brought to the knowledge of the truth of the blessed Gospel.

His conversation habitually evinced how much he prized the prosperity of Zion, and his liberal support of the Gospel proved how much he was ready to do for it. His constant desire and prayer to God were, that all his children might become Christians in early life: and his oft-repeated declaration was, that he wished all his sons to become ministers of the Gospel, as the most useful and the most noble of all professions; and if the godly counsels of such a father have influence over the youthful mind, and the treasured prayers of such a believer have power before God, it will be the cherished hope of many of his friends, that some one at least of his sons will yet fulfil this fond expectation of a parent passed into the skies.

In the Jackson church, with which he was last connected as an elder, he was looked upon by his associates in office, and the members of the little flock, as a wise counsellor, as a faithful friend, as a spiritual guide. As such, his labours of love were abundant. Upon the erection of a house of worship, and the establishment of a Presbyterian congregation in this place, he had set his fondest affections. Various were the schemes of usefulness which he had devised or begun in this scene of his last labours. During the last year of his life he had purchased and put in circulation several dozen copies of the "Way of Life," and the "History of the Reformation," remarking, that "as he was now disabled from much conversation, he must preach the



Gospel in future by proxy, through the words of Hodge and D'Aubigne." But he was soon called away, to leave, in our feeble band, a vacancy which none but the God of Providence can supply. In this example, then, we "mark the perfect man and behold the upright," as one distinguished for active benevolence, and a disposition to do all the good within his power to his fellow-men.

There is one more essential and important characteristic of the perfect man in Christ. *He relies solely on the righteousness of God his Redeemer for salvation.* Though he labours, whilst he lives, to do good, with zeal for God and love to man, he does not expect, on that account, to merit heaven. Though he spends his life in works of usefulness, in deeds of charity, and in acts of devotion, he does not rely upon one or all of them for justification before God. Though he has exemplified in himself all the foregoing characteristics of the good man, his reverence for the Bible, his high moral principle, his disinterested benevolence, he does not depend upon them as the foundation of his salvation. Though he has adopted the law of God as the binding rule of his life, he has not trusted in that as the groundwork of his justification, sanctification and eternal redemption. And though, out of love to his Divine Saviour's command, he endeavours to keep the whole law, and does, in his walk and conversation, exhibit before the world the beautiful fruits of holy living as the evidences of a genuine repentance and faith, yet he has too high a sense of the perfection of the Divine law, and too deep a conviction of the inadequacy and imperfection of his own best obedience to trust in that for salvation, or in anything else but the perfect meritorious righteousness and intercession of God his Redeemer. After all his good deeds he acknowledges himself to be an unprofitable servant, who has offended in many points, and failed of perfection in all. There are no works of righteousness which his hands have done, there are no redeeming qualities which his heart possesses, there are no prayers of penitence which he has ever offered, no tears of contrition which his eyes have ever shed, or sighs of sorrow with which his bosom has heaved, in which he can trust, or ever expect to trust, as the rock of his salvation. Though he will often exhibit all these as the fruits and the proofs of his piety, yet he discards



them all as a ground of merit for justification; and looks away from them, or anything else in himself, in order that he may wear the robe of a Saviour's righteousness, and appear justified, sanctified and redeemed in heaven by that alone. And if any man here is unable to understand this distinction, that for a sinner to perform and plead his own many good deeds as a ground of merit before God is one thing, and for a sinner to renounce all confidence in them as a ground of merit, but still perform them out of love, as the fruits or effects of piety, is another and altogether different thing; if he cannot see that the one of these is seeking to be justified by the law, and the other by the grace of God, it is to be feared that he is himself an utter stranger to the faith of the Gospel, having no adequate views of the Divine perfections, and of his own sinfulness, and consequently no experimental acquaintance with the Christian character.

Perhaps the most obvious of all differences between the true Christian and other men may be found in this very thing—that he ascribes everything good in himself to God and his grace, whilst they ascribe it to themselves, to their own natural powers, to anything rather than to Divine grace. The Christian sees, feels, acknowledges, and laments his deep personal unworthiness and imperfection, whilst they do neither. The Christian lives a life of habitual and unceasing repentance, and discovers more and more his guilt just in proportion as he grows in grace and knowledge, whilst they cannot perceive themselves to be worse than others, or to have any great need of repentance. The Christian, convinced of his sinfulness, clothed with humility, feeling his weakness, renouncing all self-righteousness, distrusting his most perfect obedience, throws himself at the feet of a Divine Redeemer, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and so is justified by the faith of the Gospel, without the deeds of the law, whilst they, only augmenting their depravity by refusing to acknowledge it, say to themselves, "We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; and consequently, "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness," they will be condemned by the law without the grace of the Gospel.

In the life, amidst the sufferings, and especially in the death

of our lamented brother, this essential trait of the Christian character shone forth most brilliantly. When he came to tread the verge of Jordan alone—as sooner or later we must all tread it—when he knew that he was passing through the valley and shadow of death with no hope of a return—when he had reached that honest hour which tries all men’s souls, and puts to the proof the strength of the materials on which they have been building for eternity, then it was that he felt the reality and the value of his religion; then it was that he felt himself sustained by the Rock of Ages, and Jesus Christ, in all his offices of Prophet, Priest and King, became most precious to him; and then it was that the fast-anchored hope in Christ, which he had cherished through life, cheered him, and brightened even the gloom of the dying hour. He had no other hope of heaven, and desired to have none other but that which was founded upon the perfect, all sufficient, imputed righteousness of a Divine Saviour. And though he never appeared for one moment to doubt its sufficiency, or his own personal interest in it, yet so deep was his sense of ill-desert and imperfection, and so exalted his views of the Divine holiness, that the reiterated sentiment of his last days was, “Oh, the rich, amazing, unmerited grace of God which can save such a helpless, imperfect and unworthy sinner as I am.” This humble and grateful feeling of absolute, unlimited confidence in the grace of God alone for salvation was indeed the crowning virtue of his Christian character. This child-like dependence upon God seemed to throw around his whole conduct the graceful garb of an almost primitive simplicity and humility. Probably there have been but few men, occupying the same station in society, having the same intercourse with the world, and bearing the same relations of husband, father, citizen, church-officer and master, who have lived so true to nature, so artless and unartificial in their conversation, their feelings and all their intercourse with men. If there was anything which he abhorred it was vanity and affectation. Everything like pride, pomp, ceremony, parade and affectation, he looked upon as both foolish and sinful. Unostentatious and unassuming himself, of a meek and quiet spirit, of gentle and easy demeanour, of plain, straightforward speech, he loved naturalness, and simplicity, and

truth in others; loved it in everything—in conversation, in manners, in religious worship, in the business of life.

Thus did he live, and thus did he die. Every quality which had marked his life, adorned his death. His last words, his last act, his last looks, were characteristic of the man. He died as it is the prerogative of the Christian conqueror to die, without fear and without regret. Calm, patient, resigned, self-possessed, fearless and cheerful, showing no signs of apprehension or uneasiness, or gloom himself, he divested those who witnessed his parting breath, of all afflictive feelings, by presenting a dying spectacle above their sympathies and tears, and leaving upon their minds the great impression, that “for him to live was Christ; to die was gain.” As a river flows with its widest and deepest, and most majestic current when it reaches the ocean, and as the setting sun shines with its mildest and most beautiful effulgence, so it was with the issue of the river of his existence, and the going down of the sun of his earthly life. His character seemed to shine forth in full-orbed beauty as he left the world; his life seemed to flow with its serenest and most crystal current as it entered eternity.

And now that he is gone, we may modify and apply to him the words of another on a similar occasion. “He needs not the breath of human eulogy to fan his spirit to its resting place; for already it is hushed and happy upon the bosom of its God. This rich and valued specimen of man, around which his fellow-men used to gather, to look upon and admire, its Maker has reclaimed for himself, and keeps it in his cabinet of men made perfect. Scarcely has death ever stopped the beat of a warmer or more expanded heart, or quenched, so far as it could quench, the light of a more noble spirit. But it is all over. The sound of his gentle voice winning souls to God shall be heard no more. His absence shall help to wean many from the world. He was one of those few men whose death shall make us willing to die; and in the general revelation these eyes shall see him again in peace, these ears shall hear, this hand shall grasp the hand no longer chilled, and this heart shall again commingle and coalesce with the heart of him for whom it feels.”

When we contemplate such an example as this, in life and in death, we are constrained to say, “Let me die the death of the

righteous, and let my last end be like his." When we contemplate the great principles of truth and holiness which formed such a character as this, we can but say, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." When we contemplate these characteristics of the good man—his adherence to the Word of God, his unyielding integrity, his generous benevolence, and his humble confidence in his Redeemer, all exemplified in one whom we called our friend and fellow Christian, we can appreciate the great lesson taught by the Psalmist, "MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT; FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE."

THE END.