

A

FUNERAL DISCOURSE,

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH BENTON,

[WIFE OF THE HON. THOS. H. BENTON.]

DELIVERED IN THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

MONDAY, MARCH 26, 1855,

BY

REV. N. L. RICE, D. D.

ST. LOUIS, MO.
KEITH, WOODS & CO.
1855.

US 25472.25.

✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHARLES ELIOT PIERCE
MEMORIAL COLLECTION

June 30, 1915

✓

To Mrs. NANCY PRESTON, of *Montgomery County, Virginia*, widow of the late Governor Preston, and aunt of Mrs. BENTON.

To you, dear madam, as the surviving aunt of Mrs. Benton, and one of her friends from girl-hood, and my own friend for forty years, I dedicate these memorials of her death and burial: taken from the papers of the day: and collected into this form, as some solace to my own feelings, and for the gratification of numerous relatives to whom she was dear—and at the head of whom time and events have placed you.

Her death, though long looked at as an approaching and inevitable event, yet took us by surprise when it came, finding so many of us absent who intended to be present in these last moments. I had sat out to Missouri, with our youngest daughter, Susan: our third daughter, Sarah, was at her home in Kentucky: of her three sons-in-law, each of whom bore her so much affection and respect, neither was present—Mr Carey Jones and Col. Fremont being in California, and Mr. Jacob with his family in Kentucky. Eliza and Jessie Ann, her first and second born, of all those nearest to us, alone were with her—and Eliza not in a state to remain at the bed-side of a dying mother. Our lamentable absences were supplied, as far as others could supply the place of those most wanted, by numerous assiduous and sympathising friends.

An increase of strength during the summer had deceived us, and led to the belief that the advancing event would not arrive until during the winter; and for its coming at that time all our cares and preparations were directed.

Sarah and Mr. Jacob were to be in from Kentucky : Mr. Jones and Col. Fremont were to return from California : Susan and I were to be back from Missouri : and my two nieces from St. Louis, (Mrs. Brant and Mrs. Potts, who loved their aunt with the affection of sisters,) were also to be with us. That bright Elizabeth McDowell whom you had known so full of intellect and energy, and of such exalted moral tone, now afflicted and broken down—alive only to heavenly and family contemplations—was at least to have the consolations of the family circle at the last moments. But, how vain are our calculations ! Before I had arrived in Missouri we were overtaken by the news of her death ; and, returning immediately, it was still too late to find her except in the cold and gloomy vault. But her death had been easy and peaceful—not a movement to indicate it—the mere repose of sleep, and cessation of pulse and breath.

Ten years ago she received slight shocks of paralysis ; and the best medical attention and constant care may have delayed the final event, and softened its approach, without being able to avert it. A general and gradual debility came over her, with a difficulty, and within the last year, a total inability of speech. She sat by me the whole time—speechless except with those eyes which were still bright ; and the last time she rose from her bed was to go and look at my empty chair—as if recalling its occupant. That I should have been absent at that moment, and the cause of pain ! I who had been always with her, and striving to keep every sorrow from her heart.

Her married life had carried her far from the circle of her relatives and early friends, but it was to find new friends wherever she went, and to win new respect and affection wherever she was known.

A tribute to her goodness, to me affecting and which you will know how to feel, was seen in the conduct of the old family servants whom we had sat free years ago, and now returning in her affliction "*to wait upon their mistres, because they could do it better than any body else :*" Sarah, her woman from child-hood—and Ralph, her mother's coachman. Such conduct proves what a mistres she had been.

Affectionately yours,
THOMAS H. BENTON.

DEATH AND OBSEQUIES
OF
MRS. ELIZABETH MCDOWELL BENTON,
AND
FUNERAL DISCOURSE
OF
THE REVEREND DR. RICE.

From the National Intelligencer, of September 12, 1854.

OBITUARY.

DIED, in this city, at 8 o'clock P. M. Sunday, 10th instant, Mrs. ELIZABETH BENTON, wife of the Hon. THOMAS H. BENTON, aged sixty years. Her protracted illness of several years, which from the first was known to be beyond remedy, was borne with a patience and propriety of demeanor that proves how the noble faculties and affections may survive the wreck of the mortal frame. Deprived of utterance, of all her energies, Mrs. BENTON still preserved the bearing of one whose mind would not allow the most prostrating affliction to overthrow the fine character it had formed. No part of it gave way under the long trial to which it was subjected. The simplicity of manners, the domestic and social virtues, the generous, high toned, well-regulated feelings—the religious faith, severe to herself, liberal to all the rest of the world, in which she was nurtured in her father's house and among the Virginia Puritans of Rockbridge—stood the test of thirty years, spent amidst the fashionable life of Washington and the prejudices of its political strife, without reproach. Her exalted character bore the more trying ordeal of a malady which conquers the will and often breaks down the nobler traits of the most happily constituted natures. The ruling feeling in Mrs. BENTON's heart, and strongest to the last, was her devotion to her husband. Of late she has sat constantly by his side when at his labors at home, and indeed their lives may be said to have been inseparable, for she has made her home wherever his business called him.

She was reconciled to part with him on his late return to Missouri because she was too weak to accompany him, and knew that his duty required his presence at his home. When she felt the approach of the crisis which terminated her life, she led her daughter, Mrs. Fremont, to the vacant chair in which her husband worked, and, by look and gestures, made it apparent that she required his recall. It was too late. She walked to the bed in the next apartment, from which she was never able to rise again.

~~At~~ Her funeral will take place this afternoon at four o'clock, from the residence of Col. BENTON, on C street.

A funeral service was performed over the body, at the house, by the Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, formerly of the First Presbyterian Church in Washington, where Mrs. Benton has always worshipped during her residence in the City. A large concourse of friends, neighbours and citizens, among whom were the President of the United States and heads of Departments attended the service; and the body, inclosed in a metallic coffin encased in another of wood, was removed to the large vault in the Congress Burying Ground—to remain until removed for interment at St. Louis.

A silver plate on the breast of the metallic coffin gave the name and age of the deceased: ELIZABETH McDOWELL BENTON: BORN JULY 8th, 1794: DIED SEPTEMBER 10th, 1854.

The pall-bearers were:

GENERAL JESUP, <i>U. S. A.</i>	GENERAL HENDERSON, <i>U. S. Marines.</i>
HON. R. H. STANTON, <i>of Ky.</i>	HON. W. S. ASHE, <i>of North Carolina.</i>
MR. W. W. SEATON, <i>of W. City.</i>	COM. McCAULEY, <i>U. S. N.</i>
HON. MR. SINGLETON, <i>of Mppi.</i>	F. PRESTON BLAIR, Esq., <i>of W. City.</i>

From the St. Louis Intelligencer of March 27, 1855.

OBSEQUIES OF MRS. THOMAS H. BENTON.

"On Sunday last, Col. Benton arrived in this city from Washington, bringing with him the remains of Mrs. Benton, whose decease several months since at Washington, was announced at the time. The body was taken from the steamer to the residence of Col. Joshua B. Brant, on Washington Avenue.

At ten o'clock, yesterday morning, the body was placed in the hearse, and the funeral cortege proceeded to the Second Presbyterian Church, (Rev. Dr. Rice's,) corner of Walnut and Fifth streets.

The following citizens acted as pall-bearers on the occasion :

Mr. EDWARD WALSH,	Mr. KENNETH MCKENZIE,
JOHN BRADY SMITH, Esq.,	Col. ROBERT CAMPBELL,
Col. A. D. STEWART,	ANDREW ELLIOT, Esq.,
THOMAS WATSON, Esq.,	Judge MONTGOMERY BLAIR.

Col. Benton was accompanied by his daughter, Miss Susan Benton, and two nieces, Miss Mary Benton, of Texas, and Mrs. Col. Brant, of this city.

The attendance on the occasion was numerous, a large portion of the body of the church being filled. A majority of our most distinguished citizens, accompanied by their ladies, were present. We noticed most of the prominent members of the Bench and Bar, and, among others, the three Justices of the Supreme Court.

The body, which was enclosed in a sarcophagus, was placed on the chancel in the church. The services were commenced by the choir singing an appropriate hymn. Rev. Dr. Rice then read the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Dr. Rice made an appropriate prayer, after which the choir sang a hymn. Dr. Rice then proceeded to pronounce the funeral discourse. He selected as his text the words, "One thing is needful,"—from Luke X, 42.

In the discourse, the reverend speaker aimed to inculcate in the minds of the assembly the necessity of seeking human happiness through the Christian religion, and not to rely, as the human family were apt to do, upon external circumstances. They should regard the tribulations which men suffered on earth, as but the means of preparing them to recognize the important truth that it was only through the religion of Christ that they can hope to secure temporal happiness or salvation in the future. It was the Christian religion that was "the one thing needful." In the deceased, he said, was combined in an eminent degree the qualities of the true Christian. When the gaities of life surrounded her she remained unaffected by it, and even when she had first come to this city—when examples of Christian piety were few—she was an exemplary Christian. Her life was an exhibition of true faith, and her reward was now a position amid the glories of Heaven. He hoped that her bright example would not be lost to those who knew her and those who were now assembled to pay their tribute of respect to her memory.

After the discourse the choir sang a hymn, the 84th Select, given out by the Rev. Pastor at the request of Mrs. Jones as the favorite hymn of her mother.

The benediction was then pronounced, the body was placed in the hearse, and conveyed to Bellefontaine Cemetery for interment, where the remains of other members of Colonel Benton's family are lying. A numerous train

of carriages followed the hearse to the cemetery. The double coffin received in a brick chamber at the bottom of the grave, walled in with brick, and shut with massive blocks of limestone laid in mortar, gave security to the sacred remains; and the grave itself, filled with earth and moulded into the natural form, with its head-piece and columnar inscription, mark the resting place of one of the noblest of women."

BELLEFONTAINE CEMETERY,

One of the most beautiful imaginable, three miles above St. Louis, on the western bank of the Mississippi; elevated above the highest floods, waved into gentle undulations, and covered with an open growth of native oaks. It is already a necropolis—city of the dead—populous with the numerous dead collected in it: of great extent: tastefully laid out in walks and drives: and the burial ground of each family enclosed in an iron railing, ornamented with flowers and evergreens; and marked by columns and tombs of white marble with appropriate inscriptions. It was of this beautiful cemetery that Col. Benton spoke in concluding the last speech he made to the citizens of St. Louis, soon after the death of his son, and foreseeing the death of his wife; and which was so deeply felt at the time.

"I have domestic affections sorely lacerated in these latter times; an afflicted wife whom I have never neglected, and who needs my attention now more than ever; children, some separated from me by the wide expanse of oceans and continents, others by the slender bounds which separate time from eternity. I touch the age which the Psalmist assigns for the limit of manly life, and must be thoughtless indeed if I do not think of something beyond the fleeting and shadowy pursuits of this life, of all which I have seen the vanity. What is my occupation? Ask the undertaker, that good Mr. Lynch, whose face, present on so many mournful occasions, has become pleasant to me. He knows what occupies my thoughts and cares; gathering the bones of the dead—a mother, sister, two sons, a grandchild—planting the cypress over assembled graves, and marking the spot where I and those who are dear to me are soon to be laid; all on the sunset side of the Father of Floods, the towering city of St. Louis on one hand, the rolling stream of the Missouri on the other; and where a cemetery of large dimensions is to be the future necropolis of unnumbered generations. These are my thoughts and cares, and the undertaker knows them."

Near the centre of this cemetery, and on one of the rolling swells which diversify its surface, is the family burying ground of Col. Benton, and his

connexion, Col. Brant—the graves only sodded, with names on the marble head-pieces—a square white marble column in the centre, bearing the commemorative inscription of each interred.

From the St. Louis Intelligencer.

BIOGRAPHY OF MRS. BENTON.

"Our reporter has collected a few facts connected with the life of Mrs. Benton, which we doubt not will be read with interest by our readers. Mrs. Benton was born in Rockbridge, Va., July 8th, 1794. Her maiden name was Elizabeth McDowell, daughter of Col. James McDowell, and of Sarah Preston his wife. She was the second of three children—two of the three being daughters—the eldest sister married to William Taylor, Esq., member of Congress. The son, also named James, was afterwards Governor of Virginia, and also a member of Congress and distinguished for his oratorial ability. On March 20th, 1821, soon after his election to the Senate, Miss McDowell was married to Col. Benton, in Rockbridge; and, subsequently, came on with her husband to Missouri. Most of her time, however, as passed at Washington, Col. Benton's Senatorial duties requiring him to be in that city more than elsewhere. At the Capital, Mrs. Benton mixed in society and ever received a marked attention. But few ladies were more beloved. Mr. Macon, of North Carolina, in letters written upon the subject, often expressed his admiration of Mrs. Benton's qualities, and, in one of them, said that Mrs. Benton and Mrs. Washington were two of the women who were not altered by a residence at the Seat of Government. Mrs. Benton was a Presbyterian, in religious belief—she early connected herself with that denomination, joining the Rev. Dr. Baxter's church in Lexington, Virginia.

She gave birth to six children, four of whom are still living. They are Eliza, now Mrs. William Carey Jones, of Washington; Jessie Ann, now Mrs. Col. Fremont; Sarah, now Mrs. Richard Taylor Jacob, of Louisville, Kentucky; Susan, unmarried; Randolph, deceased, and James McDowell, also deceased. At the time of her death she was the only surviving member of her immediate family—her father, mother, brother, sister, brother-in-law and sister-in-law having all gone before her. Some years since Mrs. Benton became afflicted with a paralysis, which gradually increased until about a year before her death, when it had completely protracted her vocal organs, and during that period she was unable to utter a word or even a sound. She was obliged to depend upon a simple pantomime in expressing her immediate wants. In the summer of 1853, Mrs. Benton left St. Louis for the last time and proceeded to Washington. She gradually sunk under her disease until in September last, when she departed this life. But few ladies enjoyed the esteem of all in so eminent a degree."

FUNERAL DISCOURSE

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH BENTON,

[WIFE OF THE HON. THOS. H. BENTON.]

DELIVERED IN THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

MONDAY, MARCH 26, 1855,

BY

REV. N. L. RICE, D. D.

**ST. LOUIS, MO.
KEITH, WOODS & CO.
1855.**

ST. LOUIS, MARCH 28th, 1855.

REV. N. L. RICE, D. D.

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, friends of the late Mrs. THOMAS H. BENTON, will take it as a marked kindness, if you will furnish them a copy for publication, of your discourse delivered on the 26th inst., at the Second Presbyterian Church, on the occasion of her obsequies.

Very Respectfully,

Your obedient Servants;

THOS. WATSON,
ADAM D. STEWART,
ANDREW ELLIOTT,
JOHN BRADY SMITH,
K. MACKENZIE,
ED. WALSH,
MONTGOMERY BLAIR.

MESSEB. THOS. WATSON, ADAM D. STEWART, AND OTHERS,

GENTLEMEN,

It affords me pleasure to comply with the request you have done me the honor to make. I only regret, that the discourse has been prepared for the press with more haste than I would desire. I herewith transmit to you the manuscript.

Very Respectfully,

Your obedient Servant,

N. L. RICE.

DISCOURSE:

LUKE 10 : 42. BUT ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.

THE grave is a favorable point from which to view life, to estimate its value, and to ascertain its real wants. The termination of the life of a human being is an event of incalculable moment. It is the summing up of ten thousand plans, desires, hopes, fears, successes, disappointments, joys, and sorrows of the ever active mind. It closes the work of preparation of an immortal being for the eternal future. It is adapted deeply to impress on the mind the sentiment of the text, expressed by the Great Teacher—that numerous and various as are the wants of human beings, only one thing is needful. Possessed of that, we are rich indeed. Possessed of all things but that, we are still miserably poor.

The two sisters of Lazarus, whose conduct gave occasion for the utterance of this sentiment, are types of two widely different characters; the one ever anxious and troubled with the secular cares of life, to the neglect of its more important duties and higher interests;

the other making the duties of religion and the interests of eternity, the matters of chief concern. The former unfortunately, are far the most numerous in our world; and even in the Church of Christ their number is alarmingly large.

We are called to the house of God to-day, not for the purpose of extending assistance to the deceased. The spirit, freed from its clay tenement, has passed beyond the reach of our sympathies and our prayers; and the truly pious, departed in the exercise of faith in Christ, no longer need our feeble aid. For "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But we are here, that we may pay a suitable tribute of regard to the virtues of the deceased, offer such consolation as we may to the bereaved, and impress on our own minds lessons of wisdom. Let us, then, stand at the point where time and eternity meet, and, looking backward and forward, learn the great lesson, *that one thing is needful*.

What is this one thing? It is faith in Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. To prove and illustrate this great truth, is the design of the remarks to which I now invite attention.

1. Faith in Christ places before the mind the great aim of life, and the way to receive it. Few who hear me now, question the immortality of the soul. The clear revelation of the Scriptures on this subject corresponds with the earnest longings of every human being. Nor can it be reasonably doubted, that the conduct of men in the present life, will determine their character and condition in the future state. Is it not, then, the dictate of true wisdom, that in choosing our principles and our aims, we should take into view the whole of our future being? Is it not infinite folly for an accountable, immortal being to concentrate all the energies of his mind upon the enjoyments of a single point

in his eternal being?—and to have his moral character and his taste, formed chiefly or entirely for a world he must very soon leave forever? In accordance with the dictates of sound reason, the Gospel of Christ fixes the eye of the believer upon his eternal home, illumines the path that leads thither, and bids him aim to reach it. Of Abraham, the father of believers, it is testified, that “by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, labored “in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” And our Savior taught all to lay up for themselves treasures in Heaven. The difference between the loftiest aims of worldly men, and the aims of the humblest Christian, is vast as that between time and eternity; between the infancy of the immortal mind and its childish sports, and the unceasing developments of that mind, purified by grace, and its eternal progress in wisdom and in joy; between the struggle for withering honors and perishing treasures, and the glories of the third Heaven. For whatever may be the aspirations of worldly men, they all terminate on this side of the grave. Whatever may be the cares and toils of the true Christian, they are part of his preparation for the bliss of heaven. The former, as he descends to the valley of death, must look back with sorrow upon pleasures to be enjoyed no more; the latter, feeling that his work of preparation is done, joyfully exclaims—“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.”

The principles which mould the characters and control

the conduct of these two classes, exhibit a contrast as striking as their aims. The Christian expects to be saved by faith in Christ; but Christ came to save men not only from suffering, but from sin; to save them from suffering only by delivering them from sin. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" and he exhorts us to "follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Sin, the Christian is taught to believe, is the prolific cause of all his unhappiness in this world; and his hope of happiness in heaven is inseparably connected with his expectation of attaining to perfect holiness. The word of God is the lamp to his feet, the light to his path. He prays for strength to obey and honor his Savior; and he struggles to overcome the depravity of his heart. With him the question of right and wrong is the great question. Moreover, he aims to lay up treasures in heaven, as well as to be fitted to dwell there; and none but good works can add to heavenly treasures.

True religion is not a sentiment in the mind, intended to console in the day of trial, and to inspire hope in view of death. It is the controlling principle of life, placing the renewed affections on things in heaven, and prompting to habitual obedience to all the commands of Christ. Thousands take to themselves the consolations of religion, and cheer themselves with its hopes, whose lives exhibit none of its fruits. The deception is fatal. True religion is a new life, and will exhibit new works. Jesus Christ will reign supreme over all whom he saves. He said to his disciples—"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

But whatever moral principles worldly men may have, certain it is, that with them the authority of Christ is not supreme; neither are they laboring to prepare themselves for a holy heaven. Their aims are earthly; and their prin-

ciples are necessarily like their aims. How different the characters formed under the operation of these two sets of principles.

II.—Faith in Jesus Christ makes both the happiness and the usefulness of men independent, in large part, of their external circumstances. This is a consideration of great importance in a world of perpetual change, and where, through a large portion of life, the circumstances which surround us, are rather painful than pleasant; where oftentimes a clear sky becomes suddenly overcast, and the most cherished hopes are blasted in an hour; where indeed every individual is constrained to feel, that changes of a most melancholy nature are gradually, but constantly being effected. Silently but surely the eye that gazes with delight upon the beauties of nature and of art, grows dim; and the ear ceases to appreciate the harmonies of music. The senses become blunted; and the infirmities of age admonish us of the approach of death. Meanwhile early friends one by one pass away; and the aged man looks sadly on a new generation with whom he has but few sympathies, then turns with tearful eye to his desolate fireside. In such a world, we feel the need of sources of happiness which cannot be affected by such changes. Where shall we find them? Not in popular applause, fickle as the changing wind, and worthless even if more steadfast. Not in wealth, which bereavement, affliction and decay forbid us long to enjoy. Not in earthly possessions, which cannot silence the clamors of a conscience oppressed with guilt, or satisfy the longings of a mind formed for immortality.

We turn to the religion of Christ, and there we find what we are seeking. It is equally suited to all classes, and equally attainable by all. However widely the characters and conditions of men differ in some respects, in one respect, and that the

most important of all, they are all alike. All are sinners, depraved and condemned, unable to make expiation for the sins with which they stand charged, or to purge away the depravity which unfits them for heaven. The gospel brings to them all a gracious salvation—the only salvation they could accept. It points them to the cross of Christ—the only place in the universe, where a sinner can meet God in safety. The rich cannot purchase salvation, and the poor are not required to bring a price in their hands. All are lost, and to all the command is—*believe*—trust in Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, and live. To the poor the gospel gives the true riches ; and to the rich, it imparts poverty of spirit. To the young, it gives the wisdom of age ; and to the aged, the cheerfulness of youth. To the ignorant, it imparts the knowledge which is above all price ; and to the learned, a higher wisdom. It sweetens all the pleasures of life, and alleviates its sorrows. To all who have experienced its power, it appears the one thing needful.

But the usefulness of a good man is no small part of his happiness ; and this, too, Christianity makes to a great extent, independent of external circumstances. The light of true piety can shine in the palace or in the hovel ; in the midst of the temptations and struggles of active life, or on the sick-bed. Wherever the faithful Christian mingles with his fellow-men, he can illustrate the pure and elevating doctrines of his faith, and teach them the way of life. Like the sun in a cloudless sky, he continues to enlighten the world, till he sinks in death ; and as almost all objects reflect more or less fully the sun's light, so do all the varied events of life, prosperous or adverse, painful or pleasant, exhibit the light of Christian example. His usefulness commences with his spiritual life, and continues till he is called to a higher sphere of labor in heaven.

No wonder, then, that the Scriptures so constantly represent the happiness of the Christian as entirely apart from his outward circumstances. Turn if you please to all those passages in the Scriptures, in which the words *blessed* and *happy* are applied to men, and see how generally their blessedness is represented as depending upon their moral and religious state, not upon wealth, honors, health or friends. Blessed is the man "whose delight is in the law of the Lord." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him." The righteous may be rich or poor, honored or obscure, sick or in health, surrounded by a beloved family or suffering painful bereavement; still it is well.

Unhappily for mankind the opinion too generally prevails, that human happiness depends far more upon the circumstances which surround men, than upon their moral state; and therefore the unceasing struggle to change the former, instead of improving the latter. Men will not believe, what is most obviously true—that to a mind formed by the infinitely holy God, sin must ever prove the cause of wretchedness; and moral purity, a source of elevated enjoyment. Every pure affection in its exercise produces only happiness; and every evil disposition helps to make the mind like the troubled sea, that cannot rest. A pure heart with the blessing of God upon it cannot be unhappy. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow therewith."

III.—The Christian faith converts perishing possessions into imperishable treasures. The ties of nature are destined soon to be sundered by the hand of death. The domestic circle, with all its sweet enjoyments—purest and sweetest

of earthly kind—must be broken up. “Sweet home,” must be left desolate. Yet through these fragile ties, others may be formed, which shall endure forever. The godly wife, by her example and her prayers, may lead her husband to Christ and to heaven. Believing parents may take advantage of the maternal affection of their children, to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Every tie of kindred may be blessed to the forming of another tie which death cannot break; and they who have taken sweet counsel together in the midst of the conflict of life, may sing together the songs of victory in the New Jerusalem.

The words uttered here by the tongue which must soon be silent in death, may produce blessed fruits to be gathered in heaven. The riches expended here in promoting truth and righteousness, are thus converted into spiritual treasures to be enjoyed forever. The good works done in this world will all be transferred to heaven to add to its honors and its bliss through eternal ages. Not that our poor works can merit the favor of God, or constitute a price for the purchase of an unfading crown. The Gospel, I have said, brings to us a salvation all of grace. Our good works are but the fruits of grace. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Yet it has pleased God, in his infinite goodness, to promise to our imperfect works a gracious reward, and thus to encourage his people to abound in good works. “Therefore, my beloved brethren,” says Paul, “be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” And again — “Let us not be weary in well-doing.

for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Death imposes upon the man of successful toil the duty of making his will, and takes him forever from all his possessions. The man of fame is borne beyond the reach of the sound of popular applause. He is alike unaffected by the praises or the censures of the world he has forever left. But the Christian rejoices in the wonderful announcement of John, in the isle of Patmos : " And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors : and their works do follow them." This world is full of unrequited toil ; multitudes have labored, but will never reap ; and multitudes more have gathered stores they will never enjoy. But not one work of true faith will ever be lost to the doer. Even the giving of a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, will not lose its reward. He who is to be our final Judge, forgets nothing ; nor is he indifferent to any act prompted by a desire to honor him, and to increase the sum of human happiness. " He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Nor is this gracious reward confined to works commonly regarded as strictly religious. The Christian is a servant of Christ. The word of Christ furnishes him a complete rule for all his conduct in all the relation and avocations of life. Whatever he may do at all, he may and should do in obedience to Christ. His new, spiritual life is to be the controlling principle of all his conduct. " Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." His whole life should be a preparation for heaven, and his entire labors, performed from love to God, should be his eternal treasure.

Is not faith in Christ the one thing needful? What would not men of the world give in a dying hour to be able to take with them the fruits of all their toils, and to enjoy them without interruption in a better world? But this may not be. Of all our treasures we shall take nothing with us, but our good works. Faith in Christ prompts to the performing of such works, and secures for them acceptance and reward. Whatever may be true of others, the Christian knows, that his labors are not in vain in the Lord.

IV. Faith in Christ converts temporary evil into eternal good. Disappointments and afflictions call into exercise the Christian graces; and as the believer sees in them the hand of a wise, affectionate and faithful Father, he seeks, in the light of his Word, to make the proper improvement. "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The jealousy and cruelty of Joseph's brethren proved a great blessing to him, both in this life and in his preparation for a better life. David thankfully acknowledged — "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." Paul rejoiced in tribulations; "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost which is given unto us." There is no trial to which the Christian is subjected, which does not exercise one or more of his virtues, and none consequently that does not, attended by the Holy Spirit, strengthen them. Of the glorious company seen by John the Apostle before the throne of God, it is said — "These are they which came out of great tribulation."

But if the ills of life exercise and strengthen the Christian virtues; they thereby become a blessing; more truly so, than the medicine which gives the patient momentary pain, but eradicates disease and restores health. For sin is the great and only cause of human sorrow; and every step of progress toward holiness, is a step toward exalted happiness — a step toward heaven. Well, then, might Paul say — “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Is not faith in Christ the one thing needful? It converts perishing possessions into imperishable treasures, and turns the sorrows of life into endless joys.

V. Faith in Christ converts death itself into a blessing, and takes the departing spirit to a glorious home. How perfectly helpless must one feel, when the skilful physician has turned sadly away, and said there is no hope. Friends may weep around his bed, and pour into his ear words of tender affection; but he is hastening beyond the reach of even these unavailing expressions. He must go alone where all is new and untried. He must go, too, with the conviction on his mind of having greatly sinned against God his Judge. Eternity with all its untold realities is just before him. Where shall he find help in this trying hour? Let Paul answer — “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” He was made under the law to redeem them that were under its curse. He took our nature, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Faith in the crucified Redeemer secures a gracious justification, and

peace with God; and the Holy Spirit, shed upon the heart through Christ, will receive the last stain of sin. Justified, adopted, sanctified, the dying Christian may dismiss his fears. The Holy Spirit bears witness with his spirit, that he is a child and an heir of God. His Savior, ever a tender, sympathising friend, has said — “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;” and now in the last great conflict he will be nigh. “For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.”

How often have God's children, male and female, young and old, met death not only calmly, but joyfully and triumphantly, exclaiming with Paul — “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” But who shall describe the overpowering emotions that fill the soul, when first it gazes upon the glories of heaven, beholds the Savior, and hears the song of the redeemed? “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” How blessed, an angel could not adequately describe. Our highest conceptions of heaven undoubtedly fall unspeakably below the glorious reality. We have never been, for one moment, perfectly pure or perfectly happy. We have never looked on the face of a being wholly free from sin, or whose countenance gave expression of entire happiness. How, then, shall we rise to the conception of the wonderful dwelling-place of the eternal God, of Christ in human nature, of angels and the saints in light?

But faith in Christ does yet more for us. If it does not prevent death, it will certainly secure a glorious resurrection. The body may return to its mother earth; but at the sound of the trump of God, it shall come forth all glorious to die no more. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

Matter exists in grosser and in more refined forms. The light is matter; and it does not decay. The bodies of the saints will be as much more refined by the power of God, at the resurrection, than they were in this life, as light is more pure and beautiful than the earth on which we tread. For they will be fashioned like unto the glorified body of Christ. Then will they be fit tabernacles in which the purified spirit may take up its abode forever. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

I have selected the subject which I have now briefly discussed, not only because it has seemed to me appropriate to so solemn an occasion, but because the great truths I have sought to present, were strikingly illustrated in the life of the deceased.

Mrs. Elizabeth Benton was the daughter of James McDowell, the father of Gov. Jas. McDowell, of Virginia. She was born July 8th, 1794. She was married March 19th, 1821, and soon after became a resident of St. Louis. She was endowed with an intellect of extraordinary vigor, which was highly cultivated. She possessed a remarkable firmness of purpose and great moral courage, which combined with an amiable and affectionate disposition, secured for her both the respect and the love of those who knew her. She was well acquainted with the sacred Scriptures, and had remarkably clear views of the doctrines of the Gospel. These she embraced, not only, nor chiefly, as a matter of intellectual conviction and of conscience, but as truths which she admired and loved, and of the power and preciousness of which she had a rich experience. She was from conviction a decided Presbyterian; yet, she embraced with Christian

affection all who hold the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. When unable to attend upon the ordinances in her own church, she found spiritual refreshment in worshipping with other evangelical denominations. She lived so near to Christ, and had so much true enjoyment in his service, that the giddy dance and the corrupting theatre had no attractions for her. To her the Sabbath was "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable." Numerous as was the circle of her acquaintance, and various as were their characters and habits, she had no hesitation in having it distinctly understood, that on that day she did not receive visitors. The circumstances in which, for many years, she was placed, severely tested the firmness of her principles. She was one of the pioneers amongst the Presbyterians of St. Louis—having come to the city at a time when there were not more than one or two Presbyterian families, and when the little band worshipped in a school-house. In those days, the public sentiment amongst the most respectable and moral classes, was far from being very strict. But Mrs. B. read the word of God prayerfully, and from its sacred teachings fixed her standard of Christian conduct, from which fashion could never cause her to swerve.

The position in public life occupied by her husband, threw Mrs. B., during the whole of her married life into the gayest and most worldly circles; but she was never fascinated by them, nor was the fervor of her piety cooled. Her correspondence with her beloved Pastor, the lamented Dr. Potts, affords abundant evidence, that she lived in constant habits of communion with God, and that she was far more anxious that her family should be true Christians, than that they should shine in the highest circles of society. Often did she entreat him to remember her and those she loved, at a throne of grace. And whilst surrounded by the gay and

excited crowds in Washington city, she expressed the most earnest desire for quiet and retirement, that she might cultivate personal piety and enjoy the elevated pleasures of religion. Her Christian feelings were ever interested in the prosperity of the Church, as well as in the spiritual welfare of her family. Mr. Macon, of North Carolina, said that Mrs. Benton and Mrs. Washington were two women who were not altered by residence at the seat of government. This was a high commendation. We shall never know, till the revelations of the Day of Judgment, how extensive and happy was the influence of such an example, in such a sphere, for so many years.

For several years before her death, Mrs. Benton was afflicted with paralysis, which seriously affected her mind. But during that period of suffering, her heart still turned, when the Sabbath came, to the house of God. Her seat, in the days of health, had not been unnecessarily vacant; and still "the sound of the church-going bell" had music for her ear; nor did she cease to fill her place in the church, until her growing infirmities made it impossible for her to go.

Her labors and her sufferings are ended forever; and her record is on high. Her light shone with a steady brightness here, in public and in private, in the capacities of wife, mother, friend. It now shines in a better world. Of her own piety she had a very humble opinion; her acquaintances differed from her in opinion. But whatever her attainments were, she was accustomed to ascribe them all to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. I hold them up to-day, not to the praise of human nature, but to the glory of Divine grace.

1st. We may venture in view of the truths now presented to console the bereaved. That death is a great blessing to the righteous — introducing them immediately to the

joys of heaven, the Scriptures do not allow us to doubt. And the life of the deceased left not a lingering doubt on the minds of those who knew her, that she had "chosen that good part that shall not be taken from her." Her place in the family circle and in the house of God is vacant; but far beyond the reach of sin and pain, she worships in the heavenly sanctuary, and is filled with inexpressible joy. You would not selfishly recall her to mingle again in the conflicts and sufferings of earth. The time of separation, if indeed you are the children of God, will be short. Sorrow not, then, as those who have no hope.

2nd. The life of Mrs. Benton presents an example for imitation, throwing serious responsibility upon those who witnessed it. It is no slight matter to live through a series of years under the rays of so clear a light, to see the excellency of the Gospel so beautifully and so constantly illustrated. And no small privilege it is to have been so often, for so long a period, borne to a throne of grace by one who never forgot to pray. May we not hope, that the words she uttered, whilst yet in the flesh, the example she set, and the prayers she so earnestly offered, will result in the salvation of those she loved?

3d. It is at the close of life, we realize, that one thing is needful. On the verge of the grave, riches lose their power to blind the eyes; honors are felt to be but trifling toys. Faith in Christ, which sheds a clear light on the pathway to heaven, which raises us above surrounding circumstances, which converts perishing possessions into imperishable treasures, and temporary evils into eternal good, and which triumphs over death and the grave;—faith in Christ is seen to be the great interest. Let those of us who are here to-day to sympathize with our afflicted friends, learn a lesson of wisdom, ere it be too late. A voice comes to us from the grave—"Be ye also ready." God grant, we heed the solemn admonition.