

87  
369  
569

FRUITFULNESS IN OLD AGE.

---

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Central Presbyterian Church

OF BROOKLYN,

November 12, 1865,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

**JOHN MORRIS.**

By Rev. J. E. ROCKWELL, D. D.

*PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.*

BROOKLYN :

"THE UNION" STEAM PRESSES, 10 FRONT STREET.

—  
1865.

# FRUITFULNESS IN OLD AGE.

---

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Central Presbyterian Church


OF BROOKLYN,

November 12, 1865,


ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

**JOHN MORRIS.**

By Rev. J. E. ROCKWELL, D. D.



*PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.*



BROOKLYN :

"THE UNION" STEAM PRESSES, 10 FRONT STREET.

—  
1865.



## SERMON.

---

“THE righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.”—*Psalms* 92; 12-14.

THESE words are a vivid and beautiful description of a righteous man. They are part of a psalm which celebrates the goodness and grace of God, as manifested in his works, and most especially in his works of Providence and Redemption. They appear in contrast with the transient prosperity of wicked men, who spring up as the grass, and are as suddenly destroyed; who appear for a time to flourish and prosper, but who soon pass away to be seen no more. They are a distinct statement of the work of grace as it is developed in the life and character of the christian. They present him to us under the figure of a palm-tree, which continues green and vigorous all the year through, and whose leaves remain amid the frosts of winter, as well as the more genial heat of the summer months, and whose age is counted not by years, but by centuries. They set forth the aged christian as bearing rich and precious fruits of piety and faith, even while drawing near to the grave, and as giving ample testimony to the power and glory of the Gospel amid the infirmities of life's decline, and while his bodily strength is daily

weakening under the influence of age and decay. Taking these words as our guide on the present occasion.

I. Let us enquire first into the Scriptural meaning of the word *righteous*, as it occurs in this and similar passages. There are evidently but two ways in which a man may become righteous: first, by his own perfect and sinless obedience; and, secondly, by the imputation to him of the righteousness of another. In the first form Adam was righteous until he fell by transgression. Since that hour, neither he, nor his posterity who fell with him, have ever been able to present to God a righteousness of their own which he could accept. 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' 'By the deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh living be justified.'

It is only therefore in the second form that any child of Adam can become a child of God, and an heir of heaven.

To meet this want of our fallen nature, Christ became flesh; and, having magnified and honored the Law, bore in his own body the tremendous penalty due to our transgression, and thus 'became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

In the arrangements of his grace, and the provisions of mercy, he who accepts of Christ by faith secures to himself the benefits of his merits and death. Thus 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.' And all the way through the Scriptures we meet with the statement, that 'the just by faith shall live.' Christ has taken the place of the believing sinner—he has borne the stripes that he must otherwise have suffered. He has obeyed the law in his behalf, and when he is brought to receive Christ by faith, power is given unto him to become a son of God.



There is no longer to him any condemnation. The law ceases to pursue its claims against him. The perfections and government of God are honored even while he accepts and justifies the sinner. The righteous man, then, is one who, though by nature a sinner, and a child of wrath, and exposed to all the terrors of the second death, has been pardoned for the sake of Christ. He stands acquitted of all legal claims against him. He is clothed upon with the righteousness of Christ, and thus has secured to him the favor of God, and the crown and joy of the heavenly inheritance. This was the righteousness of the saints of old. This was the boast and glory of Apostles and martyrs. This alone is the hope of any sinner, that he may be found in Christ, justified in his merits, washed in his blood, and accepted as righteous for his sake. And this leads us to notice,

II. The fact that the life and character of the Christian is the result of a work of grace in and upon him. The words before us, and those which precede and follow, are a celebration of God's power as indicated in the destruction of his enemies, and in the holiness and joy and salvation of his people. His loving kindness and faithfulness are the themes with which the Psalmist would awaken the chords of his harp, and which he would celebrate upon the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. And when he turns for illustrations of his theme to the righteous, he speaks of them as planted in the house of the Lord. The sovereignty and providence and grace of God are all concerned in the salvation of the sinner. He is taken in the fulfillment of a divine and gracious purpose, which formed a part of God's eternal counsels. He is led to see his lost and guilty estate, and under the eye of an ever-watchful

Providence is brought within the reach of sacred influences, which exert upon his mind and heart a healthful control, until the Holy Spirit renews his heart, brings him into a cordial reception of the Gospel, and fills him with peace and joy in believing. From this hour a work is begun which will be fully completed amid the joys and holiness of heaven. Yet this work is to be accomplished by the use and enjoyment of the means of grace. As the tree cannot grow without a proper soil in which to stand, or without the rain and the sun—so the Christian cannot flourish except in the midst of those divinely appointed ordinances, which are designed to fill his mind with heavenly truths, and to strengthen his faith, and develop all his graces. Hence he is said to be planted in the house of the Lord. He is brought into the visible Church, where he is fed and nourished by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel. He is surrounded by sacred influences which are ever at work upon his heart and life. He enters his closet, and the word of God opens to him its treasures; while in prayer and holy communion with his Maker, he draws into his soul the richest blessings of Heaven. He enters the house of God, and is fed by the sacred truths of the Gospel as they fall from the lips of Christ's ambassadors. He sits down at the table of his Lord, where he commemorates his sufferings and death, and his heart is refreshed and strengthened and comforted by the sacred ordinance which sets vividly and sensibly before him the great sacrifice of Calvary. He looks upon the administration of Baptism, and receives new impressions of the grace of God in his covenant with his people, and their seed after them, of which it is the seal. He visits the place of prayer, and his spiritual strength is renewed by the

precious communion and fellowship of the saints. While with all these means of grace the Holy Spirit sheds his own blessed influences upon his heart, strengthening his faith, increasing the power of his gracious affections, enlightening his mind, confirming his hope, and giving him the ability to overcome sin, to walk in the fear of God, and to manifest in all his life the beauty and glory of the Gospel.

III. And the results of this work of grace in the soul are set forth in the words before us with great clearness in three important particulars.

1. The first result is Growth. When true grace is given to a soul—more is given. When there is the blade—then follows the ear, and then the ripening corn in the ear. The righteous, says the Psalmist, shall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon. All the imagery of the Scriptures which are used to describe the character and life of the child of God, represents him as increasing in all his spiritual graces. He is first the new born babe, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby, and then passing upward through the successive stages of the Christian life, becomes the perfect man in Christ Jesus. Nor has any man a right to believe that he has been made an heir of heaven who is not conscious of an increase in faith, and all the graces that are the fruit of the spirit. The law of the Kingdom is ‘he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger.’

2. The second result of grace is Spiritual Prosperity. ‘The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God.’ The natural and normal state of the Christian is one of peace and joy, and spiritual comfort and happiness.



All the provisions of the Gospel look toward this result. Soul prosperity is the proper condition of him who lives near to God. His experiences are not evanescent frames and feelings, now mounting to extacies and intense excitement, and then relapsing into coldness and declension, but they are the steady, calm, and sure effects of faith and love, and clear apprehensions of divine truth, and of all the great and essential doctrines of the Gospel. His spiritual life is hid with Christ in God. The world cannot tell why the lamp always burns brightly. But the word of God shows us the secret pipes from the olive tree, which are ever feeding it with oil. He lives in communion with God in his closet, and the ordinances of the Sanctuary. He builds up his hopes and his character upon Christ alone. His faith takes hold of his truths and promises. His heart clings to him with a growing love. His soul feeds upon his word as heavenly manna, and drinks daily drafts from the overflowing fountain of his grace. Every dispensation of divine Providence, whether it be joyous or sorrowful, brings with it some new experience of the love and grace of Christ. 'All things work together for his good.' Every event of life, ordered as it is by his Heavenly Father, is part of the process by which his graces are strengthened, his passions subdued, and his nature made the more fit for heaven.

3. And with this growth and prosperity there comes also Fertility. Nor is this a temporary result. His fruit drops all the way through life, even down to old age. The means of grace, and the influences of the Spirit are given to man, not that he might simply have joy in his own heart, but that he might thereby be fitted to glorify God here in the upbuilding of his king-

dom and the good of men. Hence our Saviour commands his disciples 'let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works shall glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The true Christian has not alone the leaves of a profession. His spiritual life is not a mere outward show. But all his walk and conversation testifies that he is under the control of true Christian principle, and that his noblest life is drawn from Christ. As he professes to have been born of the Spirit, so he manifests the fruits of the Spirit. His passions and appetites are all controlled and regulated by the law of God. He is kind, and forgiving—unselfish in his motives and acts. He never gives utterance to a slander—nor acts the part of a tale bearer, or a busy body in other men's matters. He has no malice or envy in his treatment of his fellow men. He would rather suffer wrong, than injure either in reputation or person his neighbor. He seeks the peace, harmony and prosperity of the community, and especially of the Church. He does good to all men as he has opportunity. He seeks in every way that the Providence of God points out to him, the upbuilding of the Kingdom—the enlargement and extension of the Church, and the promotion of Truth, Temperance and Righteousness throughout the world. Thus his fruit drops rich and ripe through all the years of his life. Nor when the tree becomes old, and broken by the storms of age, does the leaf yet wither or the fruit disappear. As gray hairs come upon—his ripe christian experience is every way developing itself in judicious counsels, in the administration of comfort to the afflicted, in kindness to the needy, and in the encouragement of the young to an earnest pursuit of knowledge and the attainment of a well-grounded Christian hope;

and in a godly walk and conversation, which becomes more and more spiritual and heavenly as he draws near to eternal realities. Thus, in a calm and serene old age, do the righteous bear the fruits of faith and holiness, until they come down to the grave like a shock of corn fully ripe in its season; and when death comes to take down their earthly tabernacle they fall asleep in Jesus, leaving behind them the savor of a good life, and passing upward to the light and joy and worship of the New Jerusalem.

Such is a brief and imperfect view of the truths set before us in the words of our text. Your own minds will already have recalled, as a vivid illustration of the description here given, the life and character of that venerable servant of God whose grey hairs were a 'crown of glory, because they were found in the ways of righteousness,' and who has but lately passed away from our midst, to join the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in heaven.

JOHN MORRIS was born in the City of Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1775. His father lost his life with the army at the Battle of Brandywine, leaving him thus at a tender age to the care of a pious mother, to whose instructions he was greatly indebted for many salutary impressions, which never lost their hold upon his mind.

His memory went back with great vividness to the closing scenes of the revolutionary struggle—to the splendid festivities which were held at the declaration of Peace, and to the imposing ceremonies which followed the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and the inauguration of our present form of government. It was pleasant and instructive to hear his reminiscences of those days, and of the great men who were ac-



tors in those scenes, and upon whom he had often looked with a boyish delight and wonder. And one almost felt as if he had witnessed the scenes himself when he listened to his minute and graphic description of pageants in which Washington and Franklin and other heroes of the Revolution were the central figures and prominent actors.

In April, 1798, he left his Philadelphia home, and came to the city of New York to enter into business. His journey thither was by stage to the then little hamlet of Paulus Hook, now known as Jersey City, and containing only a population of 10 or 12 persons, where was a single tavern and a ferry, whence sail and row boats took passengers across the river. New York had extended only to the Park, and the City Hall and other public buildings stood in Wall street, around which the wealth and fashion of the metropolis were gathered. The number of inhabitants was less than 60,000. On this side of the river was a small hamlet, at the ferry, built under the hills, then extending to the Wallabout, and reached by sail and row boats, from which a road passing up through farms and orchards to a settlement, the centre of which was the present City Hall, containing, with that at the river, a population of 2,000 or 3,000 souls.

Hills and meadows and forests were seen on every hand, where now a vast city is stretching forth its arms, and covering the land with its beautiful monuments of civilization and art, and taste and wealth. Such was the appearance of these two cities when Mr. Morris came to New York to engage in business; and where for 70 years he was destined to be identified with its interests, and to witness its growth and prosperity. Although not yet a member of the Church, he had en-

joyed religious instructions which had left ineffacable influences upon his mind. A single fact will show what was the early training he had received whose fruits were to appear after many days. While yet a child his mother was once reading to him a story from the Bible. As he stood by her knee listening with childish delight and interest to the narrative, he interrupted her with the question 'Is this true.' Yes, my child, was the answer: 'All that you read in the Bible is truth.' Those words he never forgot. Nor did he ever from that hour have one doubt as to the veracity of God's Word. In all his after years he came to its study with entire confidence. His mother's words were ever sounding in his ears, like the echo of Christ's declaration, 'thy word is truth.' Soon after coming to New York he attached himself to the ministrations of the venerable Dr. John Rogers, the pastor of the Wall Street Church. There he was, by the Grace of God, converted, and in June, 1799 was admitted to the fellowship of the Saints. His reminiscences of that eminent servant of God were many and pleasant. Under his instructions he was fed and nourished, and fitted for the long life of usefulness which has just closed its earthly mission. His intercourse with his aged pastor was pleasant and intimate, and when he passed away he assisted the devout men who carried him to his burial. The Churches of New York were at that time blessed with the ministration of men whose names have never ceased to be borne in affectionate and honored remembrance. Our venerable father was permitted to sit at the feet of such men as Drs. Miller and McKnight, and Milledollar and Mason, and from their lips often to hear the precious messages of the Gospel, and he also listened to the first sermon which the ven-

erable Dr. Spring preached, when called to the charge of the Church where he is still a pastor.

With the commencement of his Christian profession began his life of active piety. He found his way to the meetings for prayer, and engaged with his brethren in works for the enlargement and upbuilding of the Church. As early as the year 1809, in connection with the late John Mills, whose name he always mentioned with great affection and respect, he established a meeting for prayer in Spring street, which was then just beginning to be built up in the advance and growth of the city. Beyond it were only scattered houses, standing in the country and surrounded by farms and forests. The whole population of the city at that time was 90,000. A large pond of water, of great depth, then occupied the spot where now the Tombs stand, and its water flowing through Canal street to the North River was crossed by a substantial bridge on Broadway. Hills and valleys and groves everywhere met the eye above this, and meadows stretching down to the river's brink, were sweet with new-mown hay, or alive with flocks and herds which there found pasturage. Making their way over many a vacant square, and along streets not yet thoroughly paved or lighted, Father Morris, and his friend John Mills, looked around for a place in which to establish a meeting for prayer. Their first selection proved an unfavorable one, and but few persons could be gathered there for worship. Another site was tried with little more success. But these pioneers of the Church were not to be easily discouraged. One more place was tried; and here a permanent meeting for prayer was established. The proper centre for a new Church was found. Here month after month, these fast friends



made their way at evening, to meet their brethren in social worship. During these labors in the outskirts of the city, the old Wall street Church was demolished to make way for a new and more commodious edifice. At the request of these brethren the pews and pulpit were given to them, and carted up and stored in a shed in Spring street. A few wealthy members of the Church, among whom was the late Col. Rutgers, then bought four lots of ground, on which the first edifice of the Spring Street Church was built. Here a congregation was soon gathered, and a Church organized under the ministrations of Rev. Mr. Perrine, and Mr. Morris was ordained a Ruling Elder therein. Here he labored with earnestness and zeal, and had the privilege of seeing his own daughter Mary, afterwards Mrs. Moon, brought into the Church as one of the precious fruits of a revival with which it pleased God to visit his people.

He used often to refer to these happy days, and to the communion immediately preceding that work of grace, at which but a single person was admitted to the Church. His pastor, Rev. Dr. S. H. Cox, in his prayer, at that time alluding to the fact, prayed that it might be the drop which preceded a plentiful shower. The wish seemed to be prophetic, and the blessing came in answer thereto.

During the administration of President Jefferson, Mr. Morris was appointed to a position in the Custom House, which he retained for thirty years, discharging its duties with singular fidelity, and retaining the good will of all with whom he came into official contact, by the urbanity and kindness with which he tempered the strict and unbending integrity by which he conserved the interests of the government. His re-

ligion was illustrated and set forth in his business, as well as in all the walks of life. It made him a thoroughly honest man in his dealings with the world, as well as an active and efficient member of the Church of Christ.

In the year 1824, Mr. Morris removed to the city of Brooklyn, and connected himself with the First Church, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Sandford. The tree lost neither leaf nor fruit in its transplanting. He at once resumed his earnest labors in the work of his master. Hitherto the efforts in behalf of the religious education of the young, in which he had always been deeply interested, had been confined to a single Union Sabbath School, conducted by members of all the various Churches, and held for convenience in the building used by the Methodists in Sands street. Mr. Morris soon saw that this was not enough to meet the spiritual wants of Brooklyn, even though it was then but a village of only 8,000 or 9,000 inhabitants. He consulted with his pastor as to the propriety of establishing a Sabbath School in their own Church. He was met with doubts and misgivings as to the success of his plan, but determined to try the experiment. Notice of the intention to form such a school was given, and in a few months the lecture room was filled with scholars, and the enterprise was established beyond a question or fear. At the same time, while giving to this work his constant attention, he was busy in establishing and conducting neighborhood prayer-meetings, going with his brethren from house to house, and especially caring for those portions of the village which were most scattered and distant from the Church.

In this work he never wearied. Year after year he

was still busy in this way of doing good. Neither cold nor heat, nor storm nor darkness, kept him from fulfilling the appointments thus made from week to week. He had the names of all the praying members of the Church who attended these services, and saw that they were each called to take their part at proper times. He was careful also to bring forward as leaders in these meetings such men as he thought proper for the work, and would place them in the chair while he sat by to counsel and aid. Many there are who bear with them still the memory of these precious scenes, and who recall those golden days of labor and of success in the master's work.

As the population of Brooklyn began to increase, and it became evident it was soon to become a large and important city, Mr. Morris and some of his brethren saw the importance of erecting another Presbyterian Church, to meet the demand of the times. Consulting with his pastor, Mr. Carroll, and the session of whom he had been made a member, the project was soon matured, and a colony was sent forth in the year 1831 to form the Second Presbyterian Church. Mr. Morris was one of the number, and as usual he gave his whole heart to the work. He was at once selected as one of its Elders, and he brought into his new field of labor also the ripe experience of a life which now had reached its noon-day.

His advice and counsel were of great value in an enterprise like that, and his labors were of acknowledged value both in the conduct of its spiritual and its temporal concerns. The services of Rev. Dr. Spencer were secured as its first pastor, and between him and our venerated friend a strong and lasting friendship grew up, which was never abated, however much they might



differ in judgment as to the propriety of measures proposed.

Although the shadows of age were now beginning to lengthen, and his locks to whiten with the frosts of life's winter, he never lost his vigor or tired of his work. It never seemed to enter his thoughts that he should retire from active service and leave hard work to younger men. His heart and spirits never grew old. He seemed as young and vigorous now as when he first avouched the Lord Jehovah to be his God. His eyes still bright and busy, were looking over all the field to see what there was for him to do. He had no disposition to sit down unemployed or idle. Out in what was then the eastern part of the village, under the shadow of Fort Greene, crowned at that time only with grass-grown fortifications thrown up in the war of the Revolution, were a few clusters of houses, built amid half graded streets, and unsightly hills of stones and sand. Farms and orchards and forests were just beyond, where now stands this Sanctuary, with many others which have since been erected.

Groups of neglected children were wandering here and there upon the Sabbath with none to care for their souls. Poverty or vice were seen on every hand. Here was the very spot in which Mr. Morris felt there should be established a Sabbath School. What he proposed he ever had the energy to carry through. Applying to a few of the men of wealth in his Church for means to erect a suitable house, he soon had an earnest and efficient band of teachers at work; and so the first Mission School of the City was established in Prince Street, on the 19th of July, 1834.

The success of this enterprise soon drew attention to the importance of establishing a new Presbyterian

Church in this part of the City. It was evident that the tide of population must roll on and cover all this territory with houses and families. Mr. Morris often conversed with his pastor on the matter, and the proposition was at length made that he should himself go forth with a colony, and lay the foundation for a new Church. It was asking of him what many a one in his circumstances would have felt at liberty to decline. Twice already he had broken away from pastors and friends whom he loved, to engage in the work of Church extension. He was warmly attached to Dr. Spencer, both as an able preacher and faithful pastor and a personal friend. He was surrounded by men with whom he had long labored, and with whom he had taken sweet counsel, as they went to the house of God in company. He was now 72 years old, and might well have asked to be excused from the arduous labors which this new work would impose upon him. Yet none of these things moved him. The tree that had breasted the storms of three score and ten winters was still green and flourishing, and its rich fruit was hanging ripe and fair upon its branches. He yielded to the request of his pastor, and came forth with a colony to form this Church, to which his last labors were given, and in the bosom of which he breathed his last breath. The new congregation was organized in the month of April, 1847, under the pastoral care of Rev. N. C. Locke. Fifteen years ago, at the close of brother Locke's connection with the Church, I became its pastor, and was at once brought into pleasant relations with our venerable father—as the senior Elder of this Church. He was then 75 years of age, but his step seemed as elastic and his spirits as buoyant, and his heart as warm, as a youth's.

In all these years he had never lost the energy and interest he had before manifested in this work of advancing the interests of Christ's Kingdom. His place in the Sanctuary and in the meetings for prayer has ever been filled when his health permitted. With an unflagging zeal he has gone about doing good, assisting the poor, comforting the afflicted, admonishing the erring, and seeking to reclaim those who were gone out of the way. Often in the Sabbath School has his venerable form been seen, as he has watched with an unabated interest the work which was then going on, and on the occasion of the gathering of the children at the anniversaries of our Sabbath or Mission Schools his face has beamed with pleasure, and his voice has often been heard giving some word of encouragement to the teachers, or recalling to the youth there assembled some scenes of his earlier years, the memory of which had been revived by their presence. Neither personal afflictions nor the growing infirmities of age could dampen the ardor with which he engaged in his work. Five times since I have been his pastor have I been called to minister to his stricken household. Early in my connection with this Church a beloved daughter was called away to her rest, and then a son, and successively three of his children's children. He felt these losses deeply, for he had a warm and loving nature, that clung largely for happiness to his family. Yet he never faltered in his work. The more sorely the tree was pressed and crushed, the sweeter and richer seemed to be the fruit it yielded. Amid all these painful bereavements he found strong consolation in the promises of God, and, like David arose from his sorrow and tears and went into the Sanctuary, and resumed the duties of life, chastened and purified and



brought nearer heaven by his affliction. And even when his aged eyes were blinded, and he could no longer distinguish even the features of his dearest friends, he never lost his cheerfulness or activity. Leaning upon his staff he still went forth for his daily walks of usefulness, making his way from the house of one friend to another, and still visiting the Sanctuary and the place of prayer. On the Sabbath before he died he was in his wonted seat in this House of God. As he turned away at the close of the services he walked along with a dear young brother whose wife was, after a long illness, just lingering upon the shores of time, and who has since then been called home. His heart beat in strong sympathy with him, and he sought to comfort him by recalling to his mind the precious promises of the Word of God, which had often given his own heart peace amid its sorrows. On the next day he suffered some little inconveniences from a cold which he had taken on the Sabbath. But no alarming symptoms were developed until Friday. Even then he had dressed himself and was about to go down as usual for his morning meal, but was prevailed upon to keep his room. Toward noon it became evident that the end was approaching. And his family and friends gathered around his bedside to witness his departure. I entered his room when made aware of his sickness, and found the dying patriarch literally falling asleep. He was just passing into a state of apparent unconsciousness. Once or twice in response to a question whether Jesus was with him, his lips parted as if he were making an effort to answer. And so he lay during most of the night, gently breathing his life away. There was no struggle—it did not seem like Death. All was so peaceful and calm. The

wheels of nature, worn out by constant action, through 90 years, stopped at length, and he was at rest. He left but few sayings as his dying testimony. Nor were they needed, except as precious mementoes of a dying saint. When, early in the day, a member of the family was speaking to him of his increasing illness, he simply expressed a willingness to leave all to God, repeating the words of scripture, "My times are in thy hand." "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." To another he said, "I am a great sinner, but the grace and blood of Jesus is sufficient to save me, and my trust is in him alone." To his son who, as he saw he was soon to pass away, asked him to give them his blessing, he simply replied. "The Saviour's blessing is better than mine." Thus gently did the aged patriarch fall asleep in Jesus. And his history as it has thus been briefly given, and his Christian character as we have all seen it, are beautiful and striking illustrations of the words which we have chosen for the theme of our remarks. The foundation of the character of Father Morris was a firm faith in God, and reliance upon Christ as his only Saviour. He depended solely upon the merits of his Divine Redeemer as his ground of justification in the sight of God. The prominent traits of his character are familiar to all.

He was consistent in his life with all the professions he had made. He loved the Sanctuary, and was never absent from it when his health permitted him to attend its services. He was eminently an honest man. There was nothing like deception in either his word or his acts. His Religion was not a mere act of the head, but a work of the heart and life. It diffused itself over his whole character. It made him thoroughly

earnest and devoted to his master's business. It controlled and regulated his thoughts and appetites and passions. No one could fail to see that he was truly a godly man. His Religion made itself felt in his family, and in all his social relations. It made him a faithful and affectionate husband and father, a warm friend, a loyal citizen, an active officer and member of the Church. It made him set a constant watch over the door of his lips. He was never known to speak ill of his neighbor, nor to backbite with his tongue, nor to circulate an ill or evil report. He had a warm and generous and sympathizing heart. No one who knew him can ever forget the genuine kindness of his nature, which was ever welling up in some kind and loving action or word, and which made him, even in old age, a pleasant companion even for the child. He did not hesitate to speak plainly and frankly his sentiments even to one with whom he most differed. But when speaking of such an one to others it was always with kindness and approbation.

His cheerfulness often manifested itself in a dry humor and a playful manner, that seemed more like the expressions of youth than the more sober feelings of old age, and that threw a wonderful charm over his whole conversation, and set forth his religion with a peculiar grace and loveliness. This manner often was used to impress some special truth or expression with great power. But a few days before his death some old friend who had not seen him for years said to him: 'Why Father Morris I did not know that you were yet in the land of the living.' No, said he, I am in the land of the dying, and then pointing upward he added with a smile, 'The land of the living is up there, I am expecting soon to go to it.'



He did not care much to speak publicly of his own personal experience. He evidently regarded this habit as one which often tended to spiritual pride. His addresses were earnest appeals to Christians to be faithful, and touching allusions to Christ as our only dependence. But he always kept himself and his works out of sight. He gloried only in the Cross of Christ. For many years he had evidently looked upon his great change as near at hand. It was his habit, until his sight failed him, to take the lead of the last prayer-meeting of the year. And his presence and his words of counsel made these seasons occasions of great and solemn interest to all. Every worshipper felt that possibly he was listening for the last time to the counsels of the aged and venerable patriarch. He always spoke of his coming change with calmness, nay with the pleasure of a pilgrim who felt that he was drawing near to his home. In all the long and frequent interviews I have held with him as his pastor, I have felt that he was a living and beautiful illustration of Bunyan's description of the land of Beulah, to which he brought his pilgrims before they crossed the river, 'whose air was very sweet and pleasant,' and 'where they heard the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth,' and 'had no want of corn or wine.' There he stood for years, waiting until his change should come. One after another of those he loved passed over the river before him, and then the summons came to him, 'set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.' He heard it without a fear. But a few days before, he had been speaking to some friends of the difference in the deaths of young and aged Christians, and quoted the words of one who accounted for it in this wise: The young Christian is full of strong

emotion, and when he nears the heavenly world, is often full of joy and extacy at the sight, but with the aged believer the whole is a matter of life-long experience. Death and Heaven have been themes familiar to his mind for years, and so when his time comes he simply falls asleep, and says nothing about what he feels or sees. It was so with our venerable friend. The scene was not strange or new to him. His thoughts had long dwelt upon it. And when the hour of departure came he yielded up his spirit to God, and gently passed from earth to heaven. What a blessed exchange, from cares and sorrows to eternal joy and peace, from the ordinances of the visible Church to the worship of the Redeemed. And he, being dead, yet speaketh. He has left behind him to his family the precious legacy of a good name and a godly example. He has left to the Session with which he was so long connected, the memory of a life consecrated to Christ, and to the up-building of his kingdom, for he was an Elder that ruled well, and who was accounted worthy of double honor, and who by faith obtained a good report. He has left to this Church a long record of prayer and efforts for its prosperity, and of devotion to its interests. And he has taught you who are yet without a hope in Christ, that Religion fits a man to live as well as to die. He left not the work of preparation for death to the closing hours of life. In his youth he consecrated himself to Christ, and was by his grace planted in the house of the Lord, where he long flourished and bore fruit even to old age.

Take, then, the lessons of God's Providence and Grace, as they are here presented to you. Remember, ye children and youth, the words which he often spake while yet was with you; recall his godly walk and life,

and seek the Saviour while he is near. And, ye men of maturer years, will you not receive instruction in this record of a good man's life and death, and 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.' Our venerable friend left for you this great lesson of the Gospel as his dying message, which spoke of the blood and grace of Christ as his only hopes. O let it be yours. Turn from the world and its pursuits, and make it your great business to make your calling and election sure.

Would you have a useful life and a serene and happy death, trust in him who hath taken the sting from Death and robbed the grave of its victory. Oh, by faith

"So live that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His Chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not like the quarry slave, at night  
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."



