

Chas. J. M. Butler.

DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the Death

OF THE

REV. NICHOLAS MURRAY, D. D.

A
DISCOURSE

ADDRESSED TO THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN ELIZABETH, N. J.,

FEBRUARY 10, 1861,

THE SUNDAY MORNING IMMEDIATELY SUCCEEDING THE DEATH OF THE

REV. NICHOLAS MURRAY, D. D.,
THEIR PASTOR.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE BEREAVED CONGREGATION.

ALBANY:
PRINTED BY C. VAN BENTHUYSEN.
1861.

has bound those links together, and holds the chain in his hand, is "wonderful in counsel."

But, while all things are tending towards the accomplishment of a single grand purpose, the system of Providence takes the form of an uninterrupted series of causes and effects; of means employed and ends accomplished. Nothing that comes within our observation is ultimate—that which seems in itself to be a highly important end, and which may be the result of manifold, long continued, complicated agencies, becomes in turn a means for the accomplishment of some other end, and that of yet another, and so on in a succession to which we can fix no limit. This great principle,—the subserviency of means to ends, we recognize in every part of the Divine administration. Or if we look first at the ends which God proposes to accomplish, then we are struck with the fact that He always provides the fittest means for their accomplishment—his boundless resources of wisdom and power are fully adequate to the production of all the instrumentalities requisite for bringing about the desired result. While men dream not of any such thing, God is forming, and adapting, and

polishing, some instrument, by which is to be performed a work that will tell mightily upon the destinies, perhaps of a nation, perhaps of the world.

Let us, for a few moments, dwell upon this feature of the Divine economy,—namely, that WHEREVER GOD HAS A WORK TO DO, HE ALWAYS HAS THE FITTING INSTRUMENT AT HAND. Witness a few examples by way of illustration.

What an illustrious example was MOSES! The people of Israel, who, in the progress of several centuries, had grown into an immense multitude, were not merely the subjects but the slaves of the tyrant Pharaoh; and so bitter was their bondage that their mourning, while it spread over the whole land, also went up to Heaven; and, when the fitting time should come, the arm of the Almighty was to be stretched out for their deliverance. It was a great work that was to be accomplished—the deliverance of several millions of human beings from the power of a haughty and impious monarch, whose avarice and ambition and cruelty were all enlisted in the effort to render their servitude perpetual—it was to be accomplished partly indeed by a direct miraculous

agency, but partly also by human wisdom and virtue—but where on earth was to be found the man to whom such an enterprise could be safely entrusted? Such a man there was, though even he himself knew not yet to what he was destined—silently indeed, but most effectually, God had been educating him for his work; and when the time came for the blow to be struck, the instrument was all ready. A child had been born sometime in the preceding century, which, according to Pharaoh's bloody mandate in respect to all the male infants of the Hebrews, was destined to be destroyed at its birth. But this child was to become the deliverer of his people—and see how marvellously God interposed for his preservation. His parents, from some indefinable impression they had of his future greatness, concealed him for three months; and, when this experiment became too dangerous to be persevered in, a mother's anxious and loving heart devised that other expedient of depositing her precious babe in an ark of bulrushes made by her own hand, and placing it near the banks of the Nile, where the princess and others of the nobility were accustomed to regale themselves with the fresh

air. The result was that it fell into the hands of the King's daughter; and then, strangely enough, back again into its own mother's arms; and maternal tenderness combined with royal munificence in giving to the child the best possible education; causing him to be instructed in the principles of the true religion on the one hand, and in all the sciences that were then known in Egypt on the other. God had endowed him originally with noble qualities both of mind and of heart; and these were developed under the most auspicious influences; and more than all, Divine grace had wrought effectually upon him, giving a right direction to all his faculties, and leading him to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Here then, when the time for Israel's redemption came, was found the man who was every way qualified to conduct the enterprise. Notwithstanding Pharaoh had issued a decree, in the natural operation of which Moses would have been cut off the moment he was born, it was by an influence from Pharaoh's family that his life was spared, and his character moulded into that type of intelligence, meek-

ness, conscientiousness, and true nobility, that finally made him more terrible to the Egyptian King and his hosts than an army with banners. God had determined upon the release of his people from bondage at that particular time, and, when the time came, the wisest of legislators, the most accomplished of commanders, as well as the meekest of saints, stood forth at his command, thoroughly trained for the mighty work,—as the manner in which he entered upon it and proceeded in it abundantly evinced.

PAUL is another memorable example of the same kind. Christianity had indeed been introduced in Judea through the ministry of its Founder and his Apostles; but Christianity, though it had in it a Divine element, involving a pledge of its extension and final triumph, was yet in its infancy—the Church was a little band of obscure individuals, setting up a new standard, against which, in proportion as it became known, the world was in arms; and the Apostles were a company of humble and mostly illiterate men, who were strong only as they were animated by the power of God. It was not merely the Jewish nation whose minds were locked up by prejudice and bigotry, but

the enlightened and polished Greeks and Romans, to whom the Gospel was to be carried; and just such a man as Paul was needed for the accomplishment of this double mission—a man whom the Jews had known not only as one of their own nation, but as one of the bitterest persecutors of Christianity, and whose conversion, therefore, must have been a most powerful argument to them in favour of the Divinity of the system—a man, too, whose commanding talents and vast acquirements abundantly qualified him to encounter the astute and ingenious reasonings of the Pagan philosophers. In short, the crisis needed a man of the largest comprehension, the most liberal attainments, and the most heroic virtue; a man who was capable of writing the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews; who could stand erect before Felix and Agrippa, and utter words that made the one tremble, and led the other to play a trick upon his conscience in order to avoid it. And Paul, having been, by the providence and grace of God, duly prepared for his work, was miraculously introduced to it; and faithfully and nobly did he magnify his office. He was, beyond all question, the ruling spirit of his day.

The high and the low resisted and opposed him, but he bore himself triumphantly above them all. At the end of the last stage in his journey, he found the martyr's stake waiting for him; but what of that, so long as it was the highest testimony he could render, the best offering he could make, to his Master's cause? I repeat, Paul was a man for the crisis; and because God knew what the crisis would demand, just such a man as he was raised up,—inheriting Jewish bigotry, and accomplished in all the learning of the schools; and then intelligently and cordially renouncing the one, and no less intelligently and cordially consecrating the other, with all his noble qualities of mind and heart, to the service and glory of that Saviour of whom he now became a disciple.

LUTHER is another example; and second to none that the world has seen since the apostolic age. The Church, which, in her earlier days, had been so full of love, and life, and blessing, had become darkened, and chilled, and dishonoured, by too familiar contact with the world. Her sublime doctrines had been degraded into what were little better than the dogmas of heathen superstition. Her simple rites had given

place to a set of unmeaning, pompous, burdensome ceremonies. Her benevolent and Heaven-born spirit had degenerated into an intense and all-pervading worldliness. The Bible indeed remained in the world; and here and there were hid in the caves and dens of the earth a few solitary witnesses for the truth; but that which took the name of the Church, and that which took the name of the Ministry, was at best a heartless, faithless, lifeless thing. Such a state of things could not be perpetuated, but at the expense of nullifying God's revealed purposes, and defeating the great ends of Christ's Mediation. At length, the fulness of time for the dawn of a brighter day came; and several noble voices were lifted up to proclaim the true Gospel,—some of which, however, the rack and the flames quickly silenced; and in this galaxy, equalling, to say the least, and in some respects towering above, any of the rest, was Luther. His Maker had impressed upon him the stamp of intellectual nobility. His parents, besides watching his early developments with great care, gave him the best opportunities for improving his mind which the age afforded; and most industriously and

successfully did he use them. At length, in an hour of despondency, he resolved to bury himself for the rest of his life in a monastery; and amidst the darkness that prevailed there, he found an old Latin Bible; and, as he began to read, the light began to shine; and, as he kept on reading, it shone brighter; and at length Christianity stood before him as a new and beautiful creation. His mind dismissed, one by one, its old errors and prejudices, and welcomed the opposite truths, not only as a new and glorious light, but as a quickening and all-controlling power. And here now was the warrior, girded, armed, all ready for conflict. And he went forth wearing the helmet of salvation, and attacking with the sword of the Spirit, the very strong-holds of the Papacy. He knew well the darkness of the system; for he had been groping about in it for more than twenty years; and he felt that his mission was to do all that he could to dissipate that darkness, and cause the true light to shine in its place. He had a courage that had never learned to quail—there were no terrors for him in the Imperial Edict—none in the threats of the Papacy—none in the Diet of Worms—his body

and soul, his tongue and pen, were all consecrated to the one great work of Reformation—he impressed himself upon the destinies of his country not only, but of the world; and when the time came for him to ascend, he seemed like a mighty angel going back to his native Heavens. It was God's providence that sent him to that monastery, to come in contact with that Bible, through the influence of which the monk became a hero for Christ, and fought battles and gained victories, which we may be sure are not forgotten even in the songs of the ransomed around the throne.

Our own WASHINGTON is another case signally in point—it was indeed more immediately the cause of civil liberty that he was raised up to defend and establish; but in that cause were bound up also the elements of our social and even religious well-being. We were as truly, if not as deeply, an oppressed nation, as were the Israelites while groaning under Egyptian bondage. But the day of our redemption finally came; and it was heralded by lightnings, and darkness, and tempest; and the grand problem was, Who is to be the master spirit of the Revolution—who shall “ride in the whirlwind and

direct the storm?" A young man had been growing up in Virginia,—the son of a strong-minded, heroic, patriotic mother—he was modest and unobtrusive; but he had a far-reaching, comprehensive, and well disciplined mind, a calm dignity, an unyielding firmness, an incorruptible integrity, and withal a most intense devotion to the interests of his country. In due time, he emerged from his retirement into military life; and, young as he was, he earned bright laurels by the sagacity and valour which he displayed during the French war. When the exigency of our Revolution was to be met, there were other brave and noble spirits in the land, and some of greater age and experience than Washington; and yet it pleased a gracious Providence to fasten the eye of the nation upon *him*, as the great conductor of the then dubious enterprise. And he showed himself every way adequate to one of the greatest emergencies that ever occurred in human affairs. God, through the instrumentality of that great and good mother, was silently inaugurating a work, which was destined, in its remoter bearings, to mark a new epoch in the world's history.

And I trust it will not be thought irreverent

to crown this series of illustrations by one drawn from a yet deeper exigency and a yet grander provision—I refer to man's redemption by the wonderful mission of the SON OF GOD. Man had become a rebel; and the problem was whether he could, and if so by what means, ever again become a loyal subject. Man had forfeited the life of his soul; and the problem was whether the condemning sentence could be cancelled, and the justice of the great Lawgiver and Judge remain immaculate; and if so, through what instrumentality. These were problems too deep for the angel that stood nearest the throne to solve; but from the bosom of Omniscience the wonderful solution came forth. The preparation for the Incarnation of the Son of God having run through a long course of ages, and been finally matured, Heaven gave up this glorious personage to earth. And here the man Christ Jesus, in mysterious union with the Divinity, became the world's great Teacher; set a perfect example of moral virtue; gave his life a sacrifice for men's sins; lay in the grave long enough to consecrate it, and then came forth to prove Himself Death's Conqueror; and finally, after staying on earth

till every thing contemplated by his mission hither was fully accomplished, He made his triumphant entry into Heaven, and took possession of the mediatorial throne, and resumed the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Thus was undertaken, carried forward, and completed, the grandest enterprise which even the mind of the Godhead ever designed; and, as the result of this enterprise, Heaven is to be the everlasting home of a multitude of redeemed souls, which no man can number. Upon this grand consummation God determined in his own eternal counsels; and when the time which his infinite wisdom appointed had come, here on earth was found a Being, whose constitution, alike singular and glorious, qualified Him to do all that was necessary to exalt the sinful sons of men into kings and priests unto God. Surely, the entire history of the universe does not supply another illustration to be compared with this, of that great principle of the Divine government, which I am endeavouring to present to you,—namely, that when God has an object to accomplish, He is never straitened for the means wherewith to effect it.

I shall keep in view this grand feature of the Divine economy in what I am about to say of the late beloved and venerated Pastor of this church, whose sudden death has not only made you a mourning congregation, and this a mourning community, but has vibrated in a note of unaccustomed sadness to the extremities of our Church and of the land. In what I shall say of the life and character of DR. MURRAY, of what he was and what he accomplished, I expect to furnish evidence that God had, in his infinite wisdom, designed a great work for him, and that, by the gifts of Nature, the leadings of Providence, and the operations of Grace, its accomplishment was most signally secured.

What the work was which God had committed to our departed friend, we know from what he has actually done. The labours of his life were not indeed, as in some cases, concentrated upon a single object, but were distributed among various objects, accommodated to the versatility of his powers, and the circumstances in which Providence had placed him. His work may naturally enough be considered as dividing itself into three distinct parts—what

he did as the Pastor of this Church—what he did for the Presbyterian Church at large—and what he did for the more general interests of the cause of Christ and of Humanity.

It was here, on the spot where I stand, and in the midst of the congregation that I see around me, that his influence was most intensely and constantly exerted. It was much for any man to have been entrusted with the interests of a church which has numbered in its succession of pastors such names as Dickinson and Caldwell, and another beloved and honoured name, which,—thanks to God's gracious providence,—has yet a place among the living; but the event has proved that our friend, who now sleepeth, was eminently qualified to sustain these high responsibilities. Under his ministry, this church has not only retained all its wonted intelligence and stability, its orderly, peaceable, and earnest Christian spirit, but has been constantly growing in numbers and influence—in zeal, in spirituality, in beneficent activity, in devotion to all the great interests of truth and righteousness,—in every thing, in short, that enters essentially into the true glory of a church. Its present financial prosperity

is thus gratefully recorded in a memorandum made by Dr. Murray on the first day of the present year:—"There was a glorious meeting in the First Church to-day—the first time in all its history, it was declared to be out of debt—with a balance in the treasury—with a yearly income to meet all its expenditures, and about four thousand dollars in funds for the poor, and to keep the grave-yard in repair." Rely on it, the work that has been done here, during the last twenty-seven years and a half, in awakening sinners and leading them to Christ, in guiding, and quickening, and comforting the saints, in developing and directing the energies of the church, and elevating the standard of Christian and benevolent activity, is itself a great work,—far greater than, with our present limited views, it appears to us.

But while this was the more immediate field of his labour, his influence, more than that of almost any other man, pervaded the entire Presbyterian Church. It was felt in her various Judicatories, and Boards, and especially in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, which he cherished with an affection truly filial. Part of his ministry has fallen into the period

of the Church's greatest trial; and he lent his full influence to what he believed to be the truth and the right; but he never yielded to a spirit of reckless crimination, nor sacrificed charity even at the altar of faith. In almost every part of the Presbyterian Church he was personally known—in the West, and the Southwest, and the South, there are multitudes who have heard the words of eternal life from his lips, and among them no doubt some who will appear in the judgment, as seals of his ministry, and gems in his crown.

And it were impossible that such a man as he could live, without operating for good outside of his own immediate ecclesiastical relations. As his mind was always awake both to the good and the evil involved in passing events, he was always on the alert to secure and advance the one, to discourage and arrest the other. I do not mean that he ever engaged in any enterprise so exclusively worldly as to dishonour, in the least degree, his sacred calling; but wherever there was physical or moral evil to be averted, wherever there was physical or moral good to be attained, there he

was willing to make his influence felt; and it often was felt in great power.

Having thus glanced at the work which our departed friend has been instrumental in accomplishing, let me now, by tracing the outline of the history of his life, and presenting his leading characteristics a little in detail, show you how God's hand was manifest in securing these great results.

NICHOLAS MURRAY was born in the county of Westmeath, Ireland, on Christmas day, 1802. His father was a man of some property, and exerted considerable influence in the civil affairs of his neighbourhood. Both his parents, and all his ancestry as far back as he could trace them, were Roman Catholics. He lost his father when he was three years old; and, having remained at home till he was about nine, he went to live with an aunt, (his mother's sister,) some ten or twelve miles distant, and there continued, going to school, till he had reached the age of twelve. He was then apprenticed as a merchant's clerk to a house in Grannard, near Edgeworth's town; but the place proved a hard one, and, at the end of three years, his power of endurance

was so far exhausted that he ran away and went home. His mother strongly disapproved the step, and urged him to return; but his answer was that he preferred to go abroad into the wide world and seek his fortune.

Accordingly, when he was between fifteen and sixteen years of age, he went to Dublin, and took passage in a vessel that was about to sail for New York, where he landed in July, 1818. As the expense of his passage had nearly exhausted his pecuniary means, he set himself at once to look for some employment; and the result was that, after a short time, he became engaged as a clerk to that large and respectable bookselling house in New York, the Harpers. Up to this time, the hereditary film of Romanism had not begun to be removed; and of this system he was ready, at all times, notwithstanding his utter ignorance of the Scriptures, to stand forth an earnest advocate. His most frequent and vigorous discussions were with a young man, who afterwards entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and, as he found himself pressed by arguments which his young friend professed to have derived from the Bible, he resolved that he would

read the New Testament for himself, not doubting that the result would be to confirm, rather than weaken, his faith in his own system. Accordingly, he read through the Gospels, and then the other parts of the New Testament, and was surprised to find no recognition of either Purgatory, or any other of the Romish doctrines; and the result was that, intellectually, he very soon abjured the whole system. But he did more than abandon Romanism—with it he cast away Christianity also; and, for some time, gloried in being an infidel. In the family in which he lived, he was accustomed to meet several of Dr. Mason's theological students; and, in conversing with them, he did not hesitate to avow, and defend as well as he could, his sceptical views. At length, at the suggestion, I think, of one of his fellow boarders, he was led to go to hear Dr. Mason preach; and the sermon which he heard was one of a celebrated series on the First Epistle of Peter. It was one of Dr. Mason's mighty efforts; and the scepticism of our friend, which had succeeded to his Romanism, faltered not a little under it. He soon became convinced that religion was not only a verity, but to him

a deeply appalling verity; and he began not only to read the Bible anew but to read it with a docile spirit; and presently he became satisfied that he needed the aid of some competent counsellor and teacher; and, as was natural, he went first to the great man whose powerful eloquence had given the new direction to his thoughts. But, owing to certain circumstances, the interview was less satisfactory to him than he had expected; and he did not seek for a repetition of it. Shortly after this, however, he became acquainted with some young men belonging to Dr. Spring's church, and, at no distant period, with Dr. Spring himself; and, after attending on the ministry of the Brick Church for about a year and a half, he became so far settled in his views and feelings as to become a member of that church. I need not say that he always cherished the most grateful regard for his venerable Pastor, and often referred to his kindness towards him as identified with some of the most important facilities he enjoyed for obtaining a collegiate education.

Mr. Murray's gifts and general character, in due time, began to attract attention, and some benevolent individuals conceived the idea that

it would be a good service rendered to the Church to bring him into the ministry. Accordingly, the proposal was made to him; and though, at first, he was little inclined to listen to it, further reflection led him to regard it more favourably, until at length he thankfully signified his acceptance of the generous offer. He, however, for some time after, continued in his clerkship, giving all the leisure he could command to his books; but, in the fall of 1821, he gave it up with a view to devote himself entirely to study. After nine months spent at the Amherst Academy, he entered Williams College, which had then just come under the Presidency of the venerable Dr. Griffin, who, to the close of life, remained his fast friend. Here he passed through the regular course, and graduated with honour in 1826. Immediately on leaving College, he took an agency of a few weeks, from the American Tract Society, in Washington County, New York, in which he was eminently successful, and then entered as a student the Theological Seminary at Princeton. At the end of one year, being straitened in his pecuniary means, he took another agency under the Tract Society, at Philadelphia, where

he established a Branch Society; and, instead of returning to Princeton at the close of the vacation, as he had intended, he accepted an invitation from the Society to become its Secretary. Here he continued for eighteen months, and then resumed his place in his class at Princeton, having kept along with them in his studies during the whole time of his absence. By this means he was enabled to continue at Princeton, without further interruption, to the end of his course.

He was licensed to preach, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in April, 1829. After preaching for a short time, with much acceptance, at Morristown, he engaged as a domestic missionary, and, at the suggestion of Dr. Engles of Philadelphia, went to pass a little time at Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania. The result of this visit was that he received and accepted a call to the pastoral charge of the church in that place, and was ordained and installed in November, 1829.

In the autumn of 1832, he preached for the first time in this house,— Dr. McDowell having kindly given him the opportunity of passing round among his congregation to solicit contribu-

tions towards the erection of a new church edifice by his people at Wilkesbarre. So decidedly favourable was the impression produced by his preaching, that, when, the next year, this became a vacant church, your eyes were at once directed to him as a suitable person to become Dr. McDowell's successor; and, after he had supplied the pulpit two Sabbaths, he received from you a unanimous call, which, in due time, he accepted. He was installed as Pastor of this church, on the 23d of July, 1833.

Dr. Murray's ministry has been marked with great favour, both at home and abroad. He has been invited, at different periods, to the pastorate of a considerable number of the most prominent churches in various parts of the country; particularly in Boston, Brooklyn, Charleston, S. C., Natchez, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. He has been appointed Professor in two Theological Seminaries—also Secretary and General Agent of the Board of Foreign Missions, and General Agent of the American Tract Society for the Valley of the Mississippi. While his appointment to so many important places in the Church shows the high estimate that has been placed upon his character and services,

the fact that he has declined them all shows the strength of his attachment to the people among whom Providence had cast his lot. I may add, in this connection, that the General Assembly conferred upon him one of the highest honours within their gift, in choosing him their Moderator.

Twice within the last few years Dr. Murray has crossed the ocean, and visited not only his native land, but England and Scotland, and several of the countries of Continental Europe. On these tours he made the acquaintance of many distinguished men, and attracted great attention by his vigorous and stirring efforts on many public occasions. It may safely be said that few American clergymen have attained to so wide a European celebrity as Dr. Murray.

In passing from this brief notice of his life, to a very general delineation of his character, I am quite aware that I am occupying ground, with portions of which at least, you must be more familiar than myself. But it is not to enlighten or instruct you that I now speak—it is to call up memories that are alike dear to you and to me—it is to prevent the grave from having more than belongs to it, by keeping

alive that precious deposit, which he who now rests from his labours has made in our memories and our hearts.

Dr. Murray's intellect was decidedly of a marked character. It was clear, comprehensive, logical, and withal eminently practical. Though it never moved sluggishly, it was never in a hurry—it always took time to assure itself that there were no unsound links in the chain by which it was conducted to its conclusion. It had no sympathy and little patience with mere abstractions, that could be turned to no practical account; but all his thoughts and studies seemed to be with reference, if not to some specific palpable result, at least to the general improvement and elevation of his own character or the characters of others. He could not be said to be highly imaginative; and yet he was perhaps as much so as would consist with his bold, manly and hard-working intellect. He had an exuberance of that quality, which is the common birthright of his countrymen,—wit; and though he generally used it as a bright and beautiful play-thing, he could, if occasion required, transmute it into an engine of most scathing irony.

He had one of the largest, most guileless, genial, and loving hearts in the world. You needed only to look him in the face to feel assured that you were in contact with a man who could not deceive you. For all meanness, duplicity, and indirect dealing, he felt an unutterable contempt; and he sometimes expressed himself in regard to such demonstrations in burning words; and when he felt no confidence he was sure not to pretend to any; but I never saw the least evidence that he was capable of cherishing malice or revenge. Indeed, it took little to warm his heart up into a glow of kindly feeling even towards one who he felt had injured him. He possessed strong sensibilities and sympathies, and knew how to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, as well as any other man. He was one of the truest and firmest of friends—you never feared that he would betray you even by forgetfulness—you never hesitated to ask any favour of him within his power, because you knew it would be a pleasure to him to confer it.

With this combination of fine intellectual and moral qualities, it were to be expected that his presence would always be most wel-

come and grateful in the social circle—and thus it surely was. With a most bland and winning manner; with a rich store of varied and valuable information, and a fund of pertinent and striking anecdote that seemed inexhaustible; with great facility of communication, and the ability to accommodate himself to every variety of intellect and character, he was very likely to be the master spirit of any circle into which he was thrown. His beaming, genial expression, and affable manners, gave promise of nothing which his bright, cheerful, edifying conversation did not amply realize.

Dr. Murray's Christian character was so engrafted upon the peculiarities of his moral constitution that it was not always easy to say what was to be credited to nature and what to grace. But certain it is that it was marked by profound reverence for the character of God; by intense delight in his worship; by the diligent and devout study of his word; by an habitual and earnest desire to know, and do, and patiently suffer, his will; by a steadfast adherence to his own convictions of right, no matter what might be the sacrifice; by a hearty

sympathy in every well directed effort for serving God or blessing man; and by an affectionate recognition of the bonds of Christian brotherhood in respect to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. It is quite possible that some who only knew him casually, and witnessed the buoyancy of his spirits and the playfulness of his wit in his intercourse with general society, may have failed to discover the depth of his spirituality; but those who had the opportunity of observing his daily deportment, especially those who were brought into more intimate relations with him, knew that there was no theme to which his heart vibrated so quickly and so tenderly as redeeming love. While he abhorred every religious demonstration that savoured of ostentation or cant, he delighted in nothing more than a free interchange of views with a Christian friend in respect to any thing that had a bearing upon the great interests of the inner and higher life.

With such elements of general character as we have seen that Dr. Murray possessed, it were impossible but that he should have taken a very superior rank in the several depart-

ments of official duty and responsibility. As a Preacher, very rare and commanding qualities were, I believe, universally conceded to him. In respect to both matter and manner, he possessed a certain individuality, which forbade the suspicion of his having ever copied any one, and precluded the possibility of any body's successfully copying him. His style was luminous, simple, and in the highest degree sententious. His thoughts were always pertinent to his subject, and even though they may have been substantially in other men's minds, they never came forth from his without receiving its distinctive hue. What he would utter in a single breath, though it was as clear as the light, would often reveal to the thoughtful hearer such depth and force of meaning, that it would be a work of time for any mind adequately to digest it. His discourses were marked by great variety, and were not only accommodated to the diversity of human character, but were addressed, in due proportion, to the different parts of man's nature;—to the intellect, the conscience, and the heart. The careless sinner and the inquiring sinner, the active Christian and the sluggish Christian,

the sorrowful and the tempted, each had a portion duly meted out to him. He reasoned with great power, but at the same time with such admirable simplicity, that the conclusion was seen in the light of noonday, while the logical process was scarcely thought of. I imagine he never preached a sermon that did not leave a distinct impression upon every attentive listener. His manner of delivery was about an equal compound of simplicity, dignity, and forcible earnestness—he cared little whether or not he conformed to the rules of the rhetoricians, provided only he could drop his words of life and power into the understanding and heart.

In the duties of a Pastor, as distinguished from those of a Preacher, you know better than I do Dr. Murray's pre-eminence. You know how watchful he has been of all the interests of his flock; how eager to avail himself of every opportunity of doing good even to the obscurest of its members; how ready to sympathize with the children of sorrow; how prompt to put forth his hand to encourage and lead back the wanderer into the straight and narrow way; how his presence was always a

light and a joy in the Sunday School, and how he smiled upon the little children, and they smiled and loved in return. And I may add, in this connection, that he not only fed the flock, but governed it also with great fidelity and efficiency, and yet with exemplary consideration and tenderness. In every thing indeed pertaining to the office of either Pastor or Ruler, he showed himself at once careful, energetic, competent, and, as might be expected, in a high degree successful.

In his more public relations to the Church, Dr. Murray exerted a commanding influence. In all deliberative and judicial bodies, his quick apprehension, and sound judgment, and strict impartiality, and entire self-possession, combined with his love of ecclesiastical order, and his perfect familiarity with ecclesiastical rules and usages, to give him a pre-eminence which few other men in the Church have ever enjoyed. At the same time, there was nothing in his bearing on these occasions that seemed in the least degree obtrusive;—nothing that looked like undervaluing the opinion or the co-operation of his brethren with whom he was associated;—nothing to betray a self-

complacent consciousness of the power which every one knew that he possessed—but all that he did seemed to be from the easy and natural working of his great and well-furnished mind, and in simple obedience to his enlightened and honest convictions.

But it was probably as a writer that Dr. Murray's name will be most deeply and enduringly embalmed in the memory of the Church. The same characteristics which rendered his public discourses so striking and effective, combined with others to make him a most attractive writer on general subjects, and on questions of controversy particularly, well nigh unequalled. He always thoroughly surveyed his ground before he planted himself upon it; but when he once opened his battery, it was any thing else than pastime to his adversary. Whether he sent forth an elaborate argument that would fall with the weight of a thunderbolt, or a sharp missile that would strike deep into the vulnerable place, the object at which he aimed was very sure to be accomplished. Not a small part of his printed works, as you know, are directed against the religious system to which he was educated;

and if the English language, or any language, can furnish a more vigorous, luminous, perfectly impregnable defence of Protestantism, than these works contain, I know not where to look for it. His last volume, entitled "Preachers and Preaching," is one of the richest gifts that any man could make to the Church—it is fitted at once to elevate the standard both of preaching and of hearing—every minister should read it—every theological student should read it—every member of the Church should read it; and I predict that it will live through many coming generations as one of the channels through which his influence will be perpetuated and his name honoured. I must not omit to say that, in the department of epistolary writing, he was, so far as I know, unrivalled. He could scarcely write a letter upon the most indifferent subject, but it seemed like a daguerreotype of both his mind and his heart. If the letters of counsel which he has addressed to persons in difficulty, letters of consolation to those in sorrow, letters containing his opinion on matters of grave public import, to say nothing of letters of personal friendship, in which he gave full

play to his wit, and his genius, and his warm affections,—if all these could be collected, I doubt not that they would make a volume which would scarcely have its superior in that department of our literature.

He has written a beautiful work on “Home”; and what he was in his own home that book well reveals. Never, I may safely say, was husband or father more loving or more loved. With a dignity that secured the highest reverence, he united a graceful and tender familiarity that was alike rare and irresistible. There was always bright sunshine in that dwelling—for how could it be otherwise, when such a mind, and such a heart, and such a bright speaking face, were always co-operating to render every one happy. His children were the delight of his soul—when he was with them, their filial embraces made his heart bound for joy—when he was separated from them, they were still in his thoughts, and often upon his lips—and he clung to them to the last with a love stronger than death—and yet, when his Heavenly Father was pleased to call some of them home, he could not only submissively but cheerfully give them up, and go on his way

trusting and rejoicing. A most impressive example of this he gave a year or two since, when that last blooming flower, which had been nurtured so tenderly, and had unfolded so beautifully, drooped and died. He led her along by his gentle hand till the night clouds of unconsciousness, which often overhang the dark valley, gathered about her; and he stood by her, in the exercise of faith and prayer, until the signal was given for the opening of the celestial gates: and then, after he knew that she was drest for the grave, he went, with his wife and children, and knelt beside the coffin, and gave up the precious remains into the keeping of the Resurrection and the Life; and he came away from her grave with his heart full of gratitude that he had made a deposit there which the Redeemer will acknowledge as his own in the day of final redemption. And thus it was with him in every domestic affliction—however deeply he might be stricken, he remembered that the design of God in afflicting him was, not that he should resign himself to unavailing grief, or relax even temporarily his diligence in his Master's work, but rather that he should find fresh cause for gratitude,

and new motives for activity, and larger desires for usefulness, even in the furnace.

And in speaking of Dr. Murray's home, I must not forget to say that it was one of the most hospitable of dwellings. His friends, who came to visit him, never failed to go away with a rich treasury of grateful recollections. His brethren in the ministry always found his arms and his heart open, and, if they had tried to doubt the cordiality of the welcome, it would have been in vain. The stranger who crossed his threshold found himself immediately in a friendly atmosphere, and needed nothing but what he saw and felt to assure him that he was in contact with a warm and generous heart. Nothing but detected imposture or unblushing impudence ever met a repulse at his door.

In looking back upon this very general enumeration of the qualities by which Dr. Murray's character was marked, and the varied services which he performed, nothing seems to me more remarkable than the wonderful versatility which made him so entirely at home in so many different fields of useful activity. He was equally well qualified to wield the sword of the Spirit with mighty power in the pulpit; to take the

lead in great enterprises of Christian benevolence; to become the controlling spirit of an ecclesiastical body; and to do battle, as occasion required, in the cause of truth and righteousness. He could, with the same facility, address the multitude in Exeter Hall, in words of bold and stirring import, and talk in a strain of loving simplicity and wisdom to the children of his own Sunday School. His visits to his sick and dying parishioners often embraced the double object of counselling and comforting them, and of writing their wills; and he was as competent to the latter as to the former. Indeed, if there was any one thing in the ordinary course of human affairs to which he could not readily turn his hand, I am yet to be informed what it was.

Enough, I am sure, has been said to show that, in the life and character of Dr. Murray, we have a striking illustration of the truth which has formed the leading thought of this discourse. We have seen that God had a great work for him to do; and that He formed him, and educated him, and directed him, with reference to its accomplishment. While he was suffering from a hard master, during his clerk-

ship in Ireland, and when he finally ran away in the hope of finding some better lot; when, contrary to his mother's strongly expressed wishes, he refused to return, and crossed the ocean a poor solitary boy, with nothing but his own efforts to depend upon; when, in the indulgence of an hereditary prejudice, and without having ever read a chapter in the Bible, he stood forth a spirited but ignorant defender of the faith of his fathers,—in all this God's providence was working to bring him to accept a purer faith, and to exalt him into one of the most efficient witnesses for it, which the age has produced. Had he been born and educated a Protestant, he never could have been the author of such works as now bear his name—it was because he could testify from the depths of a bitter experience, that he spoke and wrote such bold and powerful and sometimes almost annihilating words. And, on the other hand, had it not been for the apparently adverse circumstances to which I have referred, nothing appears but that he might have been a bigoted Romanist to the end of his life. And, while God's providence has been so conspicuous in the ordering of his

lot, his original constitution, both intellectual and moral, was eminently adapted to the several spheres of Christian and ministerial usefulness into which he was thrown; and, to crown all, a most thorough work of Divine grace brought his whole soul into efficient harmony with the great objects for which he lived. Had he lacked any of the fine qualities which he possessed, or had Divine providence allotted to him a different training, or had Divine grace done only so much for him that he could be saved so as by fire, the results of the life of Nicholas Murray had never been what we are now permitted to behold.

But his great work was done when his vigour had not even begun to wane. While the Church was looking at him as one of her strong pillars, and his own beloved flock felt that his ministrations were constantly growing more edifying and powerful, and every thing seemed to indicate that his bow would abide in strength through many successive years, He who commissioned him to his work, saw that the fitting time had come to withdraw him from it. His arrangements were made for an annual journey and visit, which always brought him

into a circle of glad and thankful hearts, and brought him to a congregation who greeted his advent as marking one of the greenest spots in the year. But, feeling slightly indisposed, he reluctantly concluded to postpone his journey for a week; and yet, in that slight illness, Death, which sometimes acts the part of a deceiver as well as a destroyer, had hid himself, with his arrow already upon the string. You missed him on the Sabbath; but if you knew that he was sick, you knew of nothing—and there was nothing—that betokened the semblance of danger. And thus, too, the greater part of the next day passed; but, in the course of the evening, he suddenly fainted, and then it was that Death threw off his mask. It seemed, for a while, that the vital flame had quite gone out; but the vigorous application of restoratives so far rekindled it that his lips were soon open again, and he seemed to be speaking with the tongue of an angel. Then it was, for the first time, that he recognized the monster at his side; but He who had met and conquered him was there too—Heaven had come down to illuminate the dark valley. And there, while he was just about being habi-

ted in his immortal robes, he was occupied in bearing a blessed testimony in honour of that Saviour in whom he had trusted; in dropping the last words of tender counsel upon the hearts of his beloved wife and children; in sending up fervent supplications not only for them but for all his friends; for the church and its officers with whom he had so long been associated; for those in the morning of life, exposed to manifold temptations; for his brethren in the ministry; for the Church universal; for his country; for the world. It was his last prayer, and it was worthy to be the last—so comprehensive, so tender, so baptized with the spirit of Heaven. When he had uttered a few more characteristic words, the last whisper died away upon his lips, and his voice, we doubt not, was put in requisition for the service of the eternal temple.

And the tidings of his death—how quickly they flew into all your houses, and set your hearts to bleeding as if each family had been bereft of one of its own members! And before the going down of the sun the next day, the shock which his death occasioned, had vibrated throughout the length and breadth of

the Presbyterian Church; and men, who for weeks had been completely absorbed by the alarming condition of our public affairs, found time to pause, and mourn that one of the princes of Israel had fallen. And who of us has ever witnessed such demonstrations of wide spread, unaffected grief, as the hour of his funeral solemnities brought with it? It was not merely a congregation mourning for a pastor, but it was a community mourning for one who, for more than a quarter of a century, had thoroughly identified himself with all its interests, and who always stood ready to make any sacrifice for the promotion of its prosperity. As the long procession passed through your streets, so deep and all-pervading was the air of sadness, that it seemed as if arrangements might be making for a funeral in every house. The bells which tolled so solemnly gave forth no denominational sound; but each seemed expressive of the general loss—each was a faithful witness to the deep sorrow and cordial sympathy of the congregation which it represented. The services that were performed here, we all felt came forth from stricken hearts; and every word seemed to be earnestly and tenderly re-

sponded to by the whole of that vast congregation. And when we laid him down in his last resting place, and thought, as we came away, that all was over, were not our hearts burdened with the reflection that you and I, the Christian ministry and the Church at large, had sustained a loss which God alone could repair?

But I am dwelling too long on the sorrowful side of my subject—there is another view which is charged with strong consolation. True, the seal has been placed upon his ministry, and you will see his face no more; but if you loved him, will you not rejoice that he has gone to the Father? He has glorified God pre-eminently both in his life and in his death—that last dark step he took without the semblance of faltering, knowing that it would land him in Heaven. And in leaving one part of his flock, remember that he has gone to mingle with another—many of the graves which now surround his own, embosom the dust of those whom he once helped forward in their Christian course, and who have already welcomed him as a sharer in their heavenly joys. And how many of his fathers and brethren—to say nothing of those still nearer to him—has he already re-

cognized in the glorified community! Above all, what joy unspeakable and full of glory springs up in his soul, as he beholds his Redeemer face to face, and takes the crown of life to which he has not yet become used, and casts it, in token of gratitude and praise, at his feet! Let our thoughts, then, instead of lingering by the cold, dark grave, follow him upward to his glorious home. And may our remembrances of what he was, as a faithful soldier of the Cross, and our reflections upon what he is, as having come off more than conqueror, be a channel through which a sanctifying as well as comforting influence shall flow into our hearts.

Standing as I do on the spot where I have so often stood, with my beloved and now glorified brother at my side, and where he so lately stood, delivering that last and most persuasive message,—“Come with us and we will do thee good,” it seems to me as if I were midway between the resting place of his body and the resting place of his soul, and as if he were charging me, both from his grave and from his throne, not to close this discourse till, in his name, I had dropped one word of parting counsel on the ear of his mourning family and

his mourning flock. I counsel you then, my much loved friends, into whose hearts the iron has entered most deeply, to let half your tears be tears of gratitude that you have had such a husband and father, and have had him so long; that his death was as peaceful as his life had been honoured and useful; that there is nothing treasured in your memories concerning him that you would be willing to forget; that, by holding to your minds his counsels and instructions, his good example and fervent prayers, you can still have him in the midst of you, as your helper on the journey to Heaven. I know that his dying words especially will be treasured in your hearts, and I pray God that they may be there, as the seeds both of consolation and of salvation. I counsel you who have been associated with him as office-bearers in this church, to let the remembrance of his energy, his integrity, his wisdom, his love of peace and his greater love of truth, and his intense and never waning devotion to the interests of his flock, stimulate you not only to hold fast what has been gained under his ministry, but to go forward in the good work of Christian enlargement and improvement. I counsel you who

have received the word of life from his lips as the power of God, and have received the consecrated memorials from his hands in testimony of your discipleship, to honour his memory by clinging more closely to the Master whom he served so well, and keeping yourselves in habitual readiness to follow in his upward track. I counsel you who have shown yourselves proof against his instructions, and warnings, and prayers, to let his death do for you what his life has never done,—bring you to a solemn adjustment of your concerns for eternity. I counsel you who are engaged as Sabbath School teachers, to let the encouraging and cheering words he has so often addressed to you, dwell in your minds, supplying you constantly with fresh motives for diligence in your unpretending but glorious work. I counsel you, dear children, whose faces used to brighten as often as he opened his lips to speak to you, to open your hearts to the blessed Saviour, and perhaps some angel may carry up the blessed news to him in Heaven. I counsel this whole congregation to walk in the footsteps of his faith, his benevolence, his devotion, his intense and never tiring zeal in doing good—thus will you erect

a monument to his honour, that will survive in the freshness of immortal beauty, when the marble that shall be placed beside his grave, shall be numbered among the things that have been. Farewell, my brother! Very pleasant hast thou been unto me! Precious be thy memory on earth; sweet be thy rest in the grave; and rapturous thine everlasting song!