

A. W. Burns 251
with the respects of
C. Van Rensselaer

S E R M O N

HAVING SOME REFERENCE TO THE CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

REV. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.,

PREACHED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALBANY,

SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 16, 1860.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

ALBANY:

PRINTED BY C. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

1860.

The appearing of this discourse in print demands a word of explanation. The intimate friendship which had long existed between the lamented Dr. Van Rensselaer and myself, and the somewhat peculiar relation he sustained to the Presbyterian Church, disposed me to take some commemorative notice of him in the pulpit, immediately after his death ; but my necessary absence from home rendered this impracticable. Since my return, I have still felt desirous of paying a tribute to the memory of my friend ; while yet I have felt that the lateness of the period forbade any thing like a formal Funeral Discourse. Hence, instead of attempting a complete view of his character, I have selected what seems to me to have been its most distinctive feature, as a fine illustration of one of the most beautiful of the Christian graces. It is hardly necessary to say that this discourse was written without the remotest view to any other publicity than it would gain in the delivery. It is printed at the request of the bereaved family, whose wishes on so tenderly sacred a subject I have neither the right nor the heart to disregard.

S E R M O N .

LUKE XIV, 11.

HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED.

The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are distinguished at once for simplicity and comprehensiveness. Witness the passage just read—so simple that a child can understand it; so comprehensive as to form a universal law of the Divine administration. Let me present this truth before you in two or three different aspects; and we shall see how worthy it is of having come from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake.

I. My first general remark is that the act in which the sinner becomes a saint is an act of humiliation; and that in that humiliation is bound up the seminal principle of the highest dignity.

Human nature, in its fallen state, is essentially rebellious. The intellect, instead of welcoming the Divine teachings with child-like docility, takes on an air of conscious

independence, and constitutes itself a judge, when it ought to be an humble learner. The heart resists the Divine requirements, and sometimes takes the attitude of stern and indignant opposition, even where God, in his abounding mercy, condescends to invite and expostulate. The conscience, though naturally moving in the right direction, sometimes becomes fearfully darkened, through the influence of corrupt passions and propensities, and, instead of protesting against the wrong, makes itself a party to the wrong, thus giving greater intensity to the general spirit of rebellion. Such is man in his unrenewed state,—man as he presents himself a subject for the quickening, transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

And now, mark the change that passes upon him; or rather see what he himself does, at the moment of being brought in contact with the renewing agency—he *humbles himself*. With the new views of the evil nature of sin, and of his own personal guilt, which are now imparted to him, all his previous unconcern, and false speculations, and dreams of self-dependence vanish—he sinks into the dust, in token of unworthiness, while he sends up to

Heaven the imploring cry for mercy ; and, in the performance of this act, the rebel gives place to the loyal subject. The attitude of opposition, of revolt, of resistance, is abandoned ; and henceforth the renovated spirit finds its element at the foot of the Cross. The whole man, in all his affections and faculties, is humbled. The intellect humbles itself to receive the truth, simply upon the Divine testimony, without halting or cavilling at what may be too deep, or too high, or too remote, for it to reach. The heart humbles itself to the most self-denying of all the Divine requirements—it yields a cordial consent to the terms on which salvation is offered—it casts away every hope of Heaven, founded on anything short of the Redeemer's righteousness—it submits quietly to all the orderings of God's providence, and, by the light of his providence and his word, traces its own path of duty. And that humility which thus begins in a change of views, and is carried forward in a change of feelings, is consummated in the change of life. The outward manifestations are in accordance with the inward principles and temper—the movements of the body are

but a faithful exponent of the workings of the spirit within—all the various actions of the life, as far as they partake of a Christian character, are modified and coloured by the spirit of humility.

Now, my position is that he who thus humbles himself, as a penitent sinner, at the foot of the Cross, shall be exalted—exalted in his character, his relations, his prospects.

As this humble spirit is the effect of a Divine operation, so the work that is performed, must be worthy of Him who performed it—of course it must impart dignity and elevation to the subject. In the first humbling of the soul there comes the germ of all the Christian graces; for one of these graces cannot exist but in alliance with all the rest; and the entire absence of any one marks whatever else may assume the name, as counterfeit. But who will not say that the Christian graces are severally elements of true moral dignity? What thoughtful and honest mind but will acknowledge that truth, and justice, and charity, and all the kindred virtues, elevate and adorn every character which they help to constitute? And these are qualities which attract the

observation and the regard even of angels—nay, upon which the Infinite God Himself looks with an approving smile.

So, also, the soul, in the first humbling of itself before God, forms new and noble relations. Its relations to God, as we have already seen, are changed from those of a rebel—it may be an open and Heaven-daring rebel, or it may be a self-righteous and self-deceived rebel—to those of a willing and obedient subject; and the stern character of the Lawgiver gives place to the winning loveliness of an All-gracious Friend and Father: and that Friend and Father takes that regenerate, humbled being under his special care, and gives him his hand to take hold of in all dark places, and his arm to rest upon in all the hours of his weariness, and even opens the treasures of infinite love that are lodged in his heart, and bids him welcome to them. So, too, he comes into a new and blessed relation to the Lord Jesus Christ—Christ now becomes, in the highest sense, his Master, his Teacher, his Redeemer; and he, in turn, becomes Christ's servant, his disciple, his ransomed one—he is now interested in all that pertains to the

advancement of Christ's Kingdom—he loves to subject himself, without reserve, to Christ's authority,—loves to receive implicitly Christ's teachings,—loves to recognize the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood in the sweet assurance which he feels of the Divine forgiveness—in short, he values himself most as a monument, a subject, of the Redemption purchased on Calvary. To the angels, also, this humbling process of which I am speaking brings him into a new relation—for their interests and his hereby become identical—they and he are fellow-workers for the accomplishment of the same glorious results—they and he sympathise with each other in each successive triumph of the cause of truth and holiness—they minister to him, under the direction of their common and glorious Head, in his seasons of weakness and darkness, to strengthen and to cheer, while that mysterious Redemption, of which he is the subject, employs their admiring and adoring scrutiny.

And there is a corresponding change in his relations to the Church—whereas he has before stood aloof from its ordinances, and never more than looked into the sacred enclosure,

he has now come to sit under the shadow of those ordinances, and to appropriate that precious spiritual provision of which they form the channel, and to welcome all the true disciples of Christ as brethren and sisters, and to mingle with them in a blessed communion of privilege and duty. All these new and hallowed relations, into which there enters incomparably more of dignity and blessing than it comes within the province of the highest human intelligence now to conceive, cluster about that one act which brings the soul down, in full submission, at the foot of the Cross.

I will only add that he who is thus humbled is proportionally exalted in his prospects; for in that bowing down to accept of a free salvation, there was the germ of a life and glory, destined to an immortal expansion. Though there may be many things in his future lot, which it is not yet given him to anticipate, yet there are certain things which he is allowed to consider as fixed, and of which a voice, speaking directly from Heaven, could scarcely convey to him any additional assurance. He knows not whether he is to serve God on earth for a longer or shorter period;

but he knows that, as long as he lives, and labours, and suffers here, the grace of Christ will be sufficient for him; he knows that no affliction can come to him so severe but that he may look upon it as a disguised blessing—above all, he knows that the last step in his earthly course brings him to the gate of Heaven; and that death is only a transition to that glorious world which is to be the future home of all the saints—their home, not merely for a limited period, even for thousands of millions of ages, but while immortality endures. Of the elements of celestial glory we know something; but eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to conceive, the joy which the soul that has been humbled at the Cross will generate within itself,—the glories heaped on glories with which it will be surrounded, and overwhelmed, and entranced by infinite love, in its onward course through everlasting ages.

Say then whether, in that first act of humiliation, in which the enemy and rebel melted into the loving child, there was not a seed that was destined to shoot, and bloom, and bear precious fruit to all eternity. In that holy

character which then took its rise, in those sacred relations with earth and Heaven which were then constituted, in those glorious prospects, thereby opened into the eternal future, which it would defy angelic eloquence adequately to set forth, is there not enough to warrant us in saying, in this application of the text,—“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted..”

II. My second general remark, in illustration of this passage, is, that the external developments of the grace of humility exalt the subject of it, even in the world’s estimation.

I hardly need say that I speak here of the genuine grace of humility in distinction from all counterfeits—for there is not one of all the Christian graces, in respect to the real nature of which men more frequently mistake than this; and that in regard to both themselves and others. Sometimes a mere morbid temperament is mistaken for humility; and an individual is supposed to be walking humbly with God, just because his words are few and his aspect gloomy. Sometimes religious despondency is mistaken for humility; whereas scarcely any two qualities are more unlike;—

the leading element of the one being faith, the leading element of the other being distrust. Sometimes an assumed austerity of manner, the taking on of self-condemning airs, the practice of self-denial to which our duty does not call us, the ready acknowledgement of sins of which we are not guilty,—each of these in turn, or all of them combined, challenge the regard that is due to true Christian humility. But, I repeat, not one of these is even legitimately allied to the genuine quality—not one of them receives or deserves the homage of mankind. The world has a keen eye to distinguish between the precious and the vile in the character of professed Christians; and never is it less likely to err than in passing judgment upon those who fancy themselves humble, or would fain be thought to be so, while yet they are utter strangers to the spirit of true lowliness. In an affected humility the world sees nothing better than hypocrisy; and who shall say that the world does not here judge righteous judgment?

Very different in its exercises and manifestations is the genuine quality. True humility, as it is one of the graces of the

Spirit, is one of the legitimate exercises of the renewed nature ; and hence it is characterized by simplicity and naturalness—it makes no extravagant professions—it takes on no sanctimonious airs—it practises no self-inflictions in the way of penance—but it imparts dignity to the humblest station and the most insignificant action—it sheds a soft and mellow and graceful hue over the whole character. Humility does not make one less firm to his convictions of the true and the right, but it makes him compassionate and condescending towards those who have wandered, and imparts a kindly spirit to his efforts to reclaim them. Humility does not forbid its possessor to accept and occupy a lofty station, but it keeps him from perverting that station to purposes of self-indulgence, or oppression, or ostentation, and makes him watchful for the opportunities it presents of doing good, especially to those whom Providence has placed in a humbler sphere. Humility is not inconsistent with the highest degree of activity and enterprise ; with resisting contrary influences and breaking through formidable obstacles ; but it frowns upon an officious and obtrusive

spirit—it does not court the public eye, though it is not afraid of it—while it rejoices in the good results of its own well directed activity, it does not think it meet to herald them by the sound of a trumpet. Humility is the dear sister of all the Christian graces, and you cannot separate her from the rest, without striking a deadly blow at the whole family.

Now, the idea which I wish to impress upon you, is, that a character of which the grace of humility is one of the leading constituents, *must* be an exalted character, even in the view of the world, because it commends itself not only to the moral sense, but to all the better feelings, of the world. It is true, indeed, that there are certain *spiritual* manifestations to which it must prompt, in which the world can have no complacency; but the general tone of conduct in ordinary life which it secures, will find a grateful response in every heart that recognizes the difference between good and evil. And even where the *cordial* assent of the world falters,—nay, even where the demonstrations of the humble spirit are met with opposition and contumely, there is usually one mighty agent in the soul to bear witness to

the right; so that it may safely be said that humility prompts to nothing to which the world is not compelled to render some sort of homage. And let me add that there are occasions enough which furnish the opportunity for worldly, and even decidedly irreligious, men to manifest their convictions and feelings in respect to such a character; and need I say that it is no doubtful testimony which they render to the truth of my position. While they despise the actings of pride and vain-glorying in all but themselves, he who walks humbly before God and his fellow-men, commands their approving and often admiring regard; and they hesitate not to openly and practically avow it.

III. My third and only remaining general remark is, that the measure of our humility in this life marks the measure of our exaltation in the next.

I here assume that humility is so important an ingredient in vital, practical religion, that, in the same proportion that a man is truly humble, he may be said to be truly religious. For it is impossible that true Christian humility should be making healthful progress

in the soul, while the other graces are in a languishing state—it so intertwines and identifies itself with them, that its nourishment becomes essentially theirs, and its growth also. I do not mean to say that religious character always presents itself in perfectly harmonious proportions; or that one grace may not seem to be, and actually be, cultivated at the expense of another; or that there is not good reason why every Christian should take special care that his character is symmetrically developed—but I mean that the cultivation of an humble spirit is really the best pledge of a well balanced character, and that it supposes the presence and general growth of all the other graces. I speak of humility here as an habitual temper, and not as an occasional, I may say spasmodic, exercise—for there are sometimes demonstrations of this spirit that are so wonderful as to seem doubtful; and, admitting even that they are the exercises of a renewed heart, they are at best to be referred to a peculiarity of the natural temperament in connection with a Divine influence. It is the calm, habitual, uniform, all pervading, and increasing operation of an humble spirit,

that we are to regard as the evidence of substantial Christian growth; while all that humility that is occasional rather than constant in its manifestations, (and the same remark applies to all the other Christian graces), is at best of a dubious and unsatisfactory character.

The more humility we have then, the more religion we have; and, as the measure of our spiritual attainments is to be the measure of our future reward, so just in proportion as one humbles himself on earth, shall he be exalted in Heaven. \ The teachings of the Bible evidently justify the idea that the saints, when they reach Heaven, will not all fare alike; that there will be degrees of happiness there corresponding to the diversity of improvement here; that, though imperfection shall not attach to any, yet the same degree of glory shall not be the portion of all—some shall shine on brighter thrones, and send forth louder hallelujahs, than others. The point to which I wish to come, is, that the lowliest being on earth will occupy the loftiest place in Heaven—that is, he who has been most sensible of his own unworthiness and dependance, and has laboured most earnestly, and faith-

fully, in view of eternal scenes, and in the strength of all-sufficient grace, shall have his place nearest the Lamb that died for him; and the measure of bliss to which he is admitted, shall be such as they who are saved so as by fire can never attain to. / Oh what a thought is this in its application to what we see passing around us! What a thought that that humble being who is never heard of here in the circles of fashion, or the palaces of the great, shall hereafter shine as a star of the first magnitude in the Heavenly firmament! Yes, ye lowly souls, in the obscure and unnoticed work which you are performing on earth, in which humility and benevolence appear as twin sisters; in your visits of compassion to the huts of poverty, of which there is perhaps no record made but in the book of God's remembrance; in your sympathy with the wretched, in your admonitions to the wayward, in your quiet distribution of the Bible and of tracts which have salvation bound up in them, and in the deep and solemn communing with your own spirit,—an exercise that always brings you down into the dust,—in all this, I say, you are undergoing a process of preparation for dwel-

ling in one of the brightest of the Heavenly mansions. And when, millions of ages hence, it shall be asked Who are these, and whence came they, who are encircled with such ineffable glory; who seem to be the privileged ones even here amidst the adoring throng of the ransomed?—the answer shall be, they are those who used secretly to weep in the dust for their own sins, and openly and earnestly to labour for the world's salvation—they came up perhaps from amidst walks of obscurity or scenes of distress,—perhaps from threading the lanes of some city on the humblest of all missions; and here they are, turned into kings and priests unto God, and recognized as among the most honoured guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

It is worthy of remark that the form which humility, in its outward developments, takes on, varies with the circumstances and relations of different individuals. For instance, an act which might not only be fitting but even necessary, in a person in the humbler walks of life, might justly be considered as betokening a humble spirit, if performed by one whose condition of affluence or of influence

placed him altogether above the necessity of it,—thus giving to it the character, perhaps, of a voluntary condescension. Every one knows how the riches and honours of this world tend to self-exaltation; how men who were once on a level with the poorest, becoming the subjects of such an elevation, sometimes forget the lowly place which they used to occupy, and look down with scorn upon those who still occupy it, as if they had never been there themselves. And even where this revolting exhibition is not witnessed, where there is nothing in the outer conduct to become the subject of special observation, still no doubt the movements of the heart are often in the wrong direction—the consciousness of independence or authority begets a spirit, not very nearly allied to humility. But blessed be God, there *are* cases of a different character—here and there you will find an individual, descended from an honourable ancestry, nursed in the bosom of affluence, and in due time coming in possession of an immense fortune, who stands on what to others would be a dizzy height, with perfect steadiness and sobriety; who, when he takes an inventory of

his immense possessions, writes upon every one 'This belongs to God'; who is ever on the alert for opportunities of doing good among the humblest as well as the highest; and who does not disdain even the drudgery incident to any good cause. Such a man, surely, is honoured, both on earth and in Heaven. He lives in the grateful respect of his fellow-creatures, and in the light of his Heavenly Father's countenance, and beholds in prospect a reward, alike glorious in its nature and boundless in its duration. Not only while such men live, are we bound to profit by their example, but, after they are dead, we are no less bound to honour and cherish their memories.

I can scarcely think of a more striking illustration of my subject than is furnished by the character, and life, and I may add death, of the lamented Dr. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, whose remains some of us saw laid, a few weeks since, in their last lowly and beautiful resting place. It is no part of my intention to go into any of the details of his history, or even, at this late day, to attempt any general delineation of his character—I wish to present him before you in only a single aspect,

that you may learn from him the one great lesson,—so beautifully embodied in his life,—that “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Dr. Van Rensselaer, as you all know, was honoured in his descent—not to go back beyond the first generation,—his father was a very patriarch in simplicity and dignity,—a man of the noblest natural qualities, of the finest accomplishments, of elevated civil position, of the highest social consideration, and not only shedding a genial lustre on every relation he sustained, but forming one of the chief attractions of the community in which he lived. Cortlandt passed his boyhood and early youth amidst the luxuries and elegances incident to the paternal home; and, as soon as he is capable of understanding it, he is met with that revelation that embosoms death to so many young men,—that he is destined to be the heir to a princely fortune,—a fortune that will make him as independent as he *can* be in this world, and leaving it at his option whether to use his faculties and become a man, or settle down into the indolent and sensual enjoyment of himself. In due time, he is sent

to College, where, with all the truly benign and elevating influences that prevail, there are innumerable tempters to that which is evil;—altars on which young men offer themselves as voluntary sacrifices to the Prince of darkness. But he passes this ordeal unscathed: the influences of a pious education prove too strong for the mighty and manifold corrupt influences by which he is assailed; though it was not till after he left College that he believed that his heart was touched by the renovating influence from above. In due time, the great problem urges itself upon his thoughts, which of the different paths that open before him into life he shall take—that he will not take that of the sensualist, or of the prodigal, we feel assured; for his experience at College, and still more his subsequent profession of faith in Christ, is a sufficient guarantee against that—but will he not feel that the circumstances in which Providence has placed him fairly allow him the latitude of a somewhat easy life? Will he not so far heed the pleadings of natural feeling, as to settle down in some dignified position that shall impose no heavy tax upon his faculties, and

consider his mission fulfilled in exerting a general good influence, and especially in contributing of his abundance to the promotion of the best interests of his fellow-men? Had he taken this course, would any one have felt that it involved any particular incongruity with his character or his profession; or would there have been anything in it to forfeit the respect of either the Church or the world? But no, he has received an impulse in a different direction—he forgets his ease, and his pleasure, and all the world's attractions, in his aspirations for the ministry of the Gospel; and in due time he is engaged in his preparation for the sacred office; and, at a later period still, is coming forth as one of Heaven's commissioned ambassadors. And now, considering his excellent descent, and excellent talents, and excellent education, perhaps it would be only imputing to him the ordinary measure of human ambition, to expect that he should wait a little for some one of the higher fields of ministerial usefulness;—some place which would at once require but a moderate share of effort, and be congenial with his cultivated tastes. But, instead of thus taking counsel of

flesh and blood, we hear of him a voluntary, humble missionary down among the negroes of Virginia ; and he goes round into their huts and hovels, talking to them with the affectionate freedom of a brother, and labouring heartily and lovingly to make them free men in Christ. He staid there, sowing seed on that interesting, but in some respects dark and rugged, field, till the excitement on the subject of Slavery led him to abandon it ; but I should infer from what I have heard him say, that he not only never forgot his coloured friends, but that he remembered his labours among them with as much interest as any which he ever performed. When his mission among the slaves closed, he came a little more than half way home, and took charge of a church, consisting then of a mere handful of people, who found in him, in every respect, just the minister they needed, and to whose other excellent qualifications was superadded that rare one,—of being able to preach for nothing. He remained there several years, until a sphere of not less self-denying activity, but of more extended usefulness, opened to him, as Secretary of the General Assembly's Board of Educa-

tion ; and it is not too much to say that here, in a course of gratuitous, persevering labour, he wore his strength and life away in the service of the Church. The day-labourer does not work harder to earn bread for his family, the miser does not work harder to add to the heap that *must* grow even within hearing of the groans of starvation, than Cortlandt Van Rensselaer worked to enlarge, and direct, and apply the resources of the Church, in aid of the cause of theological education.

Am I not right in saying that in all this our departed friend—when we take into view the circumstances in which Providence had placed him—set a beautiful example of Christian humility? Another glance at his history will show us how this humble man was exalted—or I should rather say *is* exalted ; for his noblest exaltation is amidst the scenes in which he is mingling now. His exaltation began in the substantial excellence which his humble and self-denying labours imparted to his own character—it made him a man of mark, a man towards whom the eyes both of the Church and of the world were turned, not only with respect but with admiration. He was exalted

in the regards of the various classes and communities which have successively enjoyed the benefit of his labours. The good people of Virginia, among whom he sojourned as an humble missionary on their plantations, honoured him for his benevolence, fidelity, and condescension; and the poor enslaved people, whose minds, darker than their faces, he sought to enlighten with Divine truth—they honoured him as a benefactor indeed; and among them no doubt he found some of the early seals of his ministry, who have carried, or will carry, the grateful remembrance of him up to Heaven. He was honoured by the feeble congregation who, for several years, enjoyed his pastoral labours, and who sustained towards him the relation of a grateful beneficiary. He was honoured by that influential and venerable Board with which, for so long a period, he was more immediately connected; by the different Theological Seminaries, of which he was a most kind and watchful guardian; by his brethren in the ministry all over the land, who recognized him as a fellow-helper in every good work; by the highest judicatory of the Church, in appointing him their Moderator;

and finally by the Church as a body,—not merely the Presbyterian, but other denominations among whom he lived, or to whom his character was known. And the men of the world honoured him too; for, however little they might sympathise in the objects towards which his efforts were directed, they could not but admire the unswerving integrity, the heroic self-denial, the calm and earnest perseverance, which were so conspicuous in his every-day life. And need I add that he was honoured, both of God and of man, as the time of his departure drew near. A complicated malady, firmly seated in his system, is the acknowledged signal of approaching death. He knows what is before him, but all other desires are subordinate to that one desire,—that God's holy will should be done. He looks around upon one of the brightest, loveliest domestic circles, and then thinks of his own grave, and still keeps as cheerful as ever; because he remembers that his grave will form part of his Redeemer's gracious dominion, and thinks what a gathering-place Heaven will be for the loved and the loving on earth. His two devoted sons take him in their arms and row him about on the river, where he

can breathe the fresh air and gratify one of his peculiar tastes; and, while he thankfully accepts these offices of filial love, his own heart is lifted to his Heavenly Father in filial gratitude and praise. His brethren in the ministry and other friends come to see him, and he talks to them like a consciously dying man, who has already got within sight of the Heavenly Jerusalem; and they go away at once bowed and refreshed under his tender and solemn words. Finally, the morning comes that he is to die. Conscious evidently of the nearness of the change, he makes a last request, which shows his thoughtfulness, even in death, for those he is leaving, and now feels that he is ready. The ominous sleep comes over him, out of which he is to be awaked by the songs of angels; and, while the words of prayer for the dying are being uttered by the voice of conjugal love, the cord that has hitherto bound the mortal and immortal together, snaps asunder, and the eye and the heart that have been fastened upon Heaven so long, are entranced with its full glory. And, as the tidings flew in the lightning, there was hearty mourning all over the Church; and that was literally a mourning

assembly that gathered around his coffin, when the day of the funeral came ; and those of us who met his mortal remains on the spot where he began life, were mourners too, though we felt how much the gloom of the hour was qualified and softened by the remembrance of what he had been, and the thought of what he had become. Thus was he honoured both in life and in death ; but most of all is he honoured in the crown that he wears now ; in the new and noble song that trembles upon his lips ; in a blissful companionship, never to end, with angels who have always kept themselves pure, and with saints who, like himself, have been made pure by being washed in the blood of Calvary. Will any one now doubt whether he who performed that course of humble, self-denying service for Christ, has found the promise made good to him, that “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted ?” Nay, is not the exaltation which he has attained such, that no sacrifice, no self-denial, which it is possible for mortals to be subjected to, could be brought into comparison with it ?

Oh that I could write, so that it should be proof against time, upon the hearts especially

of those to whom Providence has dispensed its bounties with a most liberal hand, the great practical lesson which our subject so impressively teaches, and the character we have been contemplating so beautifully illustrates,—the obligation of living so as to fulfill the legitimate ends of human existence. Every young man especially, who is placed in these favoured, yet dangerous, circumstances, I would call upon to pause, and decide intelligently and deliberately, whether he will take the path of humility, and self-denial, and obedience to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, that leads to usefulness and honour on earth, and finally terminates in Heaven; or the path of indolent ease, of sensuality, of sinful indulgence, that no one can walk in without being dishonoured on this side of the grave, and ruined eternally on the other. Yonder is a youth to whom the fact of his being born to a large inheritance has operated first as a paralysis upon his energies, and then as a poison through his whole moral system. ‘What need have I to exert myself?’ is the question which he opposes to every solicitation to active effort; and thus he quickly becomes a confirmed idler;

and in the track of idleness comes multiform, loathsome vice ; and now there is going rapidly forward the suicidal process, which, in its issue, gathers a company of friends, with bleeding hearts, around a drunkard's grave. Or the case may not be so bad as this, and yet bad enough to keep any prudent person from running the least hazard of becoming an example of it. There may be no open outrage upon the laws of God—there may be nothing to make reverence shudder or decency blush—nothing more than an ignoble selfishness acting itself out in ways which the world calls honourable ; but there is no practical recognition of the obligation to do good—the graceful amenities of life may not be overlooked, but the claims of substantial charity are to a great extent ignored—there may be exhibited a luxury, and a splendour, and a loftiness of social position, in which the opulent and the gay will love to regale themselves ; but there will be no attractions there for the ignorant, or the needy, or the wretched, or even for those who come together to consult for their relief or well-being. If that man does anybody any good, it is only an incidental result from

his efforts at self-gratification ; and not because he is capable of forming a disinterested purpose. When he reaches the end of his course, and looks backward, not a solitary monument of designed active usefulness rises up to relieve the gloomy waste of an utterly selfish life. His wealth may indeed secure to him a splendid funeral pageant, and may build a costly monument over his grave, and inscribe upon it words of more than doubtful import—but, believe me, there is an inherent tendency to oblivion in that man's name which the wealth of the Indies could not counteract. Even those who flattered and caressed him while living, have little to say of him after he is dead ; and perhaps in that little there may be scathing truth at the expense even of gratitude and consistency. And he goes to meet his Lord as a servant who has wasted his Lord's goods ;—as one who had ten talents entrusted to him, but who has nothing to show for any of them. Compare even this less offensive form of self-indulgent character with such a character as that of our departed friend, and say whether darkness and light are more opposite. When an allusion is made to the one, mark

the significant silence—when the name of the other is spoken,—no matter in what circle,—how spontaneous are the testimonies to his exalted worth ! Curiosity is attracted to the grave of the one by the splendid chiselled marble that towers above it—Reverence and gratitude walk hand in hand to the grave of the other, and place upon it their choicest offerings. I look upward, I look downward, and behold ! where there was abasement there is exaltation ; where there was exaltation there is abasement ! I gaze upon that saint who has come up out of one of the world's dark places into the boundless light and glory amidst which the throne of the Lamb is fixed ; I gaze upon that sinner who has been cast down from one of the world's high places into the depths of degradation and wo ; and a thrill of rapture or a chill of horror comes over me, as I hold to my mind the thought that the career of the one or of the other is to be eternal !