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**SERMON**

AT THE INTERMENT OF THE

REVEREND DOCTOR LATHROP.

Dear Cotton Partridge  
from his sincere  
Seth Lathrop

A

## **SERMON,**

PREACHED JANUARY 3, 1821.

AT THE

## **INTERMENT**

OF THE

**REVEREND JOSEPH LATHROP, D. D.**  
SENIOR PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN

West-Springfield.

BY WILLIAM BUELL SPRAGUE,  
SURVIVING MINISTER OF SAID CHURCH. *R*

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M DCCC XXI.

TO THE  
BEREAVED FAMILY AND CONGREGATION  
OF THE LATE  
DOCTOR LATHROP,  
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,  
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,  
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,  
BY THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR,  
W. B. S.

## SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE,

READ AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FUNERAL SOLEMNITIES.

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MAN dieth and wasteth away; he giveth up the ghost, and where is he? All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle: cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return. Verily, every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. Thou changest his countenance and sendest him away. Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write; Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. I am

the Resurrection and the Life. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. Behold, I shew you a mystery : we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Your fathers, where are they ? The priests were not suffered to continue by reason of death. Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

## FUNERAL SERMON.

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### II. KINGS ii. 12—~~latter~~ clause.

And he saw him no more : and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces.

THE occasion, which has called us together, this afternoon, has spread an unprecedented gloom around us, and hung this church in the deepest mourning. That venerable servant of Christ, who has so long broken to you the bread of life, has, at length, been summoned from this scene of labour and trial, to enter on the rewards of the just.— Those hands, which have so often been lifted in devotion, from this consecrated place, are fast clenched in death; and that heart which has so long sent up its supplications to heaven on your behalf, has heaved its final sigh, and felt its last throb. I feel oppressed at the sight of these badges of death, which surround the place, where my father so lately stood, and would fain spend this hour in silent sympathy, with my afflicted people. But there devolves upon me, as your minister, a higher duty. You have come together, as a congregation of mourners, and it is for me to offer you the consolations of the gospel. But I shall not have gained my purpose, if you retire from this place, with the mere transient impression of regret; nor will you

have paid a reasonable tribute to the memory of your departed pastor, unless you make a practical improvement of this solemn dispensation.

The prophet Elijah, to whom the text refers, occupied a station of superior dignity and influence, among God's chosen people, at an interesting period of their history. As he was drawing towards the close of an active and brilliant career, he received an intimation, that his departure from the world should be attended by circumstances of peculiar distinction and glory ;—that, instead of following the multitude through the valley of death, and leaving his earthly house of this tabernacle behind him, he should be honoured with an immediate translation to the regions of immortality. Elisha, his favourite disciple and friend, being divinely admonished of what was about to happen to his illustrious master, would not yield to any solicitations to leave him, but determined, if possible, to witness his translation. Accordingly, they proceeded together, till they arrived at the bank of the river Jordan, when Elijah, by a stroke of his mantle, divided the waters, so that they passed through on dry ground. The venerable prophet now inquired of Elisha, what was the last request, which he had to make of him, before their separation ; and when Elisha signified his desire, that he might receive a double portion of his master's spirit, he was informed that the request, however great, should be granted, if he was permitted to witness his departure. After proceeding a short distance

farther, a company of angels, in the form of a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, made their appearance, and Elijah was carried up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha, as he gazed after his ascending master, enveloped in a blaze of glory, cried out, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces.*

The text records the deep and heartfelt grief, which Elisha manifested on the departure of his excellent father. We will briefly consider THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH JUSTIFIED HIS MOURNING.

It is obvious that he did not mourn, because *the illustrious prophet was released from this world of trial, and gone to heaven.* The pious benevolence which he undoubtedly possessed, as well as his personal and filial attachment, must rather have kindled a sentiment of exultation, when he recollected that one, so much and so deservedly beloved, had gone to be for ever with the Lord. Nor is it any part of *our* regret, when men, who are endeared to us, by their private virtues, as well as public usefulness, leave the world, that they are resting peacefully in the bosom of their Saviour, and their God. The thought is unutterably consoling, and often causes joy to spring up in the soul, which was sinking under the most painful recollections.

Nor yet, again, are we to suppose, that the mourning of Elisha had any connection with *the*

*manner of Elijah's departure.* In this, he was signally distinguished. He was not, like the rest of his race, compelled to suffer the pains of dissolution. A company of angels was commissioned to descend, from the third heavens, to conduct him, with the utmost glory, into the presence of his God. This is a distinction to which no other good man, unless it was Enoch, was ever admitted.— All others have been introduced into the heavenly paradise, through the gloomy gate of death.— But even this does not constitute a sufficient reason, why we should mourn, for the departure of eminently wise and pious men. Imagination may indeed call up the pale image of death, as it sat upon the countenance of the expiring saint, may station us by his dying bed, and bid us listen to his final sigh, and witness his convulsed struggle ; yet the reflection that he has entered an eternity of glory is fitted to restore tranquillity to the soul, and yield the most valuable consolation.

The principal cause of Elisha's mourning was *the loss which he, and the whole nation of Israel, had sustained, in the removal of this eminent servant of God.* It was a peculiarly interesting period, when his services seemed necessary to arrest the progress of idolatry, and bring back the people to the knowledge and worship of Jehovah. It was, therefore, not merely a personal but a national loss which the prophet deplored. He was not only deprived of an excellent father and guide, but the nation was bereaved of its brightest orna-

ment and most illustrious prophet. Doubtless, his mourning was a tribute of deep affection to his departed father ; but it was also an expression of sensibility to the public loss, and of sympathy with the whole nation.

When men, distinguished by their excellence and usefulness, are taken away, and particularly those with whom we have been connected, it is right that we should give utterance to wounded nature. To refrain from it were to violate a law of natural affection. Jesus, our beloved master, we know, had tears to shed at the grave of his friend. But our mourning on such occasions should not be the simple, involuntary tribute of tender affection: it should be a rational expression of regret, that a life is blotted out with which were connected so many important interests. We may mourn that so much activity and usefulness are come to a close ; that the prudent counsellor, the exemplary and devoted christian, is no longer here, to preside amidst the jarring interests of the church or state ; to animate to virtue by the power of his example, and to call down blessings by the fervency of his prayers. To mourn in this manner is not only a dictate of propriety, but duty ; and to refuse thus to mourn, when the pillars of the church and state are stricken away by death, betrays a gross insensibility to the interests of religion, and a noticeable inattention to the providence of God.

Let it be remembered, however, that this

mourning must not be excessive. We are not, by the unreasonable indulgence of grief, to charge God foolishly, or to manifest any distrust of his Providence, in accomplishing his glorious purposes. While we cherish a sentiment of regret, that a career of active usefulness is terminated, it becomes us to bow before the righteous providence of God, and trust in him to provide other instruments for the extension and glory of his kingdom.

You have doubtless observed, my hearers, in the progress of these observations, some general allusion to the character of the man, whose death has occasioned our present meeting. We believe it may be said, without the fear of contradiction, that a great and good man has fallen in our Israel. But we are assembled, not to flatter the living, or praise the dead. The place, the occasion, and the presence of these venerable remains of departed greatness, all forbid it. It is however nothing more than a reasonable tribute to his memory, and a proper indulgence to the claims of surviving friendship, that we attempt to lay before you some brief recollection of his life and character.

The Reverend Doctor Joseph Lathrop\* was born at Norwich, Connecticut, October 31st, 1731. In 1750, he became a member of Yale College, and having sustained his course with great

\* He was a descendant, of the fourth generation, from the Rev. John Lathrop, a minister of Barnstable in England, who came to this country in 1634, and settled in the ministry at Barnstable in this state.

reputation, commenced bachelor of arts in 1754, at the age of 23. It was during his residence at college, that he dated his first permanent religious impressions ; and about the time that he was graduated, he made a public profession of religion. In the interesting memoir\* of his life, which he has left, he has the following account of his early religious exercises.

“ In the course of this year (1754) there were some deaths in college, which deeply impressed my mind with a sense of the uncertainty of life, the necessity of religion, and the importance of a good hope. I felt convinced of my sinfulness, lamented it before God, sought his mercy, and seemed to myself as if religion was my choice ; but was much discouraged by an apprehension that I was not one of the elect. I spent much time in secret exercises. As I was walking and meditating one day in solitude and anxiety, I reasoned thus with myself. A Saviour has come to open a way of salvation for sinners. Salvation is offered, and the terms are stated. The offer is to all, and the terms are the same for all. In God there is no insincerity ; to him belong secret things ; things only which are revealed belong to me. There can be no decree which frustrates the divine promises. If I comply with the terms, the benefits promised are mine. God has chosen men to sal-

\* It is expected that this memoir will at some future period be given to the public.

vation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. It concerns me to make my election sure, by adding to my faith, virtue, &c. 'By faith and patience I may inherit the promises.' By thus arguing with myself, my anxiety was relieved, my mind comforted, and my hope strengthened."

Soon after leaving college, he became the instructor of a grammar school in Springfield, and at the same time commenced the study of theology, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Breck,\* of whom he always continued to speak in terms of high respect and affection. In January 1756, he was licensed to preach the Gospel, and in July following received a unanimous call to take the pastoral charge of this society, then vacant by the death of the Reverend Mr. Hopkins. On the 25th of August, the union between him and this people was ratified, by the solemnities of ordination; this being the only vacancy in which he had preached, as a candidate, and he the only candidate employed by the parish.

Sometime after his ordination, as appears from

\* During his residence in the family of Mr. Breck, he formed an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Whitney, afterwards the Rev. Doctor Whitney of Brooklyn, Conn. The friendship which commenced between them at this early period was mutually cherished, till the close of Doctor L's. life. Doctor W. survives his venerable friend, and it is understood that he is now, at the advanced age of 90, in comfortable health, and in the possession of a good degree of intellectual vigour.

the memoir to which we have referred, from a deep sense of the magnitude and responsibility of his work, he set apart a day for secret prayer, and committed to writing several solemn resolutions of future obedience to the will of God, and fidelity in his service. These resolutions have particular respect to his devotions, to the government of himself, to the treatment of his fellow men, and to his ministerial character and work ; and they breathe a spirit, which cannot fail to refresh and animate every christian minister. He seems afterwards to have reviewed the solemn transactions of that day, at stated periods, and to have found it a quickening and salutary exercise.

From the time of his settlement to the termination of his stated services in the desk, a period of sixty-two years, his official labours were continued for the most part with but little intermission.\* In 1793, the professorship of theology in Yale College, being vacant, he was elected to that office ; but from an aversion to breaking connections, which time had rendered strong and agreeable,

\* The only considerable period in which the active labours of Doctor L. have been interrupted, during his ministry, was from 1778 to 1781, when he was prevented from regularly discharging the duties of his office by a painful indisposition. It was during this time, that an impostor, professing himself a disciple of Whitefield, intruded into his parish, and by his fanatical preaching, and base conduct, stirred up a contention which led Doctor L. shortly after to compose and publish his celebrated sermons entitled "*Christ's warning to the Churches.*"

from the peculiarly delicate state of his parish, and from a characteristical distrust of his own abilities, he declined the appointment.

For many of the last years of his life, he received frequent public testimonies of the high estimation in which he was held, both as an accomplished scholar, and a distinguished minister of the gospel. In 1791, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the college at which he received his education, and at a later period in life, was admitted to the same distinction in the University of Cambridge. Many other respectable societies have at various times borne honourable testimony to his talents and virtues. It may be proper also to mention that these expressions of respect have not been confined to his own countrymen, but his character has been known and venerated on the other side of the Atlantic.\*

From the period that Doctor Lathrop retired from his public labours till his death, an interval of nearly three years, he enjoyed for the most part, comfortable health, and retained so much intellectual vigour as to render his conversation always pleasant and instructive. It was however easy to discover that the disorder,† to which he was occasionally subject, was making rapid inroads, both

\* He was for several years the constant correspondent of the late Rev. Samuel Palmer, a distinguished dissenting minister of Hackney, near London.

† A comatose affection.

upon his constitution and intellect ; and each successive attack was regarded by his friends, as the probable harbinger of his dissolution. Though the nature of his last disease prevented him from disclosing to us his views, in the immediate prospect of eternity, every one, who had previously witnessed the calmness of his spirit, and the triumph of his faith, felt an unwavering conviction, that death was to him the gate of glory. We saw him gradually sinking under the power of disease, and anticipated the decisive moment when the spirit should take its flight, without one painful doubt—one chill of apprehension.

In attempting an outline of the character of Doctor Lathrop, I feel that I am occupying ground, with which most of my hearers cannot be less conversant than myself. But it is ground which is so dear to us all, that I have no fear of wearying your patience by the sketch which I am about to offer. It is ground, my beloved hearers, which shall be sacred, for years to come, to our sweetest meditations, where our best affections shall often linger, and where your children shall find themselves instructed and animated, while you are slumbering in your graves.

The character of Doctor Lathrop, as a MAN, was made up of a rare assemblage of interesting qualities. Perhaps it is not too much to say that he possessed an *intellect* of the first order. If the cast of his mind was less bold than that of some other great men, there are few whose intellectual

operations are equally rapid, distinct, and original. His discernment of character seemed almost intuitive. In the investigation of truth, his mind was accustomed to range through the whole field of evidence, and finally arrive at its conclusion by a path so luminous, that few could trace it without perfect conviction. Multitudes can testify, with what delight they have listened to his conversation, when his mind has seemed to dart like lightning through a difficult subject, and by a single effort, to relieve it from all its obscurity.

One of the features, by which his intellectual character was strongly marked, was an *uncommon power of invention*. Some of his ideas, on almost every subject, were peculiarly his own ; and even those which were comparatively trite, could not pass through his mind without receiving a tinge of originality. His imagination, though originally prolific, was disciplined with the strictest care, and oftener delighted by its gentle and delicate touches, than overpowered by its awful sublimity and magnificence. It was his to wander in the calm sunshine of heaven, and amidst the softer and more beautiful scenes of creation, rather than to move in the whirlwind, or mount in the storm.\* A vein of brilliant but chastened humour frequently appeared in his conversation, which, while it al-

\* Doctor L. has occasionally written some fugitive pieces of poetry, which exhibit a talent for that kind of composition of a superior order.

ways gave a charm to his intercourse with his friends, never left an impression unfavourable to the strict delicacy of his feelings, or the dignity of his character.

The *qualities of his heart* also, all who knew him will acknowledge, were peculiarly excellent. Benevolence marked his whole deportment. The more private and endearing relations of life, he sustained with the utmost dignity and affection; and never seemed more in the sphere for which Providence designed him, than when mingling in the social enjoyments of his own fireside. In his common intercourse, he was unusually affable and communicative, and accommodated himself, with peculiar felicity, to the characters of those with whom he conversed. To all his other amiable and social qualities were added an unusual serenity and cheerfulness of temper, which gave to his old age a charm, as rare as it was delightful.

His *manners* were the simple effusion of his amiable and excellent feelings. Without any of that severity or ostentation which are so often mistaken for the concomitants of greatness, he was uniformly mild and unobtrusive. Though it was impossible to be long in his presence without an impression of his superiority, that impression was never assisted by any thing like personal display. His politeness was of the highest kind: it was nature speaking in all her simplicity and loveliness through his whole deportment.

As a CHRISTIAN, Doctor Lathrop was also

in no small degree distinguished. If we were to attempt to describe his religious character in a single word, we should say that it was eminently *consistent*. He was equally remote from the intemperate heat of enthusiasm on the one hand, and that miserable, lifeless system, which excludes all exercise of the affections, on the other. It was his favourite maxim, that the evidence of a christian temper is not so much to be sought in occasional fervours, as in a consistent, pious, and exemplary deportment. Those who knew him best are most ready to testify in what rich abundance he brought forth the fruits of the Spirit ; how frequent, fervent, and affectionate was his communion with his God ; how exemplary were his patience and fortitude under the pressure of deep affliction, and the accumulated infirmities of age ; how inoffensive, and forbearing, and charitable, he was in all his intercourse with the world ; how much disposed to mourn over the deficiencies and sins of his life, and give to God all the glory of his salvation ; how benign, joyful, and even rapturous was the spirit with which he sometimes spake of his approaching departure, and his entrance upon that rest which remains for the people of God.—The glorious plan of redemption was the theme which occupied his mind above every other ; and while absorbed in meditation on this wonderful subject, he seemed almost to rise above these regions of mortality, and anticipate the transports of

the redeemed. It was his usual practice to devote the first and last moments of every day to solemn self-examination, meditation, and prayer. In this exercise, he has been heard to say, that he found great satisfaction and profit; and there is no doubt that it contributed much to the stability and elevation of his christian character.

But the most interesting view of Doctor Lathrop's character remains yet to be exhibited: it was as a MINISTER of Jesus that his reputation shone with the most unclouded splendour. To his comprehensive intellect and exalted piety was added all that acquired ministerial furniture which is necessary to constitute a great *theologian*.\*— From the straightened advantages of his early theological education, as well as from the constant pressure of parochial duties in after life, it was not to be expected that his reading should be so extensive or various, as that of many others, who are placed in more propitious circumstances. He was, however, familiar with the most distinguished theological writers, and could analyze, at pleasure, many important controversies in the christian church. The science of theology he had carefully studied in all its parts and connections. The system of truth which he found in the BIBLE, and to which he stedfastly adhered, was that of which salvation by the atoning blood and life-giv-

\* Doctor Lathrop assisted about twenty young gentlemen in their studies for the ministry. Among these was the late Doctor Appleton, President of Bowdoin College.

ing spirit of Christ is the prominent feature. Here he often declared that he rested his hope of heaven; and that if the great doctrine of atonement were taken away, there was, in his view, nothing left in the gospel, to meet the necessities of a sinner. At the same time, his enlarged views of christianity led him to place a due estimate upon every part of evangelical truth. The system of doctrines and precepts, revealed in the gospel, was, to his apprehension, a harmonious and beautiful whole; every part of which, though not absolutely essential to salvation, bears the impressions of truth and Divinity.

As a *preacher*, Doctor Lathrop undoubtedly held no ordinary rank\*. He never conducted his hearers into the field of metaphysical and refined speculation, but was contented to preach the truth as it is in Jesus. His discourses were remarkable for a practical exhibition of gospel truth, for a strict and ingenious analysis of his subject, for abounding with lively, impressive sentiment, and deep and critical views of human nature, and for a simplicity and perspicuity of method, sentiment,

\* The printed Sermons of Doctor L. are contained in six volumes, octavo, beside many occasional discourses which have not been collected. No other American divine, it is believed, has published so many sermons, and few have gained a more extensive and rapid circulation. Some of his works have been printed, and received with great applause in Europe. It is expected that some of the large number of valuable MSS. which he has left will be given to the public.

and expression, which rendered them alike intelligible to the most illiterate, and gratifying to the most refined of his hearers. It is a common observation among preachers, that the great truths of the gospel, from the peculiar constitution of the human mind, lose much of their effect, by being often repeated; but Doctor Lathrop possessed the rare talent of making the text of every discourse so prominent, that while he kept constantly in view the same cardinal truths, his hearers were perpetually gratified with novelty. Though he preached all the doctrines of the gospel affectionately and faithfully, he never introduced controversy into the desk, unless some exigency manifestly required it. As a writer of occasional sermons, it may be doubted whether he was exceeded by any preacher of his day. His peculiarly fertile and inventive genius supplied him with materials appropriate to every occasion. He composed with great rapidity, and, it would seem, with less intellectual effort than most writers of eminence. He has left behind him about five thousand manuscript sermons, a noble monument of his piety, talents, and industry.

In his *devotional exercises*, he was peculiarly fervent, appropriate, and instructive. His occasional prayers were so remarkably pertinent, that no circumstance, which could excite sympathy or interest, seemed to be overlooked. While the pious mind attended upon these exercises with delight and edification, it was impossible to resist the

impression, that his heart was warmed with the true spirit of a disciple. Those of us, my hearers, who have so often been privileged, to accompany him to the throne of grace, will never forget the affectionate fervour which seemed to glow in every petition, the exalted strain of evangelical sentiment, the expressions of deep humility and unfeigned confidence in the merits of the Redeemer, and the tender and animating benedictions which he pronounced upon his beloved people. The interests of his congregation were peculiarly near his heart, and his prayers were never more fervent, than while he was commending them in all the tenderness of a father to the blessing of his Father in heaven.

His *manner in the pulpit*, as I am informed,\* was natural, solemn, and impressive. Without possessing, in a high degree, the graces of elocution, there was a dignified and reverent style of address which gave importance to every sentiment that he uttered. It was the unaffected expression of a heart impressed and elevated, by a sense of the presence and majesty of Jehovah.

In his *pastoral intercourse*, he was uncommonly attentive to the peculiar circumstances of his flock, and disposed to make great personal sacrifices,†

\* Doctor L. never preached after the settlement of his colleague, though he usually attended public worship, and occasionally led in the devotional service, till a short time before his death.

† He was several times solicited to leave his congregation for a more distinguished sphere of professional labour, but he uniform-

for the sake of preserving their union and prosperity. Above all, he was an eminent example of prudence. He was cautious, without being timid; familiar, without sacrificing his dignity; condescending, without abandoning what he believed to be the principles of duty. In cases of difficulty, his people always found in him a counsellor, in whose decisions they could trust with unwavering confidence. In seasons of affliction, they found him alive to all their sorrows, and ready to commend them to the God of all grace and comfort. They only, who have known and loved him as their minister, can form an adequate idea of the tenderness and dignity, with which he sustained the pastoral relation.

As a ruler in the church, few men have been more eminently distinguished. His excellent judgment and consummate prudence, united with a deep discernment of character, and an extensive acquaintance with ecclesiastical government, eminently qualified him to be entrusted with the most important interests of the church. The numerous instances, in which his advice has been solicited in doubtful and perplexing cases, shew in what estimation his character as a counsellor has been held by the christian public. His talent at composing differences was almost peculiar to himself. He has, more than once, when called to act as me-

ly declined on the ground that his own parish would probably suffer by his removal.

diator, in the heat of controversy, extinguished the flame of animosity and discord, and dropped upon the conflicting parties the mantle of kindness and benignity.

It would be a grateful employment, did time permit, to dwell upon many other features of Doctor Lathrop's character, but I must leave to your own recollection, to fill up the imperfect outline which has been presented. We do not pretend that he was free from the infirmities of human nature, or hold him up to you as a model of christian perfection; but for intellectual greatness, for the most amiable and kind affections, for exemplary prudence and enlightened, consistent piety, we believe that few men have sustained a more exalted character. Multitudes, who have only heard of the splendour of his virtues, will contemplate, in his death, the extinction of one of the brightest luminaries of the church; while those, who have been blessed with his instructions and example, who have revered him as a pastor and loved him as a father, will delight to embalm his memory in the most grateful and tender recollections.

His afflicted and greatly respected widow\* experiences, in his death, the disruption of ties, which were entwined with the fibres of her heart. For more than threescore years, have she and her deceased husband mutually shared, in a high de-

\* Madam Lathrop was the daughter of Mr. Seth Dwight of Hatfield. She has reached the advanced age of 84, and now enjoys comfortable health.

gree, the blessings of the conjugal relation. They have stood, the monuments of God's preserving goodness, while the arrows of death have been flying thick across their path, and have seen more than two generations pass off into the land of silence. But at length, the blow is struck which sunders their dearest earthly connections. God has called *him* to enter upon the rewards of the faithful, and has left *her*, in the evening of her days, a mourning, solitary widow. But with the bitterness of her cup are mingled many softening ingredients. Let her contemplate the illustrious path which her deceased husband has trod, his holy and blameless example, his unqualified resignation to the Divine will, and, above all, the joyful tranquillity with which he anticipated the hour of his departure; and thank that God who has so eminently distinguished her even in affliction. And when she finds her earthly house of this tabernacle tottering beneath the weight of years, let her faith rise to that blessed world, whither we believe her departed husband is gone, to mingle in the employments of sanctified spirits. We affectionately commend this venerable mother to the consolations of Divine grace. May the solitude of her widowhood, and the evening of her life, be cheered by the animating hopes of the gospel; and when she too shall add another to the congregation of the dead, may she also add another to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.

With the children, bereaved of an affectionate and excellent parent, we also mingle our undissembled condolence. It has been your lot, my friends, to grow up under the direction and instructions of a father whose parental character has been greatly distinguished. You have been privileged to enjoy his counsels and example, not only through the period of childhood and youth, but beyond the ordinary limit of human life. You have seen with what rare fidelity, he has discharged his various important duties, you have witnessed the numerous tokens of public confidence and esteem which he has received, and finally you have seen him at a good old age, die the death of the righteous, and you are comforted by the assurance that his flesh now rests in hope. It is not strange that your hearts bleed at the reflection that you shall see his face and listen to his counsels no more: it is right that you should weep, and I would rather ask God to sanctify, than to repress your grief. But while you cherish the memory of your father, with filial reverence and affection, do not forget that a part of the debt of gratitude which you owe to him, consists in an obligation to be attracted to virtue by the lustre of his example. Oh, listen to the voice of parental affection which now speaks to you, through the solemnities of death, and charges you to be mindful of your own departure. May the God of all consolation support and comfort you; and may the

tears which fall upon a father's grave return you a harvest of eternal joy.

The absent sister, and other relatives of the deceased, have also a claim upon our sympathy on this sorrowful occasion. Let them all repair to that God who binds up the broken heart, and often dispenses blessings through the channel of his darkest visitations.

This afflicted church and congregation need not be reminded that they also have a peculiar interest in the solemnities of this day. The same stroke which has prostrated one of the noblest pillars of the church, and sent a thrill of agony through a domestic circle, has bereaved you of a much loved and highly venerated pastor. The solemn stillness which pervades the assembly, the unaffected grief which is depicted in your countenances, the habiliments of mourning with which you have invested this consecrated desk, these walls and pillars, testify that you are not insensible to your loss. But in the midst of overwhelming sorrow, and here, in the place, where your recollections are most fresh and vivid, I cannot but exhort you to let the first sentiment of your hearts be a sentiment of devout gratitude. That God, who disposes all our allotments, has permitted you, for more than sixty years, to enjoy the services of one of the most eminent ministers, whose names have adorned the annals of our American Church. While almost every other congregation in New-England, has at least once been called to

mourning, and while some have followed several faithful pastors successively to the grave, in your case, neither death, nor the common vicissitudes of time, have invaded the sacredness of the pastoral relation. And now that *your* season of mourning has, at length, arrived, call to mind the privileges which you and your fathers have enjoyed, and let the tears of gratitude to your father in heaven mingle with the tears of affection to the memory of your departed pastor.\*

But the occasion does not merely call you to a grateful recollection of the goodness of God : it bids you pause and inquire, how you have improved that ministry, which has now come to a close. Have the truths, which your deceased pastor has so often exhibited and enforced, ever exerted any practical influence upon your hearts and lives? Can you call God to witness that you have not only been hearers, but doers of the word? Is that an approving or condemning voice, which speaks to you from within, amidst these funeral solemnities? What account, let me affectionately ask,

\* The church, of which Doctor L. was pastor, has been incorporated upwards of 120 years. So great has been its harmony that, from its incorporation to the present time, there has never been occasion for an ecclesiastical council, except for the purpose of ordination. For the last hundred years, it has not been without a settled minister but ten months. It is a circumstance of some interest that of the present inhabitants of the parish there are only about 30, who were residents here at the time of Doctor L.'s settlement.

have *you* to render, my aged fathers, for the privileges, by which you have been so long and so highly distinguished? Oh, if the voice of your departed pastor, warning you to flee from the wrath to come, has never reached your hearts, turn not a deaf ear to the monitory call which now issues from his grave. Though he has preceded you in his entrance into eternity, you must soon meet him there; and what a meeting that will be, if your testimony to his faithfulness, as a minister of Christ, should be the seal of your own eternal condemnation. My respected fathers, forgive the plainness with which I speak, for I dare not withhold the message I am delivering, lest I should put into your mouths a reproach to cast out upon me at the day of judgment. With the grave under your feet, and the judgment seat in your eye, and the voice of death ringing in your ears, I announce to you, with all the affection and earnestness of my soul, *behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.*

My fathers and brethren in the ministry, while they are deeply sensible to the sorrows of this afflicted congregation, and to the still keener but more retired griefs of the domestic circle, do not forget that they also are bereaved of a venerable father. Without venturing to intrude myself, as your monitor, on this occasion, permit me to remind you that though this beloved servant of God will never again mingle in our christian and ministerial intercourse, though we shall no longer be

assisted by his counsels, and animated by his prayers, there is a holy eloquence in his example which has survived even the palsyng stroke of death. While we dwell with fond recollection upon the meekness and gentleness of his spirit, the prudence and fortitude with which he encountered trials, and in the many exalted ministerial traits which he exhibited, let us remember that fidelity to his memory demands that we engraft these sublime virtues upon our own characters. In the repeated inroads which death has recently made upon our number,\* God is calling us to renew our diligence in his service, and to be ready to give an account of our stewardship. We may already ask with emphasis, in reference to our own immediate circle, *the fathers where are they?* And it may be said, in regard to many of our congregations, that *instead of the fathers are the children.* My brethren, there is no time to be lost. What we do for the glory of our master, we must do quickly.— Which of us has his foot nearest the threshold of eternity, is known only to him who decides the destinies of men. But certain it is, that in a little while, at longest, the night of death will cast its gloomy shades around us all. God grant that the king of terrors may find no one of us slumbering

\* Within a little more than a year, the Rev. Mr. Storrs of Longmeadow, the Rev. Mr. Griswold of the parish of Feeding-hills in this town, and now the Rev. Doctor Lathrop, have died from our immediate neighborhood.

at his post. God grant that we may imitate the example, and share in the blessedness, of those who, having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever.

The numerous assembly, convened by this solemn providence, are impressively reminded of the importance of an immediate preparation for a dying hour. You see that the grave is insatiable in its demands, and that 'the tall, the wise, the reverend head, must lie as low as ours.' You are taught, moreover, that the gospel furnishes an antidote against the terrors of death, and that the prospects of the good man, even while the grave is opening to receive him, are gilded with glory. It is not indeed essential that you should, like the man whose death we lament, occupy an exalted station in society, and have your names emblazoned in the annals of genius and fame; but it is indispensable that you should have that holiness of heart and life, which was the crowning attribute of his character, and without which no man can see the Lord. It was a simple reliance on the atoning blood and perfect righteousness of Christ, and not the splendour of his genius or acquirements, which constituted his noblest distinction, and gave him a complete victory over the last enemy. It is the saint, and not the scholar, which we call upon you to imitate. The laurels, which decorate the brow of literary greatness, will ere long wither; the honours, which throng about the chair of authority, will be blown away; the pride of world-

ly opulence and grandeur will be brought down to the dust ; and the exploits of heroism will perish in the grave of oblivion ; but in the midst of this mighty wreck, the faith of the obscurest believer will survive and triumph, and his name be enrolled in the record of immortality. Imitate, therefore, the piety of this venerated christian, and though you may not be advanced to the same earthly distinction, you shall share with him the everlasting benefits of redemption, shall occupy thrones of unfading glory, and dwell in the light of the Lamb for ever.

And now what remains, but that we bid our friend and father, farewell ! We will cherish his memory with unabated interest, and the recollection of his distinguished excellence shall encourage and animate us on our journey to heaven.— Here in the sanctuary, we will remember the precious legacy of his instructions and example, and our hearts shall be cheered by the thought, that he is mingling in more perfect services, and engaged in sweeter communion. When two or three of us are met together, the remembrance of our departed father shall gladden our intercourse, and come to our souls, in all the tenderness of grateful affection. He has left us a bereaved and mourning people, but we will rejoice in the victory of his faith, and trust in the God of his salvation. *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof !* 24 JU 68