

*Mr. Cotton Parton,
from his friend
Sam'l Lathrop*

SERMON,

PREACHED MAY 15, 1821.

AT THE INTERMENT

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH LATHROP,

RELICT OF THE

REV. JOSEPH LATHROP, D. D.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, *R*
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN WEST SPRINGFIELD.

SPRINGFIELD:
A. G. TANNATT & CO. PRINTERS.
MDCCCXXI.

TO THE

FAMILY OF THE LATE

DOCTOR AND MRS. LATHROP,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,

PUBLISHED BY THEIR REQUEST,

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

AS AN EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY

IN THEIR REPEATED AFFLICTIONS,

AND A TESTIMONY OF DEEP VENERATION

FOR THE MEMORY OF THEIR DEPARTED PARENTS,

BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,

W. B. S.

FUNERAL SERMON.

JOB XIV. 10.

MAN DIETH AND WASTETH AWAY; YEA, MAN GIVETH UP THE GHOST,
AND WHERE IS HE ?

THE history of Job presents a striking example of the instability of worldly greatness. It shows us the same man, now rising to the loftiest temporal elevation, and now sinking into the deepest, darkest vale of adversity. There was a time when he was the greatest of all the men of the East. Surrounded by his numerous children, he lived in princely ease and magnificence, and all his worldly prospects seemed fair and bright. But by a train of dispensations, as singular as they were sad, this man, whose name had become associated with all that is venerable in rank and greatness, was, in a little while, reduced to a condition the most forlorn and wretched, that ever happens to mortals. He was stripped of his possessions: he was bereaved of his children: his body was afflicted with a most loathsome disease, and his nearest friends, instead of sympathising in his affliction, reproached him as a hypocrite. While the hand of God

was upon him with such awful pressure, he dwelt much upon the vanity of human life, and expressed his confidence in a future world of retribution. One of his reflections we have in the words of our text: *Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?*

I design, my brethren, to attempt an analysis of this passage, with some reference to the solemn dispensation which has called us together: and may the good spirit of God give such a direction to our meditations as deeply to impress this providence upon all our hearts.

1. The first thought which these words obviously suggest is, *the universal mortality of man*. Death is not a rare calamity, which befalls a few individuals only, but it happens indiscriminately to the whole race of men.

MAN dieth.

In the conditions of men in the present life, there is a great variety. With respect to fame, wealth, talents, learning and power, we find almost every gradation. One man is saluted by the shouts of public applause, while another is scarcely known beyond the contracted limits of his own neighborhood. Here is the votary of opulence, who revels at a luxurious table, and rolls in a gilded coach; and there is the poor despised beggar, who is fed from day to day, by the hand of charity. On the one hand, we find a penetrating, powerful intellect, and extensive acquirements in literature and science; on the other, a mind clouded with ignorance, and doomed to perpetual sterility. One is destined to occupy a throne, and wield a sceptre, another is confined to a dungeon, and loaded with chains. But notwithstanding these distinctions, and many more, exist in the present

life, the same thing happeneth alike to all in the end. No sagacity can elude, no power can resist, no sum can bribe away the king of terrors. He stalks, with as little ceremony, into the mansion of opulence, as the cottage of poverty, and is as likely to find his victim upon the bed of down, as upon the couch of straw. Oh ye, who are fascinated by the empty distinctions of the world, go to the grave, and learn what is their real value. What difference do you find between the master and the slave, except that the one occupies the more splendid coffin. Well may the beggar say unto the monarch, on finding him reduced to the same level with himself, "*Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become as one of us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee and the worms cover thee.*"

But though the seeds of mortality are sown alike in the constitution of every man, there is a great variety in the circumstances in which death makes his appearance. One is cut off by a lingering disease, another by a violent casualty.—Some are carried directly from the cradle to the grave, while others die in the vigour of manhood, and others still are arrested on the declivity of life. There is no time, nor place, nor circumstances, in which we can say we are secure from death. He may meet us in the walk of pleasure, or the circle of friendship: he may arrest us at home, or abroad, in the workshop, or in the field. He may come at noon-day, while we are mingling in the bustle of life, or he may steal upon us in the stillness of midnight, or he may surprize us in the sanctuary of God. And there is nothing in all the works of creation so insignificant but it may be

commissioned to perform the work of destruction. The fluttering of an insect, the motion of an atom, may lay in ruins a frame that seemed built to sustain the shocks of an age. A single mis-step in the path in which we have walked a thousand times in security, may be the means of terminating our mortal existence. Truly, *the way of man is not in himself. Verily every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity.*

In one way or another, then, does death extend his ravages through the whole family of man. *We tread on the ashes of generations who have gone before us, and in a little while, others will walk carelessly over the clods which our bodies have helped to form. The gates of the world of silence stand open day and night. Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.*

II. The passage under consideration exhibits an affecting view of our present mortal state. *Man dieth and WASTETH AWAY.* As the principles of death are incorporated in our constitution, there is no period till we reach the grave, in which their operation may be said to be suspended. Disease, and accident, and the whole tribe of natural evils, which assail us on our passage through the world, have all a direct or more remote influence in preparing our bodies for the grave. Our earthly house of this tabernacle is built of such frail materials, that every shock, which it receives, leaves it more liable to dissolution. Moreover there is a withering, palsy influence exerted by time, which no human energy is able to resist. The organs of sight and hearing become impaired by use; the blood which used to send a genial warmth through the system, becomes chilled by the

winter of age ; the limbs lose their activity and strength, and grow weary of performing their wonted office. It has been said, with great propriety, that we begin to die, as soon as we begin to live. The first breath we draw, may be considered the commencement of a process of decay and dissolution.

But while there is this general tendency to decay from the constitution of our frame, we are liable to have our strength more suddenly wasted by the hand of disease. How often has the infant languished away a momentary existence, and fallen into the sleep of death in a mother's arms ! How often has the blooming beauty, who had attracted the admiring gaze of multitudes, found the roses withering upon her cheeks, disease making its rapid and fatal inroads, the symptoms of death becoming more awfully decisive, till she has been consigned to the darkness and corruption of the grave ! Who of us has not seen the man who glori- ed in his strength, suddenly prostrated upon a sick bed, and in a few hours, exhibiting all the weakness and helplessness of an infant ? And can we look on the emaciated body, the withered, fallen countenance, the faded eye, without being deeply impressed with the sentiment contained in the text, that *man wasteth away*.

But this gloomy process of consumption does not terminate at death. It continues after the body is laid in the grave, and is not arrested, till it is reduced to the simple elements of which it was originally built. Ye votaries of fashion, who pride yourselves on personal charms, draw nigh to the grave, and learn a lesson of humility. After surveying the desolations of the tomb, and seeing how death mocks

- at beauty and accomplishments, return to the world and place a juster estimate upon the objects of human pursuit.

III. Our text instructs us with regard to the nature of the change, which takes place at death: *Man giveth up the ghost.*

Man is a compound being. He is made up of body and spirit, existing together in a mysterious union. This union, however, though necessary to the perfection of his nature, is not essential to his existence; and may be dissolved, without annihilating or impairing the living principle, which more properly constitutes the man. Accordingly we find that common usage, as well as the authority of scripture, justifies us in ascribing to the soul, after its separation from the body, the attributes of a person. *Man giveth up the ghost, says Job, and where is HE?*

The amount, then, of what we know respecting death is, that it is the *giving up of the ghost*. It is the disruption of that invisible, mysterious chord, which binds the soul and body together. The body ceases to be the organ of the soul's operations, and *returns to the dust as it was*; while the living principle, by which it was animated, *returns to God who gave it*.

It is an interesting reflection, that this great event, in which we are so deeply concerned, is entirely beyond our own control. Not only is it beyond the power of any man that liveth to deliver himself from the hand of the grave, but the time and manner of every man's death are entirely at the disposal of another. *No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit in the day of death.* Let the ties which bind him to the world be ever so tender, or let his reluctance to leave it be ever so strong, *there is no discharge in*

that war. He giveth up the ghost when and where his Maker is pleased to call for it.

IV. The text suggests a most solemn and interesting inquiry concerning the state of man after death : *And where is he ?*

This interrogation evidently implies that *he is no longer here.* The place which knew him, will know him no more. The body remains, but since the principle which animated it has fled, there is a process of corruption going forward, which renders it necessary that it should soon be hidden in the grave. The soul, that which peculiarly constitutes the man, has departed. If you approach the coffin of your friend, and speak to him, he hears you not ; for though the air still falls upon his ear as formerly, the friend, who used to hear and answer you, is not there. It was the spirit which gave animation and interest to that clay, around which your affections still linger ; but that spirit has fled. Perhaps you stood by his dying bed, and watched the decisive moment when he gave up the ghost. You could see the distorted look, the convulsive struggle, the glistening eye, but the flight of the spirit you could not trace. But though you saw not whither it went, the stiffened tongue, and the motionless clay, told your bleeding heart that your friend was gone.

The question, *where is he ?* also implies that *he still continues to exist.* The mode of his existence is indeed greatly changed. It is no longer that of a compound being, but of a disembodied spirit. Still, it is substantially the same being, that was lately an inhabitant of the earth, and that has now passed into the regions of invisible and spiritual existence. The same powers and faculties which he pos-

- sessed in the present world, he still retains, and probably exerts them with an activity increased beyond our conceptions. The habitation is indeed demolished ; but the inhabitant has only fled into other regions.

I am aware that there have been, and still are, men so fearlessly impious, as to maintain that our existence terminates at the grave ; and that death, instead of introducing the soul to a different state of being, plunges it into the dark gulf of annihilation. But need I say, Brethren, that such a sentiment could never find place, except in a mind voluntarily abandoned to error ;—that a hope so full of horror, could never spring up, unless it were in a heart, in which guilt had so long held her throne, as to make it revolt and shudder at the thought of retribution ! Every legitimate conclusion of reason is in favour of immortality.— But we have evidence more conclusive than any which reason can furnish ; for God himself has told us that we are made to be immortal : and let the infidel, who would deny our claim to this high destination, be reminded that he does it in the face of a declaration, as firm as the pillars of the universe.

There is another class, who, while they would revolt at the monstrous doctrine of annihilation, actually hold another, which, in the view of the consistent believer, partakes in no small degree of the horrors of the first : I refer to the notion that there is no state of separate conscious existence between death and the resurrection. All that we know of the nature and properties of the human soul, leads to the conclusion that it is *essentially* active, and of course contradicts the idea that it may slumber for ages with the body. But on a subject which is so much out of the range of

human investigation, it were rash to confide in the decisions of erring reason, when there is the sure word of prophecy to which we can resort. Surely Paul had no idea of this unconscious state, when he declared that he had *a desire to depart and be with Christ*, which was FAR BETTER than to *abide in the flesh*; and again, when he spake of *being absent from the body, and present with the Lord*. Stephen was not under the influence of this comfortless theology, when he breathed out his life so triumphantly, and commended his departing spirit into the hands of his Redeemer. And what language could more clearly convey the doctrine of a separate existence, than that in which our Saviour addressed the thief on the cross, "TO DAY shalt thou be with me in paradise." The full recompense, both of saints and sinners, will indeed be reserved to the final judgment; nevertheless, it is the current sentiment of scripture, that their allotments will be made known to them immediately after death, and they will enter, in some sense, upon their final retributions. Yes, Brethren, the doctrine of a separate existence, whether it be desirable to us or not, rests on the immoveable basis of Divine authority. Whether we can contemplate that state with joy, as the first stage of eternal felicity, or whether guilt takes the alarm, and clothes the prospect with visions of horror, rely upon it, we shall find it to be no delusion.

Again: The interrogation *where is he?* denotes that we cannot follow the soul to its particular destination. We know, in general, that *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*; that the wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment*, and the righteous *into life eternal*. But we know too little of the characters of our fellow men, to apply these great

principles, by which the retributions of eternity are to be regulated. We cannot look into the heart, and see how much purity of motive there may be, where the external deportment appears of an exceedingly doubtful character ; nor, on the other hand, can we decide how much wickedness may be concealed under a garb of outward sanctity and devotion. And there are many persons, in whom there appears to be such a mixture of good and bad, that we are unable to form even a secret conjecture concerning their probable destination. When such an one giveth up the ghost, with how much propriety may we pause over his remains, and utter the solemn interrogation, *where is he ?*

But notwithstanding our ignorance of the characters of our fellow-men forbids us to pronounce with certainty, in respect to their future allotments, there are still many cases, in which the evidence is so decisive, that we can hardly avoid forming an opinion. There are those, however small the number, who exemplify the religion of the gospel in their daily conversation. They let their light shine before men : their religion is a living, active principle. From our daily intercourse with them, we gain what we consider satisfactory evidence, that they are the sincere and faithful followers of Christ. When such persons die, we exclaim, almost involuntarily, "they have gone to rest : they have entered upon the reward of their labours : they have joined the general assembly and church of the first born ;" and if we ever ask, *where are they ?* we scarcely mean to express any thing more than our conviction that the joys which they experience, are such as it *has not entered the heart of man to conceive*. But though we have a right to all the consolation which is furnished by the triumphant deaths of our friends, it

is a subject upon which it becomes us to speak with caution, because it involves many things which are too deep for us. While we thank God for a comfortable hope that our friends have died in the faith of Jesus, let us beware of that excessive confidence, so unbecoming short sighted and erring creatures.

There are others, with respect to whom this interrogation must convey a far different meaning. We sometimes witness the departure of those, whose lives have been an uninterrupted scene of profligacy, and who exhibit, even on the bed of death, all the hardihood of obstinate impenitence.— Even in such cases, we have no right to anticipate the sentence of the Judge of all the earth. It is not for us to determine, in any given instance, that the same Being, who extended his compassion to the dying thief, may not, by some sovereign interposition, purify the soul of an habitual offender, in the very last moment of his probation. But though we dare not decide in a case for which omniscience alone is adequate, yet when we see one who has habitually disregarded or despised the gospel, breathing out his life, we can hardly forbear to follow his departing spirit with the anxious, agonizing inquiry, *where is he?*

Once more : This interrogation denotes *our general ignorance of the future world*. Job speaking of the state of the dead, calls it *a land of darkness and the shadow of death ; a land of darkness as darkness itself, without any order, and where the light is as darkness*.

There are some things concerning a future world, perhaps all which it would be for our advantage to know, which have been disclosed to us by Divine revelation.— We know, in general, that the same stroke which remands

the body to the dust, introduces the soul to a new state of existence ;—that this state will be happy or miserable, according to the character which we form in this time of probation ;—that in some distant period the body will be raised, moulded and fashioned anew, and restored to its union with the soul, to partake of its happiness or misery ;—and that the duration of our existence in another world will be eternal. On all these points which are of practical importance to us, God has been pleased to give us distinct information : but in many other respects, the future world is a land of darkness. *We see through a glass darkly and we know but in part.*

There are many inquiries, which the curiosity of man has suggested concerning a future state, which it would be rash for any mortal to attempt to answer. Such are the questions, in what manner we shall exist ;—how long the soul will continue in its separate state ;—how we shall receive and convey our notices of things without bodily organs ;—how far the body, after the resurrection, will retain its present form ;—where the place of happiness or misery will be fixed ;—in what degree departed souls are conversant with the things of the world ;—and what will be the full measure of the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked. Over these subjects it has pleased Infinite wisdom to draw an impenetrable veil. Let us not venture to approach them with a spirit of rash speculation, but be contented to remain in ignorance, until we arrive in that world of light, where we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.

1. On a review of this subject, we discover the unreasonableness and folly of human pride.

We have seen that, however we may be exalted with respect to our worldly condition, there is not an hour, but all the enjoyments of life are liable to be blown away, and our earthly house of this tabernacle beaten down, by the blast of death. Let the man who prides himself upon his wealth, approach the grave, and see how worthless his possessions appear, when viewed from the threshold of this dark habitation. Let the man who eagerly courts the honours of life, look into the glass of human mortality, and behold 'vanity' inscribed upon them all. Let the man of pleasure, whose appetite is his god, and who glories in his excess, say whether the thought does not sometimes obtrude, to chill his unhallowed joys, that he is only preparing a luxurious feast for worms. That narrow house is all that a Dives can claim; and that will not be denied to the beggar who lies at his gate. Brethren, let us learn to be humble; and if ever we indulge an opposite spirit, let us correct it, by going in our meditations to the grave. Let us look upon our bodies as already in a state of decay, and remember that *when a few more days are come*, they will be mouldering and mingling with the clods. Hearers, friends, think of this, and confess that *pride was not made for man*.

2. Another obvious reflection upon what has been said, is, that it is a most solemn thing to die. The change is great and momentous beyond expression. It is a change of state. It is a separation of the man, not only from the objects of worldly pursuit, not only from the friends who have loved him, and whom he has loved in return, but if I may be allowed the expression, it is a separation of the man from himself. It is a disunion of body and spirit. It is the giving up of the ghost. And yet, after all, there is much im-

plied in it, which we can only learn in our passage through the dark valley. By the partial light, therefore, which revelation has thrown upon this mighty change, as well as by the darkness, in which it is still, to a great degree, involved, let us be induced to give all diligence to prepare for it; remembering that it will be a change which will fill us with joy unspeakable and full of glory, or with despair and horror which are overwhelming.

3. How thankfully ought we to acknowledge the light which revelation has shed upon the prospects of the christian. Reason and observation teach us that we must die. But they conduct us only to the grave, and leave us there in suspense and wretchedness. The gospel, like an angel of mercy, takes us by the hand, and leads us through the dark caverns of the tomb, into the regions of everlasting day. It reveals to the christian a future world of immortality and glory; and assures him that even his body, which must moulder into dust, is destined to a glorious resurrection. It points to a day memorable in the annals of eternity, in which *the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, having their robes washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Disciple of Jesus, thou shalt die! Thou shalt lie down in the grave, and become the prey of corruption and worms. But fear not the change. You are not destined to sleep there forever. Age after age may roll away, and your ashes may still be there; but as God is true, and as Jesus is faithful, that grave will ere long give up its dead, and you will come forth, not in the livery of the tomb, but in the robes of immortality. Here, too, let the pious mourner find consolation and rest. When you commit the remains of your

christian friend to the tomb, remember that Jesus has inscribed upon its dark portals, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" When you behold that earthly tabernacle falling to ruins, remember that it will ere long be raised from the dust, with new beauty and more exquisite workmanship. Yes, you shall see that christian friend again; and ye shall hail each other as the happy inhabitants of heaven, and recommence an intercourse which shall be commensurate with the ages of eternity.

You are aware, my hearers, that the train of thought which has now been pursued, has been suggested by the mournful occasion which has called us together. The venerable woman, whose remains we are soon to commit to the earth, has sustained so important a relation to this society, and has occupied so high a place in your affections and confidence, that you would naturally expect, on the present occasion, some notice of her life and character. The few observations which I shall make, must needs be general, as they are predicated on a comparatively short acquaintance, and limited information.

Mrs. Lathrop was descended from a respectable family* of Hatfield, in this state. She was distinguished for the correctness of her manners, and the sobriety and purity of her character, from childhood. She made a profession of religion in early life, and was married to your late venerable minister, in the year 1759. In the sketch of his life which he has left, speaking of his marriage, he says, "This connection laid a foundation for much family comfort. She has been a great blessing in her place, and in all her relations."

* Her family name was Dwight.

The life of Mrs. Lathrop has been marked by few incidents fitted to give it a very distinctive complexion. In the year 1789, she was brought, by a violent hemorrhage, to the borders of the grave, and for a short time, it was supposed by her family and friends around her, that she had ceased to breathe. She was, however, unexpectedly restored to them, and continued, for many years, to adorn her various relations. Her husband, who now sleeps with the just, received her from this death-like slumber as some, who were present, have testified, with emotions of gratitude and joy, which he wanted power to express : while she, in the high enjoyment of religious consolation, expressed her regret that she had been brought back from the borders of heaven, to encounter again the infirmities and sins of mortality. From that period, though her constitution never recovered from the shock which it received, she enjoyed, with some occasional intermissions, comfortable health, till the distressing casualty which terminated her life.*

As there was little in the *life* of Mrs. Lathrop, to distinguish her greatly from other excellent women moving in the same sphere, so also her *character* was of a cast that was not likely to attract extensively the observation of the world. She possessed that good sense and correct judgment which enabled her to fill with propriety any station to which she was called ; but she was too retiring and unobtrusive, to do any thing merely with a view to personal distinction. Being unusually domestic in her feelings, she found her sweetest comforts in the bosom of her own family. Nevertheless, she was ready to administer to the sick and afflicted, and was never wanting in any office of sym-

* The fracture of a bone, in consequence of a fall on the ice.

pathy or kindness. The virtue of prudence, which was so eminently requisite in her station, she exhibited with uncommon advantage. She kept a watch at the door of her lips, and was rarely heard to utter an uncharitable or incautious word. She was courteous and hospitable in her intercourse with the world, and in her own family was a bright example of industry and good management. Her memory, as a wife, a mother, a neighbour, and a friend, is blessed.

Her christian character also, was distinguished by the same retiring disposition and manner, which marked, in a greater or less degree, her whole deportment. What gave to her piety its distinctive character, more than any thing else, was a steady adherence to duty. Her religion was not like the meteor of night, that confounds and dazzles for a moment, and then vanishes, but it was calm, and steady and active. It discovered itself in the vigilant fidelity with which she guarded the interests of her family, in the alacrity with which she engaged in every good work, in the scrupulous caution with which she avoided even the appearance of evil, in the fortitude with which she sustained the severest afflictions, and in the cheerful submission which she manifested in the prospect of death. Though she was little accustomed to speak of her own personal hopes and prospects, and seemed to regard these things as secrets of the soul too sacred to be indiscriminately disclosed to the world, she was ready, on proper occasions, to give a reason of the hope that was in her. In one of the longest conversations which I was permitted to hold with her during her last sickness, when her approaching dissolution became the immediate topic, she expressed her full confidence in the providence of God with respect to the result of her illness, and

was enabled to say that she could anticipate death without terror. She remarked with great apparent humility, that it had been her aim from early childhood to do her duty ; but that she knew she had come short in many respects, and was at best an unprofitable servant ; and that her hope rested not on her own righteousness, but on the righteousness and merits of her Redeemer. "I may be deceived," said she, "but here is my hope." The close of her life, as we might expect the close of such a life to be, was calm and tranquil, brightened by the steady hope of a glorious immortality. The same unwavering faith in the gospel of Christ, which had sustained her departed husband in similar circumstances, we have reason to believe, administered substantial support to her : and now that they are both gone, and we shall see them no more in the flesh, it is a delightful thought that these aged saints who were lately here, mingling with us in the duties and enjoyments of life, are probably united in singing the praises, and enjoying the raptures of heaven.

Ye bereaved and mourning children, I well know that the scenes of this day must fill your hearts with no common emotions. The gates of the grave had hardly closed upon the remains of your venerable father,* before they are unfolding again to receive the ashes of your greatly respected mother. In the mean time, other inroads have been made in different branches of your family,† and here and there, a little object which had lived only to awaken parental hopes, has dropped from the arms of maternal tender-

* Doctor Lathrop died, December 31st, 1820.

† An infant child of Hon. Samuel Lathrop, died on the 18th of March, and another of Solomon Lathrop Esq. on the 24th.

ness into an early grave. Say not, my friends, that your sorrow is greater than you can bear: it is the language of impatience, in which you have no right to indulge. But pause rather, while the arm of God is upon you, and while the air of death oppresses you, and send up a silent tribute of thanksgiving to heaven, for the various circumstances which are fitted to soften the anguish of your bereavement. You do not mourn for friends on whose memories you can dwell only with apprehension and regret, nor for those who have left no record of their virtues and usefulness behind them: but it is your privilege to mourn for those, for whom the world is ready to put on badges of mourning; whose lives have been a career of active and eminent usefulness; whose deaths have opened the fountains of public grief, and whose memories will be embalmed in the gratitude and affection of posterity. Be thankful, my friends, that these aged parents were continued to you so long, and that their example to the last, was so pure and bright. Be thankful that you have lived to minister to their latest wants, to receive their final benediction, and to close their eyes in death. Be thankful that a rich legacy of excellent instruction remains to you, and testify your regard for it by practically improving it to help you onward to glory. May you and your children, and other relatives, bow with reverence and submission before these chastisements of heaven; and if the desolation which has commenced in your family, should not now be arrested, may each succeeding removal be to a better world, and each succeeding bereavement be the occasion of securing rich blessings to your souls.

I think, my hearers, that this rapid succession of dispensations, by which your venerable minister and now his aged

relict have been removed from the world must bring all of us, for a little time, at least, into the posture of serious reflection. Ye aged fathers and mothers, whose heads are white with the snows of many winters, this providence speaks to you. It charges you to inquire of your consciences, whether you are prepared for that momentous change, which the wrinkles of age, and the decays of nature, admonish you, is close at hand. Ye sons and daughters of pleasure, this providence speaks to you. It inculcates the solemn lesson that the grave and eternity are realities, and thunders in your ear an awful rebuke for treating them as if they were idle dreams. Ye who are looking for many prosperous days, heedless of the dangers that throng the path of life, this providence speaks to you. It teaches you that life may be terminated by an unexpected casualty, and all its joys and hopes withered in an hour. Ye who disregard or despise the gospel of Christ, this providence speaks to you. It proclaims to you, that you reject the only legitimate source of consolation. It points you to that sad extremity to which you must soon be reduced in the catastrophe of death, and to that cup of unmingled bitterness which will be dealt out to you in the world of retribution. Mortals dying, and hastening to the judgment, there is a voice this afternoon from the tomb, which commands you all to **PAUSE AND PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD!**

2410 52