

A

FUNERAL SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE

REV. ROBT. DUNLAP, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PITTSBURGH;
AND DELIVERED IN THAT CHURCH, MARCH 28, 1847, ON
THE SABBATH MORNING FOLLOWING HIS DECEASE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN THE SAME PLACE, AT HIS INTERMENT, MARCH 23RD, 1847.

By Rev. E. P. SWIFT, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALLEGHENY.

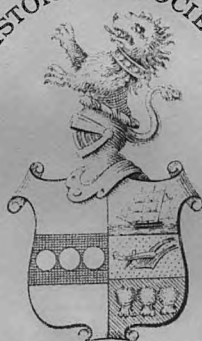
WITH AN APPENDIX.

PITTSBURGH:

LUKE LOOMIS, AGENT, BOOKSELLER, NO. 89, WOOD ST.
1847.

Biog.
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1847

THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



OF PENNSYLVANIA

CORRESPONDENCE, ETC.

At a meeting of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, on the 29th March, the following resolution was adopted: *Resolved*, That the Board of Trustees be appointed a committee to solicit of Dr. SWIFT copies of his Address and Sermon for publication; and also that the Obituary Notice by Doctor ELLIOTT be appended thereunto.

Rev. E. P. Swift, D. D.

PITTSBURGH, March 31, 1847.

RESPECTED SIR:

At a meeting of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, Pittsburgh, on the 29th inst. the Board of Trustees was appointed a Committee to tender the thanks of the Congregation to you, for your admirable Address on the 23d instant, over the remains of our beloved Pastor, and your appropriate Sermon, on the 28th instant, and to solicit copies of the same for publication.

In accordance with the above instructions, we tender our profound sense of obligation for your prompt and efficient service, under circumstances of such peculiar solemnity and bereavement to us, and respectfully request the additional favor, as a valuable memento of cherished relationship, assured that the community, with us, will be greatly obliged and benefitted.

HARVEY CHILDS,
JOHN T. LOGAN,
WALTER BRYANT,
J. D. WILLIAMS,
W. W. WILSON.

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ALLEGHENY, April 3, 1847.

Messrs. H. Childs, J. T. Logan, Walter Bryant, J. D. Williams and W. W. Wilson,  
Trustees of Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh.

GENTLEMEN:

The "Address" and "Sermon" to which you refer with so much kindness of expression, were, as you are aware, hastily prepared, and at a moment when all our minds were greatly oppressed by the sudden and unexpected removal, from the midst of us, of an excellent minister of Jesus Christ. I felt thankful that by your appointment, it became my privilege on that mournful occasion, to render my feeble tribute to the personal and ministerial worth of your deceased Pastor; and that I was allowed to mingle my sympathies with those of a congregation to which I am attached by the remembrances of a former "cherished relationship," when they were called to meet the hour of this afflictive bereavement.

You desire, through the publication of what was said on that occasion, to preserve something that may serve to recall to your own minds, and those of your children, in time to come, the life and doctrine, and labors, and early death, of a beloved Pastor; and also that may express to others, your sense of his worth. In this aspect of a purpose so laudable and affectionate, it would be unsuitable in me to hesitate in complying with the wishes which the congregation have so promptly expressed; and which you have in so kind and obliging a manner, communicated to me.

I am, Brethren, truly and sincerely, Yours, &c.

E. P. SWIFT

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E. P. SWIFT

FUNERAL ADDRESS.

THE Funeral of the REV. ROBERT DUNLAP was attended, on Tuesday, the 23d of March. The procession moved from his late residence, in Allegheny, to the church of which he had been Pastor, at 10 o'clock, A. M., where after singing a few touching stanzas, appropriate to the occasion, the following Address was delivered, and the services closed with prayer by the REV. DR. ELLIOTT and the benediction by the REV. DR. HERRON.

ADDRESS.

I rise, CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, to offer a few remarks on this occasion, under a feeling of great embarrassment; not so much, I would hope, from a sense of inability to meet your reasonable wishes as to what should be said, as from a deep concern lest I should mar rather than promote the high and holy purposes of Providence at this hour.

"*The Lord is in his holy temple,*" exclaimed the Prophet, "*and let all the earth keep silence before him.*" There are moments when the voice of the invisible *Jehovah*, in his holy courts and by his providential acts, appears to be so distinct and audible, that we feel that silence most properly becomes us and the solemn scenes amidst which he places us. If it has been the predetermined will of Heaven, as this event now shows, that the hand of death should at this time fall upon the Pastor of this particular congregation, I cannot resist the thought, that had I retained the relation to it which subsisted a few years ago, my place to-day would have been in that coffin, which now incloses my younger Brother. I am sorry that I do not feel as I should, so impressive a consideration, and this affords a further reason why I should wish to sit here in silent meditation, rather than to speak. What mean these *sable emblems* so unused to hang around this place, where the minister of Christ is accustomed to proclaim the words of eternal life? Do they here hang as a funeral token of respect and affection for him whose office and custom it has been, in this place, to stand before you as an ambassador of Christ—ah, then, they but too truthfully declare that your beloved Pastor is gone—"a standard-bearer" has fainted—a watchman of Israel has fallen in the midst of his way—yes, that your earthly shepherd shall never again re-ascend these steps—never again proclaim to you the messages of peace—no more lead your accustomed devotion in this house, or beseech you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. A Pastor, whose age and vigor seemed to promise you instruction and edification for many years, and after most of us who were his associates in the work should have gone down to the grave, has suddenly ended his work and fallen asleep in Jesus—and here his cold and forsaken body lies—*great* and appalling change indeed! On the sacred day when he had been used to meet you here, his spirit, it would seem, had found itself approaching the threshold of the upper temple, and called to pass its first Sabbath in heaven. On that sacred morn, in the dimness of whose early twilight he closed his eyes on all earthly things—his receding eye caught in another brightening horizon—a "morning without clouds"—a morning without an end—a dawn which mortal vision is too feeble to descry. Happy—honored transition—thrice blessed Sabbath. And now, in respect to all that is visible and tangible to mortals, he enters for the *last time* this house of God—this theatre of his ministrations—to preach his final sermon—his farewell discourse here in the impressive silence of death—solemn preaching this. Yes, our brother DUNLAP, thou

art silent—gone indeed! O speak *once more* ere thou art borne away to the tomb to be seen here no more—remind this vast assembly that each attendant is hastening to the grave—hastening all of us to stand as disembodied and accountable spirits before the Lord of life and death—once more beseech these ranks of immortal beings just behind thee, near the crossings of Jordan, to be reconciled to God—once more instruct us as the followers of Christ, to arise and trim our lamps! But, ah, what am I saying—shall we forget that it requires a voice louder than that of death to wake the valley of bones from spiritual slumber? Shall we forget even now the impotence of mortal man, even if he were risen from the dead to “persuade” us to believe and act aright?

But the inquiry returns, what mean these mourning badges? Are they spread, as it were, before the omniscient eye of Him—the mighty and awful God of Israel, to whose service this edifice is devoted in token of a response to his solemn voice—a recognition of his high and holy visitation? Do they seem to say to us, it is no fortuitous event unguided by his invisible hand, which has led you at this unusual hour into these sacred courts to behold a standard-bearer fallen in the midst of his strength. No—here is the *voice of God* falling in tones of impressive warning upon the slumbering conscience—here are the footsteps of the great Invisible as he steps into the ranks of the ministry and suddenly closes the lips of one who labored at their side—as he enters the sanctuary and cuts down the earthly shepherd in the midst of his days and his usefulness. Man adventures not to ask “the reason why?”—nor God the reason gives. “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty—just and true are all his ways. “The Lord reigneth.” “Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” His counsel doth stand and he will do all his pleasure: and to us it belongs humbly to say, Though he slay us yet will we trust in him?

By these you, my brethren of this congregation, recognize before his throne the fact that he has taken from you your *beloved Pastor*; and he has gone to render up his commission as a watchman of Zion—to give in his last account to God, and O what would have become of him at this hour were it not for the finished righteousness of Christ. He has gone up to the throne of judgment, and will you not go by special prayer to the throne of grace asking that this solemn visitation may be sanctified, and that you may have in remembrance the words which his servant hath spoken unto you while he was yet with you. If any of you have continued unprofitable, unconverted and unsanctified under his ministrations he has gone to be a “*swift witness*” against you. If to others of you his ministry has proved a blessing, as you remember how he has broken to you the bread of life; and that in the prayer meeting, beside the bed of sickness and in the house of mourning you will see his face no more, let his removal give a fresh impulse to your piety. O be not stupid and unaffected in such an hour as this, when God has made your sanctuary a spectacle of uncommon interest, as it were to heaven as well as earth. Reflect upon the arousing fact that your Pastor has addressed to you his last warnings—his last exhortations and words of christian counsel, and that as to his ministry it only now remains that you go to meet him at the bar of God. These badges of mourning enshroud the *sacred desk*, and they thus declare in silent impressiveness that the ministers of Christ must die—and die often in the youth and maturity of their days. A stewardship, eventful and solemn in its aspects at all times, seems doubly so when we his survivors in our broken rank gather round his bier. The excellent ministers of the sanctuary here present, these fathers and brethren, while they deplore the early removal of an esteemed fellow servant, doubtless feel as though they heard afresh from the lips of their Master the announcement that, though the church lives, the gospel survives—the Mediator lives forever more, his ministers must die. I seem to hear it as from each devoted heart here present, let us be more watchful, more prayerful, more solicitous and laborious to promote the glory of God, seeing we know not the day nor the hour when the “Son of Man cometh.” Solemn yet cheering reflections gather

from the closing hours of the faithful watchman. What blessings—what consolations—what rewards await those who are found walking in the footsteps of their glorious leader!

Of the life and ministry and death of our departed brother—his ability and activity and diligence and effectiveness as a Minister and a Pastor—his industry in the improvement of his talents and his amiable manners, I must not detain you now to say a word. Nor is it needful. His name will long be dear to the recollections of you all. Nor ought I perhaps now in the depth and freshness of conjugal, fraternal and filial sorrow to allude even for purposes of consolation to those domestic relations which death has dissolved, or to say how great to the bereaved partner and her fatherless children is the loss of one who loved them much, and so truly deserved their affection. There is not I am sure in this large assembly a single heart which does not participate in the grief which God has called them to experience. Yes, they mourn in the bosom of friends, ready to mingle their tears with those who stood nearest to our deceased brother, and to offer prayer to God continually that he may graciously take these dear children, who will often feel that they need a father's care, under his special guidance and protection, while to her from whom he has taken the husband of her youth, he may mercifully apply the interrogation, "Is not the eternal God thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms?" Will he who has removed the Pastor, the husband and the father, forget the stricken flock—the desolated heart and home of her and the little ones with whose welfare the tenderest anxieties of his deceased servant were identified? Will Jesus leave them comfortless who in the hour of bereaved anguish turn their weeping eyes to him? And is there not alleviation in the reflection that the highest, noblest and holiest wishes which you could have entertained for him whom you so tenderly loved have we trust been fulfilled in the exchange of worlds?

This solemn occasion reminds us that the true and faithful ministers of Christ are ambassadors of God to men—watchmen of the spiritual Jerusalem—official intercessors for their people with Christ, and under-shepherds of his ransomed flock—the common counsellors and friends of all. It is therefore fit that these children of the Sabbath Schools of the church—these lambs of the fold of God, whom this his departed servant has by prayer and the application of the baptismal water, consecrated to Christ—should be permitted to gather round the bier of their friend and spiritual father, and weep with others in the contemplation of their loss.

The death of an active and devoted minister of the New Testament is moreover a public loss to the community in which he dwells. The number of such ministers is always too few; and small as may be the measure of their usefulness in their own eyes, and small as it is in comparison to the work to be done, it is yet true that great in fact is the amount of good which one such devoted Pastor may effect in the space of a few industrious years. Let us all feel then, my fellow Christians, while thus fulfilling the last offices of respect to the cold and tenantless remains of this esteemed Brother, that our whole Christian community is called to share in the grief of his immediate relations, and the congregation over which he presided. He bid fair to be increasingly useful, not only to the church of which he was a minister, but to the cause of piety and morality, generally. His spiritual fruitfulness grew with his years, and his consecration brightened as he advanced. But his earthly labors have ended in the midst of the day; and our solace is, that while those who depart this life, having truly served the *kingdom of Christ*, do enter into the "joy of their Lord," the *ark of God*, as it here abides amidst the storms and trials of the wilderness, is guarded by an eye that never slumbers; and is defended by a hand that never tires. It is related of both the officers and private soldiers in the army of Napoleon, that when in the fiercest engagement, and the bloodiest battles, one and another of the standard-bearers, and ranks of the combatants were cut down, the shattered troops rushed forward into the hottest of the conflict and breasted the roar of death and destruction, with unwavering courage and determination: and the victory was won, though few of them remained to witness the tri-

umph. So in this latter respect, it must be with the servants of God now living, as to the final spread and triumphs of the gospel in the conversion of the world: and God grant that such an invigorated and determinate spirit may animate every christian heart in this assembly as we now convey our brother to his burial. He has early fallen in a glorious enterprise; but we trust with all Christ's approved and faithful servants, he lives to witness from heaven; and rejoice in all the movements "*of the sacramental host of God*" in carrying forward the conquests of the cross. In this sacred desk, has our deceased Brother often announced to many of you, that death often comes *suddenly*; and that it breaks in upon all the ordinary calculations of time and age; and upon all the schemes of worldly pursuit. Now his own death in the noon-tide of the day, has become an illustration of what he taught. Hard is it for mortals, even for men of thought and experience, to believe this familiar truth in real and practical earnestness? With such an exemplification, and on such an occasion, my friends, be no longer *incredulous*, but let the voice of heaven awaken every mind to fresh consideration; and let us all redouble our diligence that we may not live in vain, or die uninterested in the glorious immunity: "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection over whom the second death hath no power.*"

FUNERAL SERMON.

LUKE 12 : 43—"Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

ON last Sabbath morning, at half past seven o'clock, your late *Pastor*, the Rev. ROBERT DUNLAP, realized that event which our Savior intended by the "*Coming of the Lord*." The close of his life, as to bodily suffering, was remarkably calm and easy; and the tenor of his christian character and deportment was such as not to leave the shadow of a doubt on probably a single mind, that he was a good man, and was found such as our Lord describes in the text. It was a happy coincidence, that on his last Sabbath with you, he was called to administer to you, and to partake with you of the memorials of the dying love of Christ. In solemn and mournful succession, many of you, during the week, have repaired to his late dwelling and mingled your tears over his faded and breathless tabernacle; and in company with many of your fellow citizens, you subsequently followed him to the grave. It now becomes your duty, when the shock of astonishment and grief has given place to solemn thoughtfulness, to contemplate the uses to which this dispensation may be applied.

The words of the text are a part of the parable in which the conduct of the wise is contrasted with that of the unfaithful steward; and the harmony of this parable with that of the ten virgins, leads us to the conclusion that our Lord drew his similitude from the customs of the Hebrews at their weddings, or the celebration of their nuptial feasts. These were held at night, and often the guests continued their convivialities till a late hour. It was the duty of the servants of these respective guests, and particularly of those to whom the care of the mansion was entrusted, to sit up—keep the lights burning, and have refreshments in readiness when the company might return.

The fact that this absence occurred in the night, when they would most naturally seek repose, and that the precise time of return, within some hours, was very uncertain, might lead to the relaxation of this vigilance so that they would be surprised by an unexpected arrival; or the principal servants finding the mansion and all its contents in their custody, might if negligent, resolve to turn it into an occasion of riotous and extravagant festivity, saying "the Lord will delay his coming," and begin to beat his fellow servants. But instead of this, they were required to have their long

robes tucked and girded up, their lamps burning and their torches ready at once to go out and meet him. This comprehends a faithful execution of our trust as to the opportunities and talents which Christ has given us;—an actual preparation to serve him and to meet him at any hour of the night of life; an undying apprehension of his coming: a being divested of all impediments and unfitnesses to meet him on his coming; having the light of outward profession and inward faith, love and grace trimmed and burning. Those who are found wholly destitute of these, when he thus suddenly arrives, are to be deprived of all their privileges, and to be cut in pieces as unfaithful persons, wholly unworthy of any trust. There are times in the history of the church and of christian communities, when even the people of God, as if by common consent, take very light and easy conceptions of this watchful and vigilant fidelity. The standard of personal piety sinks low—the solemn scenes of futurity are forgotten, and superficial and accommodating ideas of the requisites to salvation are promulgated.

But it is a thrilling fact, that lax impressions, even though they overspread the whole church, cannot alter the immutable standard of the Most High, or prevent the dreadful consequences to men, individually, of being found unprepared for the “coming of Christ.” The possession of a living faith in him, and a conscientious performance of duty in the several relations and stations in which he has placed us in life, is requisite, that however, or whenever he may come, he may not find us unemployed or unprepared to receive his summons and render our final account. Thus the condition of our hearts, and the character of our lives is not to be determined by the standard of any particular age, or of any community of men. The *authoritative declaration of Jesus Christ* is to decide our readiness or unreadiness to pass the final test. The precept of Christ is *to be ready* at any time to leave this world and meet your God. Bear his image; be invested with his righteousness; abide in his truth: be united to his Son—live near to him by faith, obedience, and prayer: and thus doing, you will not be surprised by his coming “as a thief in the night,” however soon or suddenly he may arrive. The Savior’s words naturally lead us to consider,

- I. *The coming of the Lord in its objects and results.*
- II. *The nature of that continued watchfulness and vigilance and fidelity which is comprised in a preparation for it.*
- III. *The danger of being found wanting in this; and*
- IV. *The blessedness which is then realized by the faithful servant of Christ.* And

I. The coming of the Lord is an event of the profoundest interest, as it dissolves for a time the union of soul and body; and issues all the trials, uncertainties and probationary responsibilities of man as the servant of

God. The first funeral which took place on earth, if it proved a spectacle of solemn interest to other worlds, would not fail to declare by its mournful circumstances, not only that this was a race among whom death must reign as "sin abounded," but one among whom the close of a life thus reprieved and spared through the mediation of the Son of God, would be momentous indeed. It would close a most responsible opportunity and introduce a surprising and lasting change. "As the tree falls, so it shall lie;" and this brief trial issues in endless life or irremediable death. The representations of Scripture sustain this thought; they assure us that when the faithful believer expires, great and mighty angels, with bosoms burning with inborn love to God, and redeemed men, are sent down with songs of unutterable praise from the immediate presence of the Most High, to this distant part of the universe, to convey with inconceivable love and majesty the disembodied spirit of the christian, the instant death has made him perfect in holiness, up to Abraham's bosom. This moment he is a sinner and without Christ—he might yet be lost; in the next he breathes his last, and in the twinkling of an eye, the illustrious convoy, in shining robes, surround and bear him away in triumph to the Savior's throne. So on the other hand, in the solemn conception of Isaiah, the guilty shades of departed men, and the spectred spirits of fallen angels are seen to rouse up and meet the impenitent sinner—the new victim of perdition as his last probationary moments die away, saying to him in malignant exultation, down low as we thou art brought in thy pride, though in thy vain hopes, and under the offers of the gospel thou didst say, I will mount up at death above the morning stars of God. O how changed are human beings at *that hour*, when the christian's trials end, and the sinner's probation closes! The reason is obvious. In this life, his relations to the moral kingdom of God;—the great objects of faith and redemption;—the duties which he owes to God;—the world and himself, have been distinctly revealed; and their reasons and motives presented to him: the claims of the invisible God have been set forth as supreme and unalterable;—the objects of eternity in their certainty, importance and grandeur, have challenged the implicit faith of his understanding, and the governing influence of his heart and life. The only Redeemer of the world with the nature and necessity of the great christian remedy provided for ruined men, applicable to himself and his cotemporaries, has been opened to his contemplation; and thus the *law* and the *cross*—the justice and the mercy of heaven, have been set before him. The necessity of immediately embracing these provisions; of repairing to and resting upon the Rock of Ages: of enlisting in the service of Christ—and subsequently fulfilling the duties of life—of "*running the race set before him*"—of "*watching unto prayer*," and "*being faithful unto death*."

is thus clearly and earnestly inculcated. This near and certain approach of Christ to call men out of life; to make full and impartial adjudication of all they have done; to end their probationary state, and immediately recompense them accordingly, is the sufficient information and the powerful motive to regulate their purposes and actions in all the temptations of life; enforced as both are more or less by the voices of Providence and the impulses of the Holy Spirit. Death in its issue comes to all neglectors in a flame of fire; and this fact with all the dreadful threatenings of the law must constrain men *in time* to throw themselves as penitent prodigals into the arms of a forgiving God: while the inexhaustible richness, gains and blessings of the Redeemer's salvation must impel them to be ever waiting for his coming. Man must not on any pretext refuse to listen to the wisdom and authority of heaven; he must not shrink from what he may deem the costliest sacrifices—the most painful exertions in view of responsibilities so vast, and a prize so glorious. While he yet has a hold upon these mortal shores, in the focus as it were of christian influence and gospel motives, he must awake to the conviction that the best days, the most precious opportunities and blessings will soon turn into the heaviest curses, if steadily neglected. While he loiters, lingers and hesitates, the moments fly apace; the hours of the day recede, and the "*night of death in which no man can work*" is hastening on. By the mercy and grace of God, his immortal spirit is like the ship anchored for a season in the verge of a desired haven, when she should at once spread all her sails and take the favored moment to complete an auspicious voyage. If duty is delayed till the cable is suddenly sundered by death, the soul driven backward, finds in the voyage of its endless being, no harbor, no anchorage, no shelter from the driving storm of misery and wrath. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." We proceed to consider,

II. The nature of that continued watchfulness, vigilance and fidelity which is comprised in a preparation for it. This inquiry is most important, since the assurance, "blessed is that servant," implies that one of an opposite character is condemned. The expression "*shall find so doing*" appears most naturally to indicate something which has distinguished the servant *on* or *before* his arrival, and not something which is done *after* the indications of his coming have been actually given. You all see the obvious meaning of such a sentiment as this, and we remark

1. That the vigilant fidelity here spoken of, is not one which is supposed to be *realized in a death bed repentance* or in *dying preparations*. It does not *necessarily* mean that such a thing is in all cases impossible, but it offers in anticipation no encouragement that it can occur. Its tendency is beforehand to sweep away the foundations of two classes of persons:

first, of those professing christians who habitually leave some important questions as to the soundness of their conversion, and their real conscientiousness to be settled by sick-bed preparations; and secondly, those who now postpone their salvation in the idea of making amends in the approaches of the close of life. Our Lord manifestly intended to guard against all such calculations. An eminent physician, not long since, observed to me that he had known many such preparations and repentances, but he scarcely knew any which were satisfactory. Even *this possibility* is in the ordinary course of things likely to be cut off. It is known to you that as to our deceased Brother, it pleased the Lord in his holy and sovereign pleasure, to suffer the disease, for almost the whole course of his illness, to deprive him of the power of any thing like calm thought—connected reflection; so that he had probably no definite idea of the great change to which he was approaching. There were indeed brief sentences and broken expressions which indicated the struggles of his piety to throw off the oppressions of disease, and of his soul to breathe out its unimpaired aspirations to Christ. "I am sorry," he would say, "that I cannot overcome this restlessness: I strive to do it: I wish to be calm." "I do not murmur at the dealings of my heavenly father,—I know that he is good, and does all things right." "I wish to be perfectly submissive to his will—whatever it may be; and repose myself upon his grace." Mournful, yet precious indications, these of a heavenly instinct strong in the delirium of death.

To have the seat and function of reason disordered by sickness, implies no crime. It is the partial, or total cessation of accountability; and the moral character of the person stands just where it did before the moral energies were suspended. Nor does it always imply a great calamity. Great and good men have sometimes desired what might practically amount to nearly the same thing—the *instant termination* of human life. "May my taper be blown out in the sanctuary," said the devoted NATHANIEL TAYLOR, "and may I pass *in an instant* from serving the church militant here on earth, to living with the church triumphant in heaven." Howe, that man, who for intellectual, moral and spiritual sublimity of character, was unrivalled in his day, when on his death-bed, said to his partner, "I think I love you as well as it is fit for one creature to love another, yet if it were put to my choice to live several years longer, or to die this moment, I should choose the latter." The calamity of being incapable of attending to any thing which requires the full exercise of reason, is *very great* when one may be in a situation where his *safety*, his *life*, and even his *eternal salvation* may be endangered, if not destroyed in consequence. If it should be said "it is hard for one unprepared to die to experience such a loss," it is enough to say in reply, that God has taught all men to consider nothing as

more probable than that sickness may produce more or less unfitness for safe, correct and difficult mental exercises, and it would hardly be sickness without this. You and I have just as much right to throw ourselves into the most imminent peril of our life, and then expect God to help us out, as we have to defer a preparation for death to a sick-bed or an uncertain futurity. Our duty is to consider that the Savior has faithfully forewarned us against this danger; and to tempt God by doing it, is in fact, the most likely way to bring about this very result. The conversion of the heart to God, is an act of the understanding as well as of the affections; and in nothing is there more need of the full and proper exercise of reason. I pretend not to be the interpreter of the secret ends and purposes of divine Providence, but I feel solemnly called to dwell upon this distinct train of thought, from the fact that I cannot divest my mind of the conviction, that it has for ministers—students of theology—christians generally; and most of all, for *unconverted persons* in our congregations—a particular and instructive lesson, in the circumstances of the sickness and death of our departed Brother. Perhaps there are moral, church-going, virtuous persons among the young and middle-aged in our churches; and perhaps in this congregation, as to whom God saw that nothing short of thus taking a faithful servant out of the pulpit and out of the world without the power of connected reflection for the several days of his last sickness, would convince them of the fearful precipice on which they stand. Viewed simply as a man, like yourselves, but as one who took a deep interest in your welfare, it becomes you to consider how great is that escape which he has made. With a moral character, devoid of any stain, how easily might he have passed along without any deep and abiding impressions of religion, flattering himself that he had a well-meaning determination as to the issue, and time sufficient to attend to it. Imagine, that just in the time and circumstances which now occur, he had been taken sick, with no thought that a man so young and healthy was about to die; conceive that he should retain these impressions until the moment when connected thought and reflection left him to return no more? What then would have been his distressing condition? and yet the agency of God in this case, is simply leaving the laws of our physical nature to their established action. *Come near, then, you who know not God—men of reflection—professional men—*come near and look on the state of your Brother, in the walks of public duty, as he lies moaning, sighing and tossing upon the bed of death? Shall he not awake to a consciousness, enabling him to adjust his affairs for death? permitting him to send some message to his people to be told when he is gone? Shall not *he* who has soothed the hours of affliction; who has spoken the tender words of consolation to others, be enabled to take the companion of his bosom, the

wife of his tender affections, by the hand, and speak in the fullness of his love, some words of consolation and counsel? Shall he not be able like an ancient and venerable dying servant of God, to lay his cold hand upon these children, which God hath given, and say "*The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless*" them when I, their father, am no more? But all this a dying pastor, husband and father may omit to do; yet it is not material if we know that it was in his heart to do so, had God permitted. But shall not reason return so as to enable him fully to see and apprehend the solemn crisis,—to enable him in the calm, distinct and profound contemplation of eternity, to say "*Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*" But no! the gleams of rationality flit in disturbed images around his receding spirit; and it has now become too late to speak. O ye people, destitute of faith, repentance, and that holiness without which no man can see the Lord, come near and gaze upon this affecting scene! *Do you believe the Bible?* do you accredit the word of God? here then is an *immortal spirit* in the last act of exchanging worlds, in one brief moment to take a stamp, which eternity cannot alter! There it is; and the last fragment of its probationary span is going without an hour of conscious reflection. Where now is your fancied death-bed preparation? your boasting of to-morrow? Does not this striking dispensation seem to say to you, that what you are when final sickness takes hold of you, that you will be forever more? Whether young or old, that event, according to the ordinary course of things, may come upon you at any hour. *Conscience now sleeps*; but if you permit it to sleep, what untold horrors may gather around you the next step you take in life? The full and offered redemption of the cross is before you this hour; and in the next, disease strikes the organs of the brain, and you are gone forever! So delicate indeed is this function, that often by the slightest touches of inflammation, the patient may sink into the deepest sensations and expressions of contrition and humility; or rise into the highest ecstasies of joy and praise, where the heart has no moral emotions whatever. Is this the readiness for which the mercy of God detains us on these mortal shores?

2. I remark that this vigilance and watchfulness which Christ requires, must be formed in a *real and sound conversion to God*, and not in a false or superficial one. All care and distress of mind; the virtues of a moral life; christian profession and circumspection are vain and futile without this. Such a readiness, I need hardly say, belongs to none of our race, in their original and actual condition. They are unfit to die in safety, because they are guilty and condemned by the justice of God; and must be justified and pardoned ere they are called to stand in judgment, and pass the solemn test. In addition to this, they are unholy and impure, and could, without renewing and sanctifying grace, find no rest or enjoyment in heaven, if they

were admitted to it. All idea of preparation and christian watchfulness must commence, therefore, in a saving *change of heart*, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a real justification through faith, "in the imputed righteousness of Christ." Our Lord said, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and again, "except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." The wide, eternal separation which takes place between the justified and believing, and all others at the coming of Christ, is not greater than is the difference which this change produces on the heart and life. Every mind unblessed with this, is "earthly" and "sensual," seeking in some form, its happiness in this world; living without God. In regeneration, however, the heart receives the divine image; and its biases, its tastes, its affections and its final end, receive altogether a new direction. The resolution—the surrender which follows must be *free, cordial and affectionate* in itself; it must be *deliberate, entire and perpetual*. We must count the cost; consider well the claims of our Master; and the more we contemplate our position, the more full and determined will be our choice. The consecration and the purpose to serve him in every condition of life, must be unreserved and full.

This is an article of great importance. The aged ministers of our body in these latter years, have been heard to deplore the fact, that there was not commonly apparent in the examination of applicants for church membership, and candidates for the ministry, those deep traces of the work of the SPIRIT which seemed to exist in former times. Let young ministers, and probationers for the holy ministry, solemnly consider how deplorable their situation would be, if they went forth without the "oil of grace" in the "lamp" of their ministerial profession. Let them remember that God may suddenly arrest them in an unguarded moment, without a lucid interval to invite self-scrutinizing and dying thoughts; and then what is the condition of the lost minister, the presumptuous envoy of God, himself a traitor to the cross?

3. But we must not mistake a *mere introduction* into the service of Christ, however genuine it be, for that continued *watchfulness* and *holy vigilance* which is implied, in not only an *habitual*, but an *actual preparation* for the coming of Christ. The incipient desires and resolutions kindled in our hearts, must be carried out in a life of steady and growing consecration. It is the office of a true and active faith, to give to the soul a living embodiment, as it were, an ever present image of invisible things in their peerless magnificence, and their near proximity. He whose heart embraces this divine exhibition of unseen realities, and who endeavors daily to live, and act, and pray and toil—to lie down, and rise up under the true and steady impression of *this*, will realize the intentions of Christ

This association of God and eternity, and the terrors of that near and vast invisible world, with all the pursuits of the present hour, will assimilate every thing which this tone of moral feeling does not reject into a likeness to itself. Study, or business, or merchandise, when pursued by such a mind, will at once exist in its thoughts as a thing limited, and guided, and stamped with this impress; and take its place just where Paul would have fixed it. This conception of himself, as abiding near the Savior, whom he loves; and of the promised land which awaits him; and of the great cloud of witnesses, whose eyes are upon him; assists him to resist temptation, and fortifies his determinations to virtue, duty and holiness; alleviates the toils, griefs and self-denials of life, and enables him to move on in a calm, guileless and holy cheerfulness to fulfill all his duty, and to meet all his responsibilities in a firm reliance upon Christ for all help. There is in his experience, a power in christianity; a refreshing in sitting at the foot of the cross; an efficacy in supplication, and a sweetness in the gospel and in the symbols of the dying love of Christ, of which his heart takes hold; and applies to the daily mortification of sin and the habitual invigoration of his love to Christ and his sense of eternal things. It is in vain to say that this cannot be attained, or that much less than this will answer. Become conscious to yourself that there are any duties which you as a christian are unwilling to discharge—any sins which you do not faithfully endeavor to subdue, or any contemplation of Christ and heaven which affords you no pleasure, and it is obvious that your hope of heaven is not one which you can make refreshing in a trying hour. You know that there must be a great change before you can expect that gracious look of God which is sufficient in one glance to fill the whole earth with happiness and glory.

This vigilance respects the *thoughts*—the tone of the *heart*—our *desires* and *affections*, as well as the actions of the outward life. The inward experience of the power of truth thus promotes a steady, active growing principle of obedience to the will of God, as that will is expressed in his law and in the example of Christ. It comprises a wise and faithful application of our *time*, our *faculties* and our *exertions*, to the great objects of a holy and useful life, with that purity of intention, sincerity of endeavor and constancy of purpose, which love to Christ, habits of meditation, self-scrutiny, earnest prayer; vivid impressions of life's responsibilities, and the solemn grandeur of its issue are calculated to produce. The *will of God*, as respects the *duties* which we owe to *Him* and to our fellow men—the church and the world, which appertain to the varied relations, stations, gifts and talents, and which he has assigned to us, we must carefully follow. "You serve a Master," our Lord would seem to say, "who requires a bold and manly perseverance in the course of duty; and who may take you by surprise, if you slumber upon your post."

Take then the plain and open path of evangelical faith and practice, and follow it with patient and untiring footsteps. While to-day you are sought to be decoyed by the ease and comfort and endearments of life, and to-morrow learn, by bitter experience, how deep and multiplied are the sorrows of human nature, in each and every earthly condition, stand up to the efforts and even, if need be, to the agonies of the conflict, growing in love to Christ, in the fellowship of his Spirit, in a more exact obedience to every duty, and in the mature fruits of every grace of the gospel. You must subject your minds to the severities of self-denial, when you find they have lost the tone of christianity. If your heart has become covetous, you must give away; if it seems inflated by pride, you must lay aside that in which it glories: and if it becomes fond of frivolous company, or hurtful occupation, you must betake yourself to the Bible and to prayer. These I mention as a few specimens of that fidelity to God and your own soul which Christ requires, and which, if you neglect, his coming will take you by surprise.

4. This vigilant fidelity—this readiness for the coming of the Lord—consists in a *felt need of the power of Christ* to strengthen and fortify us in life, and his merits to justify and save in death. The great fundamental doctrines of christianity must reign, in their living harmony, in the mind of the faithful servant of God. He must repose wholly upon Christ, and while he aims to possess a soul filled with exalted piety, established in the uprightness, benevolence and love which is implied in communion with the throne of God, he must look to the continued agency of the *Great Sanctifier*, to work effectually in him *to will and to do*. He will then be sensible, that he might as well think to tie himself with a rope of sand, as to bind his conscience and his heart by any thing less than the authority of Christ and the gracious enforcements of the *Holy Spirit*.

It may be said that we often see christians, who appear to have no such readiness, brighten up and expire in the clearness of christian hope and faith. You should rather say, so it appears to us; but if we forsake the standard of God, for the appearances of mortals, they will often lead us wherever we choose to go. *Be not deceived*. Believe the testimony of Christ. We know nothing of what happens behind the curtain; but we are sure it accords exactly with what is here declared. Depart from this, and he who rests his all for eternity in the absolution of a priest, may be as safe as you. Let us consider,

III. The *danger of being found wanting* in this vigilance. To maintain such a practice and to be thus ready, at any and at all times, for the coming of Christ, is represented by our Savior as extremely difficult, and therefore demanding the utmost exertion.

1. This peril is found in the fact, that this event, as to its *time* and *circumstances*, the *Father keeps* in his own hand. The certain prospect of being called to render up our last account, at any specified and given time, would have a natural tendency to concentrate our thoughts and meditations, and to make us wakeful and active at that *particular period*—at that *eventful juncture* in the history of our existence. But instead of such an anticipated definite period, the hour of his coming is *wrapped up in profound uncertainty*. This was the condition of the servant mentioned in the parable. His master had left him to watch the dwelling—to have the lights burning when he should come—to make ready for his entertainment—and to stand prepared the moment he knocked to open the door and receive him. Yet the fact in the case is this: the return itself will for the most part occur when the servant is not expecting it. If it finds him in the attitude mentioned, it is well—happy is that servant; but if not, he is immediately punished with death. The *extreme uncertainty*, as to the time of the Master's coming, most manifestly intended by God to keep up here on earth an unslumbering vigilance for eternity, is apt to become the *occasion* of almost perpetual inattention. To question this truth with the universal experience of all departed time and our own observation, and I may add our own consciousness to ourselves, is utterly impossible. Christ has left in the charge of all an awfully important *interest*; he has left us under special orders "to watch" and be ready, saying that it is to us entirely uncertain when or how he will come, but telling us what will be the consequences of unfaithfulness, and what the glorious approval which awaits the devoted steward of God.

2. A second impediment is found in the *ample mercies* and *varied blessings* with which our lives are *at present* crowned. The servant is supposed, in the parable, to be left in possession of the mansion—having the control of its other servants, and the means of feasting, drinking and enjoyment. By this we are taught that the goods and cares of earth resist and stifle the aims of holiness, and that the servant, or he who would become such is surrounded by continual incentives to foreign pursuits and vicious affections. Why is the servant said to have in his master's mansion, and within his reach, all the means of pleasure and festivity? and why to allure him to enjoy them is there the strongest probability that he can get time and opportunity to do it, and yet be ready to receive his master at his coming? Is not all this intended to represent to our minds *life*, and especially a *life of prosperity* as it really is, or rather as it proves to be to sinful men? Habitual ease, indulgence, comfort and repose, unfit the mind to take hold of religion with a firm resolution; to sacrifice, it may seem, the delicacies and quiet and embellishments of this world, for the self-denial, moderation,

and soberness and humility of the gospel. There is demanded a faith, a *vigor* and magnanimity in nailing one's interests and affections to the cross, which a mind at ease and rest cannot be expected to embrace, but as it is thoroughly penetrated with a sense of the emptiness of all earthly things, and is filled with the glowing conceptions of the excellence of the gospel.

3. A third obstacle to the pursuits of piety and the exercise of needful vigilance, as taught in this parable, is found in the *supposed remoteness of the hour of account*. The servant is supposed to reason himself into the abuse of his privileges by this assumption; and it is remarkable that our Lord, who fully comprehended all the secret springs of human action, in two other parables, lays the same stress upon this *propensity*, and the consequent surprisal to which it leads. The effect of this presumptuous confidence we all see and feel, and it is a terrifying thought, that if *at this moment* our Lord should come, there would be found, in this whole assembly, few (if any) in that posture of mind in which they would wish to close the drama of life. Coming months and years seem many and long to us; and the joys of heaven and the lamentations of despair dim and distant; and we naturally defer until to-morrow that which should be done to-day. Imperfect sanctification leaves even good men so much under the power of sense and sin that their religious performances are often cold and unsatisfactory, and their conceptions far from being such as are fitted to a dying hour.

4. A fourth circumstance connected with this duty, as illustrated in the parable, is that if it is fulfilled at all, it must be in *opposition to the strongest propensities of our fallen nature*. Did not our Lord, in representing it as necessary that the servants should watch through the hours of the night, when nature would involuntarily sink into repose, intend to apprise us that such an attention to our duty and our salvation as would meet his approbation and preserve us in a constant readiness for death and judgment, would be extremely opposite to our corrupt nature in any and all circumstances? He requires us "*to live, not unto ourselves,*" but for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow men; yet how much opposed to our native selfishness are those duties of enlarged benevolence and philanthropy and spiritual mindedness, which his word and example inculcate? How do the cares and pursuits of wealth and ambition—the ardent aspirations of the statesman and warrior—the warmly cherished occupations and researches of the philosopher—conflict with that spirit of consecration to the good of man, the glory of Christ's kingdom and the spread of the gospel which all men are required to possess? And even as to the conscientious minister of Christ, when religion declines in his own heart and in the church—when little or no good seems to be done, and crosses and discouragements attend him in

his work; and his frame sinks under the influence of exhausting labors and protracted studies, and weighty responsibilities and fruitless exertions; when he realizes the lassitude of impaired health and disappointed hopes—how difficult is it to possess an overcoming faith, to renew his efforts with unimpaired strength of determination, and unabated confidence in the promises of God? In a word, how much opposed to the course of this world and the natural inclinations of man is it, under any circumstances and in all conditions, daily “to deny one’s self,” take up the cross and follow Christ, in the hope of reaping no other rest and reward than that which consists in the recompenses of a future and invisible world? Yet to feel that nothing which earth can offer is so dear as the approbation of Christ and a perfect assimilation to Him, is the sentiment which must actuate the mind of every one who would be ready for the coming of the Lord. But we proceed to notice,

IV. *The blessedness which is pronounced by the divine master upon every such servant of God.* This will appear from a comparison of his happy situation with that of any and every one whose course has been different. How distressing those reflections which must arise to the minds of men who, with all the talents, opportunities and gifts of a most responsible stewardship, are found to have been utterly unfaithful to themselves and their heavenly benefactor! *This, however, is the blessedness of having made the wisest choice and the most judicious appropriation of the opportunities and hours of life.* If we compare what such a person has sacrificed for the sake of a life of watchfulness and vigilance in the duties of religion with what he has gained, we shall see that no measure of success in the pursuits, prosperities and pleasures of even a long life could bear any proportion to the benefits which he has gained. He might otherwise have fallen a victim to those vices and temptations which often make life itself a burden to its possessor, and a disgrace to others. Or if, shunning these dangers he had rushed forward in the career of business, ambition, affluence and prosperity he might have found at last how little, health, friends and affluence could do to secure his real happiness, in comparison to what they might have done had they been sanctified by religion. But no such sad reflection—no such fatal, irretrievable loss of all the real good of life attends the closing hours of him who has watched and prayed till the coming of the Lord. His has been the blessedness of resting *for justification and eternal life upon that foundation which God has laid for sinners in the cross of Christ.* His is the blessedness of having, through the grace and power of God followed, though imperfectly, through all trials, reproaches and temptations that course which the Redeemer specifies; and of having continued in it until the pilgrimage of time was ended. If our Lord

in the parable represents the master as so much delighted with the vigilance of his tried servant, how great is the recompense of having thus won the approbation of that Great Being whose judgment sways the intelligent universe? He has enstamped upon society the marks of his sincerity and usefulness, and leaves them to operate upon others while he slumbers in the dust. By an humble self-denial and devoted life he has honored God, he has walked in the Spirit, he has followed Christ, he has diminished the sins and sorrows of his fellow men, and proved a blessing to his generation, and now, at the peaceful close of his conflict, his well-established and steadfast hopes fasten upon a life of glory. But especially this blessedness consists,

1. In the first place, in the *entire safety* of his person and estate in any possible condition of suddenness as to the Savior's coming; and especially when the great objects of the invisible world are to become a sensible reality, and fill to the utmost the thoughts and capacities of the immortal soul. Gabriel and his angelic associates, confirmed in righteousness and glory beyond the possibility of falling, are not more safe in the highest heavens than yonder fainting, dying christian, bereft perhaps of comfort and of reason, whom Jesus has engaged to save: even though legions of apostate tempters, with cunning and malice great, crowd around his bed and strive to embitter the last moments of his earthly warfare. No! faithful Redeemer, though we know not in a ten thousandth part, what great offenders we have been, we ask in life and in death, in the woes and trials of earth, in the swellings of Jordan and in the day of judgment, for these mortal bodies and these immortal spirits, *no better security* or brighter prospect than thou hast freely given! The truly devoted and watchful christian is in a condition of safety both in life and in death, as nothing can separate him from the love of Christ.

2. On having accomplished the will of Christ, in the work and warfare of time, whether for a longer or a shorter period, it is the blessedness of experiencing the *entire effects* of the christian *remedy*, both as to *pardon* and *sanctification*, and a consequent restoration to the eternal favor and *fellowship of God*. The believer "*hungers and thirsts after righteousness*," and longs for such a redemption from the law of sin and death as would enable him, with the vigor of a becoming gratitude and love, and the sleepless activities of holy thought and lively consecration, to engage in the reasonable and delightful service of his Heavenly Master. The scars of the spiritual conflict on the soul, and the brow furrowed by trouble and disease, are to the disciple of Christ, but slight remembrances of grief, in comparison to the painful consciousness of past and present delinquency in thought, word and deed. Blessed to him, then, is the hour when *sove-*

reign grace not only pardons all his guilt, but subdues all his sins; and removes every taint of moral evil. The tears which ran down his cheek amid the struggles of temptation and repentance, he shall know no more. The sadness of broken vows and resolutions departs never to return, and the days of cold declension, the disturbed Sabbaths and hours of devotion; the invasion of worldly-minded and sensual affections; of unsubdued passion; of anxious foreboding and of corrosive care, shall give place to a cloudless Sabbath; to services which require no watchings of the heart; and to the affections of a breast which no longer contains an enemy of Christ. Look at the aged servant of God, who on the confines of eternity and under the weight of the infirmities of years, still stands nobly up to the Master's work. Jesus approaching lays his hand upon him and seems to say, "*It is enough*:" the great ends of your life, as to yourself and others, have been sufficiently accomplished; and of trial and conflict and watching, I ask no more. To the younger minister, in the midst of his days and the vigor of his strength, in like manner he seems to say, It is sufficient "that it was in thy heart to build the temple of the Lord thy God;" my grace has pardoned all defects and procured an exemption from all further labors.

3. *Finally*, it is the blessedness of *closing life's* wearisome journey and exchanging worlds *with prospects unalterably glorious and precious*. Behold the expiring christian—the faithful minister—in the eventful moment of death. Never on earth has he found an object of delight, which was not imperfect in itself: and soon to be torn from him! But now is closing the *last sin*, the last sigh, the last feeling of *pain*, want or imperfection, which an endless eternity can ever bring. He is putting on the *perfect image* of his *Savior*, and is to be surrounded with the lustre of those perfections which constitute the blessedness of God himself. New beams of heavenly light; new and vast conceptions and foretastes of a holy, happy heaven, break upon his mind, and absorb all his energies. Already all that was obscure in the ways of God, and in the bereavements and trials of time recedes, and the dark hours of life begin to brighten. *Providence* begins to unfold its wonders, and *creation* to wear new forms of beauty. Like the pilgrim ascending some mountain side, the eye of the mind turns back upon the long and often beclouded, perplexed and winding path, which it has pursued through the vale of tears, and all seems to have been ordered in wisdom and in love. In the opening light of Mount Zion, above the pains, the woes and sufferings of the way appear to have been meant for good, and contribute to brighten the auspicious scene. While the dying philosopher, in the depth of his studies, has lost the vision of the cross; and the expiring veteran, absorbed in the brilliance of earthly conquests and the fame of victory, has missed the triumphs of redemption, it remains for *him* now to

experience in its fulness the love of Christ, and behold the unclouded glory of the Godhead. The union and love and sweet accordance of the pure society of the upper world, now burst upon the soul. Ah! yes, the *night is past*; every cloud has disappeared; and grace and immortality have triumphed over sin and death. On those sinless shores—in that great and blessed assembly—I seem to behold our departed brother commingling with those wise and illustrious men of whom his Bible had made mention as he read it here: the confiding Abraham, the supplicating Elijah, the seraphic Isaiah, the faithful Paul and the affectionate John; and seeing that they are made happier and more thankful by the arrival of every disciple. Oh! how immense the number of that assembly! How great their joys! There I see the christian parent greeting the return of a beloved child! There I see the faithful pastor meeting and recognizing the ransomed members of his flock, as they in succession pass onward to immortal life. They speak to each other of having once been sinners; of having wept and prayed together on these mortal shores; but sinners and sufferers they are no more; and each is more grateful to Christ for the happiness of the other. Above and beyond all, without which there could be no such heaven, I behold the **MARTYRED LAMB**! And oh! how bright his glories shine!—how kindly he greets his ransomed followers, and how perfect and eternal the bliss which he bestows!

In conclusion of this subject, I remark,

I. That when we turn our thoughts *from those whom death puts in possession of this blessedness*, to the void which is created in the circle of *their friends*, we see the *marks of that discipline* by which God, by one and the same act, would *purify the living while he glorifies the dead*. When Jesus Christ calls men by his grace into the fold of God—sanctifies and seals them by his Spirit—invests them with those benevolent aims and lovely qualities and kind affections which the gospel imparts; and places them in stations of usefulness in the world, it is impossible that they should be taken to himself without the sensations of poignant grief on the part of those with whom they were connected. This fact no being better understands than the compassionate *High Priest of our profession*. He also understands—what we do not, what resources he possesses to turn the sharpest of our sorrows and the heaviest of our trials into the brightest experiences of his care on earth, and the sweetest remembrances of his love in heaven. The refining process of grace, by an inevitable law of our being, accelerates the hour when we can sin and suffer no more forever. Still the process itself is painful. When God takes away good men and faithful watchmen, it is hard to see them suffer, and have them die. When the kind whisper is heard in the apartment of anxious weeping, "*your hus-*

band has breathed his last, and you are left a widowed mother;" your father's words and counsels, and kindnesses, your tender minds may long faintly remember, but he *is gone*," and you are fatherless; your *brother* who stretched out his cold hand to greet you on your arrival at his dying bedside has ceased to live! it is impossible to suppress the gushing emotions of overwhelming sorrow. Life—the world itself seems to us to have changed when it no longer contains the dearest objects of our earthly affection. But the consoling presence of the *living Redeemer*, the recollections of that happier world in which the "righteous rest from their labors," and the prospects of a re-union to departed friends in the fruition of our common Deliverer, are the all powerful sources of christian consolation. I remark

2. That it is proper for the *church below to make mention* of the *gifts and virtues* of those whom she trusts the Savior has translated to and planted in the *church above*. The REV. ROBERT DUNLAP, your late Pastor, was born at *Doylestown*, in Bucks county, of this State, on the 12th of April, 1804, and was the son of a worthy and respectable ruling elder in the church of that place. His early youth was marked by strict propriety of moral conduct, and an amiable and engaging disposition. At the age of seventeen, and after a season of pungent conviction and deep distress, he obtained a hope of a saving interest in Christ, and soon after united with the church in his native place, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. CHAS. HYDE. His mind was soon after turned to the consecration of himself to the work of the holy ministry, and after spending some time in study under the direction of his Pastor, and in the classical seminary at Nesha-miny, he repaired to the University of Pennsylvania, and graduated at that institution in July 25th, 1827. I have been kindly furnished with a note from Dr. DALE, his fellow student and classmate at the University, and the attending physician in his sickness, from which I may take the liberty to read a few sentences in reference to his character at that period:

"Mr. DUNLAP was an acquaintance of my early years. We were fellow students in college, and *there and then*, as you have known since, he was a meek and humble child of God. Well do I remember how in the midst of his gay and thoughtless companions he uniformly moved and deported himself as a calm, consistent and devoted christian. He was a "living epistle" that might be "known and read of all men," and none that knew him needed to be told that he was a professor. On leaving college I lost sight of my friend, and had no knowledge of his history till many years after I met with him *here*, far away from the scenes of our youthful days, a *minister* of the everlasting gospel."

In the autumn of that year he entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton, and after spending three years, and taking a full course in that institu-

tion, he was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in the spring of 1830, and having in the vacation of that summer paid a visit to a sister near Danville, in this State, he preached a short time in the Presbyterian church of that place, then vacant. He was soon after called by them to become their Pastor, and in the spring of 1831 he was ordained and installed as Pastor of that church. His ministry in that place was early and extensively blessed. In the first year of it not less than one hundred hopeful converts were added to the church. The report of his personal and ministerial excellence reached you; and in the autumn of 1836, soon after you had become a vacant congregation by the resignation of the Rev. JOSEPH W. BLYTHE of his charge of this church, you transmitted to him, through a mutual friend, the invitation to supply the pulpit for a few Sabbaths on trial. The result was that with great unanimity you gave him a *call* to become the stated Pastor of the church: and on signifying his willingness to do so, measures were successfully taken to effect his translation to this charge, and he was accordingly installed in the spring of 1837. You found in him a well furnished, faithful, active and affectionate pastor. He came to you "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," and now after a successful ministry of *ten years*, he has closed his earthly labors in the early meridian of life. Cut down by the hand of death in just about the close of both his *forty-third* year and *sixteenth* of his ministry, his life is like a chapter but partly written, and realizes not that measure of usefulness and excellence of which it gave the indications. As a *Christian* and a *Christian Minister* he appeared to be a truly conscientious man, having for his ultimate end the glory of God and the discharge of his duty. He came among us apparently to share in the solitudes of Zion, and to advance the vital interests of religion in these cities; and in the last conversation which I had with him in my study a few days before he took sick he spoke of the present declensions of religion with deep sensibility. He early gained the confidence and esteem of his brethren here as a *good scholar*, a *sound theologian*, a kind *fraternal associate*, an *able and conscientious minister*, and a *highly acceptable preacher* of the gospel. He bore an active and ready part in all the objects of public usefulness; and our various denominational and charitable institutions experienced the benefits of his effective co-operation and judicious counsel. In the ecclesiastical courts and the assemblies of his fathers and brethren he was modest and retiring in his manner, but commonly evinced much soundness of judgment and fidelity of action. In the relations of private and domestic life as in its more public ones, I doubt not but his affectionate and amiable manners, and his considerate attentions strongly endeared him to the hearts of those with whom he was most intimately connected in the cares and joys of time. With a

prepossessing person, a clear and distinct enunciation, an agreeable and well modulated voice, a serious and devout tone of mind, and a plain practical aim to do good, he united the requisites of an acceptable and gifted *herald of the cross*. In his public discourses he did not so much study the elegancies of taste or the originalities of thought, as the chaste and plain, and familiar exhibitions of divine truth; but while his performances in the house of God were always solemn, practical and edifying, they were many times full of pathos and impressiveness. In *pastoral duties* he was disposed, when health and other circumstances permitted, to be prompt and laborious, and while he aimed to promote the salvation of his people, he was in the general tone of his intercourse affectionate, affable and obliging. That like all good men he had his faults, and sometimes erred in his judgment and his deportment, is only to say that there ever will be shades upon every exhibition of mortal excellence. When any well-intentioned, devoted christian, or christian minister is thus called home to God, it is a sweet reflection that all his faults and blemishes are wholly pardoned and removed, and all his graces and virtues perfected and confirmed. In this most interesting attitude I now contemplate the perfectly sanctified spirit of our deceased friend; and with you his more immediate associates, I can see many reasons why it will be delightful to meet him and be joined with him in the eternal occupations of the church triumphant. I remark

3. In the *days of darkness and rebuke*, when faithful watchmen are taken away, it becomes us to *humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God*. The Head of the church calls upon us to hear his voice; to turn to him and do works meet for repentance. It is often difficult for us rightly to appreciate the blessing of christian ordinances, and the silent power of christian institutions, and hence we do not fully realize the loss which is experienced when an approved herald of the cross is taken. But in the seasons of affliction and rebuke we must not forget as to the past, the loving-kindness of the Lord. There are now and have been for several years in these cities and their immediate vicinity *twelve or thirteen* Presbyterian congregations. It is remarkable that since the decease, about forty years ago, of the immediate predecessor of the venerated pastor of the first church, whom the goodness of God, after a successful and faithful ministry of near forty years in the same congregation, still preserves among us to shed the mellowed light of christian excellence upon our counsels, this is the *first instance* in which any one in the *actual exercise* of the pastoral office in these cities, has been removed by death. Pious and excellent ministers of Christ have indeed been removed from the midst of our community, and in a late instance a pastor elect has been taken away; but these are not exceptions to the remark just made. *Your congregational history*, in common with that of the church already mentioned, is not wanting in the marks of the divine goodness. The members of your church session (not to speak of many others who were private christians, whom at different periods the Lord has taken to himself) were *men of prayer* and of exemplary piety. Of the *days of God's power and grace* in the awakening, the conviction and conversion of sinners, it is your privilege to speak, in recalling

the events of departed years. The closing weeks of 1821, in a season of great solemnity, brought from twenty-five to thirty members into the communion of the church. Few survivors in the first and second churches can ever forget the memorable winter of 1827. In the spiritual condition of this city at that time a cloud of uncommon darkness hung over us. Of the children of God, there were a few, both male and female, beginning with some in the first, and soon comprehending some in the second church, who resolved to meet on *special occasions* and to lay this deplorable state of things before the Lord. Their hearts at first were faint, and their hopes feeble, and they seemed to rely only upon the mercy and faithfulness of a prayer-hearing God. The result was memorable and striking, and in the following spring the reports to the General Assembly showed an addition in that year of *ninety-five* members to the first, and *sixty-two* to the second church; while the cause of practical religion received an impulse which it has not lost to this day. Other seasons of refreshing have since been enjoyed; and thus in the seasons of darkness and rebuke we should remember for our encouragement the mercies of former times, and trust that there are yet rich blessings in store for the churches of these cities.

4. *Finally, how mysterious, august and awful the destinies of man.* To-day he is sitting at the sacramental table, full of darkness, grief and infirmity; to-morrow immersed in the rays of celestial glory. This hour stretched upon the bed of pain—emaciated, helpless, delirious—drawing tears of sympathy from eyes unused to weep; the next singing in the Holy Jerusalem, the song of redemption, “glory and honor and dominion,” with the noblest angels of God. Now unable through weakness to stir a finger; and then ranging, as on the wings of light, the fields of immensity. And as to its counterpart, *in the morning*, sitting under the sound of the gospel, with an open door and the internal whispers of an inviting Spirit; and, *in the evening*, dead—lost—undone—and raving in the endless horrors of remorse. In a world where God has wonderfully laid the foundations of the kingdom of grace and glory, in the one great sacrifice of his own beloved Son, great events are unfolding—attracting the profound attention of the most distant beings in the universe, who press around it, to gaze upon the results here unfolded? What event more possible than that to some here present this should be the last opportunity! What event more possible than that the speaker should be uttering his last discourse! And is this the true character? and are these responsibilities of our mortal and our immortal being? or is life an illusion and truth a fiction, as alas! our conduct would for the most part seem to say? If our life, “this feeble piece,” is a fading “leaf”—a vapor—an illusion!—such are truly our conceptions of the position in which we stand. And is there no “discharge” from these eventful scenes—these great and awful obligations—so full of terror and dark foreboding to the neglectful; but so full of exaltation and glory to the righteous? MEN AND BRETHREN! let us come up and survey, from this narrow isthmus, the amazing prospect; and let us ask what shall the end of these things be as to us who are before the Lord, on this solemn occasion? Shall we ourselves be stupid and unbelieving, while the beings of all other worlds seem interested in the issue? or shall we each resolve “to work while the day lasts, knowing that the night cometh when no man can work?”

APPENDIX.

OBITUARY NOTICE

OF THE

REV. ROBERT DUNLAP, A. M.

[ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN AND THE PRESBYTERIAN ADVOCATE.]

BY THE

REV. DAVID ELLIOTT, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE REV. ROBERT DUNLAP, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, departed this life on Sabbath morning, the 21st of March, in Allegheny City, in the 43d year of his age. Mr. Dunlap was born in Doylestown, Bucks county, Pa. on the 12th of April, 1804. When about 17 years of age, he connected himself with the church, having obtained a good hope through grace, that he had passed from death to life. This happy result took place in connection with the early ministerial labors of the Rev. Dr. C. C. Beatty, of Steubenville, O. with whom he held some of his first conversations in relation to his preaching the gospel, and who made known his desire on the subject to his father. After consultation with his father, who was an Elder in the church, and with his approbation, he entered upon a course of study with a view to the ministry. His classical studies were chiefly prosecuted in the Academy at Neshaminy, in his native county, under the direction of the Rev. Robert B. Belville, well known as an accomplished teacher. Having finished his preparatory course at Neshaminy, he proceeded to Philadelphia and entered the University of Pennsylvania, where he was graduated July 26th, 1827. While in the University, he was distinguished by his entire separation from the openly vicious, and by the strictness and integrity of his moral conduct. The careless and immoral students looked upon him as precise and unsocial, not understanding the character of the principles by which he was governed, and which required him to keep aloof from the contagion of their evil example. After leaving the University, he spent three years at the Seminary at Princeton, in the prosecution of his Theological studies, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, A. D. 1830. In the spring of 1831, he accepted a call from the congregation of Mahoning, at Danville, Columbia county, Pa. and was ordained and installed their pastor, during the same year. To his union with that people, God set his seal, by accompanying his early

labors among them with his special blessing. We have been informed that during the first year of his ministry, one hundred persons or upwards, were added to the church. Of the increase afterwards, while he remained their pastor, we have no definite information, but it is believed to have been such as to encourage the conclusion that his labors were not in vain. In the fall of 1836, the Second Presbyterian Church being vacant, and having heard favorable reports of Mr. Dunlap as a popular and useful minister, invited him to pay them a visit and preach to them. He complied with their request, and the result was, that a call was made out for him by the congregation, bearing date January 16th, 1837, which, after due deliberation, he determined to accept. The announcement of this determination was matter of great grief to his congregation at Danville. Believing, however, that he was actuated by pure motives in making this decision, they still retained for him their affectionate feelings of respect and confidence. This, they testified, at a public meeting, by the adoption of resolutions strongly expressive of their regret at the approaching separation, of the high sense which they entertained of his ministerial character, and of his "faithful, active, zealous and efficient" labors among them.

In accordance with his decision to remove to Pittsburgh, he was, on his application, regularly dismissed from the Presbytery of Northumberland, on the 8th of February, 1837, to connect himself with the Presbytery of Ohio, and was received by the latter Presbytery at their meeting in June following, and installed pastor of the Second Church of Pittsburgh. In this church he continued to labor with an encouraging measure of success, until the period of his death. So strong, however, was the attachment of the people of his former charge at Danville, that in the winter of 1844—seven years after his removal to Pittsburgh—they drew up and forwarded to him a unanimous call to return and again become their pastor. This movement was the occasion of great perplexity to him. The unanimity of the congregation in making out the call, and the unabated warmth of attachment by which the proceedings were characterized, sensibly touched his heart, and almost induced him to believe that the finger of God pointed to his acceptance of the invitation. But there were bonds of affection and solemn obligation at Pittsburgh, which were not to be sundered, but for the most cogent reasons. And, after prayerful and anxious deliberation, and taking the advice of friends, and of brethren in the ministry, he came to the conclusion that it was his duty to decline the call from Danville, and to remain at Pittsburgh. During last fall, or in the early part of the winter, his labors were sought for in another field. The Pennsylvania Colonization Society, being without a Secretary and General Agent, tendered to Mr. Dunlap that office. His popular manners and address, and his known business tact, led them to the belief that he would ably supply the loss which they had experienced by the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Pinney, their late efficient Secretary. This cause, connecting with it so many great interests, and involving the happiness of so large a portion of the colored race, presented strong claims to his favorable regard. His health, also, which had suffered from his close attention to his public labors, and other causes, seemed to require some more active employment for a season. These considerations had great influence with him, in leading him to a final determination to accept the appointment. The Providence of God,

however, thwarted his determination. The people of his congregation, on being made acquainted with his purpose immediately held a public meeting, at which strong resolutions were passed in opposition to his removal and urging him to remain with them. His salary, which for some years, had been scarcely adequate to the increasing expenses of a growing family, was also raised; so that if he should decide to continue with them, he might be free from the distraction of worldly cares, and be enabled to give himself wholly to his Master's work. Such demonstrations of attachment and confidence on the part of his people were not to be disregarded. Accordingly, after a full consideration of the whole case, and taking the counsel of some of his brethren, he changed his determination, and concluded to remain and devote his energies to the spiritual benefit of those who had given such decisive indications of their earnest desire to retain him. This decision was received with great satisfaction by his congregation, and every thing seemed to promise a long and prosperous connection. On the first Sabbath of March, not long after these proceedings—he and his beloved people united, for the last time on earth, in commemorating the death of Christ, at his own table. He preached in the morning, preparatory to the communion service, from John 12: 27, 28; and in the evening from Isaiah 25: 6. This was the close of his public labors, and of "the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The next day, he felt somewhat indisposed, but attended a public Lecture in the evening. On his return home, he retired to his bed very sick. His disease was soon discovered to be bilious fever, of an obstinate character. During its progress, he seemed to suffer much, and on the thirteenth day after the commencement of the attack, he fell asleep in Jesus. Such was the violence of his disease, that at an early stage of it, his mind became so much disordered as to disqualify him for communicating with his friends in reference to the state of his soul. To one or two of his ministerial brethren who saw him shortly after he took sick, he expressed a filial acquiescence in the Divine will, and a hope that all was well. The same feeling was still more strongly expressed afterwards to his family physician. But painful as it was to his friends not to be able to receive from his own lips his expressions of confidence in Christ, his past life furnishes far better assurance, that he died at peace with God, and that as "for him to live was Christ," so "to die was gain."

The foregoing narrative will show the estimation in which Mr. Dunlap was held, where he was best known. It is seldom that such strong and decisive indications of attachment and confidence are given, as we see in the proceedings of the congregations, of which he was, at different times, the pastor, and which were alike creditable to him and to them. He was much respected and beloved in the community in the midst of which he resided. His kind, courteous, and fraternal spirit, had won its way to many hearts, and awakened correspondent feelings in the bosoms of others. Rarely, if ever, have there been stronger manifestations of regret, than were given by the different religious denominations in Pittsburgh and Allegheny, on the occasion of his death. Forty clergymen or upwards, of various denominations, with an immense concourse of citizens, showed their respect to his memory by attending his funeral.

As a preacher, Mr. Dunlap held a very respectable rank. His public

discourses were marked by intelligence, clearness of arrangement, piety, and practical adaptation to the character and wants of his hearers. While he had less strength and boldness than some others, he had much practical good sense, which under the moulding influence of an evangelical spirit, made him a highly useful and acceptable preacher. The testimony furnished by his great popularity with the intelligent congregations which he served, is decisive on this point. His mind was carefully disciplined to study, and the large number of manuscript sermons which he has left behind him show his unceasing industry, and his conscientious efforts in seeking to furnish his people with the best products of his mind.

As a pastor, he is reported by his people, to have been active, affectionate and faithful. He was particularly attentive to the children of his charge, who were warmly attached to him.

In the chamber of sickness, and the house of mourning, he was a great favorite. Nor did he overlook the poor of his flock, but kindly visited and comforted them. In his domestic relations, moreover, he was, as every where else, kind, affectionate and peaceful. His affectionate and bereaved wife and orphan children, can testify to his faithful love and tender care as a husband and a father.

With his ministerial brethren, he lived on terms of the most confiding and generous friendship. It is not known that he ever had the slightest collision with any of them, but was in the habit of constant, fraternal intercourse with all. He was the active friend of the various benevolent operations of our church, and did what was in his power to carry them forward with success. He was a Director of the Western Theological Seminary and Secretary of its Board for many years, and gave much of his attention to its concerns. As an example of this, it may be mentioned, that when the subscription towards the endowment was about to be made by his congregation, to meet the assessment of one thousand dollars, he took the subscription paper, and by his own personal exertions, procured nearly double that amount. Thus did he attest his love to Christ, by putting forth his best efforts for the advancement of his Kingdom in the various departments of Christian enterprise.

But his work is done. His labors on earth are at an end. His place, in the midst of his brethren and of the church is vacant. His family and his congregation are clothed in mourning. The dispensation is dark. But in the midst of this darkness and desolation, it is consolatory to know, that Christ reigns. Though our brother is dead, his Savior and ours ever lives. In his hand, all will be safe. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."