

THE APPROVED SERVANT OF GOD ;

HIS PUBLIC WORK, REST, AND REWARD.

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE

Reformed Presbyterian Meeting-House, Bailiesmill,

ON SABBATH, NOVEMBER 23RD, 1862,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

THE REV. JOHN WRIGHT GRAHAM.

BY

THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D.,

Knockbracken.

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A D I S . C O U R S E .

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.”—Acts xiii. 36.

THIS chapter contains the inspired account of the first Gentile Mission, and of the Apostle Paul's first recorded sermon. In Antioch, the capital of Syria, where the followers of the Redeemer were first called CHRISTIANS, and where a flourishing Church was early planted, by a special call of the Spirit, and a solemn designation by prayer and fasting, and the imposition of hands, Paul and Barnabas were separated, and sent away to carry the tidings of salvation to the perishing heathen. Intent on their high mission, they visited Cyprus—the native country of Barnabas—and having touched at Pamphilia, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and entered the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. When they were called, after the reading of the law and the prophets, publicly to address the assembly, Paul spoke, as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance, with words of remarkable wisdom, which were singularly adapted to the occasion, and fitted to win an entrance into the hearts of his audience for the tidings of the Saviour's personal glory and salvation. In brief, but graphic terms, he recounts the wonders that God wrought for their fathers, as His chosen covenant people. He then dwells, with evident enlargement, on the special favour and peculiar honour and distinction conferred on them, in the mission of the Saviour—the seed of David—who was raised up according to the promise. He speaks of the preparations made for His advent, the treatment which He received from the Jewish rulers and people, of the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose, and the fulfilment of ancient predictions, in the sufferings and

death of the Redeemer; and he lays particular stress on the great fact of His resurrection from the dead. To this fundamental truth all the apostles bore witness, and because of its intrinsic and relative value, they assigned it an important place in their testimony. It confirmed the grand articles of the Saviour's own testimony, declared loudly the great doctrines of His salvation, and exhibited and displayed in the clearest and fullest manner, His personal and mediatorial glory. Christ Jesus was raised from the dead by "the power of the Father," to show that the heavenly Creditor was satisfied. The imprisoned debtor was discharged, to attest that our vast debt had been fully paid, and the payment of the Surety accepted on our behalf. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." * The testimony borne by the Saviour to His Godhead before Caiaphas, was fully established by His resurrection. Thus was He "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness." † He did not then *become* the Son of God, for before He appeared on earth, and from all eternity, He was "in the bosom of the Father," and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but when He rose and triumphed over the power of death, He was attested and fully shown to be a Divine person. In His resurrection, the Saviour became the "first fruits" of them that sleep—the earnest, specimen, and efficient source of blessing of a glorious harvest of the redeemed gathered home to heaven. This is the great standing miracle of the Gospel—the basis of the Christian faith—the animating principle of a good and joyful hope. Contrary to natural laws, the body of Christ in the sepulchre saw not corruption, as by supernatural energy He rose again, the conqueror of hell and death. The apostles, quoting from Old Testament predictions (Ps. ii. 9; Is. lv. 3; Ps. xvi. 10), shows the fulfilment of the great Messianic promise to David, in the Saviour's exemption from natural decay in the state of the dead, and in His resurrection. The glory of His eternal Sonship is connected with His Mediatorial office; and the provisions of the everlasting covenant—"the sure mercies of David"—comprehend the Messiah's perpetual exemption from mortality, and secure the glory and blessedness not only of the risen Redeemer, but likewise of all His spiritual seed. These exalted promises, the Apostle shows, had not their fulfilment in David, but in Him who is evidently his seed—the "root and offspring of

* Rom. iv, 25.

† Rom. i. 4.

David, and the bright and morning star." David "saw corruption"—but "He whom God raised again, saw no corruption." In stating thus luminously his weighty argument, the Apostle brings out a singularly beautiful and emphatic testimony respecting David, as a public approved servant of God, and in a manner incidental, but striking and affecting, exhibits his distinguished character and work, and future blissful reward.—"David, after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption."

The contemplation of this lovely portrait—the vivid, delicate, inspired description of the life, labours, and end of a faithful servant of God—we have judged not unsuitable to the solemn circumstances in which we are this day assembled in the house of God. Called as an unworthy minister to occupy this pulpit, so long and so ably filled by a dear departed brother, and met, as a sorrowing congregation in the house where his voice was often heard proclaiming the tidings of the glorious Gospel, and near the spot where he sleeps in dust till the morning of the resurrection, it is eminently befitting that, while noticing his life and labours, and considering the improvement to be made of this bereavement, we should, above all, direct our thoughts and hearts to Him who sits on David's throne, who, in death, saw no corruption, who lives for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death. Under the impression of solemn and trying providences, with voices addressed to us from the world of spirits, and surrounded by the affecting memorials of our mortality, it is required of us that we should embrace with greater earnestness than ever before, that complete salvation which is through a risen Saviour; and that "strong consolation," which is by "two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie"—the word and oath of the covenant, and which Christ, our blessed Forerunner, has entered within the vail to procure and confer. May the Spirit of light and love, enable us to speak and hear in a manner becoming this solemn occasion—may He come and make Himself known to our hearts, as the promised Comforter, to abide with us for ever!

This text presents the following doctrinal statement—*Approved servants of God do an important work in their day, and are blessings to the generation in which they live, and their death is peaceful and happy.* In illustrating this proposition, we shall consider—

I. THE LIFE AND PUBLIC WORK OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GOD.

II. HIS DISTINCTION AND HONOUR IN DEATH.

III. THE CHARACTER AND LABOURS OF OUR DECEASED BROTHER—AND SOME OF THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH HIS LIFE AND REMOVAL BY DEATH ARE DESIGNED TO MINISTER TO US.

1. The Life and Public Work of God's faithful Servants.

It has been observed that a larger space in the biographies of the Old Testament is assigned to David, than to any other approved servant whose name is in the inspired record. He was called early, and appointed to a lofty station—an instance of Divine election, as opposed to mere human wisdom. He was the first approved prince of the Hebrew theocracy—a valiant and victorious captain—a wise and patriotic ruler. He is renowned as “the sweet Psalmist of Israel,” and was an illustrious type of the Messiah to come. With reference both to his personal character and work, and to his glorious Antitype, he is frequently designated the “Servant of God*”—“I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.” (Ps. lxxxix. 20.) In his exalted station, and throughout his whole history, David is eminently distinguished for his *public spirit*. The Lord's cause and work, and the welfare and honour of Israel, were everything to him. Compared with the building up of the house of God, the purity of its ordinances and the prosperity of his people—fame in arms, rest in his palace, the glory of his family were as nothing. His whole life attested the sincerity of his devout utterances—“O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid” “I have chosen to occupy the threshold in the house of my God, rather than dwell in tents of wickedness.”* It is recorded of this eminent man by the Spirit of inspiration—“David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord; and turned not aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah, the Hittite.” (1 Kings xv. 3.) This honourable testimony refers to his integrity as a public servant of God, and attests that, in his spirit and conduct, and in the administration of national affairs, he acted according to the prescriptions of the law, sought the advancement of true religion, and had a supreme regard for the Divine glory. While other parts of his conduct in public and private were evidently blameworthy, his sin in the matter of Uriah was grossly inconsistent with his profession,

* Psalm cxvi. 16, lxxxiv. 10. Thus may the original words in the latter passage be more forcibly rendered.

brought a reproach upon religion, and cast a stumbling-block before the people. Notwithstanding this grievous fall, David was brought to repentance, and obtained forgiveness; and in the other parts of his conduct, as a public man, and in the general tenor of his life, he is exhibited as a faithful and approved servant. "He chose David as His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." (Ps. lxxviii. 70-72.)

The declaration contained in the text, represents David as a servant of God, doing good to the people and age in which he lived. He "served his generation by the will of God." In one of the ancient versions, the life-work of David is connected more closely with the Divine good pleasure and acceptance—"In his generation, he served the pleasure of God;"* while in another, his death, and the end of his service on earth, are exhibited as in God's sight accepted and precious. When he had served in "his generation, he slept to the will of God."† Rather, as in our Authorized Version, the prominent idea is, that he served God, and enjoyed His approval and blessing, by living for the good of others. In a proper sense, this is the calling and character of all true Christians—"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."‡ But especially those who are placed in a public and responsible station—as ministers of the Gospel—should seek this distinction and honour—they should "serve their generation by the will of God." For this they are removed from a private sphere, and separated to a sacred office. They, above all others, are required to be self-denied, devoted, and of a public spirit; and if they would have the favour of the exalted Master, whom they profess to serve, and enjoy a reward with Him in glory—on earth they must constantly aim to benefit the people and age in which they live, to promote the best interests of others, to purify and elevate society, and by doing good in the Church in their own day, to transmit a fuller inheritance of high privilege to future generations.

Considering this serving or ministering to one's generation by the will of God, in special relation to the work of approved ministers, we select for illustration a few views, which we regard as of peculiar interest and importance in the present day. We serve our generation by the will of God.

* Syriac.

† Vulgate.

‡ Romans xiv. 7.

First of all—In a heart and life holy and devoted.

Before a person can do good, or be a blessing to others in his generation, he must be, in the fullest sense, a servant of God, called by His grace, and actively engaged in His service. Thus God designates David—"I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him" (Psa. xxxix. 20); and he himself frequently appropriates and exults in the title. The apostles of Christ declared this as their highest name of distinction, and style themselves "servants of Christ," in preference to all titles of honour and lordly distinctions. This, too, is the calling of all that become partakers of the grace of the covenant, and heirs of glory. By the truth, they are made free, that they may serve the Lord, without fear, and in holiness and righteousness. This engagement of heart and life to a new Master and a new service, is inseparable from a spiritual vocation—it is at once its native fruit and proper evidence. None but believers in Christ, none save those who have devoted their heart and life to Him, and who habitually feel that they are bought with a price, and are not their own, can serve usefully the Church, or the generation in which they live. This is the true honour and distinction of approved ministers of the Word. It is not genius, eminence of natural endowment, or learning, or eloquence, or popularity, that renders one in public office in the Church accepted of God, and shows the seal of heaven to be upon his work. The secret of all real usefulness is dedication to God. The love of Christ—it is not said, pleases or comforts us, but *constrains* us—binds and impels us not to live to ourselves, but to Him and for His glory, who died and rose again. Those who are entrusted with the Gospel, and have a Divine call to this work, are "ministers of the churches," and "servants of all." This, the Saviour teaches, is the only legitimate object of holy ambition in the ministry—and to achieve this, the highest talents and most eminent attainments are to be devoted. His own blessed example, is the perfect model after which His servants are constantly to copy—"He pleased not Himself;" "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." And so the apostles, in serving the churches, first of all gloried in being servants of Christ. "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience" (2 Tim. i. 3). * Living to do good to others, they sought and aimed not chiefly to

* The apostles generally assume this title in the introduction of their Epistles—

please men, or to gain their favour; but in all things to be the servants of Christ. The dedication of the heart to Him, and the consecration of the life to His service, form the impelling principle of all Christian usefulness, and the constraining motive to all deeds of Christian beneficence. The resolution of Dr. Chalmers, when he knew the power of the Saviour's grace on the heart—"I am resolved to live to Him who died for me"—declares the secret of his extensive influence for good on his own generation, and for ages yet future. Such true devotedness of heart and life must characterize us too, if we would be owned by our Master, as His approved servants.

2. *By the Truths Held Fast and Proclaimed.*

The most important service to any age and country, is to hold fast and make known revealed truth. This is the basis of all valuable knowledge, and the grand means of purifying, elevating, and blessing alike society and individuals. By the truth, men are delivered from the thralldom of error and sin; and are brought into the liberty of the children of God. In the progress of truth—peace, order, and virtue advance; and in its ultimate triumph, the countless evils that afflict humanity shall disappear, and the earth shall be filled with the Saviour's glory. The least portion of revealed truth is of more value than all material riches; and therefore are we commanded to "buy" it at whatever price, and never to sell it. He who faithfully inculcates any saving truth, and is instrumental in obtaining a lodgment for it in a human heart, becomes a benefactor of the world, and has a higher honour than riches, or political power, or military prowess can ever confer. Thus did David eminently serve his generation. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by him; and His word was in his tongue."—(2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) As a penman of Scripture, he was

Titus i. 1.—"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ." James i. 1.—"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ". Jude i.—"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ." The original term, δούλος, means that he who had been the slave of sin, made free, is the absolute property of God, and as far as obligation and life are concerned, engaged in his service. The corresponding Hebrew term means *devoted followers of Jehovah*; and is applied to Moses, David, and the Prophets. In the New Testament, the designation beautifully expresses the union between Christ and his saints, who are called δούλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *the servants of Christ*. The word too is used to denote the ministers, and public officers of a Sovereign—Matt. xxii. 4-8. These various ideas are combined, when those who are called by grace, and whose lives are devoted to advance the Divine glory, are called servants of God.

employed by the Holy Spirit to utter unerring truth, which was to be the food, life, and comfort of the Church throughout all succeeding ages. He was a "Prophet," as well as a valiant Captain, and a wise and patriotic Ruler; and was specially inspired, as the "Sweet Singer of Israel," to give fit expression to the highest devotional feeling, and to complete the canon of the Church's praise. The Psalms of David set forth the weightiest and most sublime truths, with all the graces of poetry, so as to excite the imagination, purify and enchain the affections, mould the character, and ennoble the life. They are the "Bible of believing experience;" and throughout are a grand testimony to Christ and His salvation. They contain all the great fundamental truths of the Gospel; and declare in glowing and lofty terms, the personal glory of the Redeemer—His priesthood, righteousness, and atonement; the way of a sinner's justification and sanctification; the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, and the eternal happiness of the redeemed. To be instrumental in making known and transmitting such glorious truths, was to do the most important service, not only to his own, but likewise to all future generations. Ministers of the word, above others, have a similar honour. Called to preach the glorious Gospel, they are to exhibit Christ Jesus, as the sum and centre of all truth—"The way, the truth, and the life"; and to be joint witnesses with "The Spirit of truth," for His mediatorial excellency, and the perfection of His salvation. The truth believed, loved, and obeyed, is the great principle of their own life, the basis of holy character, and joyful hope. Here too is all their power for good. By the truth sinners are enlightened, regenerated, sanctified, and comforted. Ministers should display the truth in its due proportions, and attractive lustre; and should aim to commend it to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God. No work on earth is greater, or more important, than that of displaying, defending, and advancing the truth. Those who faithfully perform it, are co-workers with God, in His designs of mercy and love towards our world—signally benefit their own age, and promote God's praise in future ages. "The living, the living he shall praise thee as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth." (Isaiah xxxviii. 19.)

3. In Labours for the Purity and Upbuilding of the Sanctuary.

Thus was David distinguished above the princes that preceded or followed him. Fervent zeal for God's glory, and ardent affection to the house of God, were with him absorbing emotions. He set his heart early on the house of God, and through a busy and eventful

life, he made preparation in peace and war, to provide a suitable habitation for the God of Israel—a centre of national worship, whence the Divine glory might shine forth, and where spiritual and eternal blessings might be realized. When he was advanced to the throne, this was his first care. He brought up the tabernacle, with befitting honour to the city of David, and proposed the erection of the temple. “When the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies: the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.” (2 Samuel vii. 1, 2.) The last charges of the aged monarch, to his son Solomon, evinced his deep heartfelt concern in this subject. (1 Chr. xxviii. xxix.) Not only was the building of a material structure for the national homage to God, and the establishment and permanence of external ordinances, an object of intense interest to David; he was very jealous too, for the purity of Divine institutions, and he sought to have the order and rites of the sanctuary settled in conformity to Divine prescription. The priests and the Levites were disposed in their courses, the singers and porters were arranged in order. The worship of the Sanctuary was perfected, after the Divine pattern shown in vision, and “the ordinances of David” continued unaltered as long as the Jewish Church existed, and till the material things of the ancient economy gave place to the spiritual realities of the new dispensation. To maintain the Scriptural government of the Church; to preserve purity of worship and ordinances; to carry out impartial, faithful discipline, and to labour that all in the order, and internal arrangements of the house of God be conformed to the revealed pattern, are services of the highest moment, whether as relating to the Divine glory, or the spiritual benefit of man. The Church is a society separated from the world, and its most marked characteristic is visible holiness. “The whole limit round about is most holy: behold this is the law of the house.” (Ezek. xliii. 10.) The strength, the beauty, and efficiency of the Church are connected with its Scriptural order, and with purity of doctrine and ordinances. Ministers are set up as watchmen, and one of their most important functions is by constant vigilance to guard against internal corruption, and against the assaults of the enemy from without. To preserve a strict impartial discipline is always a difficult and trying service; and, hence it is evaded by many who are clothed with office, and called to rule in the Church. Yet is there no work more important. Scripture representations everywhere declare the unspeakable value of

maintaining in the house of God, divinely prescribed order, and purity of administration. The wall of the city is fourfold, the length and the breadth, and the height of it being equal. The Church is built up, and alone appears in its glory, when it is fully established on a Scriptural foundation, and carried forward according to the prescriptions of the Word. "The city shall be built upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof." (Jer. xxx. 18.) Fidelity in maintaining a Scriptural discipline, and preserving the Church's order and purity, brings with it a gracious reward, while unfaithfulness here incurs the disapproval and rejection of Him who dwells in Zion, and whose name is Jealous. "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed with fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Cor. iii. 10-13.) The work of faithful Ministers and Elders, in preserving the purity of the Sanctuary, in a day of formal profession and relaxed discipline, though slighted and condemned by multitudes, is among the highest services to their generation. The Church's bright future will display its value and excellence, and will reflect on those who have performed it, unspeakable honour, as it will confer on others an abundant blessing. As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity. "The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness." (Jer. xxxi. 23.) "In that day there shall be no more Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts. . . . There shall be upon the bells of the horses holiness to the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." (Zec. xiv. 20, 21.)

4. By Bearing Faithful Testimony to the Cause of God, amidst Trials and Conflicts.

To witness in behalf of the Divine character and government, and of all revealed truth, against error, idolatry, and ungodliness, is a chief function of the Church on earth, and an eminent work of Christ's approved servants. The ancient Church of God enjoyed this high and distinctive honour, when it was declared, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." (Isaiah xliii. 10.) The risen Saviour assigned the like office to the Church under the new economy, and to its

ministers, to be discharged in the most extensive sphere, and for which they were to receive special qualifications. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) The most distinguished servants of God in all ages have recognized this appointment, and have regarded it as at once their duty and privilege to be witnesses for precious truth. Hence, testimony-bearing is represented as entering into all their work, and as constituting the chief evidence of the fidelity of their ministry. The Apostle Paul once and again speaks of his service under this designation. "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 24.) "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." (Acts xxvi. 22.) And Peter styles himself "a Witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." (Peter v. 1.) In bearing testimony for truth, Christ's servants "contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints," and wrestle successfully against the "rulers of the darkness of this world," and "spiritual wickedness in high places." They not unfrequently rouse a slumbering age, and fix attention upon great principles which are in danger of being undervalued, and they preserve the precious heritage of truth for transmission to future generations. We are encouraged to perform the work of our own day, and to enter upon the future labours of the Church, as surrounded with "a great cloud of former witnesses," animating and encouraging us, while we run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. During the whole period of the Church's oppression and sufferings under Antichrist, the great work of maintaining the truth, and of promoting Christ's glory, in the earth, is in the hands of the two witnesses, "the two torch-bearers, and the two Anointed ones" that stand before the God of the earth. These are a succession of faithful men, that witness amidst persecution and trial, against error and corruption, and in behalf of revealed truth, and especially in favour of the two grand ordinances that eminently concern the Redeemer's glory—Scriptural civil government and ecclesiastical order.

They are but a small number compared with even those that hold evangelical truth; they witness "in sackcloth," as being poor, contemned, and as mourning for public evils; and when they shall have finished their testimony, they will be slain, their dead bodies lie dishonoured three days and a-half in the streets of the great city. Yet their position is one of special honour, and their work is of the highest importance, not only in their own day, but likewise to the Church and the world in all coming ages. After a brief period, they rise again, and ascend up to heaven in the sight of their enemies. Their resurrection is the signal of Antichrist's certain downfall. In the wide spread and reception of the great principles for which they nobly contended they triumph, and in their final victory, the cause of truth and righteousness becomes universally ascendant. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives to the death." (Rev. xii. 11.) While there have been witnesses for various articles of Divine truth, in all past periods, since the Redeemer's ascension to glory, and these have faithfully served the church and their own generation, the clearest and most complete testimony for the crown-rights of Messiah the Prince, in favour of all revealed truth, and against error and defection of every kind, is that held by the Covenanted confessors and martyrs of the Seventeenth Century. Embracing all that concerns the Redeemer's glory, the Church's liberties and purity, and the welfare of nations, it is destined hereafter to a certain and glorious triumph. By far the most valuable benefit that we can confer upon our own or other generations is, to hold fast, diffuse, and embody in a living and holy practice, the principles of the Saviour's testimony. Contemned as these principles are now, their final ascendancy shall be matter of joyful praise to saints on earth and the dwellers in glory. "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xix. 6.)

Lastly. *The Spirit and Manner of this Service Deserve Notice.*

He serves his generation aright who makes God's Word his rule, and as ordered, directed, and sustained in Providence. It is by "the will of God," in the fullest sense, that all acceptable service is rendered. This is opposed to all work performed according to the low standard of mere human opinion, or for selfish objects, as pride, ambition, or worldly applause. "The love of Christ constraineth us not

to live to ourselves." "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Cor. v. 14 ; Gal. i. 10.) A service "by the will of God" is—*According to His will revealed in precept.* Thus David frequently speaks of his obedience to God, and his service to men, in solemn resolutions, in earnest prayers, and joyful praises. "I will meditate in the precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." "Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage." (Ps. cxix. 15, 32—34.) If ministers would be approved servants of God, and benefit their generation, they are imperatively required to walk by the same rule. The commission which they bear enjoins them to "teach all things whatsoever Christ has commanded," and only as they thus act in all their public service, can they expect the fulfilment of their Master's gracious promise—"Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Walking themselves by the rule of the Word, they are to hold up to others a perfect standard, aiming to bring them fully up to it, and never to lower it to men's inclinations or prejudices. They should exhibit the supreme authority of the Divine Word, and demand that it be accepted by all as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. This is the great instrument of sanctification, and the rule of final judgment. Ministers are therefore to insist on the ready and loving performance of all commanded duty, and on the blameless observance of all Divine institutions.

According to the Divine providential will. He that calls His servants, carves out their work for them, appoints their allotted time of service, gives them the qualifications they need, grants the measure of success that seems fit, and confers at length their reward. When He assigns them their separate tasks and posts of labour, He entrusts them with "talents"—each according to his several ability. Their duty is to "occupy" till He come again to require the final account. They are to work in His vineyard, as under His eye, do faithfully the service assigned them; trade with their Lord's money so as to honour Him by the increase, be content with His wages, and continue till they have done all that He appointed them. In resignation to God's providential will, we serve our generation; and when the work allotted us has been accomplished, an entrance to the joy of our Lord will be its glorious and blissful reward.

And this service must be—

In Prayerful Self denial and Perseverance to the End.

Self-renunciation is indispensable to all right service of Christ, and to

beneficence to fellow-men. Whosoever will be a disciple of Christ must forsake all that he has—deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Him. A public benefactor is required to relinquish ease, to be denied to reputation, and riches, and pleasure; and to be willing to encounter opposition and reproach, and to surrender life itself, that he may do good to all as he has opportunity. He must not consult with flesh or blood; and feeling the high honour of being a servant of Christ, and of living to benefit others, he will enjoy his reward in arduous labour, in the conviction of the excellency of the cause which he maintains, and in anticipating the results in a glorious future. “One soweth and another reapeth, and both he that sows and he that reaps shall rejoice together.” The spirit of self-denial and of persevering diligence has characterized all approved servants of Christ. It was conspicuous in the work of Moses, who by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, and chose affliction with God’s people rather than the pleasures of sin, and afterwards rejected honour and greatness for his own family, while he earnestly sought blessing for Israel. It distinguished David, the man after God’s own heart. It was nobly displayed by Paul, who accounted not his life dear to himself, so that he might finish his course with joy. It has stood forth prominently in the lives and labours of Reformers, and martyrs, and missionaries of past ages. It has been exemplified even to our own day, by Covenanted witnesses, and by faithful ministers of the Word, who have learned to account all but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; and have sought, by diligent perseverance, to be found of their Master at His coming without spot and blameless. The two witnesses testify in sackcloth till they have finished their testimony. The woman is in the wilderness, in a place prepared for her, where they feed her, till the power of the enemy is overthrown.

In such a spirit of self-denial and persevering diligence, the servant of Christ serves his generation in doing whatever his hand finds to do, to promote the temporal and spiritual benefit of fellow-men. An opportunity to do good he regards as an obligation to do it. His time, mental endowments, worldly property and influence, are gifts from the best of Masters, and talents entrusted to him for the advancement of His glory in the earth. Wherever there is human suffering to alleviate, or oppression or wrong to be redressed, he is a ready worker. The evils of slavery, intemperance, and prevailing vice and ungodliness, call forth his loudest protest, and enlist the most strenuous efforts for their removal. In the Church

and the world, in the walks of domestic life, in the narrowest circle, as well as in the widest sphere of public usefulness, there is work to be done for God and for man, that demands constant self-denial and untiring energy. And, as the spiritual benefit of man, in the conversion of souls and the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the earth transcends in importance all other pursuits, this must ever occupy the highest place in the thoughts and affections of every faithful servant of God. This will be first in all his prayers; to this he will willingly devote money and personal effort; this will be the chosen labour of his life. To be instrumental in the conversion of a single soul is a work exceeding in interest and importance all mere human pursuits, as the honour and reward surpass all worldly glory. And to sow seeds which shall afterwards ripen into a harvest of peace and righteousness in the earth, and be a co-worker with God in setting up the kingdom of Christ in the world, is a labour so glorious that the utmost self-denial and devoted diligence are, when seen connected with the blessed end and issue, a state of heart and life to be preferred above every other—in all respects the most pleasing and honourable. The Spirit of grace and supplication is indispensable to such a service. It is the moving principle of all approved and accepted work, as in its continual exercise, it brings down the blessing upon the labour performed. "*Praying and working*" must be the motto of all who would serve their generation by the will of God. None but a self-denied and devoted servant is approved; no service, save that which is distinguished for inflexible purpose and persevering diligence, is accepted. And such features of work for God, and for our generation, exhibit a meetness for the reward promised to fidelity. Self-denial for Christ and His cause, and diligence in His service to the end, bring present joy of heart, and conduct to future felicity. "In keeping his commandments there is a great reward." The Apostle Paul exemplifies strikingly such self-denial, when relinquishing temporal support or labouring in the word, to which he was entitled to claim, he made the "Gospel without charge." "For though," says he, in writing to the Corinthians, "I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." (1 Cor. ix. 19.) Matthew Henry said, near the close of his work on earth, "Men note the sayings of dying men: mine is, that a life spent in the service of God, and in communion with Him, is the most comfortable and pleasant that any can live in this world." Our Lord's assured promise to all his faithful servants is—"There is no man that hath left

house, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and lands, with persecutions ; and in the world to come, eternal life." (Mark. x. 29. 30.)

II. HIS DISTINCTION AND HONOUR IN DEATH.

The close of David's service, and his distinction in death, are beautifully declared by two emphatic expressions in the text—1, "He fell on sleep," or more simply, "he slept;" and 2, he "was laid," or added "to his fathers;" or, according to the phrase frequently applied to the state in death of servants of God, under the Old Testament—"He was gathered to his fathers." These brief, but comprehensive statements describe the happy end of life of servants of Christ, and a chief part of their blissful reward. Separated from others by gracious calling, and distinguished in life by character and works approved of God, the righteous enjoy privileges in death, peculiar and excellent. However various the time and circumstances of their removal, faithful servants of God have yet blessings in life's closing scene, and in their entrance into the world of spirits, which render their departure joyful and desirable—"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." (Phil. i. 21.; Num. xxiii. 10.)

Let faithful servants of God die when and how they may ; to them,
Death is divested of its sting and terror.

Believers, united to Christ and interested in His work, have death conquered, and are freed forever from its power. The penalty of the violated law was fully borne by the Surety, and the curse completely removed. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" "that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Gal. iii. 13 ; Heb. ii. 14, 15.) The Saviour, as the Covenant Head of His people, endured in their stead all that Divine justice could inflict as the punishment of their sins, and paid the full price of their redemption. He suffered "the death of deaths," and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. Through His atoning sacrifice, those for whom he obeyed and suffered are delivered forever from death under the curse, and the natural death to which they are exposed is conquered and unstinged, and is rendered to them the pathway to eternal life. The new life to which they are raised, through the

power of Christ's resurrection, extends to the body as well as the soul. The life of Christ is in both, and His promise secures to the whole person freedom from the second death. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "He that believeth in me shall never die." Believers, when they die, only pass through the "valley of the shadow of death," and the promised presence of the Saviour with them raises them above the fear of evil. As when the ark of the covenant was borne aloft, and the priests' feet touched the waters, the Jordan was dried up; so the ransomed pass over in safety the river of death under the conduct of the Captain of Salvation. The sting of death being taken away, its power to hurt is broken, and believers are at length delivered from its fear. To them, the "king of terrors" becomes an angel of peace and joy. Their death is a "departure" to be with Christ, and an "entrance" ministered to them into His everlasting kingdom. (Phil. i. 23; 2 Peter i. 11.) Here, as in many other passages, the death of saints and servants of Christ is designated a "sleep." Of one whom the Saviour restored to life, he said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." To His disciples He declared, in words of comfort and love, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps." (John xi. 11.) When Stephen had finished his testimony, and prayed for his persecutors, "he fell asleep." (Acts xii. 60.) This honour have all the saints; for they are named "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 18.) And this privilege in death is connected with their future resurrection in glory. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." (1 Thes. iv. 13.) How lovely and expressive is this image! With everything frightful and terrific removed, the faithful servant pillows his head on the bosom of Christ in death, and sleeps in Him till the glorious morn of the resurrection. Need we wonder that the primitive Christians so often soothed their sorrows, amid persecution and bereavement, by resting on this affecting image, and inscribing in the simple records of the Catacombs, "Sleeping in Jesus!"

It is rest when appointed work and labours have been accomplished.

David did not fall asleep till he had served his generation by the will of God. The servant of God rests only when the good work wrought in him is perfected, and when all the work for which he was raised up is finished. He is immortal till his work is done, and the moment his allotted service is completed, he rests from his labours and is welcomed to his blissful reward. As to Daniel, the man greatly beloved, so every faithful servant is commanded to labour in hope to the end, and is guaranteed at

last a blissful rest and reward. "Go thy way till the end be ; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Dan. xii. 13.) The sleep of the righteous in death is rest complete from toilsome labour, change, anxiety, and conflict. They enter into peace, and rest in their beds. All enemies are overcome ; all disturbing elements are hushed to peace ; trials are at an end ; and fears and sorrows have for ever fled away.

"Servant of God, well done !
Rest from thy lov'd employ ;
The battle o'er, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

Conscious activity and enjoyment with Christ.

The figurative term used respecting the believer's state in death, when the idea of inactivity is suggested, respects the body. The saints that have walked in their uprightness, rest in "*their beds.*" Their bodies are "still united to Christ," and rest where the Lord lay, as in a prepared and perfumed chamber, till the day of His glorious appearance. When sleep is applied figuratively to express the state of the believers' souls in death, it indicates only the opposite of pain, anxiety, and trouble. The sanctified spirit, disengaged from its mortal coil, does not, as some errorists allege, sleep unconscious from the time of death till the resurrection. The active powers of the soul are in exercise, however impaired or borne down at times by weakness, up till the moment of dissolution, and occasionally display unwonted vigour. The ruling passion is strong in death. "As the outward man decayeth, the inward man waxeth stronger day by day." Analogy confirms the hope of immortality—that the powers of the mind that could act without the bodily organs, and that were vigorous and active up to the moment of death, are neither destroyed nor suspended when the momentous change has taken place. The mind and its faculties are not changed by death ; and character, made up of thoughts, affections, volitions, and habits, remains unaffected by the stroke which changes the countenance, and severs the connexion between the soul and body. What reason holds forth as a strong presumption, Divine revelation makes matter of assured confidence and joyful hope. The saints in death *depart* to be with Christ ; when *absent from the body*, they are immediately *present with the Lord*. They are with Him in paradise—they walk with Him in white. The Bride, the Lamb's wife, is brought to the king, with gladness and rejoicing. They see Him as He is, as they are completely transformed into His likeness.

They behold "His face in righteousness;" and are "satisfied with His likeness." When God is styled the God of the ancient patriarchs, He is said not to be the God of the dead, but of the living—implying not only the certainty of their future resurrection, but likewise that their glorified souls were living and active, while their bodies were sleeping in the dust. The saints in heaven, even before the resurrection, rest not day nor night—actively and incessantly employed in triumphant praise; yet in reference to their bliss complete, they are said to rest in the glorious perfections of Godhead, and in lofty fellowship with Christ, and in Abraham's bosom. Every view which the Scriptures give of the heavenly state, represents the souls of believers after death as made *perfect* in all their powers, as well as in enjoyments fitted to minister the highest satisfaction. An unconscious state of suspended powers is completely opposed to beatific vision and ecstatic pleasure. Nor are the saints in glory engaged in passive praise. The talents conferred upon them on earth, and the services in which they were engaged, and in which they found delight, were their training for loftier services in the kingdom of their Father. The servant who was faithful with his lord's money, is made "ruler over many things." What the exalted employments of the redeemed in glory will be, we may be unable now to declare. But we cannot doubt that in the dominion which they share with Christ, and in His everlasting kingdom, there will be abundant room for the exercise of all the enlarged powers of the saints; there will be employments suited to the diversified state of all approved servants of God, in which, while their faculties expand, they will experience inconceivable happiness, and advance the glory of Heaven's King for ever.

Lofty Communion with God, and fellow saints throughout eternity.

David, when he had finished his work on earth, fell on sleep—he rested in peace, and was "added," or gathered "to his fathers." This latter expression is in frequent use, by the sacred writers in the Old Testament, to declare the state of the saints at death. The Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are each said to be "gathered to his fathers." (Gen. xxv. 8, xxxv. 29, xlix. 33, l. 3.) So were Aaron and Moses gathered, when by a Divine command, they were called to leave the camp, and their appointed work was ended. (Deut. xxxii. 49, 50.) The same honour was conferred upon Josiah who "Did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," "And walked in the way of David, his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or the left." (2 Kings xxii. 20.) This

adding to departed saints of a former age, cannot refer to their dust commingling in the grave, since in this there is no distinction in the lot of a common humanity. Besides, in some of the instances referred to, the gathering to fathers is marked distinctly as separate from their burial. Abraham was interred in the cave of Macpelah, and not in the tombs of his ancestors in Mesopotamia. Jacob's burial in the land of Canaan, took place forty days after he was gathered to his people, when he died in Egypt. Neither Aaron nor Moses slept in dust with their kindred; since the one was buried alone on Mount Hor, and for the other, God prepared an unknown grave, when he died, according to the Divine commandment, on Mount Pisgah. David too was buried in the Sepulchre of the Kings, and not with his fathers in Bethlehem. The rest of his body, in the tomb, seems to be referred to, when it is said "he fell on sleep;" while the felicity of his disembodied spirit is beautifully depicted, when it is declared he was "added to his fathers." The idea is vivid and enrapturing. The honour expressed in this simple phrase transcends all earthly glory. Believers in death are brought home to God in glory. Separated from society on earth, they are gathered to the Father's house in heaven, and are introduced to the full fellowship of the saints, made perfect. The family of the redeemed in glory, is continually receiving accessions from the Church on earth. When the faithful servant has done the will of God, and benefitted his generation, he is taken to a higher communion, and called to a more ennobling service. As a main article of his creed, every Christian can say "I believe in the Communion of Saints;" and this privilege, however sweet and sustaining on earth, is realized in the full extent of its glory only in heaven. Servants of Christ having finished the work assigned them, and endured their allotted trials, sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. They are added to the hundred and forty-four thousand that stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, having their Father's name written on their foreheads. On earth, they "walked with God;" and when they die, "they are not," for God "has taken them." While saints on earth mourn the breach made in their fellowship; while the Church, and the generation in which he lived, sorrow that the benefit which they enjoyed from the labours and prayers of a servant of Christ, is at an end; to himself the gain is unspeakable. His sanctification complete, he is fitted for full communion with God, and glorified saints, and holy angels. There is nothing to mar this blissful fellowship, either in himself or others—his companions in glory. No imperfect views;

no alienation of feeling; no interruption of blissful fellowship, for ever. The saints in glory are gathered very near to the glorious Centre of life and joy, whence emanate continually, enlivening influences, to gladden their hearts, and elevate their intercourse. While they have communion one with another, their fellowship too is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. They are "Jewels," polished, and set in the Redeemer's crown; reflecting each in his place, and in different measure, His glory, and enhancing their common felicity. To faithful servants of Christ, who have laboured on earth together, and have shared in each other's gifts and trials, the thought of the perfect communion of saints in heaven, has frequently ministered support and the sweetest consolation. Beza, the Swiss Reformer, when tried with the troubles of the Church, and waiting for his own release, spoke with delight of the prospect of re-union with his beloved Calvin, and of conversing with him of the mysteries of redemption in the heavenly kingdom. And this, too, animated not a few of our Covenanted martyrs, as they trod a scaffold, and sealed their testimony with their blood, when, in parting from time, they triumphantly exclaimed, "Farewell, sweet fellowship meetings, and days of the Son of man; welcome communion of saints in glory; welcome life eternal." An eminent part of the reward of faithful ministers in death is this blissful communion with brethren and fellow-saints in glory. When added to their fathers, they are admitted to near intercourse with prophets, apostles, and martyrs of Christ. Fathers, brethren, and sons in the ministry, who laboured, and wept, and prayed together, and who were at times separated by distance, or difference of judgment, in death are gathered into a holy, exalted communion, never to part company again. The joy of re-union and recognition, when they meet before the throne, and see eye to eye the wonders of the Lamb's glory and of completed redemption, will surpass their highest present conceptions, and swell their loftiest praises. Ministers and their people that served the Lord on earth, and were united in the bond of holy affection, will, in being gathered to their fathers, be brought to the sweetest fellowship in their Father's house in glory. A believing, working people, are a faithful minister's support and joy on earth—they will be his "crown of rejoicing" in the day of the Lord Jesus. Gathered as jewels to shine in the Mediator's crown, they will rejoice in him who told them of the Saviour's love on earth, and espoused them to one glorious husband; and he, exulting in the high honour and reward conferred, will exclaim—"Behold

I, and the children whom God has given me." This is the perfect felicity of faithful and approved servants of God. The whole family in heaven and earth, named after Christ, are gathered into one ecstatic and eternal communion. They who sowed, and they who reap, rejoice for ever together. In words which too often express a delusive expectation when applied to mere human friendships, but which are beautifully appropriate to the re-union in heaven of the righteous—

"A few short years of sorrow passed,
We reach that happy shore,
Where death divided friends at last
Shall meet to part no more."

We notice, lastly—

III. THE CHARACTER AND LABOURS OF OUR DECEASED BROTHER, AND SOME OF THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH HIS LIFE AND REMOVAL ARE DESIGNED TO FURNISH.

Many of the views which have been presented of the life, death, and future reward of a faithful public servant of God, have a ready application to our departed brother. In adverting to his character and labours, we desire to speak with becoming reserve, aware that it is not the province of a witness for Christ to employ flattering words, in reference either to the living or the dead. We regard ourselves called only to commend the grace of God in him, and to notice briefly what we have known personally of his labours and trials in the ministry—of the support which the Master whom he loved granted him in death—and of the evidence furnished of gracious approval and reward. From the contiguity of our pastoral charges, from frequent fraternal intercourse respecting the public interests of the Church, during nearly the whole time of his ministry, and from visiting him often, and sympathizing with him amid the trials of his latter years, I enjoyed opportunities of observing the prominent features of his character, and of witnessing the Lord's dealings with him, above most of his brethren in the ministry. A cursory notice may suffice to exhibit the principal events of his public life, and the marked traits of his character.

Of his early life, there are few incidents that require a particular record. He was born at MEALOUGH, in this county, in 1798. His parents, who had all along a character of piety and moral integrity, forsook the larger section of the Presbyterian Church from thorough conviction, and embraced the principles of the Covenanted Testimony. Un-

der the parental roof, he reaped in youth the benefits of family worship, and careful religious training. He was led in boyhood to the *fellowship prayer-meeting*, and had set before him, as the most impressive instructor, a consistent godly example. Several of the nearest relatives of his parents, were distinguished for a high measure of religious intelligence, and for fervent attachment to the cause of the Second Reformation. Under these favourable influences, our departed brother, there is reason to believe, was savingly impressed with the great truths of the Gospel in early youth; and in him we have another instance of the blessing flowing from faithful parental instruction and example. Some of his school-fellows, who survive him, speak of him as even in boyhood, distinguished for gravity, sincerity, and exemplary conduct.

My acquaintance with Mr. Graham commenced at college, though from his being my senior as a student by several years, and from his reserved manner, our intercourse at that period was but partial. I knew, however, that he was attentive and conscientious in his studies. His presence was solemn and commanded respect; and while he was cordially esteemed and loved by those who enjoyed his friendship, he was worthy to be held up as an example to other students. When I attended the Theological Hall, a few years after him, he was often spoken of by members of the church in Scotland, and by the venerable Professor, with loving interest and high esteem.

Mr. Graham was licensed to preach the Gospel in 1824. After preaching with acceptance in various congregations of the Church, he accepted the call of Baliesmill congregation, and was ordained here as a minister of the word and its first pastor, in the autumn of 1826. He was thus above thirty-six years a public labourer in the Redeemer's vineyard. More than a generation of his cotemporaries have passed away—a very small number yet remain of those who witnessed his settlement in this place. To those who knew his worth, and enjoyed the invaluable privileges of his instructions and example, it is necessary to enlarge in describing the peculiar characteristics of his public ministrations. His work and spirit, as a servant of Christ, will long be remembered by those with whom he had fellowship. Let these be his lasting memorial—"He being dead, yet speaketh."

His preaching was characterized by *faithfulness* and *power*. In his pulpit exhibitions, there was a clear and full unfolding of the glorious plan of salvation, in the statement and illustration of the doctrines of

free sovereign grace. The everlasting covenant, the person, offices, and character of the Mediator, His finished atonement, the way of a sinner's pardon and acceptance, and the work of the Spirit in the believer's sanctification, were themes on which he ever delighted to dwell; and these he discussed so as to bring out the fulness and excellency of Divine revelation, and to evidence that these glorious truths had engaged his diligent study, and that they were the food and comfort of his heart. The messages which he delivered, he spoke as an ambassador of Christ, —regarding his hearers as sinners, and in danger of wrath, he besought them as in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. His discourses were judicious and lucid in arrangement and illustration, discriminating and searching; and he ever aimed in the faithful application of the Word, at leading those who waited upon his ministrations to ready obedience to the authority of Christ, and to practical godliness.

His public ministrations were moreover distinguished for the prominence given to a *Covenanted Testimony*. Both in the pulpit and in his more private pastoral labours, he omitted no opportunity of lifting up a standard in behalf of precious and despised truth. Perceiving clearly the transcendent excellency and importance of the doctrine of the Mediator's universal Headship, and the wide range of its application, he assigned to it a chief place in his public teaching. With eminent fidelity, he testified for "CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT," and sought always to present this central article, in its legitimate applications. The Scriptural character of civil government, and the supreme authority of the Word of God, in its application to men in power, and to things civil as well as ecclesiastical, were subjects with him of distinct testimony-bearing, and on which he gave no uncertain sound. He regarded these principles as essentially connected with the advancement of the Redeemer's glory, and with the best interests of nations and rulers, as well as with the welfare and extension of the Church of Christ; and he studied, therefore, on all fitting occasions to elucidate and establish them. In an honest and uncompromising manner, he testified against every invasion of the crown rights of Messiah the Prince, against all error and corruption in the Church, and against every system, civil and ecclesiastical, that was unscriptural in character, and that refused entire practical subjection to the reigning Redeemer. Thus did he co-operate in what has been so appropriately called "the hard and rough work of bringing God into His own world." * In these labours, he eminently "served his generation by

the will of God," and maintained the honourable, but always difficult position, of a faithful witness for principles which, though very generally despised and contemned, are of high intrinsic value, and of the utmost relative importance.

As an instance of the fidelity of our departed brother in adhering to a full Covenanted testimony, may be mentioned the position which he maintained in the discussions which took place in the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in this country, between twenty and thirty years ago, and which issued in a painful division in the body. Regarding the Church's testimony as being throughout Scriptural, and as so "bound up and sealed," that no article can be impugned, or denied, without endangering the whole, he was, throughout the whole controversy, firm, decided, and unswerving; and this when he was called to a painful separation from fathers in the ministry, and when he was left alone as the only minister in the Presbytery of which he was a member, in holding fast the doctrine of the Reformers and Scottish martyrs concerning the duty of the Christian magistrate in matters of religion. Immediately after this division, he was called by the unanimous choice of his brethren to the responsible office of Clerk of Synod—the duties of which he discharged, till within a few years of his death, in such a way as to afford the highest satisfaction, not only to all the members of Synod, but likewise to the whole Church.

Towards this congregation he ever acted as a faithful and devoted pastor. His spirit was that of heart-felt love, and earnest concern for their welfare. This was frequently expressed to me and others, in words, as it was evinced in sacrifices, and self-denied actions, in some instances carried to a culpable excess. He sought "not yours, but you." It "was in his heart to live and die with you." To him it was owing, that under the blessing of the Head of the Church, the congregation, which on his settlement, as its first minister, was weak, was built up, and increased; and enjoyed a lengthened period of peace, and comparative prosperity.

The *trials* which our brother was called to endure, require a brief notice. In the providence of the Mediator, and the dispensation of the grace of the Covenant, all approved servants of God have to endure trials of various kinds. "Through much tribulation we must inherit the Kingdom." When the Apostle Paul was called to be a chosen vessel, to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles, it was shown how great things,

not he would *do*, but “ he must *suffer* for his name’s sake.” (Acts. ix. 16.) In what Luther termed Christ’s *three* schools—the word, the Spirit, and the temptation—He trains His ministers. Thus their graces are tested, and strengthened ; they are taught dependence on their beloved Master, and made acquainted with His word. Thus they learn to comfort them that are in trouble ; and are made meet for the heavenly rest. Our beloved brother, during the last five or six years of his life, laboured under considerable bodily weakness, and was thus laid aside at times from pastoral work, and from active ministerial labour. He was besides called to suffer internal trials. These, on many occasions of personal intercourse, he spoke of to me. I could not withhold from him my deepest sympathy, as I esteemed it a privilege to bear in any measure the burden of an afflicted brother. The mental distress which he endured, arose partly from constitutional temperament ; in part, too, from his views of the magnitude and importance of the ministerial work, and an overpowering feeling of not having realized its great objects ; and such feelings were doubtless intensified by the temptations of the great Adversary seeking occasion against a servant of Christ, and aiming to discourage him, and thus to hinder the success of the Lord’s work in his hands. The internal conflict was at times severe, as it was long continued. But the Master whom our brother faithfully served, sustained him in these trials—made His grace sufficient for him, and perfected His own strength, in his weakness. At the worst, when reduced to great bodily infirmity, and the cloud rested heavily on the mind, he was enabled to continue instant in prayer, both in private, and in the family. At times, too, he desired earnestly to resume his ministerial work, and to preach again the Gospel of salvation, from which he drew all his comfort and hope for eternity. This desire he actually endeavoured to accomplish, by appearing in the pulpit, for two or three Sabbaths in succession, in the Spring of the year in which he died. Though labouring under observable bodily weakness, yet this, his last appearance in public, gave clear indications of the same delight in the Saviour, and in the glorious scheme of gratuitous salvation, and of the same enlarged devotional spirit, which characterized his days of ministerial vigour.

At the close of life, the Lord remembered to His servant His covenant faithfulness and love. In answer to many prayers—his own, and other’s on his behalf—the cloud that had oppressed his spirit was at length cleared away, and the latter end was peace. Among his last charges to his beloved partner, the faithful companion of his joys and sorrows, were

directions to do good, and to seek the advancement of the Redeemer's cause in the earth. And shortly before he entered into his rest, he bore a joyful testimony, that his beloved Lord had assured him of forgiven sin, and full acceptance. From this, till he entered into his Master's joy, he seemed to have withdrawn all thoughts from the external world, and was occupied wholly in prayer. Thus did he serve faithfully, lovingly, and laboriously, his generation, by the will of God, as he endured the afflictions of the Gospel, for his Master's sake and by his grace. He now sleeps in Jesus, and is gathered to his fathers. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

CONCLUSION.

The record of the life, public service, trials, and reward of a faithful minister of Christ, presents to the Church, and especially to the flock, over which he presided, some important practical lessons. With a voice from the tomb, and from the world of Spirits, survivors are addressed, and the precepts of the word, and the blessed hopes of the Gospel are brought before the mind, with that solemn impression, that a very near connexion with eternity is fitted to inspire. We notice briefly, the import of the Providence that has removed from this congregation a loved pastor, and the Spiritual improvement which the Head of the Church designs you to make of this dispensation.

First of all, you should consider solemnly *the blessing conferred, in giving you a faithful pastor*—in continuing him so long among you, and how you have valued, and improved this signal benefit. Your deceased pastor was an ascension gift of the Redeemer. He was sent to you as an ambassador of Heaven's King; and his preaching was an earnest beseeching you, "as in Christ's stead," to be reconciled to God. He was a "star in the Saviour's right hand," the reflected "glory of Christ," and a messenger of the Church. He served you faithfully, and laboriously, by the will of God, according to the rule of the word, which he carefully studied and applied; and as he was qualified, directed, and sustained in providence. As a congregation, you enjoyed no common privilege in the labours, example, and prayers of such a minister; and his continuance among you, till more than a generation had passed away, and during a period of shakings in the Church, and varied trials in the land, you should regard as the fruit of the peculiar favour of Zion's exalted King. Distinguishing privilege implies special responsibility, which the Lord addresses you, in the view of precious past privileges. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it;" it behoves you solemnly to inquire, as a congregation, and as individuals, what fruit you have brought forth after much cultivation. The Lord of the vineyard comes to make a close inspection; and according as a people, favoured with the plentiful and precious means of grace, abound in fruits of righteousness, or

as they are barren and unfruitful, so will He bestow showers of blessings, or leave them desolate and forsaken. Under a deep and abiding sense of the high value of the gift which you so long enjoyed from the hands of the ascended Redeemer, you should hear with attention, and lay to heart the Apostolic injunction—"Remember them which had the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Hebrews xiii. 7, 8.)*

Again, the providence of the Redeemer, equally with His word, calls us to be *His devoted servants*. For this we are redeemed with His precious blood, and this is at once our privilege and unspeakable honour. Bought with a price, we are called by the Saviour's grace that we may serve Him in newness of life. As constrained by the love of Christ, believers live not to themselves, but to Him who died and rose again. To serve God in spirit and in truth is their high calling and their honourable employment. With such a vocation, the Saviour guarantees fellowship with Himself, and the highest privilege and dignity. "Where I am, there shall my servant be. Him that serveth me, will my Father honour." There are none who are devoted followers of Christ who do not give evidence of it, by labouring to do good in their generation. Their obligations to Him who called them, equally with their sacred vows, urge them to bring a revenue of glory to Christ, by seeking to make known His salvation, exemplify His character, and to gather jewels for His Mediatorial crown. In the great work of the Christian life, you are required to copy the example of Christ, and to follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The removal of a faithful minister loudly speaks to surviving brethren, and to the flock among whom he laboured, inciting them to self-denied exertion, and to entire dedication to the service of Christ. God's message to Israel, when Moses, their devoted leader, was gone, was—"My servant Moses is dead; now, therefore, arise and go over this Jordan." They were thus summoned to new labours, and invited to untried and arduous work, as they were solemnly reminded that this is the only right improvement of the death of a man of God, and the way, too, of the enjoyment of future privilege and blessing. The death of an endeared pastor calls you, his flock that remain, to do more for the cause of Christ than you have ever yet done; and, following his example, to labour by self-denied effort to advance the truth, maintain the church's purity, and promote her prosperity; to bear a full and faithful testimony in behalf of Christ's royal rights, and against prevailing error and defection, and to do good to all men as you have opportunity. Our deceased brother expressed regret that, owing to his weakness and trials, he had

* The exhortation obviously refers to departed public servants of God, and should therefore be rendered—not as in our version—in the past time. The translation of Howson and Conybeare expresses forcibly the import of the original: "Remember them that were your leaders, who spoke to you the word of God; look upon the end of their life, and follow the example of their faith."

not engaged with his people in the important work of solemn public Covenants. It were surely befitting to you, the people whom he loved and for whose good he assiduously laboured, to make preparation for engaging soon in this honourable service. Thus might you experience a higher measure of the spirit of true devotedness, and realize the blessing that has ever followed faithful covenant dedication. Let me remind you further, that each of you, in whatever position and with whatever talents entrusted, is bound to serve his own generation by the will of God. This will be the evidence of your love to Christ; thus will you recommend religion, live as public benefactors, and attain to a joyful hope in death. It is a *present* service, to which you are called; your own generation, and not a future race, you are first of all to seek to benefit. You are neither to withhold money, nor personal effort, nor example, with the purpose and expectation, often deceptive and vain, of leaving at death worldly substance for benevolent objects; nor to rest satisfied with the prospect of the spread and increase of religion in future times. Aim, on the contrary, to do all the good in your power while you live to advance the cause of truth, to benefit the Church, and to purify and elevate human society. In such a work the humblest follower of Christ may take a part, and thus glorify his Master, be a co-worker with Him, and share His honour. Thus, too, you will sow the seed of a future glorious harvest, and become instruments of enlargement to the Church, and of blessing to the nations. In Christians being devoted to Christ and to His work in the world, they become first fruits to God and the Lamb; and the grand promise to Abraham is fulfilled—"In thee and thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This subject, moreover, exhibits *the ground of full confidence in Christ, and the support and comfort that flow from Him in the season of trial.* While the most faithful servants of Christ have a limited service, and are not allowed to continue "by reason of death," their exalted Master lives for ever. Like David, when their allotted work on earth is done, they are gathered to their fathers and "see corruption"; but "He whom God raised up, sees no corruption." The most devoted men can only directly serve their own generation by the will of God, but the risen Redeemer serves all generations. His work is for all times and places, and under the law of perpetual progress, it goes forward till His purposes of love and mercy have been fully accomplished, and the glory of the Godhead, in connexion with man's completed salvation, is fully displayed in the bliss of eternity. This living and life-giving Redeemer is the grand object of assured confidence, and the inexhaustible source of all consolation. He sustains unchangeably every endearing relation, and can supply the place of departed friends however worthy and beloved. To a bereaved flock, He is the Chief Shepherd—to a sorrowing widow He declares, "Thy Maker is thy husband;" and to all who mourn breaches by death, He proclaims—"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me,

shall never die." (John xi. 25, 26.) Let the bereaved ones here, go to this unchangeable and compassionate Saviour. As John's disciples, when they had buried their master, let them "tell Jesus;" unbosom to Him their sorrows, tell Him their loss, their weakness, their wants, and repose in His love and faithfulness for all support and comfort. In the hour of sorrow and sadness, we should go near Him; and at the grave of friendship, we should take hold of His covenant, and embrace Him as All and in all. He knows perfectly all your condition, and sympathizes with all your trials. To His infinite mercy and everlasting love we commit you, in the earnest desire that you may be led by this solemn bereavement to experience His gracious presence, and all-sufficient support. May you hear His own loving voice speaking to your hearts—"Said I not unto you, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (John xi. 40; Is. xli. 10)

Finally—This subject admonishes us to *prepare for the believer's sleep in death*, and for *communion with Christ and the saints in glory*. If we would die the death of the righteous, we must lead his life. It is after a life of active service, and toilsome labour, that believers enter into rest and sleep in Jesus. With oil in the vessels, and a trimmed lamp, the wise virgins go forth to meet the Bridegroom at His coming, and are welcomed to be with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let us, brethren, improve this affecting dispensation, by seeking new supplies of grace from the fulness of Christ, and by making actual preparation for the Saviour's coming. Built up in the faith and hope of His glorious appearance, we should look for and hasten to the day of the Lord. "Give diligence, that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless." Cultivate communion with the saints now, as you expect to be gathered to believing fathers, and the glorious company of the redeemed at death. Live so that you may cherish the assured hope of being "a crown of rejoicing" to a faithful pastor at last, and of sharing with him blissful fellowship in glory. Yet a little while, and believing servants of Christ will have done with the earth, its sins and conflicts, and sorrows, and with the Church militant, and its imperfect membership, and manifold conflicts and trials. They shall be called to a higher and more ennobling service in the upper sanctuary, and be advanced to joys full and unending. "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." "The inhabitant shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (Is. xxv. 8; xxxiii. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 58.)