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THE BAPTIST PREACHER.

New Series.

January, 1851.

No. 1.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD:

A Sermon, by Rev. J. P. TUSTIN, Savannah, Georgia.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures,
nor the power of God."—Matt. xxii: 29.

This language was addressed to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead. Their error consisted in rejecting a truth which they could not understand, because the evidence by which it was proved, did not come within the notice of their senses. This disposition of mind, was the great sin of the Sadducees, and all the other Jews, with respect to Jesus Christ. They fully believed that the Old Testament prophecy had predicted the Messiah, who should come in due time, and set up a powerful kingdom. But they had no other ideas of a splendid kingdom, than what they had known of the ancient dynasties of Egypt, Babylon, Persia and Greece; or what they now saw exhibited in the magnificent empire of Rome around them. And they had no higher conception of a deliverer of their country, than the heroic character which they associated with Moses, Alexander, Cyrus or Cæsar. And because Christ and his kingdom did not conform to these pre-conceived impressions which their selfish passions had prompted them to conceive, they rejected him as an impostor, and shut their eyes against the evidence of their ancient Scriptures which testified of Him.

For the same reason that the Jews rejected Christ, and the Sadducees denied the resurrection, have men in all ages disbelieved religious truths, which are not palpably addressed to their senses. In fact, some men claim the privilege of

receiving religious truths by a method of proof in which no religious truth can be received; and if they will believe nothing but what can be demonstrated by an appeal to their senses, they must renounce the Bible altogether, and every particular truth which it reveals.

It is my object in the present discourse, to exhibit the foundation on which the evidence stands for our belief in the doctrine of the resurrection. By a reference to the words of our text, the subject naturally suggests the following order of illustration: and it is therefore proper for us to consider—

I. The legitimate extent in which human reason and tradition may be regarded as the foundation of our belief in the doctrine of the Resurrection.

II. The true and only infallible sources of evidence on this subject, are the Christian Scriptures.

III. The efficient cause of the Resurrection, is the power of God.

I. It is a remarkable fact, that a belief in a future state of being has characterized all races and nations of human beings, in all ages of the world. This belief has assumed a great variety of forms, some people denying particular matters and forms of faith maintained by others, and by the generality of mankind. But whatever variety, or even opposition of opinion on particular points, has been held by different nations at different times, there are certain fundamental principles of belief which are so universal amongst mankind, in all races and ages, that they have been regarded as the result of original innate ideas implanted in the constitution of human nature, or of traditions incorporated into the opinions and customs of men, which they have received from one common source at the beginning, and which have been carried and scattered wherever human beings have been found since the dispersion of mankind after the flood. These fundamental convictions concerning the future state, relate chiefly to the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the nature and duration of future rewards and punishments.

The immortality of the soul, is the first principle that lies at the basis of all belief concerning the future state, and is a truth that seems scarcely ever to have been obliterated

from the traditions of any people. The belief in a future state of rewards and punishments is inseparably involved in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The traditional belief of both of these truths seems to have been almost universal, at all times, and among all people concerning whom we have any authentic historical testimony. And there has been much less variety or opposition in the opinions held on these two truths, than on most of the other points of what is called natural religion. The resurrection of the body was much less clearly apprehended, either by the ancient Hebrews, or by enlightened heathen nations, than the simple truth of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments.

It is indeed impossible to estimate how much the heathen nations of antiquity and all the modern races of people who have sprung from them, were indebted to the Hebrew Scriptures for many of the sentiments which entered into their systems of faith. These ancient Jewish writings were scattered wherever the Jews were exiled or had traveled; and all the nations of antiquity, from the times of Moses, had access to them. And hence the enlightened sages of Egypt, and subsequently the learned men of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Medes, and still later, those among the Greeks and Romans,—these all had the readiest facilities for deriving impressions from the Hebrew Scriptures, and appending them in modified forms to their own invented systems of religious belief. The nations of Western Asia and Europe, which sprung directly from these ancient kingdoms, or which were in communication with them, could all have received their traditional impressions of religion in the same way, by borrowing them originally from the revealed religion of the Jews. But whether the belief of these truths among all who have ever held them, has been derived by tradition from the original inspired revelation to the Hebrew people, or whether they are truths inwrought into our very constitution, as original, innate ideas, which form a part of our nature itself, it is certain that the belief of an immortal existence, connected with future retribution, has been as universal as our race.

But the belief concerning the resurrection of the body, appears always to have been held with much less distinctness, and with a wider diversity of forms. Amongst the

earliest heathen nations, especially the Egyptians, the resurrection of the body was identified with the immortality of the soul. Hence originated the idea of embalming the bodies of the dead, so that the original tenement inhabited by the spirit might be in a state of entire soundness when the soul should come to re-animate it. This gave rise to the structure of the pyramids, for the safe keeping of the bodies and treasures of the royal dead. Amongst other and later nations, the idea of the resurrection was connected with the notion of the transmigration of souls; and they believed that the spirit of the departed, after passing through a succession of many different animals, would finally return and re-inhabit the body which it originally animated. This same impression is held by many nations of the East, and by heathen tribes in other parts of the world.

Amongst the more enlightened nations, both ancient and modern, the doctrine of the resurrection has been held in much greater disrepute than that of the immortality of the soul. The philosophers among the ancient Greeks and Romans, looked upon the body as the prison and degradation of the soul; and their conception of a future state, so far as they had any distinct belief, was, that the spirit would exist apart from all connection with any bodily vehicle, through which it would act and manifest itself. The same vague, but general impression, exists among multitudes of persons in modern times, and in Christian lands; and the doctrine of the resurrection, accordingly, has been the subject of more doubt and scepticism among free-thinkers, than almost any other point of revealed religion. One reason why so much doubt, dissatisfaction and uncertainty have been felt on this subject, has evidently been owing to the absurd representations which many Christian advocates of this doctrine have adduced in support of it. Their conceptions have been so gross, and their interpretation of Scripture so inconsistent with well known and universally admitted facts, that it is impossible to obtain the consent of men's minds to what is opposed to the clearest convictions of enlightened reason, and the irresistible testimony of unquestionable facts. No truth in revealed religion is against the dictates of enlightened reason; it may be *higher* than reason, and *beyond* it; it may be *above* and in *advance* of individual *experience*, but it cannot be at *variance* with those

laws of truth which the God of nature and of grace has impressed upon all his works. It is for these reasons, that it is so important to understand the true basis on which the doctrine of the resurrection is supported, apart from all the hypotheses and reasonings which men have adopted, either for maintaining or rejecting it.

The error of the Sadducees, for which our Saviour reproved them, was, that they rejected the belief in the resurrection, without considering the testimony of the *Scriptures*, and without taking into account the *power of God*. The error of the Pharisees, who maintained this doctrine, carried them to the other extreme, which led them to form notions of the resurrection so absurd and inconsistent, that it is not strange the Sadducees and others were repelled by them. They imagined that Judea was the centre of the whole earth,—that the earth was a vast extended level plain, reaching indefinitely, without end,—that the future kingdom of their Messiah would be a magnificent earthly empire, embracing all the nations of the earth; and that Jerusalem would be the splendid metropolis of this unbounded earthly kingdom. And they seemed to believe, that at the resurrection, the dead would be revived with the same bodies which they had laid aside in dying, and would hold the same relations, as individuals, families and societies, which they had held in the organization of the *human* society, of which they had formed a part before they died. It was this which gave so much point and plausibility to the objection of the Sadducees, when they asked the Saviour, whose wife, at the resurrection, the woman would be, of the seven brothers to whom she was successively married.

Now, it is for reasons precisely similar to these, that ever since the times of the Sadducees, men have used gross and absurd arguments for maintaining the resurrection; and other men have rejected it, because they have had nothing but sensuous and material impressions concerning it; and having first assumed a false hypothesis concerning the nature of religious truth, other men could easily invent arguments to demolish what they had falsely assumed.

The error of those who maintain the resurrection, apart from a simple reference to the *Scriptures* and the power of God, consists in the *supremacy* which they give to reasonings derived from the material world around them, and from

the analogy of human experience. But the truth is, men can reason only from what they have experienced. And they have no other ideas of this material world, than what they have received through the inlets of sensation, and of reflection on what they have thus perceived. All efforts in reasoning consist only in connecting, modifying and disposing the facts of knowledge thus acquired. Even the efforts of the imagination and fancy can rise no higher than in combining into new shapes and connections the *materials* of thought acquired by experience, and the impressions of the senses from external objects. And it is not possible for us to conceive of modes of existence in a future state, or in another world, except as we combine into new forms of being, the conceptions we have derived from communication with this earthly system in which we live. Hence it is, that all material and sensible representations of the resurrection, and the modes of existence in another world, are to be received with such entire distrust of the sufficiency of human reason to attain a perfect, ultimate knowledge of these undiscovered truths. The sensual paradise of the Mahometans, the visionary elysium of the ancients, the socialism of the modern Swedenborgians, and all other gross systems of belief as to the resurrection and the future state, have been derived from the workings of a wild imagination in combining impressions derived from this present material state of things. And yet, from the nature of the case, we can have no definite images of a state of things beyond our present knowledge and experience. The figurative language of Scripture employed to illustrate the blessings of the heavenly state, are used to give us high conceptions of their greatness and excellence, which the weakness of our faculties could not apprehend, without some such appeals to what is dear to our affections, and beautiful to our imaginations. But we are to bear in mind, that revelation has placed its solemn interdict upon our literal interpretation of similitudes, which, it is expressly said, are only introduced to *liken* or *illustrate* the kingdom of heaven. And it is explicitly written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor. ii: 9.

On the other hand, the error of those who reject the resurrection, is in *denying* the Scriptures and the power of God,

beyond the testimony of their physical senses, and their earthly experience. They even disown the separate existence and immortality of mind apart from matter, and disbelieve the spiritual world, because they cannot at present see it and touch it. It is not strange that such persons, who deny their own consciousness and reason, should stumble at the doctrines of revelation. For to every sound minded and reflecting man, it is evident that his soul may exist without his body, just as his body may exist without his soul. He knows nothing either of his soul or body, of spirit or of matter, except by their properties and manifestations, and his own conscious experience of them. The essential qualities of matter are commonly known by the following designations, which are true of matter, either as to state or capacity, wherever it exists in the universe, namely: "extension, figure, motion, divisibility, attraction and repulsion." The qualities of spirit are, "invisibility, sensation, perception, reason, conscience and volition." These powers belong purely to spirit, in its essential nature, apart from anything in common with matter. There is nothing of a common nature between them; so that the properties and capacities of spirit cannot inhere in the existence of matter; and the qualities of matter cannot enter into the formation or consciousness of a spirit. It is equally evident, that if there is *any difference* in the degree of certainty as to the existence of matter and of spirit, we must, if anything, be more confident of the independent existence of mind, than we can be of material existence; for we know nothing of either of them except by our conscious knowledge of the existence of their properties; and we are often more conscious of the qualities of mind, than of matter. We are oftentimes lost to all consciousness of the material world, and cut off from communication with it, by the agency of our animal senses, while we are most intensely alive to the experience of spiritual qualities and exercises within us, and of spiritual objects without us. It is by consciousness that we feel ourselves possessed of knowledge,—that knowledge which is certain truth; but we are more certain of our mental and spiritual existence, than we are of our animal and material; for it is by our spiritual consciousness that we are certain of *knowing that we know*; so that both in the order of nature and of time, our knowledge of spirit takes precedence over matter;

and as a fact of personal experience, we know that the soul in its purest and most vigorous exercises, feels itself as having least in common with matter in any form; and it can think, and feel, and desire, and will, and act, and be acted upon; and though this may be in part through the medium of bodily material organs, yet the mind thinks the most powerfully, when it has least conscious connection with the brain; it sees most clearly, when it is least sensible of the medium of the eye; it hears most acutely, when the ear is least the medium or the barrier between the mind and the objects of which it takes cognizance.

How vain is it, then, for men to deny the existence of a spiritual world to which they belong, on the verge of which they are now standing, and on which they are soon to enter as disembodied spirits! And how many solemn realities are they now surrounded with, even in this world, to which they are insensible! If God were but to lift the veil which envelops their minds, and pierce the darkness which is now opened only by the five inlets of their animal senses, how much knowledge of existence would they find themselves surrounded with, of objects which they cannot now taste, nor smell, nor see, nor hear, nor touch! Even if God were to give us another additional inlet of sensation,—a sixth sense, for example,—how much might we discover of those latent qualities of the material world, which once in a while we get feeble glimpses of; which make electricity the wonder of one age, and electro-magnetism the discovery of another; and which have from time to time exposed some hidden chemical property, the beneficial use of which has lain undiscovered from the creation.

It is not by the discovery of reason, nor the agency of our senses, that we acquire a knowledge of the spiritual world; but they do not stand as evidence against it. And hence we see the use which our reason is to serve us, in matters of faith. Reason is the servant, but not the enemy of faith. The God of nature and of grace is one God, and all his works form one grand harmonious scheme of things. It is safe to use reason as far as its province extends, and where its analogies fail, we are to rest entirely upon the testimony of faith, in what God has revealed in his word.

It is for these reasons that we may draw many beautiful illustrations of the resurrection, from the world around us;

but should use them only as emblems of the hidden things which God has not yet revealed;—and as figures of an existence which extends beyond the impenetrable curtain that hides eternity from time. And when we behold the beauty of spring revived from the blankness and torpidity of winter; when we see the grain deposited and dying in the ground, and then sending up another generation of its own kind and species; when we see the insect egg, existing in one form, and then bringing forth the caterpillar which moves in another sphere from its former, and after its brief existence, making its tomb, and then dying, and after its winter of death, bursting its sepulchre, and coming forth in its new and splendid existence; we see a few of the emblems which lead us to look through nature up to nature's God; and to believe in the sufficiency of that power which first called into being this splendid universe, and sustains all things in perfect harmony and order by his omnipotence; a power which, according to the teaching of the Scriptures, will bid the dead arise, and the prisoners of hope spring aloft to the regions of immortality.

II. In the brief remaining limits for this discourse, it will be only proper for us to refer to a few particulars contained in the Scriptures, for the support of a truth which those Scriptures reveal, and which the power of God will effectually realize. And this Scripture testimony refers to three separate points of this subject:—1, the distinct and independent existence of the soul apart from the body; 2, the actual present existence of the dead, in a state and sphere of action outside of these material regions, and apart from the forms and manifestations of this material world; 3, and the scriptural declaration of a general judgment yet to come.

1. The separate and independent existence and immortality of the soul, apart from the body, is so fully confirmed by reason, so universally admitted by all nations, and so fully understood, even under the partial system of the ancient Hebrew revelation, that laying aside altogether an appeal to the innumerable declarations of the New Testament, the specific proofs of which are open to all, we may simply refer to a few passages in the most ancient parts of the Old Testament revelation. In the first formation of man, it is declared that the body and soul are essentially distinct in their respective qualities, and in all that is essential respect-

ing the existence and nature of each. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—Gen. ii: 7. Solomon speaks of the separation of the soul from the body, and of each returning to its appropriate sphere, and original element. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—Eccl. xii: 7. And at the separation of the soul from the body in death, this royal and inspired preacher asks, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"—Eccl. iii: 21. But not to dwell on a point so obvious, as the separate existence of the soul apart from the body, I remark,

2. That the Scriptures teach the actual present living existence of departed souls.

The Bible does not, indeed, gratify our curiosity by any speculations or revelations concerning matters which lie beyond our present interest and duty. It addresses man simply and mainly with one view, and that is, as a sinner, guilty and miserable; and it shows him the gospel method of recovery; what his duty and happiness consist in, for this life; and reveals the hope of a blessed existence beyond the grave. This is the one single aim to which the Bible addresses its appeals; and like a faithful ambassador from a foreign country, pleading the object of his commission at the court of another nation, the main business is steadily and directly kept in view, and no digressions are made to indulge in speculation, or to gratify an idle curiosity. The ambassador, with his purpose steadily before him, might, nevertheless, make such incidental references to the customs, manners, pursuits and peculiarities of his country, as would give an attentive listener some comparative idea or inference of what the ambassador did not purposely and originally intend to communicate. And so the Bible, while dealing with man as a sinner, pointing out the way of recovery, revealing the great law of duty, and the certain prospect of a future and blessed existence, has given us incidental instruction concerning the present condition of the departed dead, and concerning which there need be no misapprehension. There are many explicit allusions, both in the Old Testament and in the New, to the fact that the departed dead are in a state

of actual living existence, in a spiritual realm, outside and apart from the material system which we now occupy. A few only of these, will I adduce. When the widow's son (xvii of 1 Kings) was dead, the prophet Elijah cried unto the Lord, "O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again; and the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." The body had been completely dead, left to return to the earth as it was, and the soul to the region of spirits; but God caused the soul to come back again, and to be re-united to the lifeless body. Enoch and Elijah were translated directly alive to heaven, and passed at once, soul and body together, into the region of departed spirits, outside of the material atmosphere which envelopes this earth. There are several other instances in the Old Testament, in which the souls of those departed were brought back to a re-union with the bodies they had left; especially the case of the man who was let down into the sepulchre of Elisha, and having touched the bones of the prophet, he revived and stood up on his feet.—2 Kings xiii: 21.

These declarations agree with many more numerous and distinct references, in the *New Testament*, that the souls of the departed dead are immediately transferred into a spiritual region beyond us, where they are actually living now, and where they may either continue to remain, or be bidden to go elsewhere, or to return to a corporeal existence on this earth, if God should so order them. The dying thief prayed to Jesus, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—Luke xxiii: 43. His soul went directly to the living peopled mansions of the departed dead.

The several instances in which Christ brought back the souls of the departed dead, during his earthly ministry, show that the souls which had gone to regions beyond, or outside of, this material system, were living in such manner, that they could be brought directly back. The centurion's daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus, were all completely dead, but their departed living souls were brought directly back. It was not the creation of new souls; for they retained their own proper personality and conscious identity. The body of Lazarus had begun to decompose.

We read, also, of another Lazarus, who when he died was carried by angels to the embrace of Abraham's bosom in heaven. Stephen in his dying moments, called upon God and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And just before he died, the material veil or film which separates the invisible world of spirits, was drawn away, and Stephen looked directly through the deep vault of these visible skies, and it is said, "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."—Acts vii: 55-6.* Here, as Olshansen remarks, "Stephen had an immediate and vivid intuition of Jesus, as he had seen him in his human form."

These instances go to show, what is elsewhere taught in the New Testament, that the living souls of the departed, are oftentimes near at hand; so that, possibly, they may be conscious of what is transpiring among the living inhabitants on the earth. At least they are so situated, that in their invisible state they can be made to re-appear at the bidding of God. In the case of our Saviour's transfiguration, he went up into a high mountain, and was transfigured into a glorified form, in the presence of Peter, James and John; and there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah, talking with them—Matt. xvii: 2; and Luke says, "they appeared in glory, and spake of Christ's decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."—ix: 31. They were evidently in a living, conscious state; and in this state they must therefore have been during all the period since their mortal exit; they needed only to be bidden into visible view, and the veil which separated them from human sight would be drawn aside, and they would appear in their own proper identity.

This truth is still more distinctly taught by our Saviour in connection with our text. When having reproved the error of the Sadducees, for "not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God," he taught the resurrection of the dead; and also, the present living state of departed souls, in these memorable words: "But as touching the resurrection of the

*None of the Apostles, except in the case of Stephen, ever applied the expression, "Son of Man," to Christ; it is found only in our Lord's own discourses.—*Neander's Life of Christ.*

dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." These words of Jehovah were spoken (Exodus iii: 6, 15,) to Moses, when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had long been dead. Abraham had been dead three hundred and twenty-nine years, Isaac, two hundred and twenty-four years, and Jacob, a hundred and ninety-eight years. Yet God spoke of being *then* their God; of their being *then* in a living state, not of their ancient and distant life-time, but now torpid and unconscious state; nor merely of being their God, when, revived hereafter into renewed consciousness, they will remember him as having been their God, once, in the distant past; but the God of those who have somewhere a living, present existence. And therefore, the Saviour adds, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" of those who have *now* an actual existence somewhere in another realm. And this teaching of Christ, establishes not only the doctrine of the resurrection—which it was his first purpose, with the Sadducees, to shew;—but it also shews, most indubitably, that the souls of the departed dead are in the fullest state of conscious existence, at this present time. The time would fail me, if I should attempt to adduce all the explicit and implied declarations of the New Testament, which declare that the separated soul goes at once into a state of living, conscious existence. Paul repeatedly declares, that as soon as Christians die and leave their bodies, they go directly into the presence of Christ, in the spiritual world. "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Therefore we are always confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."—2 Cor. v: 1. And while contemplating his own personal connection and interest, with respect to two worlds, the apostle in some instances seems to have occupied a high station, as on a narrow isthmus separating two oceans, when he says to the Philippians (i: 23), "I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

With respect to Christ's own personal and corporeal departure from earth, and his present existence in a glorified

body, there cannot be a doubt. This is an essential fact in the whole Christian scheme, on which the doctrine of the intercession of Christ as Mediator, and the office work of the Holy Spirit, respectively, depend. The whole epistle to the Hebrews shows, throughout, that Christ is now living in his glorified, crucified human body, exercising sympathy with his people, and having a perfect and intimate knowledge of their present condition, not only by his omniscience as God, but by his actual experience as a man. He was seen passing beyond these visible skies, by all his apostles, and it is said, "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i: 10, 11. This wonderful and solemn truth which is so fully declared elsewhere in the New Testament, we cannot now attempt to illustrate farther; and we need do nothing but take these explicit declarations, just as they stand.

Nor is it proper for us to attempt to relieve this subject from any objections which may be brought against it; or to go into an examination of the scriptural testimony as to the present state of the souls of the departed *wicked* and *ungodly*. The declarations of the Bible are solemnly exact and specific on this point. God threatens to turn the wicked into hell; and we know that many souls of the departed wicked are declared in the Bible to be now in a living state of consciousness, suffering banishment from the presence of God, and reserved for greater suffering at the judgment of the great day. Though the Scriptures do not speak so abundantly, and so much in detail, as to the condition of the departed wicked, as concerning the blessedness of departed saints, still there is no presumption against such proofs, which are all the more fearful, just because the wrath of God, when denounced against men, is let out, drop by drop, in the inspired sentences, like the droppings from the vial of the wrath of God, spoken of in the Apocalypse; while the representation of heaven, like God's mercies themselves, are scattered and lavished like beautiful flowers, along the pages of inspiration. God's thoughts are

thoughts of mercy. But his judicial and final condemnation is fearfully foreboded, by many of those passages, which for a moment draw aside the veil from the gloom of the world of perdition. It was that dark abode of the miserable living, to which Judas was consigned, when the Bible says of him, "*he went to his own place.*"—Acts i: 25. Something like this is intimated by the apostle's allusion (Jude 6) to departed spirits, "reserved into everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;" while the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are expressly said to be thus set forth, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

3. I have, on the present occasion, only a few references to make, as to the scriptural declaration of a general resurrection yet to come; notwithstanding it is the principal part of the subject connected with our Saviour's discourse in the passage before us; and is one of the fundamental principles of the whole gospel scheme. The apostles preached Jesus and the resurrection, as the two capital truths which embraced all that is fundamental in historical Christianity. And when Paul explains the subject of the resurrection, in the 15thth chapter of 1st Corinthians, he opens the whole subject, by laying down these two primary fundamental truths: "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." This passage declares the fundamental facts of Christianity; that Christ died, not as a martyr, but as an atoning sacrifice, a vicarious offering for sins; and the fact of his personal resurrection, on which the whole doctrine stands, that the same power which raised Christ from the dead, will re-unite the souls of the departed to spiritual bodies, corporeities, or vehicles, adapted to their eternal existence, after the general judgment.

This is the universal truth declared in the Old Testament, and everywhere affirmed in the New. It was to this that Job looked forward, many centuries before, when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes behold, and not another."—xix: 25-6. The prophetic view of the resur-

rection was revealed in the inspiration of Daniel, when he declared (xii: 2) of "many of them that sleep, that they shall awake from the dust of the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." But what was so plainly revealed in the Old Testament, is demonstrated by still more convincing testimony in the New. And amidst all the ravages of mortality and in view of the tomb, we hear Jesus saying (John xi: 25), "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi: 40. In view of the general judgment, Jesus says, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."—John v: 28-9. The apostles in all their preaching "gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus"—Acts iv: 33; and on all occasions, before Felix, and before all, declared, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."—Acts xxiv: 15.

The solemn truths we have been considering are plain and unequivocal. And the sum of all this testimony is,—not that the souls of some only of the prophets and martyrs go directly to heaven when they die; but that the souls of all departed human beings go at once to that place in the world of spirits for which they are prepared; and that a general judgment is coming, when all departed souls shall be united to spiritual bodies, vehicles or organisms, fitted for their everlasting existence in heaven or in hell. This is the great truth taught us in the inspired demonstration on this subject, in the 15th of 1st Corinthians. The resurrection will be accomplished by the power and agency of Christ,—*"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* As Adam was the procuring cause of temporal death on all mankind, so the power of Christ shall be the procuring cause of the resurrection of all whose souls have ever been dislodged and separated from their bodies. As there is a natural body fitted for their existence in this

earth, there will be a spiritual body fitted as the organism or vehicle of the soul in the realm of spirits. And the order in which this will take place is thus explicitly declared; all will not sleep in death, but those who are living at the general judgment, will be changed by a process equivalent to death; but death and the resurrection, they will not literally know. And this wondrous and momentous change will come in this manner: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [i. e. Christians living at the time] shall be changed,"—in a way the same as if by death. But this wonderful change will not come upon those living at the time of the resurrection, until those who had first departed in death shall be re-united to their proper bodies. And this we find in the words of the apostle, speaking by the inspiration of God,—(1 Thess. iv: 15)—*"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we [Christians] who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [or go before, in point of time] them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall arise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

III. After this appeal to the Scriptures, for the truth of the resurrection, every heart must acknowledge what will be the efficient cause of it. It is *"the power of God."* How this will be effected, need be no present concern of ours to know. It is only a fool, as the apostle says, who asks the question, *"How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come?"* It is enough for us to know, that this earth which we occupy, in the midst of the planetary system, was fitted up some fifty-eight and a half centuries ago, for the abode of the present race of men; and God has told us that this race, so recent in its origin, shall not always continue to inhabit this planet, as it now does. It may be blotted out, as other planets have been blotted out; or it may be re-created, as we see and know even in our own times, that new worlds are coming to light, and taking their position amidst the boundless expanse of the universe.

It is no spiritual resurrection already past, which is declared to await the just and the unjust; it is no drapery of solemn metaphor which tells of a judgment yet to come; but the Scriptures directly reveal what the power of God will render effectual, that departed souls, dislodged from their bodies, will be gathered into a spiritual realm, and shall be re-united to proper bodies fitted for receiving the sentence which at the general judgment will fix them forever in changeless blessedness or in eternal misery.

My friends and brethren; you stand on the verge of a spiritual world. You are as near to that world as you are to the event of death; for death will fix you in that state, in which you will continue forever. The gospel now sounds in your ears, to awaken you, before the judgment day will pronounce your eternal sentence,—a sentence which, if it finds you unpardoned and unrenewed, will leave you forever dead in trespasses and in sins. It is now the sound of the everlasting gospel of the grace of God, which brings salvation,—from sin now, and from ruin hereafter;—a salvation which “teaches us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”—Titus ii: 13.

TO THE CHRISTIAN DEATH IS DESIRABLE:

A Sermon, occasioned by the death of Mr. James M. Vaughan, preached in Hampton, Oct. 24th, 1850, by Rev. R. B. C. HOWELL, D. D., of Richmond, Va., and published by request of the Hampton church.

“I would not live away.”—Job vii: 16.

We have assembled this morning to discharge a melancholly, and most painful duty. Death has entered your cherished circle, and stricken down one of the tallest of your number. Our beloved, and lamented brother JAMES M. VAUGHAN sleeps in his grave. In compliance with his dying request, I have come to preach to-day, and to impress, if I may, upon your hearts the solemn considerations this event is so well calculated to awaken. In doing so, I but yield to the dictates of my own feeling. It is to me a sorrowful privilege to mingle my sympathies with yours, while we perform together these last sad offices of respect to the memory of an associate dear to all our hearts. Brother Vaughan was lovely in his life. He was an intrepid leader of Israel's hosts. He was “ready to every good word and work.” We thought not of his departure, and knew not ourselves, how much we loved him, until he was snatched from us by the hand of death. He has gone, not however, thank God, without *timely* warning, and *ample* preparation for a change of worlds. If during his life, there was any one sentiment which more than another he fostered in his inmost heart, it was that contained in our text:—“I would not live away.” Let us then, for a few moments, meditate its import, and obtain, if possible, the instructions it was designed to communicate.

When the good old patriarch exclaimed, “I would not live away,” did he not intend to assert that to those prepared for a better, the continuation of the present life beyond its ordinary limits, ought not to be coveted? TO THE CHRISTIAN DEATH ULTIMATELY BECOMES DESIRABLE.

No instinct is more universal than the love of life. It pervades the heart of *man*, in common with that of all other sentient creatures. That it should strongly influence our

general feelings, and actions, is most natural. Nor is it a sinful feeling. On the contrary, it is highly reasonable and proper, since it prevents any unnecessary exposure to death, sustains us in hours of despondency and wretchedness, prompts to personal defence, and thus contributes essentially to the public safety. And moreover, those also dependent upon us have a right to our continued existence, as long as it can be preserved. Our affection to our families, and our friends, and all the *duties* we owe to *them*, mingle with the natural love of life, and fix the desire of its continuance. Its careful preservation is, therefore, not an instinct only, but becomes consequently, an imperative moral duty. But life has its period as well as its obligations. These over, our love of it should no longer attach us to this world, or render death repulsive. It is our privilege to be prepared, and by Divine grace, able then, cheerfully to welcome the pale messenger which calls us from this to a better world.

But is such a state of mind attainable? Can any one ever say, with cheerful resignation to the Divine will, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly;" "I would not live away?" Thanks to our heavenly Father for the assurance that it is. Religion reveals the principle by which, when it is proper, we may conquer the love of life, and achieve a complete victory over death. Divine grace destroys the darkness and loathsomeness of the tomb, tears away the sting of the monster, inspires us with the desire to depart and be with Christ, and fills our hearts with unutterable joy in anticipation of a glorious immortality. Having, as did our dear departed brother, acted *well*, and honorably *finished*, the part assigned us here, we turn our thoughts beyond the grave, to those joys there to be revealed. Thus to the Christian, death becomes desirable. It is the portal that leads to his happy and eternal home. He enters its "dark valley and shadow" undismayed, and speeds him to the throne on high.

Death to the Christian, I remark in the first place, *will soon become desirable on a mere physical account.*

What we should have been physically, had we remained pure and holy, we need not now pause to consider. Holy beings cannot suffer, they are not subject to decay, they cannot die. We should therefore have enjoyed in this world forever, *life*, and health, and unfading youth. But,—“by

one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We have fallen from our "high estate." Depravity rankles in our heart. Corruption withers and destroys us. Our character and destiny are the reverse of what they would otherwise have been. The history of every man as a fallen being, is substantially the same. He comes into life a helpless sufferer. He struggles through childhood, and youth, towards maturity. Now the world becomes all "beauty to the eye, and music to the ear." Its joys seduce him, its riches task his energies to obtain them, its honors captivate his desires. He passes through the scenes and duties of life. Time flies rapidly away, and age gradually comes upon him. His cheeks are furrowed. His eyes are dim. He bends under the weight of years. His vigor is gone. His enjoyments cease. His friends one after another depart. He falls into second childhood. Other generations have risen up around him. He has no more society here. He is a stranger in his own home. Infirmities press upon him. Life is a burden. See the poor old man, as tottering he stands before you! He raises his sightless eyeballs towards heaven, stretching forth his feeble hands, and with a trembling voice exclaims, O God, "I would not live always!" No,—

"I ask not to stay,
Where storm after storm dashes dark o'er the way.
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here,
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer."

But death to the Christian is desirable on a second account. *Knowledge to a greater extent than is possible in the present state, is necessary to the perfection of our being.*

"Now we see through a glass darkly, but *then* we shall see face to face. Now we know only in part, but *then* shall we know even as also we are known." The medium is at present imperfect, through which we behold objects. Under the most favorable circumstances, our ideas of all things, and especially of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are exceedingly contracted. His works of creation give us some glimpses of his perfections, and the kingdom of his grace affords yet higher developments, but so vast is the field of knowledge, and so feeble are our present powers,

that we are comparatively in darkness. "Who by searching, can find out God? Who can know the Almighty to perfection?" When, however, death shall relieve us from the incumbrance of the flesh, and we shall stand in the presence chamber of the King of kings, so strengthened will be our faculties, so enlarged our conceptions, and so exalted will be our place on high, that we shall see God as he is; not as here, in dim shadows, or through mystic types, but in the splendor, the spirituality, the immensity, and the eternity of his being. Then we shall know him perfectly. Of his glorious designs of grace, how circumscribed at present our conceptions! There we shall learn, and appreciate all their excellency and majesty. And the great and beneficent system of divine providence, here upon earth to us all, how utterly inscrutable! His throne is now covered with clouds and darkness. His dispensations are wrapped in mystery! Of this fact, how striking an illustration have we in the painful event which has called us together to-day. Such a providence we cannot now comprehend. But the heavenly state into which death introduces us, will explain all. There light is perfect. Providences will no more be mysterious; the grace of God will appear in its true aspect; order and beauty will be conspicuous in those very events apparently the most confused; and in what seemed severity and disaster, will be seen true mercy and benevolence. Who then would live always,—thus shrouded in ignorance, and in full view of the world of light and wisdom?

Death to the Christian is, in the third place, desirable, because *in this life his happiness is necessarily incomplete.*

What are the sources to which men of the world ordinarily look for happiness? Fame, power, riches, and the gratification of the natural appetites. But how inadequate are they all to produce the result desired! And even were it otherwise, how uncertain the tenure by which they are held! How soon are we ourselves called hence into a state in which they can no longer be of any avail! We have wants which they cannot appease; woes which they cannot alleviate; cravings which they cannot satisfy; anxieties which they cannot dispel. He who enjoys most of the pleasures of this world, is far less happy than the obscurest of the saints of God. The world did not withhold its smiles from our departed brother. He had all its honors, and distinc-

tions, he ever sought or desired. Wealth poured her treasures into his coffers. Affectionate sons and daughters grew up to bless his home. Friends, ardent and sincere, surrounded him on every hand. As a neighbor, and a citizen, his estimation was but expressed by the sympathies manifested during his sufferings, and by the solemn multitudes who accompanied his remains to the grave. If, however, these had been his only sources of happiness in those hours of suffering and dissolving nature, his death-bed scenes would have been wholly different from what they were. Instead of the glad triumph by which they were characterized, they would have filled him with lamentation, mourning and woe.

The Christian is not of this world, that he should be dependent upon its joys, or fear to leave its precincts. The children of God have sought and found happiness in him. You can look up to him and exclaim,—"*Thy favor is life, and thy loving kindness is better than life.*" You are conscious of a personal interest in the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Still your happiness is exceedingly incomplete. Physical infirmities assail you; diseases prey upon your system; your powers fail; the tender and cherished ties of earth are rudely broken; friendships are abused; confidence is crushed; and disappointments beset you on every hand! Clouds often overshadow your spiritual horizon. As travelers you have not yet reached your home. As soldiers you are yet in the midst of the battle. "Many," many, "are the afflictions even of the righteous." From all these the hand of death, rude and painful as it is, relieves you and brings you at once into a state of perfect bliss. In that blessed world whither you then go, no pain exists; no griefs enter there; no tears are shed; no beloved friends die; and the deep rapture of tranquility is eternal.

"No chilling wind, nor poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore,
Sickness, and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more."

If such be the contrast between earth and heaven, who would live away? Our happiness never can be perfect until we go to that blessed world. Death, therefore, to the Christian becomes truly desirable.

The man of God can truly say, "I would not live alway," because, fourthly, *while this life continues he is separated from the purest and most enlightened society in the universe.*

How delightful often is social intercourse with dear friends on earth! There are here, notwithstanding all their imperfections, generous hearts, high communings, joyful associations. But how often do these turn into streams of bitterness! In heaven no such casualties occur. Behold that great multitude on high, which no man can number, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! There are the patriarchs and prophets, there are the apostles and martyrs, there are saints,—all the great and good who in every age have served God faithfully. There are many—perhaps a majority—of your own friends and dearest relatives. In their midst is the glorious Redeemer himself in the flesh! How exalted, how unspeakably pure, and bright is that throng! Who does not wish to mingle in their society, their songs, their rapturous conversations? But you cannot join them now. You are yet in the flesh. Would you "live always," and be forever excluded from their intercourse? Our dearest friends are going; our own bodies are wearing out; our minds under the pressure of years will soon become imbecile; other generations are rising up around us to take our places; the glory of heaven awaits us; our work is done. Why then should we wish to linger about the shores of time? No, I would not live alway. I would join at length that exalted society on high.

But there is a fifth reason why death is desirable to the Christian. *In this world he is morally and spiritually imperfect, and must look to another for full deliverance.*

To be free from sin, and perfect in holiness, is the constant desire of every renewed heart. Still, how far short of your purpose do you in this life find yourselves? Worldly passions will arise, and reign in your bosoms; your spiritual advancement is retarded by a thousand impediments; and when you would do good, evil is present with you! Grace, it is true, has been conferred; you are recovering from the power of sin; but your victory is not yet complete. Death will sever the last of your chains, and give freedom to your soul. You shall then be as our beloved brother Vaughan

now is, of the number of "the just made perfect." Made perfect! Yes;—perfect in existence; perfect in purity; perfect in knowledge; perfect in happiness; perfect forever!

"Then who would live alway, away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns?
There saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet,
While anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smiles of the Lord are the feast of the soul."

These are some of the reasons why to the Christian, death is desirable; because of the gradual failure of his bodily and mental powers, which would soon render life a burden; because his knowledge while upon earth is greatly limited; because his happiness here is necessarily incomplete; because he is as yet detained from companionship with the best and most exalted society in the universe; and because until death shall deliver him from his bondage he is morally and spiritually imperfect. These sentiments are, I have said, in full accordance with those so long and so warmly cherished by our departed brother. Hence he habitually spoke of death, when it should be the pleasure of God to remove him from earth, as a welcome messenger. From these sources, when the hour of trial came, he derived strength to meet his approach with the calmest security, and most cheerful confidence.

And now a few words more, especially in reference to the history of the lamented dead. Our brother was, as I understand, born in Gloucester county, Virginia, May 11th, 1787. He had lived, consequently, at the time of his death, sixty-three years and seven months. When or how he professed religion, I have not been able to ascertain, but I am assured it was early in life. His affectionate mother was a Christian, and a member of the church before him, and his father united with the people of God not long after. I have learned that with a few exceptions, caused by sickness, he had attended the Dover Association annually for thirty-eight years, and that he looked forward to the late meeting of that body at Grafton, with the deepest interest, expecting there

again to mingle with brethren so long and so dearly loved. His desire in this respect was not gratified. Some forty-eight hours before its assembling, he went up to meet the great Association on high, where, not his brethren on earth were found, but where Semple, and Goodall, and Broaddus, and many others dear to his heart, had gone before him. With these *he rejoiced* in glory, while with the survivors of those great men, *we wept* at that meeting over our irreparable loss.

Soon after his marriage with the desolate one still among us, he became a citizen of this vicinity, where he spent more than thirty-five years of his useful and exemplary life. He found on his arrival this church in feeble existence: What was its condition? A dozen or more obscure and persecuted, but devoted Christians, worshiped in a wooden cabin at the head of this street. In those days it required some force of character and intrepidity to be a Baptist. He hesitated not to cast in his lot among those who followed our Lord Jesus Christ fully, and with their whole heart. He was, not long after, appointed a deacon of the church, which arduous office he filled with untiring fidelity, and singular success, to the day of his death. He fully verified the declaration, that "they that use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." His worth was soon perceived by his fellow-citizens generally, and he was appointed a magistrate, in which capacity he served his county for near thirty years, and up to the time of his departure. He had long been your oldest justice, and chairman of the court, and never did any officer serve his country more faithfully. From the small beginnings in the church to which I have referred, what was he permitted to see? Look around you, and behold this splendid edifice, of which you are justly proud. This is the third that has arisen in Hampton, and each more spacious and elegant than the preceding, and here worship three hundred of your citizens, with eight hundred colored people. Your church numbers to-day eleven hundred members! Behold! What hath God wrought! During all this period of nearly forty years, he acted nobly and faithfully his part, eminently adorning his holy profession. Never was there a more sincere and ardent Christian than he, or one more warmly attached to the cause of our blessed Redeemer.

Nor was he less eminently blessed at home than he was in the church. Gradually arose around him a numerous and beloved family. There were his manly sons, and his affectionate daughters, to bless and honor the age of parents who had reared and educated them with so much care. If a dear and confiding church, a cultivated and affectionate family, an ample competency of this world's goods, and the respect of all his fellow-citizens, could make life desirable, truly might he have wished to live; and for the sake of his family, and his church, he did, as he told you, wish to remain yet for a season; but for himself he felt that it was far "better to depart and be with Christ." Up to within about three weeks of his death, he enjoyed his usual good health. Disease assailed him, and he at once decided that he could not recover. But no alarms agitated him. He felt no misgivings. Calmly he began to "set his house in order," and on Thursday, the 10th instant, between nine and ten o'clock, after the intensest bodily suffering, borne with singular fortitude and resignation, he calmly resigned his soul to God who gave it, and on the following Lord's day you laid his remains in the grave, there to await the sound of the last trumpet. The stricken partner of his life, who survives to deplore his irreparable loss, shared in all his labors, his hopes, and his consolations. And their children,—may their father's God grant them grace to walk in his footsteps, and make their path through life, as his was," that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

With his bereaved and weeping family we cannot, if we would, refrain from mingling our tears, for *they* could love him but little more than he was beloved by us all. The blow which removed him from earth falls upon them with a stunning force, and upon the church also with scarcely less power. We mourn not for him, but for ourselves. He has gone, gone triumphantly. He has passed the fearfulness of "death's dark vale," and now lives with angels in the skies. We are the sufferers. In this church, which from its beginning has been his care, for the building up and spiritual prosperity of which he has toiled so faithfully, for which, in private and in public, he has poured forth so many fervent prayers, and to whose welfare you had accustomed yourselves to think his exertions, his counsels, and his presence, almost essential; who shall supply his place? Who shall

comfort the crushed hearts that bleed in his desolate chambers? To God only, our heavenly Father, may you all look for consolation, and strength, in this hour of deep affliction.

Among the characteristics of our dear departed brother, none was more striking than his unwavering Christian firmness. Having devoted himself to the Redeemer in early life, and read much, and carefully, especially in his Bible, and also availed himself constantly of all the ordinary means of grace, in the sanctuary and elsewhere, he was well instructed in all that pertains to religion. He possessed an enlarged experience, and the doctrines which he cherished were eminently evangelical. No new or ingenious theories of religion, which have been so fatal in many places during the last quarter of a century, captivated him. He sought assiduously for "the old paths," and carefully walked in them. Grace, abounding grace, was his perpetual theme. He leaned alone upon Christ for strength and salvation,— "having no confidence in the flesh." There he was fixed and immovable.

In his business associations and pursuits, and in all his relations with men, he was, in the strictest, the best and highest sense, a gentleman, and a man of honor. His judgment of men, and things, was singularly accurate, and his integrity no one ever doubted. But business, nor pleasure, nor any other consideration, detained him from his religious duties. If in the prayer meeting, the church meeting, and the services of the Lord's day, he was not present, and ready to perform his part of every duty, you at once knew that he was either sick or absent from home. His contributions for every laudable purpose were always prompt, liberal and hearty. He was ready to labor, and to make any reasonable sacrifice, to promote the cause of Christ in his own church, or to advance anywhere, the interests of a pure and evangelical Christianity. In all these respects, his zeal and fidelity have seldom been surpassed in this, or in any other age, or country.

As he loved the cause of Christ, and gloried in its prosperity, so he rejoiced in the society of his brethren, and delighted to welcome them to the hospitalities of his mansion. Many, very many, especially of the ministry, will long gratefully remember his warm greetings, his solicitude for

their comfort, his affectionate admonitions, his pious encouragements, and the force given to their designs and endeavors by his ready hand and benevolent heart. If on this melancholly occasion I may be allowed to refer to myself, I will say that he was dear to my heart. I first saw him more than twenty-three years since. He then visited me at my residence in Norfolk, with the request that I would come over, and receive and baptize his beloved wife, and her sister, who is now gone to heaven. I came, and the elder portion of this assembly yet remember the happy results which followed. From that hour many were our associations and labors together. We parted here, in this house, at the anniversaries in June last, little imagining that we should meet no more on earth! He has gone first to his reward on high. By me the sainted Vaughan can never be forgotten.

The closing scenes of our beloved brother were such as from a life like this, might have been anticipated. Unmoved and fearless he approached his end. He was indeed joyful in Christ. With him all was bright. Heaven's glories were in full view. While he gazed upon them intently, he comforted, encouraged, and exhorted his weeping wife and children, pointing them for support to the Redeemer. How affectionately did he warn his irreligious neighbors, and entreat them to seek salvation! His beloved church especially occupied his anxious thoughts in his last hours. He was solicitous for your peace and prosperity. To his brethren who approached his bed-side, his exhortations were constant, and most earnest. Of them all this was the purport:—"Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." In the midst of these scenes the messenger came, and his spirit took its flight on high. Thus lived our brother, and thus calmly he died—

" — As sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But fades away into the light of heaven."

Rest sainted brother, until we meet thee there, in thy home of bliss! Yet a little longer, a few more contests upon earth, and we will walk together the starry pavements of the sky.

1. In view of the subject, and the melancholy providence, we have been considering, we are taught most forcibly, the excellency and power of the religion of Christ. We have in proof an illustrious instance showing how eminently it fits you for all the duties of life, how amply it arms you against the fears of death, and how fully it inspires you with courage in every extremity. It does more than all this. When your work on earth is done, it makes even death welcome. It at last introduces you glorified into the presence of your approving God! How infinitely, therefore, beyond all conception, is the value of the religion of Christ!

2. The solemn event which has called us together to-day, utters in the ear of the sinner the awful language of warning.

You are all, dear friends, destined to die. The irrevocable decree has gone forth,—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Every day brings you nearer to the execution of this sentence. You cannot evade it. Your doom is certain. Friends, associates, kindred, are falling around you. The messenger may have been already despatched from the Divine throne, that calls you to the judgment seat. How often has the voice of Vaughan called you from your wanderings, and admonished you of your danger! That voice you will hear no more. It is silent in the grave. “Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” Will you be prepared when that dread summons shall come? O, “seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

3. This solemn event admonishes the church to renewed zeal, prayerfulness and fidelity.

That countenance and person so familiar to you all, and always among the foremost in every duty, you will behold no more on earth. That voice whose fervent tones you have been so long accustomed to hear, cheering you on to active duty, will no more be heard in your ranks. O will you not heed his dying exhortations to peace, to union, to faithfulness in the cause of Christ?

Brethren of the deaconship especially; new and still more arduous duties are yours. Will you not awake to increased prayerfulness and activity in your high office? How otherwise can “the lack of service” of your departed companion be supplied? Your young and excellent pastor will need more than ever, your counsel, your assistance, your warm coöperation. One of the pillars upon which he leaned has been suddenly removed. Brethren, be faithful to your pastor, be faithful to your church, be faithful to each other, be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, sisters, dear friends, while we all humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and “repent in dust and ashes” for our sins, let us here resolve in submissive reliance upon his grace, to return to new obedience, increased exertion, and more persevering toil in the work of salvation. Soon our labors upon earth will also have been finished, and we shall follow our beloved brother to our reward above.—“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.”

“O live the life of prayer,
The life of faith in the meek Son of God,
The life of tireless labor for his sake.
So shall the angel of the covenant bring
Thee to thy home in bliss, a glowing gem,
To shine forever in thy Master's crown.”

EDITOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

BELOVED READERS:—

The revolving year has brought us, now, the tenth time, to that point, at which we retrospect the past, and anticipate the future. Let us imitate the example of the merchant, "who settles up his books, takes account of stock," and begins anew; of the husbandman, who grateful for the late harvest, "pitches his crop" for another; of the traveler, who recounts the leagues already traversed, and enquires for the remainder.

Through our contributors, you are our auditory, and we are "The Preacher." If it behooves you to listen to the advice, "Take heed how ye hear;" not less does it concern us, that we "make full proof of our ministry." These words, full of momentous import, are scarcely less applicable to written, than to oral pages. Inasmuch, indeed, as every man has a ministry to perform, a deaconship to serve, they address themselves to every servant of Christ—"Make full proof of thy ministry." Test thy sword, by seeing what it can accomplish—tax thy powers to their very utmost—let it appear what the gospel, through thy agency, is able to do. The pressing wants of a money-loving, pleasure-seeking, soul-forgetting world, demand it. The high claims of God upon us; the tremendous retributions of eternity; and the amazing gracious facilities we possess, demand it. We intend to be "instant in season, out of season;" or as the apostle means, "to press our suit, urgently, whether opportunely or inopportunely."

Our field of labor is widening. Within the past year our list of readers has greatly increased, especially in the Carolinas, in Georgia, in Alabama, in Mississippi, and in Tennessee. And we beg the co-operation of our friends in scattering the good seed everywhere; and praying for the blessing of the Lord of the harvest.

HENRY KEELING.