

# In Memoriam

By E. Douglas Plumer and  
Kate Plumer Bryan

Dear Friend:

Ever since Father's death we have been in constant receipt of letters. It certainly has been a comfort to us that so many of God's dear people have wept with us, prayed for us and written to us. The majority of the letters received have asked for a full account of Father's illness and death, while some have even desired more, and say, "What did he do all Summer?" "How long was he aware of the disease?" It is simply impossible for us to answer these questions with pen and ink. The constant repetition of the history of the sad event would be too severe upon us mentally. We neither of us have time or strength to do it. Some of necessity would be long neglected.

When Mother died two years ago, Father prepared a Memorial Letter of her as a response to those which he received. Some persons were dissatisfied, and felt that no notice was taken of their letters of sympathy. Nevertheless we are compelled to resort to this same plan. It may seem a cold and indifferent return for such warm and loving sympathy as you have poured out upon us, but be assured that we fully appreciate your love and friendship, and would with our own hands, if we could, send you messages in return. We do thank you for what you have been to us in our affliction. It is a mistaken idea that human sympathy does no good. It has helped us.

Let us make one request of all who loved Father – that while you read of him, you would breathe a prayer that "the God which fed him all his life-long," and "that the Angel which redeemed him from all evil," would make all grace abound toward us and ours, that we may be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

In sorrow and in tears your friends in a Risen Saviour,  
E. Douglas Plumer,  
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## MEMORIAL.

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Father left home Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1880, for Bristol, Tenn., where he preached twice on Sabbath, delivering the Baccalaureate Address before King College. He made several addresses, and enjoyed all the exercises of Commencement very much. He went to Blacksburg the following Thursday and preached there three times. On Sabbath morning his text was Gal. 13:3[sic], after which he administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The pastor of the church thus writes: "Language fails me in an attempt to describe his sermons. Especially does the scene at the close of the service yesterday morning beggar description. There could scarcely have been a dry eye in the house." In the afternoon he drove sixteen miles to Christiansburg, to preach by invitation before the young ladies gathered in Mrs. Pollock's Seminary. In this sermon he said: "For the fourteenth time in my life I am thrown afloat to look for a new home and new friends. I never was happier in all my life. O! God is true – God is good!" On the afternoon of that day he said: "I had rather have witnessed what I saw to-day than to have seen the Transfiguration of Christ; I have seen Christ crucified and His people worshipping Him, and they would die for Him." We write thus minutely of these sacred hours; for he probably did not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when he drank it new in his Father's kingdom.

On Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, he left for Philippi, Barbour Co., W. Va., where he had promised to be present at the ordination of one of his students who graduated at the Seminary last Spring – Mr. F. J. Brooke. But on reaching Charlottesville he felt so unwell, that as we were at Staunton, he concluded to come and spend the night there. He looked so badly when he arrived that we sent for the doctor, who came at once. Father was very sick for three or four days with bilious diarrhea. After the disease was checked, he recuperated so rapidly as to be able to preach on Sabbath the 20<sup>th</sup>, and on Monday, by order of the physician, he went to the White Sulphur Springs. He greatly enjoyed his visit there, and as the guest of Col. Peyton, received every kindness. He preached there the first Sabbath of his stay (27<sup>th</sup>;) but on the next Saturday he went to Lewisburg, and preached July 4<sup>th</sup>. He returned to Staunton the next week, and went off from there in good spirits to Baltimore where he was to fill the pulpit of the First Presbyterian church. He preached there six Lord's Days, commencing July 11<sup>th</sup>; three of them only in the morning, but the

last three Sabbaths he preached twice a day. His congregations were large during his entire visit. This gratified him greatly. The last sermon he preached was on the text, Eph. 6:24, to a crowded congregation. He never preached with more vigor and never enjoyed pastoral work more than he did this summer. In his Diary he writes, "Sabbath, (August 15<sup>th</sup>). This day my engagement here ends for this summer. The people have been very kind. Many have attended my preaching. I love to preach. I enjoy rest and leisure, but I am never so happy as when thinking of the Saviour's love, or commending Him to my fellow men. I think I had rather save a soul than own the whole world. Lord, leave me not to a barren ministry."

He left Baltimore August 16<sup>th</sup> for Cape May Point, where he spent a week most delightfully with his old student and friend, Rev. Samuel J. Lowrie, D. D. This visit was a great refreshment to him. From there he went to Richfield Springs to visit his true and tried friend, C. H. McCormick, Esq. He preached there August 29<sup>th</sup>. A friend writes: "It is a great pleasure to me that I was privileged to meet him during the past summer at Richfield Springs, to hear him preach there, and to have many pleasant hours of converse with him. He seemed as cheerful, hopeful, happy and kindly as ever. He and Mrs. McCormick and my daughter and myself, played several games of croquet together, and he seemed to enjoy the game as much as any one. I could name many of his pleasant, genial and amusing sayings."

From here he went to New York on a favorite mission, "trying," as he wrote us, "to do some good before called to my great trial." He spent several days with his honored friend, Mrs. Horace Holden. She thus writes: "I think we never enjoyed a visit from your father as we did the last. He was so genial, so communicative, and his conversation so instructive, that it seems to me if he had known 'twas to be his last, he could not have left a happier and more delightful impression upon our minds of his preparedness for a heavenly world than he did. He seemed to me as if standing midway between heaven and earth, himself feeling the awful responsibility to preach the Gospel and warn all with all long-suffering and patience."

He then journeyed to Port Deposit, Md., where he spent the Sabbath, September 12<sup>th</sup>. He preached there three times. The pastor says: "The house was full, and there was so much plainness in his words, earnestness in his utterances, and grandeur in his form and style, that he just held us all spell-bound. There were times when it seems to me his voice rose to the power of his palmist days. He preached to us with the

earnestness of a father entreating his children. O how sweet to sit at his feet and hear his testimony for Jesus, and have the Scriptures opened up to us. What an incentive to us to study God's word as we saw him at family worship close his eyes and repeat from memory the chapter or the psalm. We learned to love him; our children learned to love him. When we heard of his death we shed the tear in sympathy with you, and also because, not again in this world could we look on the face of him whom we had learned to love."

On Thursday morning he went to Colora, Cecil County, Md., where he remained until the next Tuesday. He attended the anniversary of the Sabbath Schools on Friday, and made an address to the children. The pastor of that church says: "On the Sabbath he preached, morning and evening, to very large congregations. He preached with almost the vigor of his best days. Both sermons were truly grand, and made a deep impression. They were highly appreciated by my people, and will not soon be forgotten." Of his last sermon on earth, on the text, Matt. 5:47, Dr. G. writes: "His theme was that Christians should do more than others, because they have received more than others, and because they expect more than others. The discourse was plain, practical, instructive, impressive and characterized by great emotion. My people were delighted and profited by the services of the day, as I was myself. The discourses will be long remembered by those who heard them. He did not complain of fatigue after the services of the day." He had expressed a desire to visit Lincoln University, thirteen miles distant. He went accompanied by Rev. Dr. Gayley. The regular exercises of the University were suspended, and a public meeting, attended by the faculty, their families and the students, was held in the afternoon. Father made them "an address of some length, replete with counsel and advice to the young colored men, which made a deep impression upon them. Your father was delighted with his visit. He told my wife on his return, that he was glad he went. It looked so much like work there."

During this summer he travelled 2,349 miles.

On Tuesday the time having come to which my Father had looked forward for weeks, he steadfastly set his face to go to Baltimore, knowing well how great things he must suffer. On Tuesday evening September 21<sup>st</sup>, he baptized the infant child of his long tried and dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Easter. On Wednesday, (22d), he went to the Infirmary.

In his Diary, he says: "By the kindness of friends I found my room in order, and even adorned with flowers. I thought I might never

leave this house until carried to my grave. This though is very solemn. I cannot say it was distressing. This was a great mercy. I love to leave all with God. He is my Rock. 'Surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with God!'" The next few days were spent in reading, "Even-Tides at Bethel," "The Life of Dr. Muhlenberg," of which he said, "No one could write the life of such a man." He saw many friends, to all of whom he was tender and gentle. He had to decline riding in a carriage, as he said the motion was very painful to him, and also an invitation to dinner, adding, "After I am relieved by the operation, I will drive and dine with you whenever you ask me."

On Sabbath, the 26<sup>th</sup>, he and Kate went to the First Presbyterian Church, and heard a most wonderful sermon, from Rev. Dr. Skinner of Cincinnati, on the text, "He is altogether lovely." Father said it was the most amazing discourse, and he felt more than repaid for going. We talked much of it, and he went over different strong points that Dr. S. had made. We never knew him more enthusiastic over a sermon. In the afternoon, it was the regular appointment of the Baptist Church to hold service in the halls of the Infirmary, each denomination taking it by turns for the Sabbath afternoon service. Father and Kate went into the Hall, and the chapter read by the leader was the 1<sup>st</sup>, of 2d Timothy. After awhile Father sat and spoke, reciting a set of texts he had collected, each verse commencing with "I know." "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" "I know whom I have believed," &c.; "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved," &c; enlarging on each one. Excited as Kate was, by fear of the approaching trial, every word seemed weighty. At the close of the meeting, he was asked to pronounce the benediction, and as we rose he said, "Now, the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen." That was his last public service on earth. None who saw him then will ever forget the scene. Friends gathered round him, and to all he was kind, and oh, so tender. In the evening we went again to hear Dr. Skinner in the First Church. The text was, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Father said, "That was not just as a sermon to Christians as the morning sermon was, but I never heard so impressive a sermon from that text – I never saw it so handled." To a friend he said: "I wanted to go to the Council in Philadelphia, but I have written a letter to-day saying, "I am in

this House of Mercy, and I have been learning better things here than I could at the Council.”

It is necessary now to go back a little, in order to answer the questions, “How long did he know he had the disease?”

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1880, in the only Diary we ever knew him to keep, he makes his first entry: “For some time I have suffered in my bladder. Of late I have suspected the presence of stone in it. To-day Dr. Smith sounded and finds it is even so. He thinks the stone is small. Tomorrow he will ascertain the size. This accounts for all my pain in riding for some time. When the cool weather of September comes, he proposes to remove the stone, not by Lithotomy, (or the knife,) but by Lithotripsy, (or friction.) As I will be obliged to lie in bed some time, he wishes me to have the advantage of cool weather. The danger is not great, except in irritating the nervous system, which is already a little disturbed. Now Lord, I am in Thy hands – there I love to be. If it is Thy will to carry me through this trial, Thou canst do it, and Thou canst enable me to glorify Thee in this trial. If it is Thy will thus or soon to remove me from time, then Thy will be done; yes, Thy will, not mine, be done. I am foolish and know nothing, and Thou knowest all things – Thou wilt certainly do right. Thy wisdom is unerring, and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. I am dust and ashes. I am sin and vanity. I deserve nothing good. All my righteousnesses are as filthy rags – all my hope is in Thy sovereign mercy, through Jesus Christ. Wash me in His blood – clothe me in His spotless righteousness. Lord, increase my faith – Thou hast helped me hitherto – Thou wilt help me to the end. Quietly and cheerfully I leave all with Thee through Christ. I dare not attempt to stand in Thy presence alone. If I but have Christ, I have all.”

“Aug. 11<sup>th</sup>, 1880. I prefer to go to the Union Protestant Infirmary, and Dr. Smith recommends it. He admits there is danger in the operation, especially on account of my age, but thinks it not great. I think I can, and do really, trust that God who has always been a Father to me. Yes, I will trust Him though He slay me. And has not Jesus Christ given me many tokens of His love for more than sixty years, and allowed me to preach His gospel more than fifty-four years, and shall I not look to Him? I think too the Blessed Comforter will be with me to the end. He has often made my heart leap for joy and sing praises. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ, His Son. I believe in the Holy Ghost.”

He writes to us from Baltimore: “I feel all the time God has been very good to us – very good. Yet He tries us, but generally He makes

*duty, present duty*, plain. That is a great mercy.” After mentioning some of our plans, and stating that they were “plainly right,” he adds: “I do not need a home or work now. That is also clear. My first business is to prepare for the 25<sup>th</sup> of September. Whether I shall be made a well man or not, the Lord will decide, and then we can act accordingly. He will make it all plain. ‘His purposes will ripen fast.’ Wait for them. Through God’s great mercy, my mind yesterday and to-day has been more calm and less anxious. I try to fall into the hands of the Lord.”

The entries in his Diary after this are very much in the same strain, and it will only be a repetition to insert them.

Kate reached Baltimore September 24<sup>th</sup>. Arrangements had been made for her to remain in the Infirmary near Father, to be, as he wrote, “His greatest unspeakable earthly comfort.” The morning after her arrival, on being asked how he was, he told the story of the boy in the hospital, who said, “He was so much better now, because mother came last night.”

Every thing was now ready for the trying ordeal. He left in his own hand-writing a list of persons whom he wished notified of his death. He also signed a blank check, saying, “If you see that I am sinking, draw the money out of the bank, so that you may have wherewith to meet expenses.” On the other hand, he prepared to live. He bought a ream of paper, a bottle of ink, &c., &c., and asked that a large table might be put in his room, as he would wish his daughter to write a great deal for him at his dictation. “To live was Christ; to die was gain.” The time for the operation was fixed for September 25<sup>th</sup>, but Dr. Smith was absent. Father writes, “The operation may be deferred two or three days. Let patience have her perfect work.” On Monday Kate called to see Dr. Smith; he told her of the complications of the case, but said he was very hopeful, and felt sure Father could be relieved. About noon Dr. Smith called to see him and fixed Tuesday at half past one for the operation. The day was passed in writing, receiving friends and in reading the Life of Dr. Muhlenburg. He reclined much, as he felt more comfortable in that position, but said his health was never better, and that every function seemed to be in good working order. He talked much of what work he would undertake, “if all goes well, as I believe it will;” was much interested in news from the Council – and by hearing from his grandson that frequent inquiries were made for him in Philadelphia. One of the managers of the Infirmary brought him a basket of peaches and other fruit; his eyes filled, and he said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.” She left his bed-side

overcome and unable to speak. And so he spoke a seasonable word to all who saw him. Tuesday was a cloudy day; he wrote some letters and earnestly hoped the Doctor would come. About eleven o'clock the message came that he feared it was too cloudy. Rev. Mr. Grammar, of P. E. Church, kindly came to see him. "He spake words taught him by the Master. The Lord gird him for the battle. Let God be glorified now and forever." (Diary.) Later in the morning, about noon, the sun came out. He seemed restless and disappointed, and asked Kate to go and see if Doctor Smith could not still come. This she did, but he had gone on his daily rounds. At two o'clock the patient sufferer said, "It will not be today."

On Saturday before the operation, Kate asked Father if he thought it really necessary, if he could not do without it? He said, "I feel it to be absolutely important, and to have it done as soon as possible. I could not much longer bear the wearing annoyance of this pain. If I get well, I can serve God all the better for the ease and relief; if His will is otherwise, God can take His child home by a surgical operation as well as any other way. His will be done." Again before the operation he said, "I want my children and grand-children to know that as I draw near to this trial, standing as I may be in the full light of eternity, I do believe that the doctrines of religion which I have preached for fifty-four years, are the true doctrines and the only doctrines which can sustain a man when he comes to die."

He writes September 28<sup>th</sup>: "God alone is wise, I am a fool. I dare not, I would not criticize Providence. I abhor sin and folly, especially in myself. Glory be to God in the Highest."

"Afternoon: My good surgeon has deferred operating until tomorrow. Lord, give me more grace. I have to-day read Goulburn's chapter on Suffering. I have perhaps never before had so strong an apprehension of the scriptural truth, that grace to bear trials is not given until the trial comes. Blessed be God for the multitude of His mercies to me – to me a sinner."

Wednesday morning was bright and beautiful. He said: "Surely we could not have a better day; there can be no reason for further delay." The last entry made by his own hand in his Diary, is as follows: "U. P. Infirmary, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1880. In about three hours my kind surgeon will be here. God, blessed be His name! has given me a wonderful calmness and a glorious confidence. I have through His mercy no fears of any kind; I am amazed. If the Lord calls me to-day, I am ready to go. Alleluiah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! I hope to sing that

song to all Eternity, and all through Jesus Christ my Saviour." In Father's last letter to Douglas, written the morning of the operation, he said: "I have often thought you might out-run me and win the goal first. But that is not certain yet. Whenever we do get there, will we not shout the praises of our Redeemer? O yes! We will crown Him in each of our songs. And He deserves it all, and a thousand times more." At twelve he bathed and dressed himself for the operation. As he sat in the large armchair, Kate mentioned to him the death of one he had loved, who though once rich, had died poor. He raised his hand and said, "And the Master saw it and opened the door of heaven and let His child come home."

Again he came and stood before Kate and said, "I want you to know this is the happiest day of my life. I have not a doubt, a cloud, a fear. Nothing but peace and perfect submission." Soon the assistant surgeons came in, and then Dr. Smith, with others he had chosen to assist him. Father at first seemed to think it unmanly to take ether; but when the Doctor told him how important it was, he yielded, saying afterwards, "It is such a relief to me now to feel that it is best for me to take ether. I did not want to appear cowardly; but I am so much afraid of pain that I was in great dread of the operation. Now that the Doctor says I must, it brings comfort to my mind and relieves me of all responsibility." So when the physician said he would begin to give the ether, Father kissed Kate with perfect calmness, and she left the room exactly at half past one on Wednesday, the 29<sup>th</sup> September. She retired to the chapel to wait, as the Doctor had feared that the operation would probably consume two hours. She had requested Dr. Gorter to call her if he should find Father sinking, and to let her know as soon as the operation was over. She was startled when the door opened and Dr. Gorter came in at just ten minutes past two. She felt sure the end had come. The Doctor said the operation was a complete success, and every symptom was satisfactory. Thus Father had been brought under the influence of the ether which was very tedious, and the operation completed successfully in half an hour. Kate returned to the room just as he was aroused from the influence of ether. He asked, where he was? The Doctor of the Infirmary told him, and also how successful the operation had been. He called us around him and asked us to unite with him in saying "Alleluiah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." But in a few moments he began to complain of chilliness. Every appliance was used to keep off the chill, but in vain. Soon violent pain commenced, which lasted for several hours. Remedies administered somewhat relieved

him and he slept, or seemed to us to sleep quietly, but on waking he said he was troubled with horrible dreams and sights. From the first he seemed to Kate very ill and very suffering. The Doctor of the Hospital slept in the room three nights, and Dr. Gorter two. Dr. Smith came at all hours of the night, whenever summoned.

Father seemed relieved from the effects of the operation, but new complications set in from the enlargement of the prostate gland, and he became worse and worse. No one allowed to see him – only once he expressed a wish that his brethren would come to see him, “Not to pity me, but to talk theology to me.” Then Doctors McIlwaine, Leyburn and Leftwich, were admitted to his room, as also Dr. Charles Phillips, of Chapel Hill, N. C. He seemed excited and wept when he met these friends, but told Kate afterwards it did not excite him. On Tuesday, he remembered his grandson, Plumer Bryan, was to come from Philadelphia, where he had been a visitor to the Council. He watched the hours, and was delighted when P. arrived about three o’clock. He questioned him closely about the Council, as to who was there, who spoke, &c. He referred frequently to the friends who were there from abroad, from whom he had received such loving attentions, and to the pleasure he had anticipated in meeting them. About this time Mr. Spence sent word to Father that Doctor and Mrs. Calderwood others from Scotland had been at his house, and were greatly disappointed at not seeing him at the Council; and that Miss -----, of Scotland, had expressed her great regret at her failure to know him, saying, he was one of three men whom she had specially hoped to meet in America. These messages greatly gratified him, and earnestly desiring to write to them called for the paper and pen, that he might dictate some loving words. But he was so ill and exhausted that any exertion was dangerous. On being told that they had left, he yielded to persuasion and desisted. We greatly regret now that these last words for foreign friends, but with whom he was one in Christ Jesus, and whom he loved so tenderly, had not been taken down. But at that time there was still hope for his life, and the Doctor’s injunction, of “perfect quiet,” was carried out, alas, in vain. One of the ministerial delegates from Scotland called, hoping to see him. He was too feeble to see him, but at the Throne of the Heavenly Grace this dear brother offered earnest petitions for his restoration, if it were God’s will. It seemed to use as if the prayer made in the broad Scotch brogue, carried with it more weight and power than those we were accustomed to every day. Thank God for the Communion of the Saints.

Father kept close watch as to the days of the week and month until Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup> – “This,” he said, “is the ninth day.” After this he seemed to keep no account of time. During the first week he said: “Oh, to fall asleep one moment and awake in heaven. I want you to know I am thoroughly satisfied I did right to have this operation performed. I would do it again, though I knew all the suffering I would have to endure. I have made an honest effort to recover my health, that I might labor for the Master and not be a burden to my friends in my old age.” His sleep, though long and deep, could not have been refreshing, as when awake he would say, “Oh, what would I not give for a few moment’s sleep?”

Once he said: “You may know how sensitive my nerves are when I tell you that notwithstanding the almost total darkness of this room, I can see every inequality on the wall, and every article within sight; and I can hear sounds one hundred yards off, though before I was sick I thought this room so quiet, as I heard no noises.”

Sabbath night having suffered intensely, and the Doctor having relieved him, he called Kate to him and asked her to write: “It is October 4<sup>th</sup>, A. M., 1880 – it is past midnight, but blessed be God there is no midnight to my soul. My impression is I shall recover my strength and live through this trial, but God knows best. My weakness is very great, but God is my strength. I have asked my precious child to write this from my lips in my little diary that lies on my table, the only journal I have left extant.” A few hours later: “God hath most graciously and tenderly and lovingly offered himself to me in His Holy Covenant as my God, my eternal portion. Jesus Christ has most lovingly died for me, and brought in a glorious and everlasting righteousness, which is infinitely well-pleasing in His Father’s sight. More than sixty-one years ago, the Holy Ghost found me and gave me grace, I doubt not, to accept Jehovah’s gracious offer. It is not possible that I can dishonor God by taking the largest views of His infinite mercy set forth in Scripture. I trust Him – I trust Him only – I trust Him altogether – I trust Him forever.” Then Kate said, “Now, Father, won’t you try and keep quiet?” He said, “I am done – I will be quiet now – but I wanted to give my testimony that the gospel I had preached for so many years had not failed me in my hour of need.” Some time after: “When I first knew of the operation, my faith was as a mountain that could not be shaken. Then for awhile my thoughts were of man; but since I have been here I have never had in my life such clear manifestations of divine love.” Again: “I did not want to die without giving my testimony on this bed that God is a faithful God.”

On Wednesday, Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, Father seemed to sink so rapidly that Douglas was telegraphed to come from Staunton. She arrived on Thursday morning, 7<sup>th</sup>, but owing to his critical condition did not see him until Friday afternoon. He was perfectly conscious, and much overcome at meeting her. He immediately commenced to talk very freely. He said: "For thirty-six hours I knew my life hung on thread, and I would not have turned my hand (making the motion with his hand) to have said which it should be, to live or to die – God's will, not mine – God's plan, not mine. Oh, my child! there can be no hell to a man whose will is lost in God's will. If he suffer a thousand torments he is still happy, for he knows he is only suffering God's will. I have suffered a thousand times more than I ever imagined necessary, but had I known it all I should never have drawn back one step. I believe I did right. I had no doubt that my soul would be with Jesus the instant it left my body." Douglas said: "O Father! I am so glad to hear you say that, for once you distressed me by telling me that your greatest joy would be if you ever got there." In a very cheerful voice he answered: "I'll tell you how that was, my child. I was not a hypocrite when I preached the gospel, begged sinners to come to Christ, to flee the wrath to come and find Heaven. O no! I was not a hypocrite; I believed every word I said, but I'll tell you about it. When I would be by myself, the devil would come and say, Old fellow, your wicked heart has deceived you many times in other things, why may it not deceive you in this, in the main chance? But I found out the answer on this bed; I did not trust Jesus for the other things; but, my child, I *have* trusted him for the main chance." After a period of great suffering, he said: "I have heard a great deal of people going to heaven in a chariot of fire – my time has come, I know all about it now."

Thursday, Friday and Saturday were days of alarming nervous restlessness; he seemed frantic with pain and discomfort, and his calls for relief were frequent and importunate. Then came a favorable symptom; he was cheered, and so were we. He seemed easier too though very ill. Douglas asked him, "Do you think you are better, Father?" "I cannot answer that question with the monosyllable, Yes – I *know* I am better." He made every effort to eat the tempting delicacies sent him by his faithful friends, Mr. Easter, Mr. Spence and many others; indeed, he tried hard to live, never refusing medicine or nourishment until his mind began to wander. Frequently he said, "I thought at one time I would not get well, but now I think I am on the ascending scale, and will recover." His changes were frequent and sudden.

So the days and nights passed wearily one, how wearily to him none can ever know. "I change the place and keep the pain;" "Insupportable agony;" "I am in a flame – on fire;" "*Quousque, Domine? Quousque, Domine?*" again and again.

"The days could somehow drag themselves,  
Like wounded worms along;  
But I know how we lived those nights,  
Save that God made us strong."

He said: "I know now what the Martyrs felt when tied to the stake as witnesses for the truth. If I were lying here by the hands of men, I could not have clearer views of truth, and of the all-sufficiency of our blessed religion – I am testing it as really as if bound at the stake." After one of these fearful paroxysms of pain, he said, "I have chosen thee – I have chosen thee." Douglas, sitting by, finished it, "In the furnace of affliction." "Yes, yes, something like that," he said. "Well, if he has *chosen* me there, it is all well, well." Again: "I have had clearer views of God and Christ than I ever had before. If God raises me up to preach again, I will preach more of God's word, and less of my own wisdom." In the stillness of the night, after hours of almost perfect silence, we heard him clearly say: "Oh spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more;" but in a changed voice added: "If that be Thy will, O Lord – Thy will – Thy plan – not my will, nor my plan – whatever is Thy plan will be the right plan."

On Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup>, about eleven o'clock, we noticed a sudden change in his countenance, and a rapid sinking of his pulse. He was indeed very low. The family were immediately called, we thinking he was about to depart; but he rallied. Texts of Scripture were quoted to him. Whenever incorrectly repeated, he corrected them. In great agitation, Kate said: "I will keep him in perfect peace who trusteth in Thee." He repeated it as it is found in Isaiah, 26:3, adding, "*trusteth* means *resteth, repositeth*; that's what I'm doing now;" and moving his hands in a waving manner, he said: "reposing, *reposing*, REPOSING." He caught "The Lord is my Shepherd" whispered by a loving one; without allowing her to finish he said, "That's all I need – I have got it – I will never want for anything." He talked on and on as if he thought he were going home; then sank into sleep or unconsciousness, it was hard to tell which. He had three sinking spells that day. Mr. Bryan was telegraphed that Father was surely but slowly passing away.

Thursday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, the Doctor said he had rallied, and hope revived again; but during the day painful and alarming symptoms appeared, which filled us with great uneasiness.

When we found he was so low, we no longer denied him the privilege of seeing his friends. Dr. Leyburn came first. He said, "Doctor, I have known and loved you a long time." "You have known and loved a great sinner then." "I have known and loved an honored servant of God, greatly blessed by his Master in bringing souls to Christ, in building up Saints, and comforting God's afflicted people. You have been a kind friend to me, your doors were always open to me, and your house was my second home." With a deprecatory wave of the hand, Father said, "I don't wish to dispute with you, but can't you talk about something else?" and then went on to speak of his sinfulness and his place in the dust. Dr. Leyburn was afraid that perhaps there was a cloud in his sky, and said, "But on this bed of suffering, Doctor, I would like to know that you have peace." With a heavenly glory on his face, he said, "Why, my dear Sir, I have it, I have it; why, my peace is like a river." After a while, Dr. Leftwich called. In his prayer, he said, "Restore unto thy servant the joy of thy salvation;" Father raised his hand and said, "I have not lost it, Sir, I have not lost it, I have not lost it." On rising from his knees, Dr. L. said, "Doctor, I'm glad to hear you say you have not lost it." "O don't talk to me that way; I should be a dead man if I had lost it."

When Mr. Bryan arrived from Pittsburg Thursday night, Father greeted him with an old-timed joke and shook his hand, but speedily sank into silence.

About this time he began to refuse his nourishment and said no, no, no. Kate coaxed, he refused. She said, "Take it for me, Father." "No." After a little while she said, "Take it for Jesus," and he took it without another word. His troubled breast was calmed by that "charming name." His weakness was so great that he dreaded to be moved. Kate wanted to turn him. He said, "Do you think you know anything?" "Only that you are very sweet, and I love you very much," and in his own dear humorous voice, he said, "I think compliments are flying very thick and fast here to-day." The following are some of his words, though it cannot be remembered exactly in what order they came:

"Tribute, tribute, divine honors be to Him."

In speaking of Mr. Moody's work, he said: "I suppose I did more good when I had the colloquy with Mr. Moody in Philadelphia on New-Year's eve, than at any other time in my life, because eleven thousand people were before us then." "I have often heard of the waters of the sea

boiling, but I have never seen them boil. I have often heard of the mountains shaking, but I have never seen them shake. God is my God. I want no help besides – other would be an offence to me. If I had the chance of being saved by my own righteousness or the righteousness of Christ, I would say Christ's. I don't want to enter the galleries of heaven making myself out some great one, but trusting only in His merits. Hold up the standard, shout salvation." "You have been doing this for fifty-five years," said Dr. Leftwich. "Ah! yes," was his response, "but Christ has been doing it in all ages." When asked if prayer should be offered, he said, "Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey.' This is an old Dutch proverb. Did you say the covenant was ordered in all things and sure?" To Dr. Leftwich: "Did you know that your precious old grandfather died of the same trouble I have? In 1827 I started to see my father whom I had not seen for seven years, [in company] with Dr. Samuel L. Graham. On the second and third day we got into that wilderness called Goose Creek. If a man wants to be obfuscated, let him go there. The next morning we called on father Turner."

"Blessed Redeemer, we are flesh and blood, we are nothing, can do nothing, our strength is in Thee. Our ability to do good, to suffer wrong, to triumph mightily is of Thee. Be Thou our help. He'll bless me – and I don't deserve one bit of it. Blessed be the name of the Lord – blessed. All thanks to His name – thanks. Amen." "One night in the bosom of Jesus is worth all this."

"I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to" – one near by said, "*dwell*" – he answered: "Yes – dwell – say it all" – and when repeated, he said, "Yes – that's it – that's it."

His mind was all the time busy with his life-work. He announced preaching in this house at 11 this morning and 4 this afternoon, said "we will now adjourn to the church" and then for several minutes preached, urging sinners to come to Jesus. "The church bids you come, the Spirit bids you come, Jesus himself says come. Oh come, sinners, come," and more to that effect. Once when though unconscious, he raised his trembling hands, (they had to be held up while he spoke), and said in a loud pulpit voice; "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, accursed in the day when the Lord cometh; but he that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be – let him be" – and in a feeble voice "exalted." There was scarcely a day in which he did not frequently pronounce one of the benedictions, as if dismissing the congregation.



“I am unworthy before God as if I had committed murder in the street; and as acceptable in Christ as if I had the amiability of the young ruler.”

“Poor Mother!” Kate said, “not poor Mother, Father.” “O no, I meant happy Mother. Well, it is two years in October since she got the start of me in getting home. I am so glad she is there before me. She never could have borne what we have borne this year, could she?” She said, “No, Father – the dread of Mother’s life was, that she might outlive you, and I have always been glad that Jesus took her first.”

In the middle of the night, when the watchers beside him thought him asleep, he suddenly made in his clearest voice a great speech, beginning, “Friends and fellow-citizens.” It was patriotic, fervid and eloquent. We dare not even try to quote it. He closed by saying, “Surely gentleman, I have said enough; if my friend, Dr. Prime” – then raising his hand, he beckoned and called, “Prime.” On opening his eyes he saw where he was, and relapsed into silence.

“The preaching of the law can bruise, but it can never heal.”

“These are they, these are they,” but he could not go one. Some one repeated the verse: “These are they that have come out of great tribulation,” &c. “Yes, that is what I wanted to say.”

Once when his mind seemed clearer, he was told of a postal card received from Doctor Girardeau, one of his former colleagues in Columbia Seminary. It was full of Christian love and sympathy, and told of constant prayer that Doctor G. had been offering for him. After a while he asked his grandson to write, and began dictating: “Blessed be the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” That was written, and Plumer said, “Well, sir?” but he had relapsed into unconsciousness, and as in several other instances, the message was never finished. Blessings and praises were forever on his lips. All his life long he had been reticent of his own religious experiences, but on his bed of fiery death his tongue was loosed, and he magnified God day and night.

We had often heard him describe our Lord’s agony on the cross, and His having died slowly of nervous exhaustion. Again and again his own words came to us, as our hearts, torn by agony over his suffering would cry out for some relief for him. “The disciple is not above his Master.”

He had prayed for uncomplaining patience, and the prayer was fully answered. In agony and pain and the most acute nervous sensibility, he never murmured or was impatient. When so racked that he sprang

from the bed and said ten men could not have held him, he still said it was all right. When ice was given to him in a spoon, he said, “My Saviour had no such comfort when he was dying.” Mr. and Mrs. Spence, who in the most delicate way ministered to all his wants, called. He heard that they were there and sent for them to come in and see him. Mrs. Spence said: “Do you suffer much, Doctor?” “Not nearly as much as my Saviour did,” was the characteristic reply. “I am sorry to see you suffer so, Doctor.” “One who loves me better than you do put me here.”

The word *submit* was used; he said, “perhaps *acquiesce* is a better word for the Christian to use. We may submit, because we are obligated to – but the Christian *cheerfully*, joyfully yields all to his Lord’s will.” Several times he said, “I have no pain – I am very comfortable,” but in a little while the agony commenced again.

“God bless the dear ladies of this Institution. Could I have been as comfortable any where else? O! I wish some one would endow this Infirmary with \$200,000, that they might have servants and nurses, and do all the good which is in their hearts.”

“I want, O, I want -----”. Kate asked, “What do you want, dear Father? Tell me and I will get it for you.” “Oh, I want the Kingdom.” She said, “You shall have the Kingdom when it is your Master’s will to give it to you.” He simply answered, “I know it.”

Many came in to see him as he lay so grand and majestic in all the helplessness of weakness. He generally slept on unconscious of visitors. Occasionally he would be aroused by their foot-falls. One day several friends came in together, only to take a last look, as they thought. While they stood he opened his eyes, and recognizing Mrs. B., put out his hand and asked for her husband. She had brought a loving message from him, with regrets that he could not ascend the stairs – Father said, “Tell my Brother B. we will both soon cross the flood. The *elite* of the universe will be there, and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Then he turned to Mrs. H., and gave her a message to a friend, in whose conversion he felt a special interest. Mrs. McK. said, “Do you know me, Doctor?” “Why shouldn’t I, have we not wept together?” Again, he said to her, “How are my babes?” alluding to her grown children. She answered in an indefinite manner, thinking that perhaps his mind wandered. He said, “I mean my babes in Christ – they are my babes in Christ.” Soon after these friends withdrew, he desired to be left along awhile. We went away, watching near, but he only fell asleep, and spoke no more for hours.

On Friday morning Mr. Easter came into his room, and Kate told Father he was there. He put out his hand, gave him a loving greeting, and tried to say something to him, but failed – held his hand a moment, and then relapsed into to us seemingly an insensible condition.

His love for the Matron of the Infirmary was great. He said her voice was like music to him, and wrote of her to a friend, “She is an elect lady.” Once he said to her, “I am going to make a wish for you, perhaps you may think it unkind: I hope it may be many years before you are take to heaven, that you may stay here and minister to God’s saints, and perhaps, by your kindness, you may win some soul to Christ.” She watched by him with us to the last. When her work is done, and her Master calls His faithful servant to come up higher, none will be more cordial in his welcome than our sainted Father, to whom she was such a comfort. God bless her and God be blessed for her.

Father talked often of earthly plans, “if he got over this;” expressed his intention of settling in Baltimore; and spoke of the work and preaching he would yet do. He had no idea he was really dying, although he had left everything as perfectly arranged as if he had known he would not live. He asked Dr. Smith once why he did not get well? what was the matter with him? The doctor candidly told him of the complication of the enlargement and inflammation of the prostate gland. After that he asked, “What the doctor thought of his condition?” He was told he was very sick, and everything depended on his taking nourishment. For a few hours he eagerly drank everything brought to him; but, alas! the mind too soon let go the idea, and he begged not to be annoyed with so much food. A little beef-tea, and milk with brandy, were all that was ever offered to him.

His distresses were constantly aggravated during the night, but the physician was always successful in relieving the dear sufferer. Before the operation, Father told the Doctor that he did not wish to take opiates. But the last few days the restlessness and pain became so violent that morphia was administered without his knowledge, and with much success. He would constantly ask, “Where am I?” Once, “Am I shipwrecked at sea?” “No, you are in the Infirmary in Baltimore, surrounded by a host of loving friends, who are longing to do every thing for you that can be done.” Sometimes his restlessness to get up became very trying. A fancied engagement to preach or speak, or to see some one, seemed to distress him and he would insist on going – “I must go – the stage is leaving – it is my last opportunity to go – give me my clothes – don’t try to keep me” – and thus until his mind could be diverted to

something else. One night he said so pitifully, “I don’t want to go away in the dark night.” And we told him, “No, we would wait till morning.”

As the end drew near he talked of old friends long gone. He asked Kate if she had seen Tom Green? She said, “No, Father, I don’t know him.” “O yes, you do! He is my old school teacher.” Then he spoke of the graves of his mother and sisters, and asked where ministers were settled who had long ago gone home.

We had frequent alarms of his dying.

“We grew more unprepared for grief,  
Which had so long been staid;  
The blow seemed more impossible,  
The more it was delayed.”

The Doctor said he was sinking, but might linger several days. Wednesday morning Kate asked him how he felt? His answer was “grand, I have not a pain;” but in about two hours, suddenly nature seemed to give way and every symptom became aggravated. For several hours he needed the incessant attention of two nurses, nausea and other distressing symptoms attacking him violently. The Doctor coming in relieved his great distress and he slept all the afternoon.

In the evening, Dr. Murkland called, and leaning over the head board of the bed, offered a short prayer and pronounced the benediction. This roused Father. Dr. M. said, “Do you know me, Doctor Plumer? I am Mr. Murkland.” “Why do you not say *Doctor*?” “Because I never use the title, Doctor.” “You have often told me that before.” Doctor M. said, “I am on my way to old Franklin Street Wednesday night lecture. Can’t you send them a message?” He feebly whispered, “He – is – a Me ----; he repeated this, and the word *Mediator* was suggested, but he gave no sign of what he meant. Doctor M. quoted texts of Scripture, until Father became restless, and then he said, “Good bye, Doctor.” With great effort he raised his trembling hand and faltered, “Good bye.” It was his last word on earth. That night Father was quiet and never spoke or recognized any one. For thirty-two hours he lay unconscious. The Doctor assured us he did not suffer, though to us he often seemed in great agony. At half-past ten on Thursday morning, Kate gave him medicine; and at 11:30 and 12:30, milk from a tea-spoon. He never took nourishment after that. The lips were moistened, but no motion of swallowing was manifest. We watched him all day and all night. There

was no change until 3:20 on Friday morning, when the labored breathing ceased.

He drew two short gentle breaths. He opened his eyes and looked intelligently around on us all; the Angel of death swept his pallid wing over his face, and with one gasp his soul was freed and he had gone to be with Him whom he so delighted to serve.

“One gentle sigh the fetter breaks;  
We scarce can say – He’s gone!  
Before the willing spirit takes  
Its mansion near the Throne.”

All that science, skill, love, tenderness and money could do was done. Rich men and loving women alike brought their offerings, but we could not keep him. “His time was come.” His Saviour willed that he should be with Him. Our hearts are desolate. Earth is very poor, but we would not have him back. For years he has said that he never attended the burial of one of God’s people that he did not wish it would be right to lie down beside him and rest. O no! We would not bring him back from the rest that remaineth.

There some touching incidents connected with Father’s illness and death. One night as his grandson watched by him he asked: “What time is it, Plumer?” “Between two and three o’clock in the morning, grandfather.” “Did you know, my son, that at that time more spirits go out of the world than at any other hour, especially in hospitals?” His spirit left the world at 3:20 Friday A. M.

When Mother died an old student wrote to him thus: “I remember well your illustration of the increasing strength of love, as given to us in the classroom: ‘When a *young* husband and wife are separated by death the grief of the survivor will be severe, poignant, perhaps violent; but it will pass away or find relief in time. But when *old* people are separated in like manner the survivor’s grief may be less demonstrative but it strikes to the heart – it saps away the strength. It is a wound that only death will effectually heal.’” It wanted just eight days of being two years since Mother “got the start of him to Heaven.”

In the spring a dear friend wrote asking to be allowed to provide Father’s summer wardrobe. He declined, as he had all he needed. She then deferred it until the fall, and after he went to the Infirmary a handsome suit of clothes was sent to him. “She did it for his burial.”

The last whisper caught from his dying lips were the words, “The Lord’s Supper.” A dear, gentle friend, bringing some lovely flowers, pointed out one, perhaps the most beautiful, “the Flower of the Eucharist.” This he had in his hand when we laid him to rest.

The floral tributes offered by loving hearts were very beautiful. A pillow of white immortelles, with the word REST in the middle, was at his head; two branches of the victor’s palm lay on his breast; at his feet there stood a sheaf of wheat, gathered and bound, ready to be garnered. “Anchored within the vale” was typified by lovely flowers, but not one cross lay on his bosom – he was done with crosses and trials. Beautiful roses were sent from Columbia, which lay all around him. There were many other love-tokens, but these were the most striking.

Memorial services were held in the Franklin Street Church, Baltimore, of which he was the first Pastor. Ministers of all denominations participated in them, Dr. Leyburn making the principal address. Drs. Murkland and McIlwaine said a few words. The precious remains were brought to Richmond Saturday night. On Sabbath the funeral too place in the First Presbyterian Church, of which he was Pastor thirteen years. The church was beautifully draped by the loving hands of those women “who had labored with him in the Gospel,” and “whose names are in the Book of Life.” Here too the catholicity of Father’s religion prompted us to invite the ministers of other denominations to unite with us in these sad rites. Dr. Hoge preached the sermon, Drs. Curry and Preston making a few appropriate remarks. The hymns sung at both places were chosen by himself and his family, and were Psalm 17, first part, and Hymns, 691 and 678. We laid him to rest in Hollywood by Mother’s side. In tender, gentle tones, Dr. Preston announced Father’s last dying injunction: “My grave shall not be opened till the morning of the resurrection. It is not to be touched by human hands.” Dr. Hoge offered an earnest, loving prayer, thanking God that we could look forward to a day which had a high, eternal noon, but which knew no night, and asking Heaven’s richest blessing on those who had been so sorely bereaved.

Memorial services were held in Pottsville, Pa., Petersburg and Danville, Va., and Columbia, S. C. In all but one of these the church was draped and appropriate symbols on the pulpit. Loving and true resolutions were also passed by the First Church, Charleston, S. C. whose pulpit he supplied last winter, and by the Central Church, Alleghany, Pa. The Western Theological Seminary has, in suitable resolutions, through its Board of Directors and its Faculty, expressed its appreciation of Dr.

Plumer's useful life and its sense of the loss sustained by the Church in his death.

Immediately after Father's death the session of the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Va., held a meeting and resolved to place a marble tablet to his memory on the right-hand side of the pulpit. After the dates, showing the time of his connection with this church, these appropriate texts follow:

“Strengthened with might by His power.”

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.”

His old student and friend, Rev. N. W. Conkling, D. D. of New York City, has requested the “privilege of placing a suitable monument over his sacred resting place.” Of course this offer is most gratifying and acceptable to us.

Now, having gone with us through all this long, sad watch, cannot you unite with him and with us in proclaiming,

GOD IS GOOD! GOD IS TRUE!

ALLELUIA! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!