

George E Hahnbaum.

43

March 1818

A

# FUNERAL SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE

XII.

*Rev. Urban Cooper,*

ONE OF THE

MINISTERS OF THE

*METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.*

DELIVERED IN THE

*SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;*

CHARLETON, S. C.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE WIDOW

AND

FRIENDS OF THE DECEASED.

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*By the Rev. ANDREW FLINN, D. D.*  
 PASTOR OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHARLETON, S. C.  
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"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."



CHARLESTON, S. C.

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*To the mourning Widow, and bereaved Friends of the late Rev. URBAN COOPER, this humble tribute to his Memory, first delivered, and now published, at their earnest request, is inscribed as a testimonial of Friendship and Christian regard, by their very sincere Friend, and Servant*

*In the Gospel of Christ,*

**THE AUTHOR.**

*Charleston, Jan. 16th 1818.*

# SERMON.

PSALM CXvi. 15.

PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS.

MUST, then, the righteous die? must the saints of the Lord, who bear his image, and reflect his glory, be shrouded in the grave? Yes! Had death no power over the righteous; were not the grave appointed as the temporary habitation for the saints of the most high God, COOPER would not have fallen! Thou youthful warrior! skilled in battle, and valiant in conflict; that arm of thine, which with so much valor, and effect, wielded the sword of the spirit, in the ranks of the redeemed, would not have fallen nerveless into the tomb, had it not been destined that the saints of the Lord must die!—And is *Cooper* dead? Has that distinguished herald of the Cross disappeared from among us? Is that voice, which was “alternately gentle as the dews, and awful as the thunder,” hushed, forever, in the silence of the grave? Has that angel of mercy, who was wont to hover around the bed of languishing, and wipe the tear from the pallid cheek, winged his flight from the earth, and left darkness, and grief behind him! Yes! *Cooper* is dead! that herald of the Cross has disappeared! that angel of mercy has winged his flight! Of this there can be no doubt. The sympathies of the community—the cries of the church—the agonies of her who sits disconsolate, covered with her weeds—whose name is *widow*, all press upon us, and, while they deepen these funeral solemnities, proclaim in our ears that *Cooper*, the great, and the



good; the friend of God and man, has gone down to the chambers of the dead!!

If then the saints of the Lord must die, wherein do they differ, in their end, from others? what advantage have the righteous over the wicked? In their death? *None*: If the hopes of the believer be but empty visions --if Christianity be a fable--if yonder mounts, and verdant plains, and gardens of delight, which faith, in vision, beholds beyond these material heavens, be only fairy lands! If that throne of the universe, on which faith beholds the Son of God, seated in majesty, from whose foot issues that river of life, and around which are arrayed imperishable glories, be but a chimera. But *reverse* all these absurd suppositions, as the truth of God, and the experience of millions have reversed them, and *then* ask me, what advantage has the righteous, in his death, over the wicked? Only suppose, what is as stable as the pillars of eternity, that the hope of the believer is not a *vision*; that it is an anchor, cast within the vale, which preserves the soul, sure and steadfast, amidst the storms of life, and the conflicts of death; suppose christianity to be no fable, but a sytem of embodied realities, resting upon a basis, which shall not *even tremble* while world shall dash against world, and the universe be shaken into ruins; suppose that yonder mounts, and verdant plains, and crystal founts, and gardens of delights, be, in reality, what faith apprehends them to be--the paradise of glory which God has prepared for his saints; suppose *that* be indeed the throne, which faith supposes it to be, on which is seated the Son of God, the Creator and Judge of the universe, from whose presence the heavens and the earth shall flee away; who is himself the exhaustless fountain of felicity, and the River which gladdens his city; that the saints are the purchase of his blood; that his intelligent eye is upon every moment of their life, and that their

death is precious in his sight ; that the perfection of their happiness is the single point, in which, essentially connected with his own glory, are centered all his councils, and designs—that death is not the extinction, but emphatically the *life*, and the entrance into glory of his saints, and *then* ask me what advantage the righteous has, in his death, over the wicked man !

Not only must the righteous die, but, what to unenlightend reason is most revolting, their death is *precious*, or *delightful*, in the estimation of the Lord. This is the single proposition which the text contains, and to the illustration of which we will now invite your attention. We shall take our arguments, for the establishment of this point, from the various relations which God sustains to his people.

I. He is their father, in the best sense of that endearing term. “ I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons, and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” “ Because they are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying Abba Father.” Adopted into his family—made “ heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ”—no more strangers, or foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, they stand to the high God in the endearing relation of children. Now it is precious in the sight, and delightful to the heart of an affectionate father, to see his children happy—to see the place of their habitation secured against the approach of *evil*, or *distress*. If “ we have had fathers of our flesh,” who have felt thus tenderly towards us, and rejoiced in our freedom from sorrow and anguish, how much greater force, and increasing tenderness accompany the principle, when we extend it to our father in heaven ? “ As a father pities,” and loves “ his children, so the Lord pities” and loves “ them that fear him.” When he adopted them into his family, and

impressed his image upon them, he told them that *here* they had “no abiding city;” that they were “strangers and pilgrims, as all their fathers were”—that this “was not their rest”—that a trackless desert lay before them, stretching through an enemy’s country,—“a land of drought, and of the shadow of death,” and that “through much tribulation,” they should, at last, come to their father’s house. The truth of all this, the believer, in every age, has experienced. This world, to him, has ever proved a place of exile. He is far from the “city of habitation,” which his father has prepared for him, in heaven. Long, and cheerless wastes spread themselves before him. How multiplied the dangers—how numerous the enemies which ambush his path! How much has he to suffer, both from within, and from without, while he is accomplishing this wearisome and dangerous journey! How much, from the darkness of his understanding, which is always leading him into error? from the turbulence of his passions, which often hurry him into sin? from the deceitfulness of his heart, which often betrays him, to the wounding of his peace? from the prevalence of unbelief, which often darkens his prospects, and covers his path with the glooms of death? From the combined influence of these causes, how often is he compelled to cry out, in his anguish, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!” Enemies from *without*, shoot their shafts at him, as he passes along. The chilling blasts of poverty pass bleakly over him. Deep often calls unto deep, while the waves, and the billows pass over his head. The *Jabours* which he is called to perform, are great, and difficult. His heart and his flesh fail him, while the streams of his earthly felicity run low. How often is he called to pour the stream of his agony upon the grave, which has swallowed up



all that his heart held dear, on earth ! Lover and acquaintance are put far from him. The companion of his life, the partner of his joys, turns aside into the land of silence, and leaves him to plod his weary way alone. The wickedness of the wicked swells the tide of his sorrows. He weeps in secret places, and sighs for the repose of the grave. Pains and sickness, hold him prisoner in the chamber of affliction—damp the ardor of his affections, and weigh down the soul. Often is his plaintive voice heard, while perched like a lonely dove, he sits amidst the rubbish and the stones of Zion, when her beautiful palaces are laid waste. These, and a thousand other “ills that flesh is heir to,” make the believer sigh for deliverance, and long to “be absent from the body, that he may be present with the Lord.”

That this deliverance, of his children, from evils and distress, should be delightful in the sight of their heavenly father, is reasonable from the relation which he sustains to them. But death is this deliverance. This is the messenger which their father sends to conduct them home. The veil of mortality being thus drawn aside, the city of God, rising in splendor, presents, to the enraptured soul, Edens of delight—palaces of glory, and thrones of honour. The troubles of the way being all forgotten, the children of the kingdom enter into rest, and are forever with the Lord. Their happiness forever freshening, forbids the approach of evil, or distress. Precious, therefore, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints, because it is their deliverance from pain—sickness—sorrow, and anguish.

II. God is the *Sovereign* of his people. Of Zion it is said “her king is in the midst of her.” He is emphatically called “the king of saints.” He rules them by his power. He goes up before them. He arms them for the conflict. He covers their head,

in the day of battle—fights for them—vanquishes their foes—conducts them on to victory, and finally crowns them with glory. To see them return, victorious from the field—arrayed in the conqueror's robe with shouts of eternal triumph, over all their countless enemies, must be delightful in the eyes of their king.

The saints of God are soldiers of the cross—marshaled under the banners of a Deathless Leader. This earth is the field of spiritual warfare. Satan, the gloomy god of this world, heads “the armies of the aliens” against which Jesus conducts the legions of the cross. In this war are enlisted, against the saints of the Most High, evil Angels—Principalities, and Powers, and spiritual wickedness, in high places. To arm against these, and to “endure hardness, as a good soldier, is the constant business of the christian here.” It is after many a hard fought battle, he is to expect the victor's crown. But the life of a soldier, is a life of suffering—of privation—of anxiety, and peril. He is never permitted to sheath his sword—to put off his helmet, or relax his vigilance, till the war is ended. On such a state of warfare—anxiety, and suffering, the benevolent king of Zion, who is ever present with his army, looks not with indifference. Not a tear that flows, nor a groan that is heaved, escapes his notice. Not a struggle—not a conflict, in which his saints are engaged, but reaches his affectionate heart. Precious in his sight is the close of this militant course. Death is the gate through which these faithful soldiers, having fought the fight, and won the crown, enter the city, whose “walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise.” There dwells their king, in the midst of imperishable glories, and wreathed with laurels, ever fresh, to welcome them home to his father's kingdom—to proclaim their warfare forever ended, and to crown them



with glory, in presence of the angels. Does the warrior who returns, flushed with victory, from the battles of his country, covered with her honours, and triumphing in her rising glory, look with rapturous delight upon his faithful, and gallant troops, who have returned in safety from the field of blood? With what inconceivably higher delight must the king of Zion view those heroic spirits returning home, who have come off "conquerors, and more than conquerors," though they had to cut their way through embattled worlds.

III. God stands to his church, embracing all his saints, in the relation of a husband. "Thy maker is thy husband" cried a prophet to the ancient church. "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so will thy God rejoice over thee." The saints of God, therefore, are the objects of his special and peculiar love. Of this he has given the highest possible evidence. For them he gave up the son of his bosom. To save them from the second death, Jesus Christ was immolated upon the altar of divine justice. For their salvation have all those stupendous scenes, which have filled both heaven, and earth with amazement, passed in review before the astonished universe. He has called them by his grace—he has justified them by the blood of the everlasting covenant—he sanctifies them by the influences of his spirit and ripens them for heaven. On their account is the consummation of all things postponed. Were it not that time might be given perfectly to complete their characters, and finish their education for the skies, the wheels of nature would immediately stop—the sign of the sun of man would appear in the clouds—the stars would be shaken from their orbs—the sun would be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the judgment of the great day would close the scene. Love so ardent—so divine, must

necessarily rejoice in the *perfected* felicity of those who are its objects. But death is the entrance upon this consummation of bliss. The fight is then fought---the battle won, and the Believer called to receive his crown. Henceforth "there is no more sorrow, nor crying"---"death is swallowed up in victory." Nought salutes the eye of the Great Deliverer *now*, but "the travel of his soul" with which he is "satisfied"---the results of his agonies, and the accomplishment of his purposes of mercy. Henceforth the happiness of the saints "shall flow like a River" and their joys "like the waves of the sea." Their days of conflict are forever past---their harps, no longer hang tuneless on the willows, nor is their disconsolate resting place by the streams of Babel. High, and safe on the Mount of God, with what ineffable delight must he who bought them with his blood, and redeemed them with his grace, hear them recount the labors of the way. Basking in the beams of his glory---kindling into rapture, and extatic devotion, they shall look back to the brambles of the wilderness, through which they have passed; to the tents of Mesheck, where their tears have flowed; to the waters of Marah, where their harps were unstrung---to the boisterous billows, which they have just escaped; to the field of battle, where their courage was tried; and at every fresh recollection, raise a louder song, in which the armies of the redeemed triumphantly join, "to him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." The strength of that love which drew Jesus from the skies, and drenched the cross with his blood, must surely rejoice in such a consummation as this. What shall we say more? Shall we present you with the joy which is not confined to the bosom of Jesus Christ *alone*, but which springs up in all the heavenly plains, and spreads its influence through all the angelic choirs,

on the safe arrival of another heir of glory? If there be joy among the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, who has yet his perilous race to run, what must be their ecstasy and triumph, when they see that redeemed sinner arrive, in safety, on the blissful shore, and hear the proclamation of their Lord, "come thou blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee, from the foundation of the world?" Shall we call you to contemplate the delight which must spring in the bosom of Divinity, at seeing the character of the saint completed, with the full assemblage of all the properties which the gospel requires, and of all the glories which it imparts? The subject is exhaustless!--A voice from the grave of a man of God, arrests our flight, in the midst of heaven, and invites us to the valley of death---we bow submission, and approach the tomb. *There*, watched by angels, sleeps the herald of the cross, whose premature departure from us has occasioned these funeral solemnities. You have commanded me to go up at your head--to lift the pall that covers him, and to give you a last view of the man you loved, before the grave closes, forever, on his ashes.

There are men, my brethren, whom God sometimes raises up, in his church, of such distinguished lustre, and solid worth, as to impart importance to every thing connected with them. The mind naturally flies back, in search of their origin, and delights to trace the track by which they travelled to the tomb. Standing high in this class of the servants of God, was Urban Cooper. Virginia, that native soil of talents, and of eloquence, gave him birth. While yet a child he was removed, with his parents of respectable memory, to the state of Georgia. Near Milledgeville, in that state, he was brought up. There "his budding genius" early unfolding, soon began to excite expectations, which were never dis-



appointed. "The course of the *boy*, like that of the *man*" was rapid, and brilliant, almost beyond example. He was placed, at an early period, in the College of Athens, and at the age of fourteen he bore away the honors of that Institution, and was fitted for the active business of life. About this time, it appears, his Divine Master, who had much work for him to do, called him effectually, by his grace, and opened to his ardent soul the mysteries of Redemption, and the career of the Ministry. About this time occurred a circumstance which, with whatever contempt the witlings of the day may affect to regard it, or the *sneering generation*, make themselves merry at it, ought not to be past over in silence, since it equally displays the triumphs of the cross, and the glory of early piety. Shortly after he returned from the College, and while he was yet a boy, although, like Barnabas of old, he "was full of the Holy Ghost, and of Faith," his modesty concealed it ever from his parents. They marked the unusual solemnity, and holy circumspection which characterized his deportment; but "knew not that the Lord had called the child." On a particular occasion his mother ventured to ask him if he would lead the devotions of the evening, at the family altar. He readily consented, and while on his knees before the mercy seat, broke forth into such strains of holy eloquence; of divine fervor, and lively devotion, as to astonish, and melt into sobs, and tears, the whole family.---Happy parents!---Blessed son!!

Having been counted faithful, and fitted for the work, he was commissioned as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Having not yet completed his sixteenth year, this stripling of Israel sallied forth, with "an armour, and an attitude" which hurled defiance at the embattled hosts of the alien foe, whom he was destined to oppose, with distinguished success.

He was, from principle, a member of that section of the general church which is known by the denomination of Episcopal Methodist; he therefore embarked, in the ministry, upon the plan which regulates the economy, and gives connection, and solidity to the system of that large, and respectable body of christians. This plan directed him to what is, in that church, called a *Circuit*. In the sixteenth year of his age, he entered upon this laborious, and appalling tour, through the most uncultivated, and uncivilized parts of Georgia, and the two Carolinas. And *here*, at the commencement of his bright career of glory, unfolded a scene, worthy “of nature’s painter, and of nature’s bard.” On the morning when, at that tender age, before his bones were hardened into manhood, he drew his sword, and threw the scabbard from him—a sword which he never disgraced, nor ever sheathed till death unnerved his arm. His mother who bore him, and whose life was wrapt up in her darling Boy, followed him to the spot where he was about to mount his horse, and in an agony of grief, and bathed in tears of maternal tenderness, intreated him not to leave her, to brave the terrors of the wilderness, and the ingratitude of man. Though feeling the full force of higher obligations, and a more noble allegiance, he seemed, for a moment to be shaken. Bathed, himself, in tears of filial piety, he intreated, as for his life, that she would give him her blessing, and send him away. Perceiving that the thing was from the Lord, she, “who had taught this young Eagle how to soar,” determined, no longer, to arrest his flight in the midst of heaven.—She sighed consent, and blessed her Boy.—He fell to the ground, and in an agony of prayer, committed his parents to the care of his heavenly Father, and himself, to the protection of Him who keepeth Israel—mounted his horse, and left her, to meet no more on

earth. I confess there is something in this scene which melts the heart, and on the sublimity of which angels love to gaze.

In the twentieth year of his age he married the object of his heart's election and located in the town of Savannah. The vigor of his intellect—the depth of his humility, and the fervour of his piety, established for him, *there*, an imperishable fame. In the month of May, 1816, he removed to this City, where, with all the cares of a rising family, and but moderate means for their support, by the strength of his talents, and the assiduity of his application, he acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew Language.

The lustre which illumined his ministerial career, in this city, has been seldom equalled, perhaps never surpassed. Active, vigilant and faithful; “instant in season, and out of season” like the veteran warrior of antiquity, his ardent and enterprising soul appeared never to think that *any thing* was *done*, while *any thing* remained yet *to be achieved*. The vast crowds which flowed to his ministry, to witness the brilliant display of talents, of eloquence and piety, where *each* appeared to struggle for the ascendancy, seemed to produce no other effect upon his mind, than to humble him, in his own estimation—more sensibly to impress upon his heart a conviction of his dread responsibility to God, and to stimulate to greater exertions to promote the salvation of man. Though a Methodist from principle, and remaining firm, till the last, in his unshaken attachment to that branch of the Church of Christ, he neither *knew* nor *acknowledged* any *exclusive* denomination of Christians. Knowing that the purchase and provisions of the cross were not limited to any particular sect, his arms and his heart embraced the friends of Jesus Christ, wherever he found them. Well knowing that the high duties and responsibilities of an ambas-



sador of Christ, are not confined within the narrow limits which bigotry has prescribed, it was never a *question*, with him, whether he should carry the messages of mercy and the consolations of the gospel, beyond the boundaries of his own particular Church.

Bursting from those fetters, which hold weaker minds in bondage—having emancipated himself from those shackles which prejudice has forged, to the disgrace of the Christian Church, he walked at liberty, in all the majesty of his office, upon the King's high way of holiness.

The urbanity of his manners, as a Gentleman; the range of his mind, as a Philosopher; and the fervor of his soul, as a Christian, presented an assemblage of attributes, which, concentrating their beams upon his character, threw around it such a lustre, as to fix the attention of his fellow men, wherever he was known.—But it was the *commanding majesty, liberality, and grandeur* of his *ministerial* character, that allied him to the angel, already on the wing, with “the everlasting gospel to preach to the *nations*”—*not to a particular and limited sect*. Say not, my Brethren, that I am exceeding the bounds of modest Eulogy! I am not pronouncing his Eulogy. He needs it not. It has been already pronounced at the gate of heaven—“well done *good, and faithful* servant.” I am only attempting to give you a faithful portrait of a Man, whose character was cast in no common mould. In my soul do I believe, had he lived (but he did not) to ripen into ministerial maturity, he would have shone into darkness most of his Coevals.

In that dreadful calamity which but lately lighted down upon our City—which spread darkness and the shadow of death upon our habitations—when cries of distress issued from every quarter, and which at last, was deepened by his untimely, and lamented death, our departed Brother took the most active,

and lively interest. Not a groan escaped from the chamber of anguish, but created a response in his sympathizing bosom. He flew from house to house—neither the fires of the meridian sun, nor the damps of the pestilential night, arrested. for a moment, his godlike career.—At length his Divine Master, whom he had served with so much integrity and zeal, said “it is enough”—and sent his messenger to call him home. Death that subtle Archer, aimed his shaft at this distinguished victim, and it lodged in his vitals. It was now that the triumphs of grace were completed—*here*, around the bed of this dying Believer, that the gospel shed her brightest lustre!

His knowledge of the human constitution, and the hold which the fatal disease had taken upon him, convinced him, at an early period of his illness, that “the time of his departure was at hand.” The progress of his disease was rapid, but his faith, and his hope gathered strength, as he advanced, and the exercises of his mind became still more nearly allied to *those* exercises, and employments upon which he was about to enter. A few minutes before he bade an eternal farewell to suffering and to sin—his strength almost exhausted, but the exercise of his reason unimpaired, he desired his weeping friends to raise and support him, in the bed; and then, as on the very vestibule of heaven, while celestial glories broke upon his vision, and the melodies of Angels vibrated on his ear, his departing spirit summoned all its energies, and with an eloquence that melted, and a fervour that astonished, he poured forth his last exhortation to the crowd that stood, overwhelmed with anguish and astonishment, around his dying bed.—His strength intirely failing, he sunk again upon the bed, and with his eyes lifted to the heavens, and kindling into lustre, at the brightening prospects which unfolded there, he expressed his unshaken confidence in

the merits of that Jesus whom he had preached to others, and whom he was shortly to meet amidst the glories of heaven. The last words which lingered on his lips, already cold in death, expressed his assurance that “the recording Angel”—*here* his voice faltered, but was understood to whisper out—“had registered his name in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”—He closed his eyes—-and the spirit winged its flight to God?—Thus lived, and thus died this excellent servant of Jesus Christ. In the twenty-eight year of age he left us!—We shall see him no more on earth!—Dim is that eye of fire, and hushed in silence is that voice of eloquence!!—Farewell, thou man of God!—Soft, and gentle be thy slumbers, in that lonely bed, which Christ has sanctified as the place of thy rest, till he shall call thee to meet him in the clouds of heaven!!—

Men, brethren, and fathers! The grave of Cooper speaks! In the mingled accents of triumph—of glory, and of terror, it speaks! It proclaims the blessedness of the man who puts his trust in the living God—he is honoured in life—unshaken in death, and his name shall be had in everlasting remembrance.” It proclaims the glory of that religion which disarms death of his terrors—brings pardon—consolation, and eternal life to its votary.—But it thunders forth the melancholy, and alarming intelligence, that the controversy of God, with a sinful people, has not yet come to a close! Ah! to lose *such* men, and at *such* a time, is a sore calamity, and wears a frowning aspect!

The triumphant death of this stripling of Israel, carries a resistless appeal to the hearts of the young—it is more than a volume, upon the importance, and excellence of early piety.—Ministers of Jesus Christ, now before me; I need not ask the reason why those floods of grief are gushing from your eyes!—Ah! I well understand, and enter deeply, myself, into the



cause of your sorrows!—Your brother beloved, is—dead!—your number is diminished! Your labours are accumulating! Your fellow-workers are dropping off, one after another, and leaving you to bear the burden alone!—And yet you are *not* alone. The conquering captain of your salvation, goes up at your head. The quivering lips of our departed brother, told us that Jesus is precious—that in him is treasured up strength, which shall be found adequate to the most trying occasions—let us then take courage—let us wipe away our tears, and gird ourselves afresh for the battle! Following the bright examples which have been set before us, let us march fearless on, knowing that if we prove “faithful unto death, we shall receive a crown of life.”

“Peace be to you, Brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!”  
 “Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect, in every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. *Amen.*”

