

David Watterson.
to Rev William Ward

DR. PERKINS'

FUNERAL SERMON.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT

OF THE

REV. NATHAN STRONG, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN HARTFORD ;

WHO DIED

DECEMBER 25, 1816 :

AGED SIXTY-EIGHT,

AND IN THE FORTY-THIRD YEAR OF HIS MINISTRY.



BY NATHAN PERKINS, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN HARTFORD.



PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.



The just shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

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1817.

FUNERAL SERMON.

REVELATION II. 10.

BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE:

DEATH is an event, in itself, and in its consequences, solemn, and deeply affecting to all. It awaits all the living. There is no man hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war. We draw mortal breath, and inhabit mortal bodies. It is appointed for all men once to die. *And a time to die.* Soon—ah, soon we must all go down to the silence of the tomb. Man lieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of sleep. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. Every where, and all around us, we have proofs of human frailty and mortality, in high and low, in old and young, in sacred and civil life. No usefulness, no greatness of talents, no eminence of piety can be any security against the arrests of death, justly styled, the king of terrors. Our fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live forever? A sovereign and holy Providence removes, by death, from this stage of action, whom, and when it pleaseth.

We are convened at this time in the sanctuary to pay our tribute of respect to the remains of that distinguished servant of the Lord, who led here in the public devo-

tions ; and taught this church and people the great and glorious truths of revealed religion ; and broke to them the bread of life. We are come to weep with those that weep ; to mingle our tears with this mourning people, and these bereaved children and friends. We are to follow, in solemn procession, the remains of our greatly respected brother and friend to the lonely grave, the house appointed for all the living. Ah ! let us never forget, that thither too, we must ere long descend—that thither too, we must all be quickly gathered. Surviving friends may weep over us, as we do over the deceased. Let our main care be, in all our various places and relations, to be faithful unto death, faithful unto God, unto conscience, and unto our divine Lord and Master, and then we shall receive a crown of life.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

These words make a part of the message delivered by the Apostle John, in the name and by the authority of his divine Lord, to the church of Smyrna, one of the seven famous Asiatic churches. It is directed to the angel of that church, and through him to all its members ; and is applicable to all the people of God, of every age and country. The angel of the church was the bishop, or stated pastor of it, who performed the duties of a gospel minister. *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write these things, saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive : I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich, and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer : behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days : be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* The angel, or pastor of the church of Smyrna was to be faithful unto death, in his important work as a gospel minister ; and then at

death, or when his days on earth should be finished, he should be gloriously rewarded. Accordingly, what is proposed in the subsequent discourse, is to explain the nature and duty of faithfulness in a gospel minister; and then to consider the reward, which he shall receive, at death.

It is, in our method of discourse, proposed first, to explain the nature and duty of faithfulness in a gospel minister.

Be thou faithful unto death.

All people, who are faithful to Christ, in their several places and relations, shall receive a crown of life from him, and be remunerated with all the felicity of the world of glory, as well as faithful ministers. But faithfulness in the arduous and important duties of the sacred office, is now to be particularly considered. Faithfulness, in general, consists in an upright and careful fulfilment of the trust reposed in us, and the duties reasonably expected of us. It is what we take a particular satisfaction in seeing exemplified, in every place and station in life. It is a beautiful part of a virtuous character. In no place or station, however, is it more necessary than in a gospel minister. Because interests of high and infinite consequence are depending; even the salvation of the souls of his people—their eternal well-being.

And it is of great moment to observe, that in order for him to be truly faithful, in the duties of the pastoral office, he must have a really pious heart. Personal religion, or vital godliness is his most essential qualification. This is not the only qualification. But without it, no education however extended, no science however great, no talents however brilliant, no address however conciliating, and no eloquence however powerful, will avail. There must be the regenerate principle. No man ought to presume to undertake to labour, in so divine a calling, unless, after the best and most critical examination, he find that he may, upon just and scriptural grounds, entertain the hope that he has experienced a work of

saving grace on the heart, or been the subject of the regenerating influences of the HOLY GHOST. To preach an unknown Saviour is a difficult and perilous undertaking. To attempt to unfold and recommend a religion, which we ourselves have never embraced, and which we know only, as we do the arts and sciences, by study and speculation, is of all employments the most inconsistent. Amidst dangers and difficulties, who, that is wise, would confide in another, as a safe guide, to direct in the path, which he himself had never travelled; or risk a distant voyage over a troubled ocean, with one, as a pilot, who had never made himself acquainted even with the mariner's art. The thing speaks for itself. Every person of common sense and candor can judge for himself, in so plain a case. All persons, anxious about their salvation in another world, when they apply for instruction and counsel, in so momentous a concern, wish to have one to direct and counsel them, who feels what he says, and knows the path. A minister of the gospel, then, in order to be faithful in all his work, must be a regenerated man, or experimentally know the truth as it is in Jesus—must feel the love of God and love of souls in his heart. If he have great erudition, and doctrinal knowledge of natural and revealed religion, but an unsanctified heart, he will, by his evil heart of unbelief, be led either to omit or be remiss in his work. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? No person indeed can be admitted into the kingdom of glory, who is a stranger to the new-birth. And if any be unwilling to hear this truth, they are in so much greater need to have it urged. *Verily, verily, I say unto you except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature; all old things are past away, and behold all things are become new.* -A

gracious God, in his infinite condescension, promises to give the new heart, as his own work. It cannot then be produced by human learning, study, or motives and arguments. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* The principle of spiritual life in the soul is not the effect of men, or means, motives, persuasions, or arguments, but is the immediate work of the divine Spirit. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. A really pious heart is then necessary to qualify a man to be a faithful gospel minister. I am happy to have it in my power to add, as a pleasing fact, that this is a sentiment adopted by all our ministers and churches. And may it always continue! A minister of the gospel then, in order to be faithful in his work, and to his Lord and Master, must be a truly pious or regenerated man.

We again remark, that fidelity in a gospel minister includes proper care and pains rightly to understand all his duty, and especially the peculiar and essential doctrines of christianity. His duty is very various; and must be known before it can be performed. In all cases, the knowledge of duty precedes the practice. To him is committed the ministry of reconciliation. And the great variety of its duties is to be attended upon, lest souls perish by his neglect. And what more painful thought can there be, than that, at the last day, the blood of souls should be found in his skirts. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed*

unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Among a minister's chief duties, is preaching to his people the pure gospel. He, like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, is to come to them, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. He must then, rightly understand all the peculiar doctrines of revealed religion. It requires no small care and study to form scriptural and correct views of them. They all depend on each other. They have a mutual connexion. If one be understandingly admitted, all must be, in order to be self-consistent. They must be contemplated and received in all their various bearings, in all their extent, and connexion. In order to be faithful, therefore, he must have a clear and just knowledge of all the articles comprised in the faith once delivered to the saints, the form of sound words. Because soundness in the faith is of the highest consequence to the prosperity of Zion, and prevalence of vital piety. Hence St. Paul's command to Titus, *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.* That a minister of the gospel know, love, and receive the truth is essential. Most unhappy to the church, and deeply to be lamented, that any should undertake to teach, who are either ignorant of, or reject it. We are not to expect that pure religion will flourish, while its fundamental principles are but imperfectly known, or rejected. "An orthodox Clergy," says an English divine, "are the greatest blessing to the church, and also to the nation." How blessed would have been the effect, if in all ages of christianity, and in all parts of the christian world, among the various denominations, the essential and discriminating principles of the gospel had been always taught. If all, both ministers and private christians had, like the Apostle, kept the faith, long before this time, the gospel would have covered the earth with its glory. Ministerial fidelity, all will see, must include

proper care and pains, by diligent study, to form correct and right views of the essential truths of the gospel ; and of all the various duties of his office.

It is further added, that faithfulness in a gospel minister chiefly consists in plainly preaching, and zealously defending all the essential principles of christianity. The truth is all important ; and ought to be sincerely and affectionately preached, correctly stated in all its branches, and ably defended against all enemies and exceptions. As the natural heart is opposed to God and divine things, and even to the method of salvation in the gospel, for the carnal mind, that is, unrenewed heart, is enmity to God, so it is to be expected that errors and heresies will be invented and disseminated. *Holding faith and a good conscience : which some have put away : concerning faith have made shipwreck.* Faith here does not mean the grace of faith, but the doctrine of faith. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* Christ's ministers, of course, will always have work enough to maintain in the churches, sound doctrine, and to preserve their hearers from imbibing false and erroneous principles. The faith, which they are to preach and defend, may be concisely summed up, in the following articles : Man's moral agency ; his accountability ; the immortality of the soul ; the infinite glories of God's character ; his existence ; his unity ; his spirituality, and adorable attributes ; the original state of man as perfectly holy ; his fallen state as wholly depraved in heart ; the covenant of redemption ; the covenant of grace ; the proper divinity, atonement, and work of the Saviour ; the trinity of persons in the God-Head ; the personality, divinity, work, and office of the Holy Ghost in the economy of our salvation ; the necessity of regeneration by the immediate influences of grace ; justification by faith in the atoning sacrifice of

the one Mediator ; the choice of God's people to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth ; the divine dominion over all events, or God's working all things after the counsel of his own will ; the rectitude of his government ; the unchangeable nature and excellence of his holy law ; the perseverance of the saints unto salvation, that they never will be suffered either totally or finally to fall from grace ; the one only way of pardon and glory for perishing men ; the infinite evil of sin ; the necessity of personal holiness or good works ; the fulness and sufficiency of the inspired volume ; the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper ; the morality of the christian sabbath ; the use of the means of grace ; the general resurrection ; the universal judgment ; the endless happiness of the righteous, and endless misery of the wicked. These, according to all our best and most approved standards and confessions of faith, are the peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel, what the Apostle Peter, by a happy metaphor, calls *the sincere milk of the word*. And preaching them plainly, and in their proper order, is being faithful in the pastoral office.

It is again to be observed, that faithfulness in a gospel minister implies diligent care to impart to all a portion of meat, in due season. He must be diligent in all his duty. *And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season.* The faithful servant of the Lord will study rightly to divide the word of truth, that he may be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. He will, as a faithful pastor, carefully inspect the state of his flock ; will guard and defend them against errors and enemies, against such as would bite and devour, scatter and destroy. Attentive to the various dispensations of Providence towards them, his uniform endeavour will be to feed them with the bread of life, and water of life, to suit his instructions to the diversified cases of his hearers, to declare the whole counsel of God,

to keep back no part of it, whether palatable or unpalatable. He will not seek to please men, but to please God. As a skilful architect, he will lay the foundation right, which is Christ and him crucified. He will strive to alarm the secure, to awaken the sleepy, to console the afflicted, to direct aright the enquiring, to reprove the froward, to reclaim the erroneous, to reduce the wandering, to instruct the ignorant, to warn the delaying, to exhibit the terrors of the law, and to dwell on the riches of redeeming love. In a word, he will point all to the cross of Christ for pardon, help, and hope.

It is only subjoined, faithfulness in a gospel minister respects the sacraments and institutions of religion. All its ordinances, public worship, the holy sabbath, and the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper are calculated, in their own nature, to instruct and refresh, to establish and edify. In their appointment there is a peculiar display of the wisdom and mercy of our heavenly Father. He ever, indeed, in the frame of his law, in all his gracious ordinances, consults the best good of man, and honour of his holy kingdom. We lament that the two special sacraments of the gospel, should in the various ages and sections of the church, be so greatly perverted, and abused to the purposes of superstition and contention, as candor must acknowledge they have been. Their nature, design, and use have been much mistaken. But alas ! what has there been great and good, but has been abused by human depravity ? As they stand in the gospel, they are plain ; and a faithful minister will invariably endeavour to administer them only to meet subjects, always making a distinction between the precious and the vile, the clean and unclean. Thus is a minister of the gospel to be faithful unto death. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

The reward, which a faithful minister is to receive at death, here promised, was the second thing to be considered.

It is here called a *crown of life*. The happiness of heaven is described by the word *life*, as life is the most valued good in this world, with which man is acquainted. Indeed, all acquisitions and treasures on earth are nothing compared to it. Heavenly blessedness is therefore called *life*, as life is the most desirable, and the sweetest good, known on earth. The crown of life promised to all Christ's faithful ministering servants, and to all faithful christians, consists in perfect holiness and perfect felicity in heaven. All the bliss of that world of glory is to be their reward. What honour and exaltation will they have! Who can conceive what it is to be blessed with the full enjoyment of God to all eternity, to be in his immediate presence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore;—where faith will be absorbed in vision, and hope in fruition? All the glory of the celestial paradise will be their portion. *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.* Whatever I can say on the greatness of the felicity of the heavenly state will fall infinitely below the reality. If a painter should undertake to exhibit, on the canvas, the glorious lustre of the great luminary of the sky, he would be certain to fail in the attempt; so the most elevated description of the holy blessedness of God's eternal kingdom, will be weak indeed, compared with the infinite greatness of that blessedness. It will, however, mainly consist in perfect conformity to the eternal source of all being and glory. *As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.* From perfect likeness to God perfect felicity necessarily results. Here the sacred volume always places happiness. And in this evidences itself to be of divine original. A religion invented by man would never make its full recompence of reward to consist in perfect sanctification of heart, or perfect conformity to God. Blessed

are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. We may remark, the body will be raised from the dead. The powers of the soul will receive a wonderful enlargement. The temper of the heart will be perfectly conformed to God. Every kind of evil, natural and moral, will be removed. The society of angels and saints will be enjoyed. We shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known ; be in the immediate presence of God and the Saviour, and shall go no more out. All this is comprised in the crown of life. The righteous shall go into life eternal. All the work, in the kingdom of our Father, will be love, adoration, and praise. Angels and saints will strike the highest note of praise. They will sing the song of Moses, and the Lamb, saying, *great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands : saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.* Nothing in that world of glory shall enter that defileth ; there the spirits of just men are made perfect. Believers ! how delightful a prospect is this ! You now daily weep over the remains of sin in your hearts, and the many imperfections in duty chargeable upon you ; you grieve that you so often sin, wait but a short space, and sin will be entirely done away. You will no longer weep and mourn over your want of conformity to the divine law, and evil

propensities still dwelling in you ; you will no longer exclaim, *Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death* : For it will be forever removed, when your Saviour shall put you in possession of the crown of life. Into heaven no sin, sorrow, or death shall ever enter. And there shall be no night there ; and there shall be no more curse. Saints of our God ! who have already arrived at this happy state, blessed are ye ! While ye have already entered into the port of rest, we are still exposed to the fury of the tempest. Whilst ye have the crown of life, we are left to conflict with enemies and dangers.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. What a plenitude ! rich plenitude of bliss. He that overcometh, shall sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and am sit down with my Father on his throne. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. The felicity of heaven is set forth in the word of God, by a great variety of expressions, and figures of speech. Sometimes it is called heaven ; the third heaven ; paradise of God ; his throne ; his temple ; his kingdom ; a city ; the new Jerusalem ; a house of God ; the inheritance of the saints in light ; seeing God and Christ ; enjoying this vision forever ; fulness of joy ; pleasures for evermore ; everlasting life ; a crown of life. At death the soul of the believer enters on its reward—goes immediately to the world of glory, and the body rests in the grave. After the resurrection and universal judgment, its felicity will be complete with the new raised body. Its bliss will be consummated. All the pious, likewise, as well as faithful ministers, will receive a crown of life. “ Oh, what a happy exchange of worlds is made by the christian at death ! He goes from a world of sin to a world of perfect holiness ; from a state of sorrow, sickness and

pain, to a state of peace, health, and ease ; from bondage to the liberty of the children of God ; from a wilderness to a paradise ; from a cross to a crown ; from earth to heaven. What could prevail with him, were it possible, to return back to this world, and again encounter the innumerable evils of human life ? What could induce him to leave the friendly climates of peace, purity, and joy, to be again subject to all the distresses of this inhospitable wilderness ; to experience again the storms of the tempestuous ocean of life, now he is on the peaceful shores of a blest eternity ?” *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* This is a promise greatly for the comfort of all pious people, as well as gospel ministers.

But it is more than time to apply our subject to the very solemn occasion of our present assembling in the sanctuary of the Lord. The audience will at once perceive how appropriate the text is, to the mournful occasion. We are met to pay our last sad offices to the remains of the deceased. There is a time to mourn. This daughter of Zion is covered with a cloud ; is clad in mourning apparel. Brethren and friends, we weep with you. You are deeply afflicted. The breach made is as wide as the sea. The great Head of the church alone can heal it ; and to him are you to look, with your fervent cries, to remember you in your bereavement. Sister churches mingle their tears with yours. Extensively in our Zion, will this death be lamented. A great and good man is fallen into the arms of death.

The benevolence of the christian religion teaches us to weep with those that weep. Its divine Author wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus. A church and people called to bury a wise, faithful, and beloved Pastor, and to be in a destitute state, experience an affliction, the bitterness of which can be known only by being felt. There lie before us the breathless remains of that revered and distinguished servant of the Lord, that man of God, who for forty-three years ministered to this people in the gospel ;

long has he broken to them the bread of life, and consecrated to them, his time and eminent talents. He has shined, in his place, as a star of the first magnitude.

That infinitely wise Providence, which governs the dependent universe, and with which are all the destinies of man, removes from our world the instruments employed in answering the purposes of God, at his pleasure, when and how he judges best, most conducive to his glory. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, righteousness and peace for ever go before him. His is the kingdom, his is the power, and his is the glory. He doth according to his sovereign will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this world. He sends his messenger of death to close man's probation-state, as he sees fit. None can stay his hand, nor has a right to say unto him, what dost thou? Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. *Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

The death of the Rev. Dr. STRONG is deeply lamented; and the community sensibly feel the loss, as well as the people of his pastoral care, and his children, to whom he was an indulgent parent, and near relatives, by whom he was affectionately regarded. He was, indeed, beloved and esteemed where known; and he was extensively known. He was the pastor of the first presbyterian church in Hartford. And had performed the important and arduous duties of a gospel minister for the long period of forty-three years. This first church of Hartford was also the first church of Christ formed in the state of Connecticut. It was established one hundred and eighty years ago, by the venerable *Thomas Hooker*, and his assistant in the holy ministry, the Rev. *Samuel Stone*.

They came from England to America in 1633, and fixed themselves, with those who came with them, in Newtown, now Cambridge, near Boston, Massachusetts; and there resided three years. And in June 1636, reach-

ed Hartford, with a company of one hundred souls ; and organized here, this church, in 1636, the first established in this, then colony, now state of Connecticut, and in which gospel worship and ordinances have ever since been regularly maintained. They have had eight worthy ministers, before the deceased. He was ordained to the work of the christian ministry over this church and people, on the 5th day of January, 1774.

Some observations concerning him may here be properly indulged. Biography is a pleasing branch of history. All, from curiosity, have a desire to know what is most interesting in public characters, which have been highly distinguished. He was descended from pious and respectable parents, who gave him much religious instruction from the earliest youth ; and when of suitable age, the advantages of a public collegiate education. He was born in the town of Coventry in Connecticut, in the north parish. His father was the pastor of the church and people there ; was much esteemed ; and laboured in word and doctrine among his people to an advanced age. When this son was of proper age, and had attended to the requisite previous studies, he was entered, as a student, in Yale College. As a student, in the various branches of science, as well as learned languages, taught in that college, the deceased distinguished himself. After completing his term of education, and receiving the customary honours of the college, such was his scholarship, that he was, in due time, appointed to the office of a tutor or instructor in that seat of learning ; and he was much esteemed in this capacity. While sustaining this office, he applied himself to the study of the law, with a view to be a counsellor at law, and he was nearly prepared to make his appearance at the bar. But upon more mature deliberation, he determined to serve his God and his generation, in the holy ministry of the gospel. He had hopefully become pious, and embraced religion, before this period.

After applying himself for a short time to the study of theology, he offered himself for examination, to an association of ministers, and being judged qualified to preach the gospel, received their approbation. He was among the most popular and esteemed licentiates of his day. Wherever he was called to preach, he was heard with pleasure. Several applications were made to him by vacant churches and congregations to preach with them, in order to a settlement in the gospel ministry over them.

Among these, the church and people of Hartford, first ecclesiastical society, applied to him. Their invitation was accepted. He gave general satisfaction; and being united, they presented, in form, a call to him, to take the pastoral charge of them; and made him such proposals and offers, that he accepted the call. Accordingly he was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry over them, on the 5th day of January, 1774. Here he has lived, and laboured, ever since, as a faithful and eminent servant of the Lord, amid all the changes, distresses, and revolutions of our own country, and convulsions of the civilized world.

He well understood human nature, and how to manage it, even in various trying circumstances. He had an uncommon insight into characters, and an almost intuitive comprehension of them. He saw when, and how to attack, and when, and how to retreat; what was proper, and what was improper; what would move and influence, and what would be unavailing.

The God of nature endowed him with rich powers of mind, far superior to what is common. From the strength and acuteness of his genius, he was capable of deep investigation. His judgment, by which he examined, compared, and weighed subjects, to which he turned his attention, was sound and correct. His apprehension was remarkably quick and brilliant. His memory was retentive. In comprehension and extent of thought he excelled. Such were the uncommon resources and energy of his mind as fitted him to accomplish much; to acquire

knowledge rapidly ; and to be equal to the most unexpected and pressing emergencies. As a student, he was diligent, feeling the importance of losing no time. As a reasoner, he was fair, candid, and impressive, availing himself of every circumstance, which would render his argument irresistible. It cannot be omitted, that among his various talents, he had a large portion of severe and sarcastic wit. But, if introduced often in social intercourse, was never suffered to obtrude itself, into his pulpit discourses. His eminent powers of mind would have enabled him to excel, in any learned profession. In his own, he greatly excelled. We rejoice that such talents were devoted to religion, which, of all subjects, to which man can turn his attention, is infinitely the most important, whether in relation to the life that now is, or that which is to come. As a scholar, philosopher, and christian divine, he had solid merit. He was not forward and assuming, boastful and obtrusive, but cautious and sagacious, deeply penetrating, and popular and eloquent in address. Intent upon truth, he preferred ideas to the ornaments of style. He came to his people, not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. He had too great a mind to aim at a florid, pompous, and ornamented diction. His language was manly, forcible, and plain. He had, indeed, many felicities of expression. As a preacher, he was faithful and diligent in his weekly preparation for the pulpit, knowing that beaten oil becomes the sanctuary of the Lord. His general strain was solemn and evangelical, often sublime and eloquent. He had a richness of thought, and would often delight his hearers, with an unexpected train of remarks, always accurately discriminating between those hopes of eternal life, which are well founded, and hypocrisy and delusion. He was a firm believer in the doctrines of grace, and a strenuous advocate for them. While most affectionately attached to them, he was of a candid and catholic spirit to all, who

professed to love the divine Redeemer. He was free from bigotry and superstition. To the promotion of pure religion he directed his greatest efforts. Christ and him crucified was the sum of his preaching. Here is the only help of lost man. Here his only hope. By no other name can we be saved. I do not go too far, when I say, that Dr. STRONG was among the best and ablest divines of our own country, or any other. He had none of the mad and shameful spirit of proselytism. A friend to free enquiry, he claimed the right to think for himself in religion, and was willing that others should enjoy the same right. Every man must stand or fall to his own master.

In the devotional exercises of christian worship, he was solemn, comprehensive, and interesting. Few ministers could comprise more in fewer words, or equally well adapt themselves to particular cases, occasions, and circumstances, however difficult or trying. His pastoral duties were faithfully performed ; and most seasonable and interesting counsel given, when he was called to attend them, to the sick and dying. And his labours, in the gospel, were greatly blessed. He was used as an instrument of much good to souls. He saw and rejoiced in several seasons of special attention, among his people, and large accessions to his church, as the consequence. The number of communicants at the sacramental table is greater than in any other church, in the whole state. As a preacher, he was highly esteemed by his own people, and in sister churches and congregations, and wherever he was occasionally called. In all ecclesiastical councils and judicatories, his advice and voice were greatly valued. His worth was duly appreciated by the public. And the community weep with his bereaved children, friends, and people. His public services were important ; and he was called to act in many different situations, and honoured with tokens of respect. He was a member of the board of trustees of Hartford grammar school—of the Connecticut academy of arts and sciences—of the board

of trustees of Yale College—received a doctorate in divinity from Nassau Hall, New-Jersey. He had as much agency, and perhaps more, than any other man, in forming the missionary society of Connecticut; and for many years was an influential member of the board of trust. A society, which has been honoured, with the smiles of a gracious Providence, in doing as much for the needy and destitute in our new settlements in the wilderness, as any other in America. And in order to furnish a fund for the support of that society, and to enable it to carry into effect its pious and benevolent purposes, the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine was instituted, the avails of which were to form a permanent fund. And being the first instituted in America, this Magazine had a most extensive and rapid circulation. While it happily furnished a respectable missionary fund, it enlightened, we believe, edified, and animated its numerous readers. In originating and conducting this richly meritorious monthly publication, Dr. STRONG had perhaps greater agency than any other man. He has published two volumes of sermons; one volume of controversy, and several occasional discourses. He was placed in a situation where he had opportunity to do much, and he had talents fitted to accomplish much. He was an efficient member of every board, where he had a seat. Nature formed him for enterprise. He might have imperfections, but he had an assemblage of excellencies and estimable virtues. Such was Dr. STRONG, a distinguished minister of the gospel. He lived greatly respected, and died extensively lamented. His death has filled the religious public with tender emotions.

We sympathize with the bereaved mourners, the children of the deceased, with their connexions and relatives. Your loss is great. One dear to you, and justly respected, is removed from you, by the cold hand of death. His life and usefulness were long continued. He goes to the silence of the tomb, greatly lamented. He has finished his course, and kept the faith; we trust, a crown of righteousness

was laid up for him in heaven, where all the redeemed church shall at last meet, to go no more out. To console his weeping disciples, their blessed Lord observed to them, In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Death is gain to the good man ; for me to die is gain. He goes from a world of sorrow, to a world where all tears shall be wiped away ; from a state of distress and painful vicissitudes, to a world of unchangeable felicity ; from darkness and doubts to the full vision and fruition of God and the Redeemer ; from a frail dying body to an immortality of blessedness ; from a cross to a crown. Your loss will be his gain. He was an example of piety, prudence, and wisdom to his children ; family, friends, people, and to all. He studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. You will carefully remember his instruction that you may be wise unto salvation. Be thankful that a kind Providence spared him in life so long, a rich blessing to you, by his prayers and counsel. Feel your obligations to be humble, resigned, and submissive. Most painful is the separation of friends, by death. A holy and sovereign God, in whom are all the destinies of men, is to be adored in all afflictions and bereavements. He never does wrong. Infinite wisdom cannot err. Infinite goodness cannot be unkind. The sceptre of God's kingdom is a right sceptre. Be followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Trust in the same God, and same Saviour, in whom your deceased father and friend trusted. And you shall be blessed in life, in death, and in eternity. His voice, you never more will hear. His face you never more will see. His pious counsel never more will you attend. How affecting the idea ! but, rich are the promises and consolations of the

gospel. May you apply the one and experience the other in your sorrow. If it be a privilege to have had such a **FRIEND**, as is now taken from you—how great the loss ! go to God, and he will bless you. Go to his throne of grace, and seek a sanctified use of the chastising rod. How many will mourn with you !

This death, which hath convened us, we wish may be sanctified to this church and people, as well as to the whole town. When distinguished characters are removed, whether in sacred or civil life, the whole community sustain a loss. Peculiarly, the flock of God here have a tender part to take in these funeral solemnities. For many years, no less than forty-three, your deceased pastor ministered to you in holy things. He was greatly respected by you. He was a faithful labourer in the vineyard of our common Lord. But you will see him no more for ever. The great change of death has passed upon him. You will hear his voice no more from this sacred desk. At his request, and that of the family, I now address you. What rich instruction, from sabbath to sabbath, did he give you. How solid and weighty, how clear and evangelical, his preaching. He was sound in the faith, equally distant from superstition and enthusiasm. A firm believer in the **DOCTRINES** of grace, and an *able* advocate for them. How bright did the light of gospel truth shine before you. He had a solemn, manly, and comprehensive manner of speaking. He was superior to the vain ornaments of style. The *greatness* of his genius could not stoop to the employment of rounding, polishing, and smoothing his periods. If he had not what fashionable hearers would call the *charms* of pulpit eloquence, he had sublimity of thought, and a powerful, impressive delivery. His praise is in the churches. When his body shall mingle with the common dust, in the grave, his sermons published, will please and enlighten—will instruct and edify you and your children's children. A people, who have an eminent and distinguished minister of Christ,

are unspeakably favoured in Providence. How great have been your advantages and privileges in this respect ! but you are now a *bereaved* flock—an *afflicted* people. Your local situation, in the centre of the state ; one of the capital towns of the state ; the place of the session of the legislature of the state ; of courts, and the resort of strangers ; the largeness of your congregation, and of the church, for it is the greatest in the state ; all these circumstances combined render it peculiarly important that you have an able and orthodox, pious and learned minister of Christ. That you have such an one, is of high importance to the interest of religion. Your condition is critical, and your loss great. No *small* degree of prudence and wisdom is requisite in seeking to have this important vacancy in our churches filled with a pastor duly qualified. You *must* have a man of great prudence and sagacity. In your endeavours to obtain a successor to Dr. STRONG, allow me to say, you should, FIRST of all, look for real experimental piety, and soundness in the faith ; for good talents, and scholarship, in the second place ; and then for prudence, the accomplishments necessary to please, and a handsome address or pulpit eloquence. We rest assured you never will agree to settle a man, unless pious, a regenerated man ; and unless a believer in the DOCTRINES of grace, and a strenuous advocate for them. Be not carried away, I know you will not, with mere extrinsic merit, a florid, declamatory style. Brethren and friends, we mourn most sincerely with you, we pray the great Head of the church to keep you from division ; to guide and bless you ; to send you, in due time, ONE to break the bread of life to you ; and to preach the pure gospel ; who shall be an able, faithful and successful minister.

The pastors of the churches assembled, on this affecting occasion, will permit a word to be spoken to them. Brethren and friends, what a solemn lesson does this death teach us. Soon—ah ! soon we must follow him to the silence of the tomb. Let us be diligent and faithful,

in the work, to which we are called. Eminent and distinguished was our brother and friend, whose remains are before us. Like him, we too must die. And like him, let us be laborious, studious, and faithful, till our Master shall come and call for us. *Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

Let all this numerous auditory receive, on this occasion, a word of exhortation. Your life is preserved. Mercy is still proffered to you. Flee then, to the great Redeemer, who is still waiting to be gracious to you; to the fountain of his blood, to the throne of his grace. He still extends his arms to embrace you. He still entreats, beseeches, importunes you to turn and live. He still gives his promises to allure you; his ministers to call you; his Spirit to excite you. "He still stands before the throne of the eternal Father, presenting to him the sacrifice of Calvary, and interceding for you. He still cries unto you, why—why will ye die? Can you resist longer these condescending exhortations, entreaties, importunities of the Son of God? I beseech you no longer to refuse admission to the Saviour, thus standing and knocking at the door of your hearts. He offers himself to you, as your Redeemer and portion. Receive the divine offer, humbly, thankfully, joyfully. I adjure you thus to act. I adjure you, by the love and terrors of the Lord; by the solemnities of the day of judgment; by a regard to the eternal destinations of your souls. Flee to the blood of Jesus for the remission of your iniquities; to the righteousness of Jesus for the justification of your persons; to the grace of Jesus for power to resist sin; to the blessed spirit of Jesus, as a fountain of holiness and happiness." Thus shall your life be peace, your eternity, joy; you shall appear, without dismay at his bar, and be admitted by him to that kingdom of glory, where you shall sing, with the heavenly host, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.....AMEN.