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FUNERAL ADDRESS,
on Dr. Chas. G. Pufe
BY THE

REV., BYRON SUNDERLAND, D. D.

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MY FRIENDS—

It is customary, on occasions like the present, to dwell chiefly on the solemn event which has removed a fellow being from the world. Less frequently does it occur that we go back to consider the results of one's birth and arrival upon the stage of human action, and the peculiar conjuncture of the times in which his advent has been made—when the great shadow of death settles down upon the dwellings of men, and all is made dreary and desolate by the departure of a friend—and as in this case of a husband, a father, and a prominent citizen, we naturally seek to assuage the sorrow of such bereavement by resorting to the only real fountain of comfort and consolation, the promise and grace of the Divine Spirit and the Divine Word. When the first fresh distress of our new grief is upon us, we long to be assured if it is always to continue—we feel, then, the weakness and childishness of our nature, and we cry out for some arm to lean upon, for some ground of hope to encourage and cheer us on. Then it is that the sublime truths of our beautiful and holy religion come to our aid; then it is that the grand discoveries of the soul's immortality and of a future state rise in the prospect with so much power to tranquilize and console us; then it is that we feel and know the certainty of revealed religion, because it speaks to that undying part within us in a voice of authority which no falsehood can command. Here our doubts begin to be resolved—here our fears begin to be dispelled—here we begin to find a reality which remains unshaken amid all the storms and troubles of this natural state. And the poor heart, wounded and sorely crushed, is fain to cast itself, with all its sighing and all its tears, on the bosom of that loving Father who never wantonly afflicts or grieves the

children of men—on the great brotherhood of that Elder Brother whose tenderness and love are more genial and more encircling than the fondness of the purest human love. This, indeed, we may do. It is allowable to weep in the poignancy of our sorrow, since Jesus wept at the grave of a friend, although He knew He was just about to disturb the silence of that grave, and by His Almighty power to break the seal of death which had bound the helpless sleeper there.

And yet there is a power in humanity, assisted by the grace of God, which can rise above every earthly grief, and cause us to feel stronger even than all our temporal distresses. Because there is a powerful intellect—a mind which looks before and after—a spirit which reaches up to God, and which knows in itself that it is not

All of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.

When the human faculties have been replenished and redressed by the light and intelligence which are made so free in the Gospel of the Son of God, then it is that all the powers of nature receive a new accession of strength, and then it is that our intellectual and moral culture tends directly and strongly to establish us in all the expectations and hopes of a glorious and unclouded future.

It is not, by any means, the least ground of our consolation to-day that we are well assured of the comfortable and good estate of our departed friend. But there was something in his case which constitutes for him alone a consideration not due to most of those who have been his cotemporaries, and have been acting on the stage around him. And it is to this point, as a fitting instance of the mode of the Divine dealings with men, and of the wonderful ways of Providence on earth, that we now desire to

trace briefly the biography of him whose obsequies we perform to-day.

PROFESSOR CHARLES GRAFTON PAGE, the son of Captain JERE L. PAGE and LUCY D. PAGE, was descended on the side of both his parents from ancestors remarkable, through many generations, for their piety and earnest Christian faith.

He was born in Salem, Mass., on the 25th of January, 1812, and was baptized in infancy in the old church of his fathers, and reared amid all the sterling influences of a Puritan home, in the former and better sense of that now much perverted term. The power of Christian example and a devoted piety was always exerting upon him its influence. His mother was, especially, a remarkable and gifted woman, and from her, undoubtedly, descended upon him many of the most beautiful and intellectual traits and qualities of his mind—from her he derived the fire of genius which has kindled one of the lights of science that will never cease to burn. This early disposition and peculiar turn of his mind was manifest. When a boy but ten years old he constructed an electrical machine. We can scarcely appreciate now the true condition of that science more than fifty years ago. Only the very meagerest knowledge was then possessed by the most learned and scientific men throughout the world, and that knowledge was not yet reduced to any practical end or purpose, and served chiefly to act as a stimulant of curiosity, or to perform the office and entertainment of a toy. Meanwhile the young student kept on his primary and academic course. He was prepared for college in the grammar school at Salem, under the charge of General H. K. Oliver, with whom the connection thus formed ripened into a friendship which continued with loving warmth to the day of Professor PAGE's death. After the completion of his course at the grammar school, he

entered Harvard University in 1828, graduating in 1832, not yet having reached his majority. He studied at the medical school in Boston the science of that great art by which life is so often saved and health restored. He had made himself thoroughly acquainted with the science and practice of medicine as held in theory, and in fact, at that day, and in the year 1838, he came into the State of Virginia, where he pursued the practice of his profession for a period of two years. It was during this period that he was brought under the renewed influence of the Christian ordinances, and was confirmed a member of the Episcopal Church. But his mind, so thoroughly trained by pious parents, had years before been deeply awakened to the importance of religious things, and it was not now, for the first time, that he had to investigate the grounds of his hope or the securities of his belief in the written Revelation of the wisdom of God. His views were always deeply evangelical and spiritual, and though his learning and scientific pursuits led him to dwell mainly upon the works and wonders of God in nature, yet he never forgot the more home and heart-work of those gentle and spiritual influences which are shed upon the humble, repentant and believing soul. In the year 1840, he was called to a position of trust and responsibility in the capacity of Examiner in the Patent-Office, under the Government of the United States, at a time when there were but two Examiners instead of the twenty of whom the examining corps is now composed, and this position, since that date, he occupied with some brief exceptional periods until the day of his decease. From a very early day he was a contributor to the various literary and scientific periodicals; among which was more prominently "Silliman's Journal"—and even within the last two weeks, though outwardly so enfeebled and exhausted,

he has prepared an article in reply to inquiries made of him in his correspondence, with reference to the series of remarkable experiments made by him in 1850 and 1851, in demonstration of the practicability of employing electromagnetism as a motive power, which will appear in the pages of the "Scientific American" only after the hand that penned it shall be lying cold in the composure of the sepulchre. And within the last four or six months he has written and caused to be published one of the most concise, full, and elaborate treatises upon the subject of electrical science and discovery which has yet appeared. His correspondence with scientific and learned men, not only in this, but other countries, has been extended over many years, and has become, indeed, voluminous. But his great achievements, which have been so recently and honorably acknowledged in the Congress of the United States, were accomplished in regard to the nature and applicability of the electric fluid in the practical purpose of life. It is now proved and admitted that, as much, if not more any other man either on this or the other side of the Atlantic, he has furnished the clue which, in the hands of others, has at last spanned the broad ocean, and made one great whispering gallery of all the continents of the world. This is truly a glorious triumph and a lasting fame. It is not a little ground of satisfaction that he lived to see his claim acknowledged, and to prove the fact that nations are not always ungrateful to their most distinguished benefactors.

But why should I attempt, in this place, to complete the portraiture of such a life and of services so great to the cause of science, humanity, and religion itself. Other pens will record, in more adequate and fitting modes, the character and life of this philosopher and sage. It is for us to meditate

upon the ways of Providence by which men and things are chosen and raised up to carry out and accomplish the wondrous designs of Heaven. In 1812, the year of the birth of our now lamented friend, the world was in a condition which prophecy had marked for the development of some great advanced stage of intellectual, national, and religious elevation. The history of those days discloses the fact that about that period began a new series of events in civil politics, in science, in religious missions; and this series of events has been in progress, till now we behold the unfolding of some of the most wonderful spectacles in human history, and some of the most amazing triumphs of human art. How strange and how impressive is the thought that a lad ten years of age, in the town of Salem, Mass., with his first rough electrical machine, was beginning that course of scientific discovery which has contributed essentially to the vast and overpowering results which we now see before us. So God raises up his instruments, and so He commissions His servants, and when they have done their work He recalls them to Himself. Professor PAGE was married to Miss PRISCILLA S. WEBSTER in 1843, and has left his wife, three sons and two daughters, who survive, while he, himself, has been summoned to join two infant sons, that years ago were taken from them, and that beautiful and lovely spirit—their eldest daughter, Mrs. EMELYN W. BAILEY, who departed this life not quite one year ago. Strange indeed have been the vicissitudes of this family circle in one short twelvemonth. It was but just fourteen moons ago that, on this very day, we were called to share in the joys of the nuptial ceremony with that fair child. Alas! how soon did illness come and smite them down again and again with a fourfold stroke, until at last Death could not be satisfied till she, the fondly cherished, was

offered on his altar. God has spared the others to continue unto this day, but I cannot forbear the thought that on him whose head now lies so low before us, this storm-burst of sorrow fell but too heavily, and that it planted in that loving heart a pang which has powerfully tended to cause it to cease to beat.

But the sources of that disease which has finally overcome him were already opened. An intensity of brain-work, as well, doubtless, as the effect of chemical substances upon the physical man, and with which his experiments compelled him to have so much to do, continued to produce, with other causes, a strange pressure and disability upon the head, which, though in a measure checked by temporary repose from labor, was nevertheless ready to reassert its power in another form, and which, for the last six months, and often attended by severe pain, settled upon the throat and bronchial parts, and wholly deprived him of the power to speak aloud. During this closing period of his life, however, as his physical suffering and disability have been increasing, nothing could be more sweet or touching than the shining out of his beautiful Christian character and confidence in God. While the outward man has been perishing, the inward man appears to have been renewed day by day. Always, by instinct, filled with a sense of the appropriate and beautiful—always cunning of hand and subtle in device, no flowers or birds, or any other favorite of human nature flourished more prosperously than his. He seemed to have a direct sympathy with everything in nature, by which it knew him for a kindred spirit and acknowledged his kinship and command. And this was not lost from among his powers in the last months and days. He had a smile for all. His eager spirit quickened on every topic of his chosen life-pursuits, and above all he

recognized the sublime truths of the Gospel as the only sufficient and satisfactory solution of all our science and all our experience. About two months since, desiring to die in full membership and communion with the church of his family, he was, on profession, received into the fellowship and communion of our church, and the associations of that most affecting occasion will long continue in the memory of those who shared in its solemn rites. Always mindful of our nature's infirmities, and always penetrated with the humility as well as the child-like confidence of a Christian, it was but a few days since that, unable to give utterance in audible tones to the testimony he would leave behind him, he wrote out the following words, which are so true, so evangelical, and so Scriptural in sentiment that I shall be permitted to recite them here: "My life," he says, "has been very unsatisfactory to me—I have neglected and abused many privileges, but God will forgive all—and my sins be remembered only to praise Him for His infinite mercy. He has followed me with loving kindness all my days."

Oh how different is such a sentiment from the proud and atheistic spirit of too many of our scientific men who, in professing to become wise, are really changed into fools, denying the God that has made them, or despising the authority and will of Him in whose hand is their very breath. To no such spirit did he ever give countenance or way. Although severely tried, and suffering much in his last illness, yet no word of insubmission, no sign of impatience escaped him. Sweet and loving, and tender to the last, while the days waxed and waned, and his mortal strength was diminishing, he appears to have had some warning—some whispering of angels, telling him that the time had come; for on the morning of the day of his decease he had

the members of his family approach his bed-side and, deprived of the usual expression of the lips, he spoke to each of them his last loving adieu, in that language which we may suppose the angels use when they are intent to tell some thrilling story of God's works and ways—the language of a smile which lighted up all the wasted features of the dying body, like the glory of a sunset reflected upon the windows of some ancient deserted castle. And when this was done, all with him was done. In a few moments, at about one o'clock on Tuesday, the 5th of May, 1868, his breathing grew low and gentle, and before it was known almost to the watchers by his couch, that mystery and stillness had come on, which no mortal power can penetrate, and which will never again be broken, until the trumpet of the archangel shall waken it. Oh how deep the mystery and the stillness of death—here now—in a moment gone, past all human recall forever!

Can anything be added for the soothing of our sorrow when we feel so great a loss? Can anything be said to comfort these bereaved and stricken ones? Perhaps not to deprive them of their sense of desolation they must needs feel in parting with their friend—perhaps it were not best in this manner, if we could, to staunch the bleeding wounds of the heart's affections. This suffering of ours is permitted, in the infinite wisdom and mercy of Him who does not forget our infirmities, and who has declared that He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. And being so permitted, we may be sure there is some gracious design yet to be discovered. The cloud that gathers its blackness, surcharged with fury, over any portion of the earth, when pierced by the spears of the tempest, has been found to discharge only the elements of refreshment and restoration upon the thirsty earth. And why may not the same great process take place in the moral and spiritual

world. If the sweet flowers are born of such a parentage as the wild storms and cloudy days of heaven, why may not a purer and holier hope blossom over the griefs and sorrows which these woes of time produce?

Surely I am not speaking to those, nor for those, who are uninstructed in the great doctrines of our common Christianity. We believe in the atonement of the Son of God; we believe in a future state of being; we believe in the immortality of the soul; we believe in the resurrection and eternal life. While, then, we shall go forward with the solemn scene of burial, and shall compose this sleeping clay in its last slumber and final resting place, let us not yield up our Christian confidence to the misgivings of unbelief, or to the upbraidings of complaint; but meekly, with pious resignation, let us bow to the Divine behest; assured that all things shall work together for the good of those who love God, and that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The soul that has left this earthly abode, and gone forth from this fleshy tabernacle, is now unfettered, free to expatiate, as never it did before, among the wonders of that creation which God has fitted up for His children, and to pour the tribute of its gratitude into the ears of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, and hath washed us in His own blood to present us without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the throne of His Father with exceeding joy.

O may we so live, and so may we die! It is Christ in the one and gain in the other. O ye spirits of the departed, who have entered into glory and await our coming, it is not for you that we mourn, for ye are at rest forever! If we mourn, it is alone for ourselves and for the hazards of the way that must yet be on our part. May God grant that none of us, for any reason, fail of this great salvation!

