

The Rev. G. Wadsworth - with author's best wishes

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Series 4
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LOVE'S MEMORIAL.

A MONUMENTAL DISCOURSE;

OCCASIONED BY THE ERECTION OF A

MONUMENT TO THE MEMORY

OF THE LATE

REV. SAMUEL RALSTON, D. D.

FORMERLY, AND FOR A LONG SERIES OF YEARS,

PASTOR OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS

OF

MINGO CREEK AND MONONGAHELA CITY;

DELIVERED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MINGO
CREEK, WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENN'A.

On Monday, 13th June, A. D. 1853.

BY REV. NATHANIEL WEST, D. D.

“And he set up the PILLARS in the porch of the Temple.”—1 Kings, vii: 21.

“James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be PILLARS.”—Gal. ii: 9.

“Him that overcometh will I make a PILLAR in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out,” &c.—Rev. iii: 12.

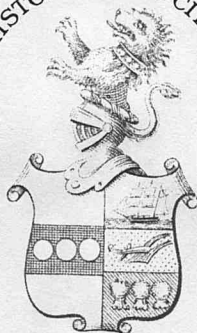
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CORRESPONDENCE.

MINGO CREEK CHURCH, June 13 h, 1853

REV NATHANIEL WEST, D. D.

DEAR SIR.—The undersigned committees in behalf of the congregations of Mingo and Monongahela City, tender you our sincere thanks for the able and appropriate discourse just delivered, in reference to the monument recently erected over the remains of the Rev. Samuel Ralston, D. D., and would earnestly solicit you to publish the same at your earliest convenience, at the expense of the congregations.

Yours respectfully,

JOHN. R. DUNDASS, <i>Pastor</i> ,	} <i>Com. of Mingo, &c.</i>
JAMES M'VEY,	
JOHN HAPPER.	
JOHN KERR, <i>Pastor</i> ,	} <i>Com. Monong. City.</i>
ISAAC VAN VOORHIS,	
ALEXANDER WILSON.	

McKEESPORT, July 1st, 1853.

TO REV. JOHN R. DUNDASS, REV. JOHN KERR, MESSRS. McVEY, HAPPER, VAN VOORHIS, and WILSON:

Very Dear Brethren:—Your complimentary and respectful request on behalf of your respective congregations, to publish my discourse relative to the Monument, which you and your people have, with such an excellent spirit, and in such chaste and beautiful style, recently erected to the memory of the beloved DR. RALSTON, is just arrived. I cannot resist your solicitations, and however imperfect the discourse may appear when published, it shall be put in the printer's hands as soon as circumstances will permit.

With true respect, I remain your brother in the Gospel,
NATHANIEL WEST.

TO THE
SURVIVING RELATIVES

OF THE LATE

REVEREND DOCTOR RALSTON,

To his pastoral successors *now* in charge, the REV. JOHN R.

DUNDASS, and the REV. JOHN KERR—

To the PEOPLE of his former united pastoral charge—

To all his surviving ministerial associates—

To his numerous surviving friends and neighbors—and

To all the friends of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, whether

Lay or clerical; the following discourse is

RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

A MONUMENTAL DISCOURSE.

TEXT.—“ *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I WILL WRITE UPON HIM my new name.* Rev. iii: 12.

IT is an uncharitable mistake in those who think it unlawful or improper to commemorate the departed servants of Christ, who have been eminent in his service while they lived. To celebrate the memories of the excellent of the earth, has ever been the practice of mankind, in every age and nation. Whether the subjects of such celebrations have been eminent ministers, or distinguished members of the Church of Christ; famous generals, or men of military renown; exalted statesmen, or noble and disinterested patriots; wise and virtuous civil rulers, or even those in humble life, whose extraordinary endowments have rendered them conspicuous benefactors of mankind; it has been judged proper in the common sense and common gratitude of all nations, barbarous or civilized, to perpetuate their memories and their fame.

Some construe all mementos and monuments of praise for the dead, into superstitious adulation. We might as well construe such a construction into moroseness and envy; for all are not free from such ill humor, and such faults. Even ministers of the gospel have in some instances been found among those who have fancied their own lives to have been upbraided when hearing and reading of the commendation of others. Envy always wishes *itself* to enjoy the character for excellence, which it does not possess, but which others do, hence opposition and slander in many cases arise against the righteous.

PRAISE, however refused by the living to the living, is a just debt due to the virtuous dead. None but those who are destitute of all generosity of nature, will invade the reputation of departed excellence. Such persons as slander, or depreciate real worth in the deceased, are in feeling similar to those birds and beasts that devour and live upon dead carcasses!

But, however we praise the dead, our praise cannot alter their state. None but those who are worse than the heathen will deny this, for ARISTOTLE affirmed it. Now, as we cannot pray for the dead, without including the motive of altering their state, so then we ought to commemorate and praise their excellent virtues. Even TULLY, though doubtful of the immortality of the soul, makes the good name we leave behind us, a kind of immortality, a sort of ever-living thing! It is only common justice to the virtuous dead to publicly pay them the gratitude we publicly owe them. But there is more than this, in commemorating those whose lives, and labors, and examples, in this world, brought much glory to God, enlarged the kingdom of Christ, and were instruments of salvation to many.

Whether the heirs of glory, upon their first admission to their heavenly inheritance, are put in possession of all they shall enjoy, has been considered doubtful. I, for one, do not believe that the glorified receive the full amount of glory at their first admission, so as never to have that amount increased. If the *faculty* be perfected by the *object* with which it is conversant, and the faculties of the glorified ones be constantly employed on an infinite object, then the faculties must be capable of more and more enlargement throughout eternity, in order to receive and appreciate new communications from an infinite and eternal source. The waters keep running and rising towards the same level with their well-spring. This is true in nature, in grace, and in glory! Hence, as the created faculties can never attain to infinity, so they must in heaven be continually, yea, eternally increasing in capacity, or the communications from the boundless well-spring of eternal felicity must cease to flow! But this is in heaven. And very similar is the case, in some respects, as to the new accessions of glory which follow the righteous from this world, as results of their labors and example in the cause of Christ. Their example, their teaching, their labor and toil in the vineyard of the Lord, keep drawing many souls after them to glory, and influence many in the church militant to imitate them. These results give the glorified in heaven a large revenue of *accessory joys!* And the passage has then its full application, which says—"Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Rev. 14: 13. It is in the heavenly Canaan the eminently righteous have

the full "blessing of the upper springs, and of the nether springs." Judges 1: 15. Full joys from heaven above and earth beneath. Gen. 49: 25. And if this be so, why deny the singularly useful in the Redeemer's cause, when they have departed, that commemoration, which will keep their example in lasting remembrance by their successors and survivors, continually stimulating them to the performance of everything lovely and praise-worthy, until they too are called to share in the eternal rewards and plaudits of the blood-washed throng in glory! To raise a monument of praise and commemoration to public or private persons, renowned in God's service, is therefore one way to glorify God for the bestowment of his gifts and his grace upon such persons, and certainly a way neither small nor mean, nor in its influence transient.

In one other way may this subject be yet viewed. It is this. The solemn pleasure it affords surviving friends, to see love's memorial, speaking from a sepulchral monument, and telling the spectator, the character of the loved one whose ashes sleep *there!* Marble preachers standing day and night at the head of the grave, are very solemn preachers! If God holds "the righteous in everlasting remembrance," the righteous themselves should hold each other in remembrance as long as they can, and not suffer "their own memorial to perish."

Having made these preparatory observations, I shall now give some account of commemorative monuments. Time will only permit me to allude to a few out of many. We begin with

1. *Monuments* erected to glorify pride and ambition. Of this class the TOWER OF BABEL is the first. Gen. 11: 4. The builders of this monument of folly said: "Let us make us a name." This was their design. They meant to have its "top to reach unto heaven," that they might climb up to God by another way than he had appointed. But God came down to them, before they got up to him, and confounded and scattered them, verse 8. Philo Judæus says, "they engraved every one his name on a brick, *in perpetuam rei memoriam,*"—as a perpetual memorial. Proud and powerful men are compared to *towers*. And such men often build towers for their safety, and to gratify their pride. God says, that "every one that is proud and lofty, and high and lifted up, shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted." Isa. 2: 12, 17; *Feriantque summos fulmina montes*, says one; *i. e.* the highest mountains are

most exposed to lightning; the proudest sinners are the soonest shivered and leveled, when God lets loose the thunderbolts of his wrath! And this is the meaning of that judgment threatened upon the lofty *towers* mentioned in Isa. 30: 25, 30. We have in several places in scripture, mention made of towers, built for other purposes than *monuments* of men's pride and ambition.

2. *Monuments* of divine vengeance. The first of these we shall name, was erected by God himself. It was *Lot's wife*! God struck her dead instantly for her disobedience, and transformed her into a sort of metallic mineral pillar, or monument of his wrath, to last for future warning. That *pillar of salt*, should be to all who read of it, both a seasonable and a *seasoning* warning not to turn back or even look back from the way of God's commandment; Gen. 19: 26, Luke 17: 32.

We shall allude to two more of these monuments of vengeance. For covetousness, lying and villany, *Achan* was stoned to death, and a *heap of stones* was raised over his body in the valley of *Achor*, as a monument of God's anger, and as a perpetual memorial of Achan's shame and just punishment. Josh. 7: 24, 26. Absalom is another case. In his cruel and unnatural rebellion against his father David, he lost his life. To show the utmost abhorrence of his wickedness, his body was "cast into a great pit in the wood, and they laid a very great heap of stones upon him," as a *monument* of his righteous punishment and disgraceful end. So he who "built in his lifetime, a *pillar*" to his honor and memory, *in the King's dale*, and gave it the name of ABSALOMS PLACE, was for the sin of rebellion against his parent, doomed to have his *heart pierced with arrows*; a common pit in the wilderness for his *grave*, and a very large heap of loose stones for his *monument*! 2 Sam. 18: 9, 18. Travellers say, that the place is taken notice of to this day; and that it is common for passengers as they pass, to throw a stone at the heap, and as they throw, to say—"cursed be the memory of rebellious Absalom, and cursed for ever, be all wicked children that rise up in rebellion against their parents!"

3. *Monuments as witnesses of agreement*. The *pillar* Jacob and Laban erected at Gilead, was of this sort. It was for a witness to an agreement. It had *three* names put upon it. Laban called it in his own tongue, the Syriac, *Jegar Sahadutha*. Jacob named it in his language, the Hebrew, *Galeed*; both agreed to have it desig-

nated a *heap of witness between them*, and because posterity was included in this covenant of agreement, they also called it Mizpah—a *watch tower*. It was a monumental pillar of witness between Laban and Jacob, and their posterities; that each party would henceforth keep its own side of *that* monument; Gen. 31: 44, 53.

In the settlement of Canaan, two tribes and a half were separated from the other tribes by the river Jordan. The tabernacle was placed at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim. To keep up a witness of the true worship of Jehovah, and to hold communion with the tabernacle at Shiloh, the two tribes and an half, erected a pillar or monument on their side of Jordan in a conspicuous place, and called it ED, which signifies *witness*, saying, "for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God;" Josh. 22: 34. Thus to witness for God was this monument built. To the tribes in Canaan, the tabernacle at Shiloh was the witness for this purpose, and to the two and an half tribes on the opposite side of Jordan, the monument ED, was the witness; and this was praise-worthy, because it shews they were more anxious to keep up a monument to perpetuate the true worship of God, for the benefit of generations yet unborn, than to erect a pillar, recording their own exploits, in the conquest of Canaan.

4. *Monuments as remembrances of remarkable events.* In Jacob's journey to *Haran*, he came to a certain place where he tarried all night. There he had his remarkable dream of the mysterious LADDER which reached from earth to heaven. God appeared to him, and renewed the covenant promise. Jacob took his *pillow* of stones, and erected them into a monumental *pillar*, calling it BETHEL, *God's house*, to keep the place and the remarkable transactions of that night in that place in remembrance; to keep this spot in remembrance, he resolved in setting up his pillar, that, should the Lord spare and prosper him, at his return from *Haran*, *there* a house should be built for God. And lest this pillar should be destroyed in his absence, he noted the original name of the place, which was *Luz*, i. e. *an almond tree*, but he called it Bethel, i. e. *God's house*. God's house bears far more precious fruit, than almond trees bear. God helped Jacob thus far, and here he set up his monument of remembrance and of the sanctity of that place, Gen. 28: 10, 20.

The *monument* which Joshua and all Israel erected on the shore of Gilgal, to keep in remembrance their remarkable and miraculous

passage across the Jordan, was designed to commemorate that event Josh. 4: 1, 9.

And the *stone* set up by the Prophet Samuel, between *Mizpah* and *Shen*, and which he called EBENEZER, *stone of help*, was a monument or memorial that God gave Israel their remarkable victory over the Philistines at that place. It was to keep this in remembrance. 1 Sam. 7: 12.

5. *Monuments for teaching.* Mount *Ebal* was on the North, and Mount *Gerizim* on the South, a valley of 200 paces lay between. These mountains were situated near to *Shechem*. On Mount Ebal an altar of unhewn stones was erected, and plastered with plaster; and the law was very plainly to be engraven upon it. To hear this law, the tribes of Israel had to assemble at stated times; six tribes on each mount. The priests stood in the valley between, recited the blessings and curses of the law, and the tribes responded with loud AMEN, to each blessing or curse, when pronounced by the priests. Deut. 27: 1-26; and chap. 28: 1-68. Josh. 8: 30-35. This monumental altar, was for *teaching* the law and worship of God. On Mount Gerizim, the Samaritans afterwards built a temple, where they sometimes professed to worship the true God. On this mountain, it seems, our Lord conversed with the Samaritan woman. John, 4: 4-26.

6. *Sepulchral Monuments.* Jewish Sepulchres were sometimes called *caves*. In the cave of *Macpelah*, Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Leah were buried; and in one near Bethany, Lazarus was interred. Gen. 50: 34; John 11: 38. Sometimes a monumental *pillar* marked the place of interment. At the birth of Benjamin, his mother Rachel died. Her husband Jacob, set up a *pillar upon her grave*, and "that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." Gen. 35: 16, 20. This pillar was a *monument* of his affectionate sorrow, for the loss of his dearly beloved wife, and of his high respect to her memory. Providence so ordered that *this very place* fell to the tribe of Benjamin, in the division of Canaan; 1 Sam. 10: 2. Pillars and piles of stones were common sepulchral monuments among the Jews, and among the Arabs also. Simon Maccaëus built a grand sepulchral monument at MODIN for his father, mother, and brethren. This monument was composed of dressed stones; had seven pyramids, several large pillars, and all covered with inscriptions and devices; 1 Mac. 13: 25-30. In 1820, a cel-

ebred British traveller, "discovered on the plain of Zebulon, not far from Cana, piles of stones marking the places of graves."* Similar piles of stones, called by the people, *Cairnes*, the monuments of very remote antiquity, are found still, in many parts of Scotland and England. Pyramidal and pillar sepulchral monuments erected for one, or many persons, are to be seen in almost every cemetery, and in every nation. The monuments built in New Greyfriars Church yard, EDINBURGH, and at RULLION GREEN near that city, in memory of the cruelly martyred covenanters, are famous instances.

Many eminent ministers of Christ have monuments erected to their memory. That one built over the grave of the famous Boston, the author of the Fourfold State, is excellent. The celebrated REV. RALPH ERSKINE, wrote the following epitaph in latin, a part of which is in English, thus—

Who "The great, the grave judicious Boston's gone,
 The once † like Athanasius bold, stood firm alone;
 Whose golden pen ‡ to future times will bear
 His fame, till in the clouds his Lord appears."

The rest of the inscription is simple, chaste, elegant, embracing the main facts in relation to the life and labors of that renowned servant of Christ. Once more here; we observe, that sometimes sepulchral monuments are called TOMBS. Hence, we read of "the Tombs of the KINGS," and "the Tombs of the JUDGES." These anciently, as eastern travellers inform us, were for the most part, hewn out of rocks half way up the sides of mountains. Sometimes they were in gardens, and often built in the shape of houses. || The allusion of the holy prophet, illustrates these facts—"thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him a sepulchre on high, and that ^zgroweth for himself a habitation in a rock." Isa. 22: 16; "All the Kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one of them in his own house, Chap. 14: 18; the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, wherein the body of Christ was laid, was in a garden, John, 19: 41.

7. *Monuments in Glory.* In heaven as well as upon earth, there are monuments having inscriptions. These monuments are

* Mr. Rae Wilson. † Meaning his defence of Prof. Simpson in 1729, before the General Assembly in Scotland, and his appearance there. ‡ Meaning his most excellent writings. || Carne's letters from the East, p. 294. Jowatt's Christian Researches in Palestine, p. 280.

PILLARS. They are distinguished glorified saints. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out;" this is the *monument!* "And I will write upon him the name of my God; and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon *him my new name.*" Here is the *inscription* on the monuments erected in glory! Rev. 3: 12.

The conquering soldier in the army of Christ, shall be a pillar in heaven; not a pillar to prop up the church *there*; for in heaven no props are needed, but a monumental pillar of sovereign saving grace. A monument never to be defaced or dilapidated, or removed, like as many are which have been built for emperors and generals, describing their grandeur and achievements. And these glorified monumental pillars shall have their characters and rewards emblazoned suitably. The inscription shall have in it,

1. The *name of that God*, in whose cause and service the soldier and servant of Christ served and fought, and conquered and died!

2. The *name of the city of God*, THE REDEEMED CHURCH, in which he was no stranger nor alien, but a fellow citizen, and whose doctrines, rights, ordinances, purity and honor he so nobly asserted, and whose people he so bravely defended. This will be more glorious honor to this pillar, in the temple of God in heaven, than all the honor which Hannibal or Cæsar, or Asiaticus, or Africanus, or Napoleon, or the Duke of Wellington ever attained in this world, by wading to fame through seas of human blood, and the carnage and sacrifice of their fellow-men upon the altars built to the spirit of war!

3. The NAME CHRIST, this *new name* will be inscribed on this monumental pillar. This is the name of the Captain of Salvation, under whom the heroic spiritual soldier faithfully served. Christ Jesus, the *Redeemer*, the *Mediator*, the *Savior*, the Captain of Salvation! The captain who commanded in every attack, directed in every defence, gave strength in every conflict and battle, and under whose banner every victory was won! That NEW NAME! To have it as an inscription of honor for ever on our breasts in heaven, to have it for ever inscribed outside on our persons, for all in heaven to read, as we trust we have it inscribed inside in our hearts, while

in the church in this world, will be our highest future glory! * Such joy and such honor would be too great, too sweet for us now ; *we must die to prove it !*

Thus have I given you, respected audience, some little account of the different sorts of monuments, and the purposes of their being erected, and they are only a few specimens from many which might be adduced, were we to explore more elaborately, the mansions of the dead, the art of sculpture and the science of architecture.

We shall now apply the subject to the purpose of our assembling to-day. The object is to consider the propriety of perpetuating the memory of the REV. DOCTOR SAMUEL RALSTON, who for a long series of years, was pastor of the united congregations of Monongahela City and Mingo Creek. I take the purpose of his affectionate surviving friends, to accomplish this object to be altogether proper, highly creditable and grateful to their own feelings and character ; and in every way respectful to the memory of their late venerated and venerable pastor.

I feel sorry that I labor under a difficulty with respect to the intimate knowledge, necessary, of his character and labors. Had I been particularly conversant with the history of a life so long, with labors so onerous and protracted, with qualifications so eminent, with a character so uncontaminated, and success in the ministry so signal, I might do more justice to the memory of our departed friend. But his record is on high, and his name written in heaven ! A few thoughts in relation to some particulars concerning him, may nevertheless not prove uninteresting. And

1. The *time* of his BIRTH. He was born A. D. 1756, a period which gave birth to some of the most illustrious men which have flourished either in the British Dominions, the continent of Europe, or the United States, during any century.

2. The *nation* of his BIRTH. This was the kingdom of IRELAND ; a *nation* whose history shows many of her sons in every department of public or private life, to be unsurpassed in talent, genius and learning, whether viewed as statesmen, jurists, generals, naval commanders, writers, theologians or patriots. A *nation* whose protestant clergy and population have rendered themselves world-renowned for their unrivalled opposition to the cruel tyranny of the POPES OF

* Inscriptions on monuments are of great antiquity. Ræ Wilson's Travels in the Holy Land. Vol. 2, p. 5, third edition.

ROME, and the infamous seditions, plots, persecutions and intrigues of Romish Priests and Jesuits. A *nation* in which the struggle for light against darkness, truth against falsehood, liberty of conscience, and freedom from the blighting withering curse of Roman priestly domination, has been maintained with such constancy, courage, and moral and physical heroism, ever since the auspicious REFORMATION, as to call the attention of the civilized and religious world to the scenes which have transpired! In *this nation*, in the Northern Province, called Ulster, and in the north west county of that province, named Donegal, the departed DOCTOR RALSTON was born!

3. The *place* of his EDUCATION. This was THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW, SCOTLAND. SCOTLAND! as a *nation*, the grand national foe of Rome! Scotland! a *nation* famed the world over for general information, general learning, profound scholars; seats of learning with their professors, inferior to none in the whole world; arts and sciences cultivated to the highest; military and naval renown, emblazoned in history; the national patroness of ORTHODOXY in the doctrines of the Bible; and a nation of undying attachment to the principles of protestant liberty!

The city of GLASGOW. This city is the great, the populous, the commercial emporium, the NEW YORK of Scotland. It is situated in the Shire of Lanark, on a gentle declivity, sloping toward the enchanting river Clyde, and *forty four* miles West of the city of EDINBURGH, the capital of the Kingdom. For population and commerce, it is the first city now in the Kingdom.

The UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW. This famous seat of learning was founded, A. D. 1454. The University of ST. ANDREWS, in date, has priority to Glasgow, being founded A. D. 1411. That of ABERDEEN in 1477, and Edinburgh University A. D. 1582. These are the *four grand* Universities of Scotland.

The University of GLASGOW has a Chancellor, Rector, Dean of Faculty, Principal, and fourteen Professors in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Oriental Languages, Moral Philosophy, Natural Philosophy, Logic, Mathematics, Practical Astronomy, History, Divinity, Civil and Scotch Law, Medicine and Anatomy. In this renowned kingdom—this world-famed city—and this University of varied and profound learning, your late spiritual father, and excellent pastor, the REV. DR. RALSTON, WAS EDUCATED!

4. The *time* or period of his emigration to the UNITED STATES. This was in the year 1794. Doubtless he saw the fearful rebellion and massacre which broke out in Ireland in 1798, approaching, and made his escape from the threatening storm which at that time deluged that devoted kingdom with Protestant blood! Many learned and excellent men did likewise. The much lamented, learned, and highly esteemed REV. DOCTOR JOHN BLACK, late of the city of Pittsburgh, was another of Ireland's honored sons, who came to this country about the same period, perhaps a little later than Dr. Ralston.

5. The COMMENCEMENT of his PASTORATE. He was ordained pastor of the churches of MINGO CREEK, and the village, *now* commonly named MONONGAHELA CITY, sometime in the year 1796. This country must then have been nearly an unbroken wilderness, and the population very sparse indeed. But his iron constitution, stout frame, and indomitable mind, were well fitted for his work and for the country. Nor did he spare the powers of mind and body he possessed, in the blessed cause of his MASTER!

THE CLOSE OF HIS LABORS AND LIFE. After being *fifty-five* years in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church from the date of his ordination, he closed his life in this world, at the advanced age of NINETY FIVE YEARS; nearly *half a century* of which was spent in active and self-denying service in the cause of his Master. And he died full of honors, as well as of years, and in sure and certain hope of everlasting life; which hope was based solely on the merits and mercy of Christ! Dr. Ralston was not such a professor of the christian religion as to dare to hope for personal acceptance with God, on the ground of *self-wrought righteousness*, nor on any other ground, but CHRIST ALONE!

And this great doctrinal truth he taught you, my brethren, who sat under his ministry. Your late venerable spiritual instructor was a profound expositor of scriptural doctrinal *principles*, as well as of a sound christian practice. He was a pains-taking, doctrinal and practical preacher. He was also a very liberal minded minister, not a narrow-souled, screwed up, *twisted* sectarian, who loved *Twistedness* more than *Christianity*. But he "loved all that is good in all, and desired an union with that good."

This liberal-mindedness, guarded by pure doctrinal teaching he also taught many of you, my worthy hearers. Hence, your prac-

tice in liberality, not only in erecting that solemn and beautiful sepulchral *memento*, but in sustaining every noble christian enterprise. And God has sent pastor's of like spirit, to both the churches united in his former charge. And for this teaching, you now feel grateful, and revere your departed minister, and both the office and *persons* of his successor's, your present incumbents.* This liberality of soul, carefully sustained by the whole truth as it is in *Jesus*, is the grand characteristic of the true Presbyterian Church! May it ever prove her distinguishing badge!

To CONCLUDE. The *general character* of your departed venerated pastor, shall conclude our discourse.

DOCTOR RALSTON was your *first* pastor. He nursed you and cherished you, and watched over you as churches, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children," until you grew up to maturity. He was your friend, your adviser, your defender, your spiritual teacher. He took you, who entered the church in his time, into the sacred enclosure, and notwithstanding the disparity between his knowledge and yours, he bore with you, pitied you, admonished you, prayed for you, visited you, and rejoiced with you! He shared with you in sorrow and in joy! He celebrated your marriages, baptized your children, kneeled and prayed at the bedside of your sick and dying relatives and neighbors, and pointed their hopes to those mansions of eternal light and glory, where

"Sickness, sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more:"

But I cannot do justice to his character, and shall supply my own defect, by giving you here, the Biographical sketch of DR RALSTON, published in the PRESBYTERIAN ADVOCATE, shortly after his demise, and prepared by the masterly hand, and accomplished mind of one of our excellent professors—the REV. DOCTOR ALEXANDER T. MCGILL. Dr. McGill says of Dr. Ralston:

"This venerable and distinguished father died at his residence, in Washington County, Pa. on the 25th of September last, at the age of ninety-five years.

"He was born in Ireland, County of Donegal, in the year 1756. His parentage was highly respectable; and of that good old Scottish character, which made his home a nursery of gospel truth, where religion, with its Bible and catechism, instead of politics with its

* The Rev. JOHN R. DUNDAS, *Pastor* of Mingo Creek congregation, and the Rev. JOHN KERR, *Pastor* of the congregation at Monongahela City.

newspapers, early imbued his vigorous mind. The rudiments of a classical education he received in the neighborhood of his birth-place; and, like the Irish Presbyterian schools of that day generally, his must have been thorough in its training, if we may judge from the accurate and extensive classical attainments for which Dr. Ralston was distinguished. He completed his studies at the University of Glasgow, in Scotland. Some years after his entrance on the ministry, he emigrated to America; arriving on our shore in the spring of 1794. After itinerating about two years in Eastern Pennsylvania, he came West, and was called, immediately, in the year 1796, to the pastoral care of the united congregations of Mingo Creek and Williamsport, (now Monongahela City) where he remained the residue of his life, pastor of the latter branch 35 years, and of the former 40 years. In 1798 he was married to a lady in a neighboring congregation, Pigeon Creek, whose family name was Ferguson. They had nine children, three sons and six daughters; five of whom, one son and four daughters, are still living. One of the sons had just completed his preparatory studies for the ministry, with bright promises of distinguished usefulness, when he was removed by death. All these children gladdened their venerable father by a seasonable and hopeful connection with the visible church. And in his long loneliness, after the death of his wife, whom he survived some 24 years, his children, and especially one daughter who remained unmarried, cherished his life and health with more than ordinary filial faithfulness and tender care.

“Although later in coming to this field of Western Pennsylvania than M’Millan, Power, Hughes, Macurdy, and others he was contemporary with these Fathers, in their best days; and shared with them the pentecostal season of revival which spread over this country with such wonderful power and abiding benefit and blessing. The estimation in which he was held by those distinguished men, and the extent to which he was interested and active in that memorable work of grace, may be inferred from the fact that he was their chosen writer and champion, in the polemics of that time. At their request and urgency he wrote “The Currycomb,”—published in 1805—a little book, whose current title suited the rather quaint and unpolished humor of pioneers in “the back woods;” but the contents of which might well rank with the “characteristics” of

Witherspoon, for keenness of satire and overwhelming vigor of argument and animadversion. His object was to answer the objections of Seceders and others to "the falling work," as it was often called with a sneer. And when we consider that Dr. Ralston had been a Seceder himself, before he came to this country, and ever retained his respect, and even admiration for Seceders, in many particulars, we may well conceive that it was a mighty and manifest working of God which he undertook to vindicate, with such ability and spirit, alike, against their mistaken reprehension, and his own habits of severe and sober discrimination.

"That first production of his pen, though written in times of religious excitement, and with evident polemical heat, fairly exhibits the qualities of his mind, as a thinker and writer. These were energy and independence of thought, directness of argument, candor, comprehensive power to seize the main point at issue, and dismiss a thousand irrelevancies, on which inferior minds would dwell to prolixity; and withal, a magnanimity of heart, and even courtesy of expression at times, which would do honor to the best writers, in seats of urbane and cultivated literature.

"His watch tower was in the woods: but nothing of any importance, in the religious, literary, or political world, escaped his keen observation. When Campbellism began to agitate the country, and the founder of the sect was glorying in his victory over Walker and others, whom he encountered in oral debate, Dr. Ralston published a book on Baptism, comprising a review of the debate with Mr. Walker, and letters in reply to Mr. Campbell's attack upon this review. This little work is one of remarkable force and erudition. No subsequent debate with Campbell, however triumphant, and deservedly popular, has evinced greater skill or cogency, in exposing his protean sophistries. Whatever diversity of opinion may exist among us respecting some positions taken by the author, all must concede that, in originality and power, this book is one of surpassing merit.

"A similar remark may be made respecting the next work he published—"A brief explanation of the principal prophecies of Daniel and John." Here at the age of 86, when retired from pastoral life, to a quietude and seclusion from the world, which would have relaxed to second childhood many another man of 60 years, we have a display of power to observe, and generalize, and investigate pro-

foundly, which very few, in the vigor of their prime can ever attain. Volumes of useful information are compressed in a duodecimo of some 180 pages; Faber, Newton, Croly, Scott, Keith, &c., dissected with a master's hand; their merits indicated, and their defects ascertained, with a brevity and fidelity which compel our admiration. Indeed, the student of prophecy can scarcely find a better history of criticism on this great subject, within any volume of moderate size. And, as a key of interpretation, it is precisely such as was inevitable to a gigantic mind, laboring without a library.

“Connected with this publication, and bound up in the same volume, is a pungent examination of a Mr. Reid's book, entitled “The Seven Last Plagues.” “The sixth vial” of this book is poured out on all christendom, excepting the sect to which the author belongs, with special aim to overwhelm the churches in which Christ is sung expressly as having already come, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. His strictures on Mr. Reid, brought Dr. Ralston into controversy with Dr. Pressly; and occasioned the next and last publication from his pen—a “Defence” of Evangelical Psalmody. Manly discussion, inflexible determination to keep his antagonist to the true point at issue, and a calm dignity of manner, which no misrepresentation and abuse could disturb, eminently characterize this last effort to be useful through the press. It was made in the 88th year of the author's life. The whole history of modern polemics cannot produce a parallel instance, perhaps, of such fresh activity, quick perception, spirited reply, and powerful concentration, beyond the limits of fourscore years.

“It was a matter of regret to this venerable father, as he once said to the writer, with manifest emotion, that nearly all his writings were controversial; that he had been “a man of war from his youth.” It had been his duty. It was not his natural disposition. His temper was peculiarly bland, and genial, and courteous. As a remarkable illustration of his pacific turn, as well as honorable and delicate sensibility, his successors in the pastoral charge always loved him, more than feared him; and always found him scrupulously careful, to hold up their hands, and strengthen them in the respect and affections of their people. It is rather a sad commentary on the frailties of retiring ministers, that we must hold up this trait of Dr. Ralston as anywise remarkable and singular. It is true

we have other beautiful illustrations of such magnanimity among us: but it is to be lamented greatly, that some men contrive without exactly designing it, to embroil the people they can no longer feed; and take a perverse care, that no one shall succeed to the confidence and love in which they were once embosomed. This noble patriarch in our Zion lived only to cheer and bless the young brethren who followed him—in one branch of his charge 20 years, and in the other 15 years, after his retirement. "He loved peace," writes the pastor of Mingo Creek, where Dr. Ralston continued to reside and worship—"and the business of peace-making was his great delight. And all his influence went to establish the pastor in the affections of the people. There was much that was truly noble and generous, and kind, in the elements of his soul. His friendship was ardent and constant."

"As a preacher, he was eminently didactic and distinctive; clear, copious, and profound, in the exposition and defence of saving truth. And yet, like every man of truly gifted mind, he was full of strong emotion; which led him to earnest and solemn appeals of a practical kind. Perhaps, his manner of treating subjects had rather too much of a controversial air. But with him there was no bitterness of spirit. He was the very opposite of that modern picture of christian love, which hates nothing so much as honesty and earnestness, in maintaining ones own conviction of truth and duty. What he stoutly claimed for himself, he heartily granted to others. He was therefore truly catholic in his feelings; and utterly remote from bigotry and rancor. He loved, with broad and deep affection, all that differed from him; just in proportion to the enlightened zeal with which he vindicated the distinctive tenets of his own profession.

"As an ecclesiastic he was ever distinguished for punctuality and faithfulness, in attending church courts. Always attentive and interesting in the business of a judicatory, he acquired such a ready apprehension of matters usually transacted there, that even when he ceased to hear the ordinary tones of speech on the floor, he could discern what many others, who had ears to hear, failed to perceive; and mingle the expressions of his own opinion, with a pertinence, which often excited the wonder of his juniors. Indeed, until he was over ninety years old, and his infirmities absolutely hindered him from travel, he was among the most regular useful members of

the Presbytery and the Synod. He possessed, pre-eminently, that triple element of christian courage which the Apostle describes as "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Ardent as were his feelings, constitutionally, and ready as they were to be zealously affected in every good thing, (as in the great revival, where bodily affections were strangely intermingled,) he was exceedingly discreet, and sober, and well balanced, in his estimation of a popular rage, or fanatical excitement. Long before the General Assembly was brought to rebuke the technical abolitionism of our day, and before the Princeton Review, or any other conservative journal, spoke out on the subject, Dr. Ralston was well known to inculcate the very same principles of scriptural truth and practical wisdom that now govern, with almost universal consent, our favored church, on the agitated subject of slavery.

"Resembling these solid attributes of his understanding was the type of his personal piety. It was remarkably free from irregular impulse and distressing variation. Tender and humble and self-abasing, it was yet almost uniformly serene and cheerful. Few men exhibited a more delicate and lively appreciation of God's favor, in the smallest mercies of his providence or grace. Gratitude then, fiducial gratitude, which will, under any circumstances, "thank God and take courage," which so beautifully distinguished the piety of David, and with which he ever imbues even the saddest song—"Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice"—was the prevailing characteristic of Dr. Ralston's personal piety. Upon this beautiful adornment, of a calm and thankful spirit, he wore the gem of consistency, which no man could ever impeach. Temptation to swerve was not only repelled by the dignity of his peculiar character, but far more was vanquished by a conscientiousness, which a fitful and variable experience of personal religion so often lamentably wants.

"His powerful mind, active, unclouded, and strong, till the very last, grappled with "the last enemy," death, as it had been wont to do, with sin and error, for almost a century of time. He was cheerful and happy, in the prospect—girded and roused, yet tranquil, and even sublime, in the nearest approach. On the day of his death, he looked out, once more, on the visible militant church, that he had loved so much, and watched with so great solicitude—reading, with fresh interest, a late number of the Presbyterian.

Then, as the struggle came on, he calmly felt his own pulse, found it sinking away, and exclaimed, without faltering or agitation, "I am ready—I am a sinner saved by grace—Tell my brethren, tell the congregation, that I die in the faith I so long preached—I die relying upon the meritorious righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—What a blessing to have such a rock!"

TO CONCLUDE—

Dr. RALSTON really deserved a standing memorial to keep him in remembrance among his survivors. You my respected hearers, have gratitude and honor. You, as congregations, have honored yourselves. You, especially, who from christian motives contributed to the erection of that beautiful and durable memento of your late venerable pastor's worth, have elevated your characters to an enviable distinction. May your *own* memorial for sound piety last for ever!

ERRATA.—On page 11, second line of poetry—for "The" read *Who*.

E P I T A P H .

DR. RALSTON'S Monument is erected at the head of his grave, in the cemetery of the congregation, and in full view from the MINGO CREEK Church door. In *quality*, it is ITALIAN MARBLE. In *form*, it is an OBELISK. It is of superb polish and color, and beautifully EXECUTED. Mr. James M'Clure, of West Elizabeth, is the ARTIST. It bears the following inscription.

REV. SAMUEL RALSTON,
D. D.

BORN
In Ireland, 1756;

DIED
September 25, 1851.

HE WAS EDUCATED IN THE
University of Glasgow, Scotland.

Emigrated to the United States, A. D. 1794;
ORDAINED PASTOR OF THE UNITED
Congregations of Mingo Creek and Monongahela City, 1796.

On this field he sowed the good seed of the word for nearly half a century. Distinguished as a scholar; a profound expositor of sacred truth; a faithful watchman on the walls of Zion; and a devoted servant of God: he was intimately identified with the advancement of literature, religion, and religious liberty in this western country.

"And he being dead yet speaketh."

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

ERECTED BY THE CONGREGATIONS OF
MINGO AND MONONGAHELA CITY.

