

A
SERMON
DELIVERED IN
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,
QUEBEC:

By the late Rev. ALEX. SPARK, D. D.

ON THE 7th MARCH, 1819,

The day of his Death.

ALSO,
A FUNERAL SERMON,
PREACHED on that OCCASION,

THE 14th MARCH, 1819.

“ But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten,
“ Their bodies are buried in Peace, but their name liveth for evermore.”

ECCLESIASTICUS.

QUEBEC :

Printed and Sold by J. NEILSON, No. 3, Mountain Street.

1819.

TO HIS GRACE
CHARLES DUKE OF RICHMOND,

LENNOX AND AUBIGNY,

KNIGHT of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Governor
General, and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in
British North America—The following Discourses are most
humbly inscribed,

By His Grace's

most obedient,

and devoted Servant,

THE EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION.

DR. SPARK received the earlier part of his classical education at the Grammar School of Montrose in Scotland. He afterwards attended the University of Aberdeen. Having taken the degree of Master of Arts, he studied Divinity under the celebrated Professors Campbell and Gerard. He came to this country in 1780, by the direction of a Gentleman yet alive. In 1783 he repaired to Scotland, where he received ordination from the Presbytery of Ellon, and returned to Quebec the year following.—He was then employed by the Honourable Colonel Caldwell to superintend the education of his son, the present Honourable J. Caldwell, by both of whom, he was deservedly held in very high estimation. At the same time he officiated in the Scotch Church in place of the Reverend MR. HENRY, then in an infirm state of health. On the death of the latter, he succeeded to the very moderate emoluments of that Church, and continued during the remainder of his life, to discharge with most exemplary diligence and fidelity, the important duties of a Minister of the Gospel.

In 1804 he obtained the degree of Doctor in Divinity from the College at which he had studied; and in 1805 was married to the amiable person who is now left to deplore his loss.

In 1809 a patent was obtained from Sir J. H. Craig, then Governor General, for the spot of ground on which St. Andrew's Church

Church now stands, and on the 30th of November 1810, that house was opened as a place for public worship. From that period the congregation gradually increased, till the late event which we all lament announced the termination of his earthly labours.

He died on Sunday the seventh instant, in circumstances awfully impressive. After delivering the first of the following discourses, than which nothing can be more truly characteristic of a solemn farewell, he attended a funeral. Returning to the Church, and being arrived within a hundred yards of it, he was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired without a groan.

The shock occasioned by his death was universally felt in this city, and the neighbourhood, and even in many remote parts of the province. Scarcely have we yet recovered from the deep distress into which we have been thrown. On the following Thursday, his remains were followed to the "House appointed for all living," by an unexampled assemblage of persons of all ranks and ages.

Though a profound scholar and an excellent writer, he has never given any thing to the public besides a few occasional Sermons. But it is confidently hoped, that his friends will permit a volume or more, of his excellent and truly edifying discourses to be printed with all convenient speed. The following list comprehends all that has hitherto appeared from his pen.

An Oration delivered at the dedication of Free Masons' Hall, in the City of Quebec, in 1787, and the following Sermons; namely,

1. A Thanksgiving Sermon for the Victory at the Nile, preached January 10th, 1799, with the form of Thanksgiving.
2. The Duties of Piety and Loyalty recommended; preached to the Society of Ancient York Masons, June 24th, 1801.
3. A Fast Sermon, preached February 1st, 1804, on the renewal of the War.

4. A Sermon preached before the Society of Free Masons, 1809.

5. The Connexion between the civil and religious state of Society; preached November 30th, 1810, at the opening of St. Andrew's Church.

6. A Thanksgiving Sermon; preached April 21st, 1814.

The following Sermon is printed without alteration, from his own copy; and, therefore, besides other claims of a higher interest, must be considered as exhibiting uncommon proofs of correctness and precision in his ordinary stile of composition. The public, who have anxiously expected its appearance, will further recollect that it was not written for publication, a circumstance which cannot fail to enhance its otherwise extraordinary value.

In my own which follows it, I have made a humble attempt to portray the character of this excellent man. The candid reader will know what allowance to make for a composition hastily written, in very unfavourable circumstances, and almost immediately sent to the press.

The discourses are both published at the express desire of the Elders of the Congregation, and of many other respectable persons who heard them.

Upon the solemn appearance of a Minister's last address, followed by his funeral Sermon at the distance of no more than one week, I forbear to make any comment, but leave the Reader to make his own serious reflections.

DANIEL WILKIE.

Quebec, }
March 24th, 1819. }

A SERMON

PREACHED

IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.

ON THE

SEVENTH MARCH, 1819.

BY THE REV. ALEX. SPARK, D. D.

LATE PASTOR

OF THE SCOTCH CHURCH,

QUEBEC.

"FINALLY, BRETHREN, FAREWELL. BE PERFECT, BE OF GOOD COMFORT, BE
"OF ONE MIND, LIVE IN PEACE; AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE SHALL BE
"WITH YOU." PAUL.

QUEBEC:

Printed and Sold by J. NEILSON, 3, Mountain Street.

1819.

A S E R M O N.

GEN. XLV.-24.

“ See that ye fall not out by the way.”

MUTUAL agreement or cordial goodwill, among those who live in society together, is one of the greatest blessings of human life. It not only prevents much trouble, pain and vexation, which unavoidably spring from disagreement, but it is also a source of real enjoyment and of improvement to the mind: It is consensual to the best affections of our nature, and fosters the most generous passions.

It was a conviction of the advantage of mutual agreement, and of the evil and danger of discord, which made Joseph admonish his Brethren in the words of our Text.

We

We need not now detain you by a recital of the history of this distinguished Patriarch. Having been sold as a slave, & carried into Egypt, through the malice of his Brethren, he was promoted to the highest rank and office in that Country, under Pharaoh the King. Owing to a Famine in the Land of Canaan, where Jacob and his Family then lived, he sent his Sons, the Brothers of Joseph, to buy Corn in Egypt; “and at the second time, Joseph “made himself known to his Brethren.” He received them with kindness, though they had meditated evil against him. He furnished them with waggons and provisions for the way; with money and changes of raiment; directing them to bring down their Father, and all his household, that they might enjoy the plenty of the Land of Egypt.

It was when he sent them away with this charge, that he admonished them in the words of our Text, saying, “see that ye fall not out by the “way.”

It is the intention of the present discourse to apply this admonition, which was addressed to the Sons of Jacob, upon their journey from Egypt to Canaan, to the state of mankind in general, in the journey of human life.

Those to whom this admonition was addressed were Brethren; the Children of the same parent;
interested

interested in the same cause, and travelling towards the same Country. This is also true of all mankind, who meet together in society, and travel together in the road of human life. We have all one Father; we are the Offspring of God: We are one family, being sprung from the Stock of Adam; and we all travel towards one place, namely, the realms of Eternity. We are formed also with like faculties both of body and mind. We have the same corporeal endowments, and also the same mental affections, appetites, and passions; for the varieties of natural temper and character depend only on the different proportions and combinations of those original faculties. We were all formed, likewise, for the same end, namely, “to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” Similar duties are assigned us *here*, and similar hopes are set before us *hereafter*.

And not only are we united by the common ties of nature, by similarity of duty and of hope, but while we remain in this world, we are also partakers of the same blessings, and liable to the same misfortunes and calamities. The rich and exuberant goodness of God is extended to us all: “In him we live, and move, and have our being.” “He maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Though some may be more abundantly supplied with the gifts of Providence than others, yet none can say that they are overlooked
or

or neglected, by the gracious Parent of mankind.
 “ He is good unto all, and his tender mercies are
 “ over all his works.”

On the other hand, all are equally liable also, to the assaults of affliction and distress. Who can say that he is exempted from the stroke of misfortune? Where is the breast, which hath never had occasion to bleed for human woes? Which hath never felt the power of anguish? We are united by our sorrows as well as by our joys; and, as was said of Saul and Jonathan of old, “ even “ in our death, we are not divided.” We have all the same end to look for, and the same kind of difficulties to apprehend, in the course of our progress towards it. As former generations were swept from the face of the earth, and have taken up their abode in the “ house appointed for all “ living,” such will be the case with the present generation also in their turn, and with the generations that are yet to come, so long as time may endure.

In the journey of life, we also form social connections, which constitute an additional band of union, and draw the ties of humanity still closer. There are the ties of patriotism, of neighbourhood, of education, of friendship, of consanguinity; all of which tend, more or less, to strengthen the bands of nature, which unite mankind together, as children of the same parent, under the care of the same Providence.

Above

Above all, true Christians are united as Disciples of Christ Jesus, and members of his mystical body. They are the Children of God, not by nature only, but also by grace and adoption. They are “all one in Christ Jesus,” as the Scripture expresseth it; and they are heirs of the same promises, through faith in his blood. This was our blessed Lord’s request unto the Father, respecting all his true Disciples, “that they may be “all one,” saith he, “as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one. “in us; I in them and thou in me, that they “may be made perfect in one; and that the “world may know that thou hast sent me, and “hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”

This Christian union, if rightly understood; if founded in true charity as it ought to be; in the true Faith of the Gospel, and practice of holiness, is of the most sacred and interesting nature. All the Disciples of Christ Jesus hence appear as children of the same family; of the household and family of God, who are ruled by love, and required to distinguish themselves by their mutual good-will, towards one another.

When we consider those various ties, by which mankind in general, and Christians in particular are united among themselves; without fatal experience to the contrary, we should be apt to conclude that there could be no danger of their
“falling

“ falling out by the way,” in the journey of life. But, in adopting this persuasion, how sadly should we be deceived !

As Joseph apprehended it possible, and not improbable, that his Brethren might “ fall out by “ the way,” as he had had experience of their disagreement before ; so, in like manner, in the general course of human life, notwithstanding the ties by which we are united, there is too great reason for the admonition in our Text. Every day’s experience shews us this necessity.

Pride, self-importance, and worldly interest, like the Demon of Discord, set men at variance with each other, and fill the world with misery and crimes. Instead of following the direction of the Apostle, not to “ think of ourselves more “ highly than we ought to think,” but to “ esteem others better than ourselves,” we are too apt to look for more respect and attention from others, than we have any just title to expect : and when we are disappointed in this expectation, it whets our anger and resentment.

A competition of interests, is still a more common and fruitful source of disagreement. This gives rise to wars between States and Kingdoms ; to inhumanity, hatred, treachery and violence between man and man. So wide and general are its ravages, that the Apostle calls it, “ the root of all evil.”

evil." This is too often found to extinguish every sentiment of humanity ; to rend the closest ties of nature ; to steel the heart against the calls of pity and benevolence ; to set the father against the son, and the son against the father. We may hereby perceive the natural bonds of society in a great measure dissolved. The social affections of the heart, which ought to unite mankind as Children of the same Parent, and as Brethren in Christ Jesus, are divested of their genuine power and effect, and in their room is substituted a kind of union founded on *interest*. Men are not kept together by the native principles of benevolence and humanity, which were implanted in their nature for that purpose ; but frequently, more by expectations of gain or private advantage ; by an artificial and mercenary bond of union, which they have formed to themselves. Hence it follows, that where interest is concerned, other considerations have but small power to influence the conduct ; and when this bond is dissolved between man and man, they are set at variance with each other.

It was this principle which raised the envy of the other sons of Jacob, against Joseph at first, because he shared more of their Father's favour and bounty than they did ; which made them meditate his destruction, and afterwards sell him as a slave to be carried into Egypt.

Another source, from which discords have also frequently

frequently arisen, is a difference of religious opinions.

Such is the unaccountable blindness or perverseness of man, that even religion itself, which, above all things, ought to soften and humanize his temper, and inspire him with principles of peace and humanity, is too often made the subject of contention and discord. That Gospel, whose voice is "peace on earth, and good-will towards men," is most sacrilegiously converted into an instrument of strife and disunion. In the road of human life, how often have men "fallen out,"—how often have their passions been sharpened against each other, merely for the sake of some *small*, and perhaps *unimportant* difference in their religious faith? In contending for religion, how often have they violated its most sacred and important duties; the duties of justice and charity? All ages of the world have witnessed this evil, in a greater or less degree; and we can scarcely indulge a hope of ever seeing it entirely removed.

There may be various other causes of inferior consideration, which make men "fall out by the way," in the journey of human life; but those which we have mentioned, are, as it were, the sources, from which they all proceed. And what hath been mentioned, is certainly sufficient to convince every man, that there is a danger of our "falling out," notwithstanding the ties of nature and
 grace,

grace, by which we ought to be united. Need we, farther, direct your view, for this purpose, to the pages of history? You will observe them to be chiefly filled with the discords of nations, and the consequent effusion of human blood. If you examine the temper of society, in smaller circles, how many little jealousies, private animosities, and rooted resentments, may you not find to poison the cup of social contentment? If you come even to the closer connections of life, to domestic society and relations by birth, among whom the bonds of union ought to be strongest, there also you may too often find some "leaven of malice," some seeds of discord. And here the evil, where it does exist, is most severely felt. The closer the connection between man and man, the more reason they have to be alarmed at any appearance of "falling out," because, in that situation, the poison operates with double force. "A Brother offended," as saith Solomon, "is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle."

Considering the actual state of man, and the general course of human life, we cannot but see ample reason for the admonition in our Text; we perceive a danger of contention and disagreement, in every sphere and relation of life. Though formed for union and charity, various causes conspire to set men at variance with each other, the evil consequences

consequences of which are very great and numerous.

“ It was from an apprehension of the bad effects
 “ that might arise from their quarrelling, as well
 “ as from a knowledge of their particular temper,
 “ that Joseph was induced to admonish his Brethren,[†] not to “ fall out by the way.” Considering the state of the world at that time, a journey like that which the sons of Jacob had before them, could not be safely undertaken without the utmost precaution ; especially as they carried property of so much value along with them. In the wild tract of country, which they had to pass through, it was to be apprehended that some wandering tribes might fall upon them. Union among themselves was therefore highly requisite, to enable them to resist the attacks of any such enemy. Disagreement and separation, might have proved fatal to them.

Our condition in this world, Christians, and our danger in the journey of life, is in a great measure similar to what theirs then was. Those who travel towards the Heavenly Canaan, have also a wild and dangerous wilderness to pass through. Many enemies lie in wait, to watch every opportunity, and to seize every advantage against them. And disagreement among themselves is equally dangerous to them, as it would have been to the sons of Jacob.

Could

[†] Kippis, S. 11.

Could you but form to yourselves, for a moment, an idea of the state of this world, were all quarrels, hatred and discord, banished from the face of the earth ; what a change would it not produce in the temper of society ! How would it augment our joys, and improve our happiness ! But this is an idea too favourable to be indulged ; a scene, which exists only in imagination ; and which unhappily we can scarcely ever expect to see realized in this life. Who does not here bewail the miserable fate of man, deprived of so much good, by his own wayward temper ; and by an excess of selfish passions, most effectually destroying the object which he strives to obtain ?

It would be endless to recite the evils which spring from discord. In destroying the pleasures of friendship, the complacency of mutual confidence, and the satisfactions which flow from social union, peace and harmony, it robs us of the purest enjoyments of human life.

And besides this, it hath a most unhappy effect upon the mind itself. It excites base and malignant passions ; and tends to establish habits and sentiments, the most unfriendly to virtue.

Considered in a religious view, nothing can be more inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, or more contrary to the precepts and example of Christ. The Christian Revelation presses no duty
on

on the disciples of Christ more earnestly than this, that they should "love one another," and live in mutual harmony and concord among themselves. This is also conformable to the character and deportment of our blessed Lord himself, who hath set us an example that we should follow his steps, His character was composed of mildness, benevolence and humanity : his deportment was peaceable, kind and courteous. Without murmuring, without complaint, "he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself." He was ever disposed to cultivate peace and good understanding with all men, even at the expense of pain and suffering to himself. If, therefore, we shew a contrary disposition to this ; if we are disposed to strife and contention ; if we foment quarrels and divisions among our neighbours ; take causeless umbrage against them, or bear them malice in our hearts ; if we are disposed to "fall out with our brethren," in the journey of life, or give them cause to "fall out" with us ; it is plain that our conduct is not conformed to the example of Christ : it is a strong evidence against us that we are not led by his spirit ; and, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ," saith the Scripture, "he is none of his."

As an additional motive to induce us to comply with the admonition of the Text, to guard against "falling out by the way," and to cultivate peace and harmony among ourselves, in the journey of
 * life,

life, we might urge *that very* principle, which men too often convert into a source of discord, namely, a regard to their own *interest*. If we judge aright, we must conclude that a person's true *interest* does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, but in the degree of happiness which he enjoys. And, as we have before briefly remarked, no circumstance in human life, contributes more to the happiness of it, than mutual agreement, good will, and complacency, between man and man. By living in a state of union and tranquillity with our fellow men, we enjoy a degree of satisfaction, which, without that, no abundance can procure. By preserving the genuine *ties* of nature inviolate, and living in harmony one with another, as becometh Brethren, heirs of the same inheritance, and travellers towards the same country ; we secure to ourselves the purest joys, which this earth can supply. By these means, we also improve our temper and dignify our minds : we form in our dispositions a nearer resemblance to our blessed Lord : and, to adopt the language of the Psalmist, we prove in our own experience, " how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

One other consideration we yet beg leave to suggest to you, which, if duly considered, ought to have a very powerful effect upon our minds, in persuading us to cultivate peace and harmony
among

among ourselves, in the journey of human life, namely, the short time during which we are permitted to travel together upon this journey.

We are creatures of a day ; the time allotted us in this world is short and uncertain. We are but as strangers and Pilgrims upon the Earth, who seek another and a better country. We are here to-day, and away to-morrow ; and whatever we possess, we hold but in trust for a little time. We know not how soon we may be called upon to resign it.

In this situation, then, how unbecoming must it appear, upon reflection, that we should, on account of any worldly concerns, be induced to “ fall out with each other by the way ?” What is there here worthy of such anxious regard as to make us fall out, for the sake of it ?

Suppose you have willingly injured your friend ; your fellow traveller in the journey of life ; or that you have “ fallen out” with him, without a cause, or on some slight and frivolous pretence ; and suppose, that he is soon afterwards taken away from you, (a circumstance which is not improbable or unlikely to happen) : in this situation, when you look back on your conduct, and reflect how you have acted ; if you have reason to accuse yourself of having been the cause of your disagreement ; of having deprived yourself and him of the happiness

ness you might have enjoyed, during the time you walked together ; while these reflections possess your mind, what must your feelings be ? What must be your regret and remorse ?

Or, on the other hand, when you find yourself now approaching to the close of your own race ; when you expect soon to be removed from the companions of your journey ; how must it wound your departing spirit, should you then be conscious of having causelessly “ fallen out with them by the way ? ” If you have ever remarked the disposition of a dying person ; of one who knows his journey is nearly closed ; you have had occasion to observe how anxious he is to compose all differences, which may have existed between him and others before. That he may die in peace, he desires to forgive and to be forgiven.

But why should this desire be deferred to the end of our journey ? It is proper that it should be found at that period, but it ought not to be peculiar to that period. Let the same mind and principle actuate us, during the whole course of our lives. Let us now act as we shall then wish we had done.

As the Apostle exhorts, let us, “ as much as possible, live peaceably with all men.” And to promote this desirable end, so conducive to the glory of God, and to our own good and happiness,

D

let

let us put away *pride* and *avarice* ; for these, as we have seen, are fruitful sources of disagreement among men.

When a person indulges too high an opinion of himself, it disposes him to take offence at small and trifling circumstances, which good sense and a lowly mind, would teach him to overlook. He who has had occasion to observe the general conduct of human life, with any degree of attention, must have remarked ; that the greatest quarrels, the most rancorous animosities, which blast all the fruits of social felicity, often originate from mere trifles ; from things, which in themselves appear hardly worthy of notice. Offences and affronts are often given, through mere inadvertency or inattention. It is proper that all should know this circumstance ; that they should reflect upon it, and make proper allowance for it.

Let us also put away all uncharitableness, in matters of religion ; for this is likewise too common a cause of discord, in the journey of human life. Let our temper and disposition be that of the religion which we profess ; which speaks peace and good-will to men. As Disciples of “ the same heavenly Teacher,” and Children of the same Parent, let us “ walk in love ” and unity, “ as Christ also hath loved us.” Let us “ put on, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, “ bowels of mercy, long suffering, gentleness, “ kindness,

“ kindness, charity, forbearing, and forgiving
“ one another ;” even as we expect forgiveness
of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. If the
peace of God reign in our hearts, it will dispose
us to live in peace with one another.

Finally, as we profess to be the Disciples of the
Lord Jesus, let us follow his example and respect
his Law. Let us learn, more and more, to be
“ meek and lowly in heart ” as he was ; to be
just and upright in our conduct to all men ; to
give them no cause of offence against us ; nor to
take up a causeless offence against them.

And now unto God, the witness and the Judge
of all our actions, be glory and dominion, through
Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,

ON THE

FOURTEENTH MARCH, 1819,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH

OF THE REV. ALEX. SPARK, D. D.

LATE MINISTER

OF THE SCOTCH CHURCH,

QUEBEC.

“ Forbearing, fair, and candid, he never failed to put the best construction upon the motives and actions of all around him ; he studied to gain his brother by kindness, and knew how to turn away wrath by a soft answer. The world can ill spare such spirits as his.”

HILL'S ADVERTISEMENT TO GILLESPIE'S SERMONS.

QUEBEC:

Printed and Sold by J. NEILSON, 3, Mountain Street.

1819.

A S E R M O N.

HEBREWS, VI. 12.

— “ *Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* ”

EVERY thing in us, and around us, demonstrates that man was intended, to be at once an active being, subject to change and governed by example. In the Heavens, and in the Earth, every thing is in rapid stir and circulation. Day succeeds night, and night gives place to day. The Sun, the Moon, and all the host of Heaven, continually mark out days and months, and years and ages. Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter, succeed each other in undisturbed revolution. Neither delays its appointed period, nor encroaches on that which comes after. So also, in the life of man, infancy, youth, manhood, and old age, invariably

invariably succeed, and give way to, each other ; except when death, as it very frequently happens, interrupts and terminates the series at an earlier stage. Still neither anticipates the other. No following part of the series can intervene, till the former has been completed.

Not only does this circulation go on, but the period of each is indispensably necessary to that which succeeds. If the order of the seasons should be inverted, if day and night should no longer succeed to one another ; we should know, that nature was approaching to dissolution. If Spring should put forth no buds, in Summer we should look for neither verdure nor fruit. And, if the fruits of Summer, by any means, were blasted, where should we look for the treasures and beneficence of Autumn ?

Even so, in man, if the seeds of virtuous industry and knowledge, be not cultivated in his tender years, we need not expect in manhood, the vigour of exertion and fidelity in duty that become advanced life ; and if, from any cause, religion, duty and faithfulness be neglected in manhood, we cannot expect that age will be revered, or that the consciousness of virtue, or the prospect of a happy immortality, will brighten the evening of life. In short, if we sleep not in the night, we can hardly devote the day to the appointed labours of life ; and if the day be spent in idleness

or

or disorder, the night will be sleepless and miserable.

Nature even teaches us that we ought to imitate those who have preceded us in well doing. This day, as to continuance, is the same as yesterday; and this night will be the same as the last. The tender plant that now springs from the root of the broken oak, will be clothed with leaves of the same form and verdure, with those which covered the parent stem; it will spread similar roots in the ground; and, in like manner, direct its lofty branches towards the impending skies.

All things, therefore, my brethen, announce to us, the importance of the Apostle's advice: "be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

In considering this subject, it is natural to reflect, first, on the duty recommended, the diligent imitation of those, who have gone before us, in the path of virtuous life; secondly, on the more conspicuous parts of their example, faith and patience; and, thirdly, on the rewards which they have reaped, the promised blessings that they inherit.

1. With regard to the first of these subjects, the diligent imitation of those who have gone before us, nothing can be more striking, than the in-

E

struction

struction which the observation of human life, enables us to draw from the different courses pursued by the righteous and the wicked. We have seen the sinner spend his life in folly, in idleness, or in guilt, and end his days in shame or misery. By the total vacuity or utter insignificance of his life, he has left no cause for remembrance behind. It is well, if he has not left relik of his mischievous disposition. No tears are shed but for his wretchedness. Our only regret is, that he has lived so long to heap disgrace upon his connections, and to dishonour human nature. We wish we could forget what God has denounced against the workers of iniquity. We follow his funeral as a duty of charity or alms giving, or for the sake of his relatives, or because we wish to practise towards others, that mercy which we implore from God for ourselves. The sooner he is forgotten the better; for we cannot speak well of him, and to speak evil might injure our own souls.

Compare with this sad picture, the life of the worthy and the good. His life has been full of usefulness and acts of duty. All have witnessed his integrity, his correctness, his steadfast principles and honourable conduct; and therefore all experience the sentiments of approbation. Many have experienced his kindness and beneficence; and will therefore remember him with gratitude "while memory holds a seat in the heart." At the hour of his dissolution we weep with tears of
true

true affection for the sad loss we have sustained. At the same time, if we are wise, we thank God for “relieving our dear friend from the miseries of this sinful world.” We strive with the utmost care to preserve his remembrance, and set a value upon the most indifferent object, if, by belonging to him, they serve to recal his memory. If the sculptured stone, or the breathing canvass, should not transmit a record of him; still the “father speaks of him to his children, and they again to theirs.” His memory is blessed upon earth, and his soul is blessed of the God of Heaven.

Your own hearts must tell you, my friends, which of these two examples, you would choose to follow. You will hardly, I think, refuse to acknowledge the justice of the Apostle’s advice, and say that it is better to be followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. If any additional argument can be wanted to induce us, to make this choice, let us reflect; that those whom we so much respect, are gone, and that the best tribute that we can pay to their memory, is to receive their advice, and pursue the course which they held. And whether we follow them in their conduct or not, we must follow them in their decease. We are just as certain, that our time is coming, as that theirs is over.

2. We are required to follow them in their faith and patience ; in their steady regard to the commands and promises of God, and in their patient continuance in well-doing, amidst all the trials and oppositions which the world may throw in our way.

We are to follow their faith. And as an inducement to do so, consider, I beseech you, through what an illustrious series our faith has been handed down ; through the hands of Patriarchs, Prophets and Kings ; Saints, Apostles and Martyrs, Jesus Christ himself being the author and finisher of it. How many pious, how many benevolent, how many worthy men, how many great and illustrious characters, have, in later times, been formed by Christian principles ! How many of our fathers have trode the path of virtue before us, looking back with steady faith to the history, instruction and miracles, to the death and resurrection of the Son of God, and forward with the confidence of hope, to the day of his second and glorious appearing ! How many worthy ornaments of our native country, did not the last age produce ! Men who joined the firm faith of the Gospel, to the practice of its just and upright maxims, and infinitely benevolent principles ; who raised their voice against much abounding iniquity, who strove in behalf of knowledge, justice, liberty, loyalty, and human happiness ; who contended thus in peace and in war, in the senate and the field,

field, in great and eminent stations, and in the humble walks of private and domestic life. They are deceased, they inherit the promises, and the greatest good that we can render to the coming age, is to follow the illustrious examples that have been handed down to us.

We are to imitate not only their faith, but their patience ; a virtue for the exercise of which there is the greatest need during every period, every step, and movement of our Christian warfare. When calumny and slander assail us, from without, when passions rise within, we need to “ possess our souls in patience.” When we see injustice triumph, as it sometimes does in this state of trial and probation, when innocence and virtue suffer ; when afflictions, public, private, or domestic assail us, even when the weariness of life exhausts, or the difficulties of our situation press hard : in all these cases, we “ have need of patience, that, after having done the will of God, we may receive the promise.” *Heb.* 10.—36. When the hopes of nations are blasted, when Sovereigns sink from their thrones, and the brave and the wise are cut off in one hour ; when parents, are torn from their weeping infants, Pastors are severed from spiritual flocks, and the disconsolate widow mourns ; what can we do, what ought we to do, but arm ourselves with patience, and trust in the Omnipotence of God ? In short, when death stalks around us on every hand, when
every

every step may be our last, and every sentence that we pronounce may be our dying testimony; what ought we to do, but to wrap ourselves up in a good conscience, to be at peace with God and with man, and in that state wait patiently for the coming of our Lord?

3. Of the rewards bestowed on those who have been faithful and patient, of the promises of which they inherit the accomplishment, I need not say much. You all know what the Scripture has declared concerning the happiness of that unseen world, to which the righteous, after death, are translated. You also know that the little which is revealed, is wrapt up in figurative allusions, suited to the present weakness of our understandings. Enough, however, is unfolded, if we listen to it with attention, to rouse the activity of our souls, to animate our fortitude, and confirm our patience.

We are assured, that it is a land of rest, from which all sin, and its necessary concomitant, misery, is for ever expelled. We are assured, also, that it is a state of society, in which there is room for the exercise of charity, benevolence, and love, and in which there is peace for evermore. Consequently, the inhabitants have intercourse with each other, may have gratitude for their former benefactors, love and affection for the former objects of their deserved esteem. It is a state of superior

perior knowledge of the works and ways of God, of gratitude to the Author of all good, and to the merciful Saviour of the human race. The inhabitants look back on their toils, and sufferings, and dangers, and bless the common Father of the human race, for their preservation while here, and for their final and blessed release. Instead of lamenting their fate, as we do, they congratulate one another, on their safe arrival in that land of Promise. They regard their arrival there, as the consummation of their hopes, the commencement of their highest joy, and the brightest era of their existence.

Into those regions of delight our late worthy Pastor, my friends, has long been directing your steps and mine. He described to us the journey, marked out the road, set us an excellent example in his own conduct, and animated our drooping spirits by holding out the prospect of this eternal reward. Now he has gone before, and left us behind, to finish our pilgrimage in the imitation of his faith and patience.

Yes, the lips which so long taught wisdom from this place, are closed. The eyes which beamed animation, are now fixed. That heart which felt for the happiness of us all, now beats no more. He who, as a friend, a companion, or Pastor, had so long enlivened and edified, and as a Gentleman had ornamented, this society, is removed from the stage.

He

He has gone to receive his Lord's reward. But, though dead, he yet speaks to us. From the grave "fresh opened" to receive his remains, he calls to us to follow his example, to make our peace with God and with man, and to be prepared for the summons of death, at what time soever it may appear.

Yet, it is by memory only we can now receive the benefit of his instructions or example. His lips to us are closed, and his steps move no more before us. How busy, then, ought we to be in treasuring up in our minds, the wisdom that he taught us, and the virtues that he exemplified! For even the wise must die, and, to us, "they" "are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot" "be gathered up again;" unless their words and example dwell in our hearts, and animate us to follow their steps.

In the account which I may be expected to give of our late, and much regretted Pastor, I can say little, I believe, that is new to any of you. But it is easy for us all to remember much; and it may not be unprofitable for us, to proceed for once in our recollections in the same train.

He had received, as you know a regular university education, and he must have profited well by it. He was admitted a Probationer, and afterwards regularly ordained a Minister of Christ in
the

the established Church of Scotland. And during more than thirty years, has laboriously and faithfully discharged the duties of that most important but difficult station.

It has been said with great propriety, that eminence in every profession, must be founded in a thorough knowledge of the principles of that profession. Dr. Spark possessed a rather more than ordinary acquaintance with all those branches of knowledge, which, in the different Churches, are esteemed necessary preparations for the Christian Ministry. But his knowledge was not limited to these, for he possessed a very studious turn of mind, and whenever the duties of public and private life were discharged, and sufficient attention given to social and friendly intercourse, he uniformly devoted his time to some useful, improving or elegant acquirement. Hence, he became an eminent scholar, and familiarly acquainted with most of the general branches of modern science. His principle was, to undertake no more than he could reasonably hope to accomplish, and whatever he did, to do well. It is also known to most of you, that he never omitted, where it could be done, to employ his knowledge in the cause of suffering humanity. For example, when electric shocks were supposed to convey relief to those who laboured under various distempers, his door was ever open to the sick, and especially to the indigent, who sought relief from that means.

He had an ease and an elegance in his studies, and in the distribution of his time, which are seldom surpassed.

But the science which, above all others, he was anxious to understand well, was his own darling province of Theology. In this he was very eminent. To an accurate acquaintance with the Greek and Hebrew languages, he added a general knowledge of the manners and customs of eastern nations, and a minute acquaintance with ancient and Sacred Geography. Along with those, he had studied all the eminent Biblical Critics, who flourished during the last century. By these means, he was enabled, as you often heard, to reconcile many apparent inconsistencies in our version of Scriptures, and to explain many difficult texts, which, with such illustration, he showed to possess peculiar beauty and energy. He was familiar with many of the early Christian Fathers, and actually translated some of them into English. He understood the Deistical Controversy in all its branches and turned his knowledge of it to good account. But it was in illustrating and enforcing the practical duties of human life, that his talents were peculiarly conspicuous. The solidity of his reasoning; and the cogency of his arguments, on these subjects, appeared, to me at least, to be almost, if not altogether, unrivalled. He appeared to draw his arguments from the broad universal principles of human nature, from that high ground
of

of morality which lies beyond the doubts of the sceptic, or the specious speculations of infidelity. His sentiments on the disputed subjects that have tortured the zeal of polemics, and unfortunately divided the Christian world, were regulated by those liberal principles which he stated to us in one of his public discourses a few months ago. "If you wish to know," he said, "whether any new opinion that may be advanced, is true; consider whether it is agreeable to the known attributes of the Deity, and whether it serves to promote the great object of all religion, the practice of real piety and virtue. If it contradicts, or opposes, either of these, it is to be considered as a groundless innovation, and must be rejected." In subjects that are above the reach of the human understanding, he kept close to the words of Scripture, avoiding all subtlety of explanation, and all dogmatism of opinion.

As he possessed the knowledge and all the talents requisite for the important office of a Christian Pastor; so was he most assiduous, most conscientious in the performance of its duties. It is now fifteen years since I heard him say, in the simple and unaffected manner which distinguished all his conversation; "I know not how a man
 "can be easy or happy, while his duty is neglected." In the course of the same period, his pulpit has never been empty at the usual hour of Divine Service. In the course of his Ministry,

how many persons think ye, has he received into the Church of Christ by the rite of Baptism? And with what simple yet persuasive eloquence, did he press upon parents, the all important duties which they then undertook to perform? How many persons, here present, or absent, or deceased, has he bound in the sacred bonds of wedlock? And with what manly firmness, did he urge upon the parties, the indispensable obligation of the duties which that relation involved? Did he not frequent the abodes of the sick and the languishing, and enliven their spirits with cheerful conversation, and the hopes of religion? How many of our friends has he accompanied to the silent mansions of the dead? And has he not animated the drooping survivors against the grief which, but for religion, has no hope; and against the terrors of the grave, which, indeed, could have few for him. "Let us not sorrow," he would say, "as those that have no hope, but remember that those who sleep in Jesus, the Lord will bring with him:" "therefore," he would add, "with this hope and confidence, we commit the body to the dust, in full expectation of a blessed and glorious resurrection to eternal life!" That duty has been done for him, which he has done for so many of our friends and near connections.

It would be extremely difficult to do justice to the virtues of his private life. But we may most
nearly

nearly approximate to that object, by referring them to the two most general principles from which they appeared to flow, a sincere and native humanity of heart, and unaffected piety. You all know what a deep impression he appeared to have of the close bond of relationship by which all mankind are bound together, by their common nature, by their common wants and infirmities, their common and universal dependence on one great Parent, their travelling together in the same great journey of life, and awaiting, in one shape or other, the same inevitable termination, and all professing the beneficent spirit of the same blessed gospel. This impression was, on his mind, certainly as pure and constant as could be expected in our frail estate, and much more so than it is found in most men; for it might be read in legible characters in all his actions. He was universally considered as a very polite man. But his politeness was the offspring of the native humanity and gentleness of his heart, improved still further by the well digested influence of Christian principles. Instead of having learned it in the school of the world, he was himself a model to the world. How could he be otherwise than polite. It was not in his nature to offend. Yet his manners, gentle as they were, were perfectly consistent with firmness. Few men have been more firm to their purpose, or more steady to the resolutions which they have once deliberately adopted.

And,

And, further, these manners, pleasing, winning, and prepossessing, were yet free from the slightest tincture of insincerity. I never knew a more upright man, and the breath of calumny has not even insinuated the contrary.

One leading precept of the Apostle, he certainly never violated ; namely, that which says, “ speak evil of no man.” We have high authority for ranking Peace-Makers among the Children of God, and most certainly his place was among them.

Indeed the natural humanity of his disposition, was conspicuous in all the relations of life. He was an excellent husband, a cheerful and pleasant companion, an easy but a steadfast friend, a kind and an equitable master. In short, he made it his business to lighten the burdens of human life to us all, and to soften the asperities that lay in the way of all his fellow travellers, in the path of life. Could a more amiable sight, or one more animating to benevolence, be seen, than that of a venerable person mingling in the harmless pleasures and enjoyments of social life, for no other purpose apparently, than to bestow happiness, and to check by his presence and example, all improper levities and all tendency to excess ?

I cannot well find better proofs of the innate benevolence of his heart than in his conduct towards

wards the youthful part of the society. To the young, wherever he met them, he was easy, and kind, and friendly. As far as his influence extended, he was a father and guardian of schools; and, I am sure, without distinction of sect or party. Many persons now alive, and probably others, owed great part of their welfare and prosperity to his assistance, advice, and protection in early life. On him, dying parents relied, as a friend, and protector, and counsellor to their helpless orphan race. Nothing delighted him more than the good conduct of children; even their innocent playfulness amused him. Certainly, he followed him who said, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

His method of bestowing charity, was prudent, discriminate and liberal. He did not throw it away indiscriminately upon all. He selected the objects of it with judgment according to their necessities, and bestowed it in the most effectual way to secure their comfort. By the regularity of his method in this, as in every thing else, he performed much good in less time than most people could, with less apparent trouble, and certainly with less embarrassment. He was really "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and the cause which he knew not he carefully searched out."

Time will not serve me to expatiate on his meekness,

ness, his contentment, his affability, his temperance, his cheerfulness, his unshaken loyalty ; for all which virtues, he was eminently conspicuous. I must add, however, that his meekness was hardly ever, perhaps never, known to have been laid aside : it is said that he never had a quarrel with any man. His loyalty was equal to the affection of a son to a father. His temperance was most exemplary, and cannot be too strongly recommended in this age and in this society. Its limits were never overstepped by him, yet it was perfectly free from austerity. It deprived him of no rational enjoyment. Truly, he was “ moderate in all “ things.”

But I must not omit a few observations on his Piety. In him it was sincere and unaffected. It was free from parade, free from superstition, free from illiberality. When he lately discoursed to us on this very subject, he observed, that, “ to “ ascertain the true amount of our devotion, we “ must leave out of the account every thing in “ which we had been influenced by the appearance, the applause, or the opinions of men. “ And if you think few men can possess this pure “ untainted piety ; I answer,” said he, “ you “ know not the amount of the genuine and ardent “ piety that may be in the hearts of other men.”

This piety, as we have observed, and his religious sentiments altogether, were entirely free from
every

every the least taint of illiberality. No man had a higher opinion than he had, of the right of private judgement. And he was just as ready to concede that right to every human being, as to claim it for himself. I appeal to yourselves, if it was not one great object of his public instructions, to persuade us, that the spirit of the gospel should lead us to embrace persons of all descriptions, of all names and denominations, in the bonds of charity and affection. And I ask you, if ever one sentence of his private conversation, or one action of his life, could be brought to impeach the sincerity of these public declarations? Or, rather, I may ask, whether the whole tenor of his conversation, and the whole course of his conduct, did not serve strongly to confirm them?

I come now to speak of the nature of his public instructions, to which more than any other part of his character, I feel myself altogether inadequate to do justice. The subjects of his discourses, were extremely numerous and diversified. At one time he treated of some of the more luminous evidences of the Christian religion, or of the Being and perfections of the Deity. At another time, he illustrated the different dispensations which God hath given to man. Again he would prove and explain the various doctrines of the gospel, and point out the practical lessons which they ought to teach us. And indeed whatever was the subject of discourse, he constantly adverted in strong and impressive

G

terms,

terms, to its practical consequences, and use, as a rule of life, or a motive to virtuous conduct. He showed that a life consecrated to our duty, was the happiest of all lives, and that a true christian had the best right in the world, to be cheerful and contented. In his observations on Providence, he clearly justified the ways of God to man ; and proved the infinite beneficence of the Deity ; even in those cases, which, to the generality of mankind, seemed most gloomy and unpropitious. It was his constant study to convince us, that the means of grace are given to all, that the mercy and assistance of God are held out to all, and that it was invariably our own fault, if we were not good and virtuous, and consequently as happy as the present state of things would admit. Above all things, he urged the necessity of good and holy lives, if we wished to live in peace and comfort in this world, or hope for that inheritance which no vicious man can enter into, nor enjoy if he were permitted to enter.

The illustration of the language of scripture, was an object to which he paid unvaried attention, and it was hardly possible to hear a discourse from him, without acquiring a better understanding of some part of the sacred writings. A good many years ago, he preached frequently from the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, on the character of Abraham, of Isaac, of Moses, and other ancient Saints, deducing religious and moral instruction

struction from their history and conduct. He afterwards explained in a series of discourses, the parables of our blessed Saviour, and at another time made useful observations upon the miracles. Another series proved and illustrated the attributes of the Deity.

At the first celebration of the Lord's Supper in this Church, he preached a luminous discourse on the events attending the death of the blessed Redeemer : and in general, his discourses on such occasions, have always been peculiarly impressive. During the past year, he pronounced a number of discourses which appeared to make a deep impression upon the audience, both from the unanswerable force of the arguments advanced, and from the extraordinary solemnity with which they were spoken. So great was this solemnity, that, at times, it seemed as if a being altogether removed from the frailties of humanity, but moved with infinite compassion for their wanderings had descended on purpose to reclaim them from their errors. Some of these discourses were on positive duties, on the blessedness of those who die in the Lord, on the necessity of joining works and faith, on the nature of true worship, on the character of Jonah, and on Evil Habits. In the last, namely, on Evil Habits, he appears to have given the best view that has yet been given of that most important subject.

Of his last discourse to us, it is altogether impossible to speak in terms adequate to the impression which has been left. I should insult the audience who heard it, if I could suppose that any of them ever could forget the words, “ see that “ ye fall not out by the way.” Controversialists may wrangle and dispute about this or the other topic in Theology ; but it remains fixed on the invariable basis of observation, that he who sees his end approaching, “ that he may die in peace, desires to forgive, and to be forgiven. “ But why,” said he, “ put off this necessary office to the period of death ?” And too soon, alas ! he showed, that the period of death, might be no time for such an arrangement. Hardly eight days, my brethren, have elapsed, since we heard these words spoken. Within three hours after pronouncing them, he yielded up his soul into the hands of him who gave it.

Thus, he died, as he had lived, in the punctual exercise of his duty. He died, like the Saviour whom he served, preaching peace and goodwill to all around. He died while the words of peace and consolation and prayer had just passed from his lips ; when, I am confident, there reigned in his heart, universal philanthropy, and entire submission to the will of God.

His punctuality in duty continued to the very last ; and the excellence of his public instructions,

ons, appeared to most of the congregation with whom I have conversed, to increase to the last. His path was truly like * “ The shining light, that
 “ shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” His lamp rose in splendour till its extinction in endless night as to this world, but to rekindle its brilliancy in the land of perpetual light, where,
 † “ 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.”

Brethren, the death of our friend, was sudden and unexpected ; but it was far from being without its particular consolations. He died in the midst of his duty, having just spoken consolation to the afflicted, and imparted admonitions never to be forgotten by those who heard them ; and we have every reason to say, with the blessed sentiments he had so impressively communicated, reigning triumphantly in his heart. After such a life of meekness, humility, Christian charity, and devotion, and brought to such a close ; surely the particular mode of his death, could be of small moment. And we have the satisfaction of knowing, that he suffered no lingering pains.

There is nothing in the death of this venerable person, which most of us would not wish for ourselves, except the suddenness of it. The employ-

* Prov. iv.—18.

† Dan. xii.—3.

ment,

ment, the state of mind, the inward peace and sincerity of faith, are what we would probably all wish to possess in our dying moments. In all these respects, we are ready to say, "let us die the death of this righteous man, and let our last end be like his." Only, we would wish, that it should not come so suddenly upon us. We would like to have some notice of the approach of dissolution. And, wherefore, I pray you, do we wish this? Whence arises this dread of sudden death?

I am afraid, my friends, that it can arise only from one cause, only from a secret suspicion, that all is not yet right within. It is to be feared, we still harbour something in our breast, that we wish to repent of in our last moments: still, there must be something of which we wish to pray for the forgiveness at our latter end, but of which we have not yet prayed for the pardon, because we still wish to indulge this darling passion a little longer. At least, if this is not the case, I confess, the dread of sudden death, more than of any other kind of death, appears to me utterly inexplicable.

But, now, we must see clearly, if we would not allow ourselves to see it before, that all such expectations are vain, and the very height of vanity. We may be called off in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Most assuredly, we know not when our Lord doth come. But, prepared as, I believe, our late excellent Pastor was, we should have nothing to fear, nothing to excite one anxious wish.

Among

Among all the instructions that we received from him, I know none, which he was at more pains to rivet upon our attention, than the utter vanity and inutility, of trusting to a death bed repentance. And, surely, if recent events in this City, have not convinced us of the truth of his representation, we must be utterly deaf to the voice of reason, and hardened against all the admonitions of Providence.

Brethren, and fellow Christians, the loss which we have sustained, must be particularly felt in the peculiar circumstances of this congregation; separated as we are, by an immense ocean, from the Mother Church, and enjoying little opportunity of receiving her maternal advice and assistance. The best resolution that we can form, is to follow the advice of our dying pastor. “ See that ye fall not “ out by the way.” Let us receive these words, and the illustration that he gave us of them, as the legacy of our Father and Benefactor. Let us act upon them with all our hearts. Then by the assistance and direction of our heavenly Protector, we may expect to weather the storms of that tempestuous sea, upon which we are embarked.

Hear also, to the same purpose, the words of the great apostle: † “ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the “ feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient

† 1st, Thess. V. 14.

“ toward

“ toward all mēn. See that none render evil for
 “ evil unto any man; but ever follow that which
 “ is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.
 “ Pray without ceasing. In every thing give
 “ thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Je-
 “ sus concerning you.”

“ And the very God of Peace sanctify you
 “ wholly: And I pray God your whole spirit
 “ and soul and body be preserved blameless unto
 “ the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful
 “ is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Now may the God who preserved Joseph's
 brethren from the ravenous beasts of the desert,
 and from the violence of wicked men, and brought
 them in peace and safety, to their father's house
 in Canaan; preserve us from all enemies bodily and
 spiritual, and present us spotless and unblamable
 with exceeding joy, before the throne of infinite
 and eternal mercy. AMEN.