

T H E
R E I G N
O F
D E A T H.

A P O E M.

Occasioned by the DECEASE of the
Rev. JAMES HARTLEY, late of HAWORTH.

By JOHN FAWCETT. *R*

W I T H
A F U N E R A L S E R M O N,
On the same Occasion.

By WILLIAM CRABTREE.

L E E D S :

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W. Mugrave

The Reign of Death.

PART FIRST.

The Nature and Extent of Death's Dominion.

A MIDST the gloomy darkness of the night,
 While the dim taper sheds her feeble light,
 Sweet solitude, I seek thy lov'd recess,
 To vent those griefs, which mortals can't redress.
 Creation now in mourning weeds appears ;
 In pearly dews she sheds a thousand tears ;
 And, wrap'd in shades, laments the absent day,
 Depriv'd of all her joy, the solar ray.
 Thick darkness, now, her awful rule maintains ;
 And silence, universal silence reigns.
 No grazing herds upon the mountains low ;
 Hush'd is the sprightly music of the bough ;
 Sweet *Philomel*, alone, her note prolongs,
 To cheer the night with her unrivall'd songs.

In lawless banquets and unchaste delights,
The sons of *Belial* join to spend their nights;
Black horrid oaths and blasphemies abound;
And jests obscene pollute the air around;
The sick'ning moon indignant wears a shroud,
Or hides her silver light behind a cloud:
The constellations tremble from afar,
And fierce resentment burns in ev'ry star.

Some revel at the lawless masquerade,
And all the rites of household peace invade,
Some throng the ball, and some at cards or dice
Profane the night, by ev'ry hateful vice.
Some crowd the tavern, some the theatre,
And some the public coffee-house prefer;
Where politicians sit, in close debate,
Proposing plans to save the sinking state.

Nocturnal revels stupify the soul;
And death is in th' intoxicating bowl.
Th' inflaming liquor sets the man on fire,
And into madness stimulates desire.
Attending fiends the vilest thoughts suggest,
And raise a hellish ferment in the breast.
Reason is lost, the brutish passions reign,
And lead the wretch to everlasting pain.

But, pleasing solitude, I court thy shade,
Thou wast for rest or contemplation made.

At dead of night, I hail the solemn gloom,
And pensive stroll along the sounding room.
Content, that neither foe nor friend is near,
My sad complaints and broken sighs to hear.
If some relieving thought my bosom fire,
With eager haste, I strive to tune the lyre;
And try my faint unskilful voice to raise,
And soothe my plaintive soul, with serious lays.

I count you happy, sons of sacred rhyme,
Whose weighty words stand all the shocks of time.
Whose flowing verses ev'ry theme adorn,
To give delight to ages yet unborn:
To aid devotion, in her close recess,
And lead the soul to God and happiness.

Some nobly tell of ancient conquests won,
Or worthy deeds, which mighty chiefs have done.
The learned hear with awe, while *Homer* sings
The victor's glory, and the pride of Kings.
Virgil's harmonious numbers sweetly roll;
And *Pope* and *Milton* captivate the soul.
But thee, immortal *Young*, I most admire,
The noblest ardor tunes thy matchless lyre.
A humbler province to my muse belongs,
To mourn the dead in sad funereal songs.
Amongst the shades, she still delights to dwell,
And death's tremendous sway attempts to tell.

Death reigns by sin : 'tis curst sin, alone,
 That rais'd at first, and still supports his throne.
 'Twas sin, that angels from perfection hurl'd ;
 And sin brought death into this guilty world.
 He enter'd by the breach that sin had made ;
 Sin plac'd the crown imperial on his head.

He for a scepter holds a dreadful dart ;
 Prepar'd to wound the inattentive heart.
 A thousand terrors in his visage dwell,
 Fierce as mount *Aetna*, or the gulf of hell,
 Infatiate hunger preys upon his maw ;
 Rapacious cruelty is all his law.

Behind him yawns the wide extended tomb,
 With this inscription, " Here is man's long home."'
 There sextons digging with incessant toil,
 Enlarge the store-house, for the victor's spoil.
 Darkness and horror overspread the ground ;
 The air is fill'd with ev'ry frightful sound.

Close by his side, a formidable train
 Of fierce diseases recognize his reign.
 There fevers, burning with malignant rage,
 Extend their flames, which nothing can assuage.
 Their lighted torches set the world on fire,
 And by their force the sick'ning crowds expire.

Consumption

Consumption shews her meager visage there ;
Her naked bones thro' the pale skin appear.
She seems a skeleton expos'd to view,
With deep sunk eyes, and lips of deadly blue.
Slowly she moves ; yet, by her wasting hand,
The tyrant death depopulates the land.

There *pestilence* premeditates her way,
To conquer towns and nations in a day.
There *apoplexy* musters all her pow'r,
To strike the blow in some unguarded hour.
Gout there awaits ; and there the tort'ring *stone*
In secret lurks beneath the victor's throne.
Mad *phrenzy* grins with a distracted air ;
Black *melancholy* sinks in deep despair.
Ulcer, o'erspread with ev'ry putrid stain ;
Convulsion, tortur'd with intestine pain.
Swoll'n *dropsy* too, with *asthma* near ally'd ;
And various maladies un-nam'd beside.

Intemp'rance there prepares the luscious bane,
By which, ten thousand victims shall be slain.
They from her hand will snatch th'empoison'd bowl,
Which kills the body and destroys the soul.

Bellona too with blood besprinkl'd o'er,
And garments, dipt in tides of human gore,
Here ready waits, her implements to wield,
That death may triumph o'er the hostile field.

He, thro' her arts, extends his awful sway,
And thins contending nations in a day.

These are th' attendants of the gloomy king,
Whose deadly rule the muse attempts to sing.
These crowd his court, in ghastly order stand,
And wait the awful signal of his hand.

Thus armed, death, with universal sway,
Sweeps all the tenants of the globe away ;
He spares nor age nor sex, nor great nor small ;
So heroes perish, and proud monarchs fall !

From house to house, he stalks with equal foot ;
The prince's palace, and the peasant's hut,
Are equal in his view ; nor does he know
To spare the crowned head, or miter'd brow.
He claims his victims, by one gen'ral law,
On downy pillows, or on beds of straw.
He pays no deff'rence to the honor'd name ;
The king and beggar are with him the same ;
Athirst for blood, with undistinguish'd rage,
He treats the master as his meanest page.
Unaw'd by lofty tow'rs, or rooms of state,
Or num'rous guards that round their sov'reign wait,
With winged speed his killing arrow flies ;
The mighty monarch trembles, groans and dies.

His

The Reign of Death. 9

His wealth and pow'r their master could not save,
Nor yet procure a respite from the grave.
Vain were his gilded roofs, his charming bow'rs,
His gardens, groves and beds of painted flow'rs;
The royal victim yielding to his fate,
Lies breathless, tho' in all the pomp of state.

The hero strives to gain a mighty name,
And shine resplendent in the sphere of fame.
He dreads no danger; nothing shall retard
His course; since glory is his wish'd reward.
With rapid speed, he flies in hope's career,
And wild ambition is his charioteer.
As soon may Syren-songs the storm appease,
Silence the winds, and smooth the ruffled seas;
As soon the wren may drink the ocean dry,
As soon a glow-worm lighten all the sky,
As lasting rest and satisfaction spring,
From breath propell'd by fame's unstable wing.

Perhaps *Honorus*, while he strives to climb,
With hasty steps, the pinnacle sublime,
Is blasted by disease's killing stroke,
And sees, at once, his airy bubbles broke.
He raves, he groans, laments and pants for breath,
As conscious of the near approach of death.
A thousand terrors overwhelm his soul,
And o'er his head the threat'ning thunders roll.

Each

Each med'cine, now, disowns its pow'r to save
 The destin'd victim from the gaping grave.
 In vain, the sons of *Esculapius* boast
 Of drugs, collected from a foreign coast.
 In vain, the fam'd practitioners prescribe;
 The king of terrors scorns to take a bribe.
 Attending friends, officious, strive in vain,
 The struggling, flying spirit to retain.
 Death stops the motion of the throbbing heart;
 And life retires from ev'ry vital part.
 In gloomy mists, the languid eye-balls roll,
 The quiv'ring lips yield up the fleeting soul.
 Fate intervenes to blast his pomp and pride,
 And in a pitchy cloud, his glory hide.

Surviving friends the fun'ral rites prepare;
 No pains are wanting, no expence they spare.
 The undertakers all their cares bestow
 To furnish out the mimicry of wo.
 The gloomy hearse, amidst the gazing throng,
 And train of mourners, slowly moves along;
 The blazing torches solemnize the scene,
 And each attendant wears a ghastly mein.

When heroes die, the grateful nations raise,
 Historic monuments to speak their praise.
 The sculptur'd stones, in lofty numbers, tell
 How this man conquer'd, that in battle fell.

This

This is the last, the dying breath of fame ;
Funereal pomp is all the great can claim.
Vain ostentation ! impotence of pride !
Yet no distinction death allows beside.
“ The most renown’d is interred here ;
Here lies his grace, or there the noble peer.”
This, this is all the flatt’ring stone can boast ;
The stone conceals——a heap of sordid dust.
In the deep grave the putrid corpses lie ;
No cheering ray salutes them from the sky.

Should ev’ry grace of blooming beauty rise
In all your form, and sparkle in your eyes,
Death will not spare the well-proportion’d frame,
Leah and *Rachel* are to him the same.

Among the crowd, *Florella* lately shone,
And vainly fancy’d ev’ry charm her own :
She labour’d much, by ev’ry guileful art,
To please the eye and captivate the heart.
’Twas all her study how she might adorn
The piece of clay, for vile corruption born.
The wild extravagance of dress she try’d,
And often with the gawdy peacock vy’d ;
So empty was her mind, of all but female pride. }

A scorching fever seiz’d the haughty maid,
At once her roses and her lilies fade.

Then

Then shiv'ring, on the verge of death she stands,
 She groans and cries, and lifts her feeble hands,
 "Permit me, yet, a little while, to live!"
 Death strikes the blow, and grants her no reprieve,
 Yet her gay sisters still as vain as she,
 Forget, that they, like her, must shortly die.

Strength nought avails in that important hour,
 When death appear'd e'en *Samson* had no pow'r,
Samson could bear the two-leav'd gates away;
 His presence fill'd whole armies with dismay;
 He needed not the conq'ring sword to draw;
 A thousand champions with an ass's jaw
 His mighty arm subdu'd; yet from the grave,
 E'en *Samson* had not strength himself to save.
 Mov'd by his touch, the mighty structure falls,
 The wide-extended roof, and massy walls,
 The pride of all the *Philistines* he slew;
 But, death himself, he could not still subdue.

Here, all the depths of human wisdom fail;
 Learning, with all her stores, could ne'er prevail
 Against the dart of death; e'en *Solomon*,
 Whose equal was not found beneath the sun,
 Could not escape the grizzly monster's pow'r,
 Nor overcome in that decisive hour.
 The wise and learned, as the foolish die,
 And in the grave, they both forgotten lie.

Some

Some part with life, before they quit the womb ;
Some, from the breast, are carry'd to the tomb.
Maternal cares the infants cannot save,
They soon exchange the cradle for the grave :
And, like the num'rous leaves, which autumn sheds,
They lie promiscuous in their clay-cold beds.
One day, indulged with the gift of breath ;
The next, infolded in the arms of death.

Some die, before the use of speech they know ;
Some quit the world, who scarce have learnt to go ;
Some rise in youth, and leave the childish toy,
Become their parent's hope and only joy ;
But death beholds them, with an envious eye,
Blasts the young blooming twigs, and bids them die.

Some by a sudden stroke are snatcht away,
In the full prospect of the bridal day ;
Amidst the pleasing dream of nuptial joys,
Death lies in ambush, and the bliss destroys.

Some, borne like bubbles, down the tide of time,
Are doom'd to part with life, in all its prime.
'Midst scenes of bus'ness, and tumultuous care,
The insidious fowler lays the fatal snare.
The flatt'ring prospects of extensive gain,
And growing wealth solicit them in vain.
They quit the golden bait ; resign their breath ;
And fall a prey to unrelenting death.

The

The careless sinner oft in vain chastis'd,
 Who, obstinate in sin, reproof despis'd ;
 Borne down, from year to year, in folly's stream,
 Is rous'd by death, from his bewitching dream.
 Thoughtless he liv'd, and destitute of fear,
 But now, he sees the *king of terrors* near.
 Disease, in all its violence and pow'r,
 Attacks his frame, in this alarming hour :
 With sad remorse and secret horror stung,
 He groans and cries, but with a faltering tongue,
 " Wretch, that I am, in such a course to run,
 By which, I am eternally undone !"

Attending friends the mournful accents hear,
 And turn aside to drop the gushing tear.
 Aghast they stand, the tragic scene they view,
 And each resolves to lead his life anew.
 They look again, with sympathetic grief,
 But none can give the dying man relief.

His awful dissolution now is near,
 Despair and terror in his looks appear.
 Behold him, gasping in the pangs of death,
 With ling'ring agonies, resign his breath.

A train of dreadful demons stand prepar'd
 To drag the pris'ner to his just reward.

Their

Their baleful eyes, with hellish fury, glare ;
Fell hissing snakes supply the place of hair ;
Each fiend, for breath, a fi'ry vapour draws,
Their hands and feet are arm'd with harpy's claws.
Th' affrighted soul is with a dismal yell,
Chas'd headlong, downwards, to th' abyss of hell.
Hoarse cries are heard, and hopeless shrieks abound,
And long the trembling air retains the sound.

In realms of endless darkness and despair,
Where none but fiends and damned spirits are ;
In gulphs of execration and of wo,
He learns, the fruits of cursed sin, to know.

PART

P A R T S E C O N D.

Philander's Death.

EXTENSIVE usefulness will not secure
 The wasting life of man; or yet procure
 A prolongation of its feeble thread;
Philander,* too, is number'd with the dead.

In active life, the dear *Philander* shone;
 His neighbour's cares and griefs he made his own.
 What proofs, he gave, of piety and zeal!
 How much, he labour'd for his country's weal!
 Anxious, that commerce, once again, might smile,
 And peace and plenty crown our native isle.
 With warm affections glowing in his breast,
 He fed the poor, and succour'd the distressed.
 The pious widow did his bounty share,
 The helpless orphan witnessed his care.
 Virtue adorn'd his soul; with steady aim
 He sought to glorify his Saviour's name.

But

* *Mir Adam Haller, late of Halifax.*

But what is life? a vain fantastic dream!
 A sleeping frenzy's transitory scheme!
 A flying shadow, an uncertain breath,
 A meteor, soon enwrap'd in shades of death.
 'Tis as the mist which morning-beams exhale,
 Or like a pleasing melancholy tale.
 'Tis like the grass, or the more fading flow'r,
 Cut down by death, and wither'd in an hour.
 Midst scenes of bus'ness and domestic cares,
 Death's hand unseen the fatal shaft prepares.
 A fierce disease *Philander's* life assails,
 Baffles the healing art; and still prevails
 O'er all the efforts learn'd physicians try;
 Their drugs are vain; they see *Philander* die.
 His God sustain'd him, in that gloomy hour,
 When all created comforts lose their pow'r:
 When nature faints and death's impending shade;
 In awful darkness hovers round the bed.

The conflict ends; the dear *Philander* dies!
 Cleaving the air, the spirit upward flies,
 And darts like lightning thro' the shining skies,
 As late *Eumenio* fled,* *Philander* goes,
 To the blest realms of undisturb'd repose.
 Now safely landed, on the blissful shore,
 Earth's disappointments ne'er shall vex him more.

B

Far

* See my *Death of Eumenio*, price 6d. sold by *Vallance*,
 Cheapside, London.

Far from the reach of ev'ry hurtful snare,
 From noisy tumult and distracting care.
 Victorious, o'er the king of dread he lives,
 And the bright crown of endless joy receives.

But who can dear *Sophronia's* woes relate !
 Muse, stop a while, to mourn her widow'd state.
 Her blasted hopes, her earthly comforts fled,
 Her *good*, her *kind*, her *own Philander* dead.

If here some transient hour of joy we feel,
 'Tis but the prelude to some threat'ning ill.
 Distress is near, when we possess delight,
 The short-liv'd day precedes a tedious night.

So in a sudden calm the billows sleep,
 Smooth is the surface of the gloomy deep ;
 The treach'rous winds, their gath'ring breath, deny
 Prefaging some destructive tempest night.

Young *Joseph* once his aged father cheer'd ;
 How happy, then, the Patriarch appear'd.
 His soul was fill'd with sympathetic joy,
 While in his arms, he claspt the smiling boy.
 But soon, the darling from his heart is torn,
 And *Jacob* lives in plaintive strains to mourn,
 His *Joseph* gone ; in whom his life was bound,
 Wide was the breach, and lasting was the wound.

Yet

Yet providence, for ever good and wise,
Conceals our future troubles, from our eyes :
Why should we then ridiculously mourn,
In view of future griefs as yet unborn ?
Now breaks the storm o'er dear *Sophronia's* head
She sees it strike the kind *Philander* dead.

A solemn sadness in her looks appears,
Beyond the soft relief of flowing tears.
Her gloomy thoughts no just expressions find,
To paint the deep affliction of her mind.
What pleas of reason can the force controul
Of that distress which overwhelms her soul ?
Her spirits droop, her head with grief oppress'd,
Dejected sinks upon her pensive breast.

In some dark hour, me thinks I hear her say,
" Why do I live to see this trying day ?
Why do I live, of earthly joy bereft ;
My other half is gone, and I am left
Disconsolate, afflicted and forlorn,
With five dear orphans, and a sixth unborn !

Philander's tender love I still review ;
And recollection wounds my soul anew :
The future prospect darker still appears,
And unbelief suggests a thousand fears.

Maternal cares and gloomy thoughts arise,
 And paint the joyless scene before my eyes.
 This stroke doth all my earthly hopes confound,
 My grief is great; incurable my wound.

Ye mourning doves, your own complaints forbear;
 To my distresses lend a list'ning ear.
 Ye pitying echoes, in the hollow vale,
 Be ye responsive to my plaintive tale,
 Ye lofty pines and beeches, as ye grow,
 Witness the sad expressions of my wo.

But ah! I hear the all-commanding word,
Be still and know I am thy sov'reign Lord:
I will, to all thy humble cries, attend,
And be, thro' life, thy never-failing friend,
Trust in my grace, thyself and babes shall share,
In me, a husband's, and a father's care.

May he my weaker passions all compose;
 'Tis right, 'tis best, whate'er my Maker does.
 Be thou, my soul, to all his will resign'd;
 He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind."

'Tis just, *Sophronia*, let your faith rely
 E'en on that hand, that bids your comforts die.
 Believe his sov'reign right to all you have;
 Whate'er he takes, he takes but what he gave.

At his command, the dreadful tempests rise,
With rapid speed, the storm obedient flies;
Th' etherial vault is rent from pole to pole,
Red lightnings glare, and vengeful thunders roll;
While, conscious terrors seize the guilty soul. }
The blustering winds, o'er the rough mountains blow,
And mighty torrents swell the brook below.
Rouz'd by the storm, the troubl'd oceans roar,
The foaming billows breaking on the shore.
Conflicting waves, with awful fury rise,
And in wild tumults, mingle seas and skies.
With ceaseless noise, the awful deeps resound;
The shelving rocks repeat the thrilling sound.
The shatter'd bark now floats upon the wave,
And instant sinks in the deep watry grave.

So, in the storms of adverse life, we find
The gath'ring tempest *close* upon the mind,
Thick clouds and darkness intercept the skies;
Desponding fears and gloomy thoughts arise.
The waves of trouble swell and break our peace,
And death is threatned by the angry seas.
A pensive sadness dwells within the breast,
And none, but God, can bring the heart to rest.

His smile, divine, can ev'ry fear controul,
And, with immortal pleasure, fill the soul.

His gracious presence drives the gloom away,
 And turns the darkness into chearing day.
 So, when the rising sun the mountain gilds
 Dull night, to him, his transient empire yields ;
 To distant realms, he takes his hasty flight,
 And nature welcomes the returning light.

Religion is no vain fantastic thing ;
 From this, alone, substantial pleasures spring.
 Its comforts soften each corroding care,
 And turn the desert to an *Eden* fair ;
 Revive the heart, when earthly joy is fled,
 And ease the pains, that wait a dying bed,

Whilst you, *Sopbronia*, with maternal cares,
 Watch o'er your babes, and nurse their infant years ;
 May providence your ev'ry want supply,
 And keep your orphans with a father's eye.
 May angel-guardians all your steps attend ;
 And JESUS be your everlasting friend.

Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair ;
 Still hope in God, and to his throne repair :
 Omnipotence will ne'er the suit deny
 Of humble souls, who on his grace rely.

When *Jacob's* son pursu'd the dang'rous road
 Appointed by their great deliv'rer, God,

The cloudy pillar led the host by day,
At night, it cheer'd them with a lightsome ray.

So trust, my friend, for heav'nly guidance too,
To light your gloomy path the desert thro'.
The chearing beams of sov'reign grace shall shine,
And lead you, in the path of peace divine ;
Point out a solid basis for your hope ;
Exalt your views and keep your courage up.
The stormy voy'ge of life shall but be short,
You, soon, shall reach the much-desir'd port.
Philander calls you to that peaceful shore,
Where sorrow, pain and death are known no more.

P A R T T H I R D.

*Euphronius ; or the Death of the Rev. JAMES
HARTLEY, late of Harworth.*

EUPHRONIUS, partner of my joy and care,
No more, thy gen'rous sympathy, I share.
Thy ear is clos'd to ev'ry plaintive strain ;
Thy friendly counsels, now, I ask in vain.

Friendship, which, ev'ry pious bosom, warms,
Euphronius shew'd, in all its pleasing forms.
As points the needle to the northern pole,
So, upright views directed all his soul.
He knew the arts of flatt'ry to despise ;
His mind was open and without disguise.
Successive years his faithfulness can prove,
His kindness, candor, sympathy and love ;
His skill to counsel, and his pious care
To warn his friends of ev'ry hurtful snare.

O may

O may my soul his footsteps oft review ;
Observe the track, his bright example drew ;
And, with a steady zeal, the heav'nly path pursue !

'Twas ne'er his aim to mingle with the great ;
He liv'd contented, in a low estate :
Secure from noisy pride's ambitious strife,
Which often poisons all the sweets of life.

The lowly mind, alone, contentment knows ;
A haughty spirit robs us of repose.
So lightnings blast the tow'ring mountain's brow ;
While humble vales, in safety, smile below.
Contentment will the happy portion be
Of heav'nly patience, tho' in poverty.

Fastosus soars aloft, and strives to climb
In worldly splendor, with the wings of time.
Of various gifts of providence possess'd,
Nor wealth nor greatness can procure his rest.
No interval of solid peace he knows ;
Tormenting passions give him no repose.
His anxious heart, oppress'd with inward strife,
Can scarce sustain the weary load of life.

When the bright crown the monarch's head adorns,
The shining jewels, scarcely, hide the thorns.
With mighty pomp, and regal ensigns grac'd,
His height of grandeur makes him more unblest.

Involv'd in cares and woes, an endless train,
His weighty honors but increase his pain.

Euphronius spent his life amongst the poor;
Contentment was to him a constant store.
The golden bait, he steadily defy'd,
And in his native village liv'd and dy'd.
Some only seek the sons of wealth to please;
They hunt for lucre, precedence and ease;
And care not for the flock, but only mind the fleece. }
Pity these poor, these starving souls, O God!
Pity the purchase of a Saviour's blood;
And send them faithful guides, whose pious care,
Shall pluck them from the captivating snare;
Who will not shun to publish all thy will,
With warm affection, steadiness and zeal.
This was my friend's concern; but now he lies,
Inactive in the grave, till JESUS bid him rise.

His mem'ry was, betimes, divinely stor'd
With the rich treasures of the sacred word.
Strong and tenacious, still it kept its pow'r,
Thro' age and sickness, to his dying hour.

Vast was his stretch of thought, and large his soul;
His judgment kept the helm, and could controul
His weaker passions, and the reins command,
In almost ev'ry work, he took in hand.

Wrong

Wrong not the muse; she means not to relate
Things, inconsistent with this mortal state.
The man that most his Maker's image bears,
Boasts not perfection, in this vale of tears.
But grace in dear *Euphronius* kept the throne,
And in his temper and his actions shone.

As flow'rs, attracted by the genial ray,
Expand their blossoms, with the op'ning day.
To meet the sun; so did *Euphronius* live
On nought this dark, benighted world can give.
He look'd to Jesus, with a fixed eye,
For life, for growth and ev'ry kind supply.
Faith points to him, her magnet in the skies,
When tempests blow, or stormy troubles rise.

No low, dishonest arts, *Euphronius* try'd,
In terms obscure, his sentiments to hide.
His heart was open, and his language clear,
Suited to gain the inattentive ear.

His little flock, the faithful shepherd fed;
In pastures fair and green, their souls were led;
"All things," he cry'd, "ye humble souls, are yours."
And then, he open'd, grace's richest stores;
Then did his words, with heav'nly pow'r, impart
Rich consolation, to the wounded heart.
In strains of comfort, with a mild address,
He clear'd the doubts and soften'd the distress

Of humble minds ; directing them to fly
To Jesus ; and upon his grace rely.

Wonder and joy, alternata, seiz'd the soul,
While streams of gospel-eloquence did roll
From his dear lips : and his majestic look,
Prov'd, that he felt the force of what he spoke.
It was a feast divine, with dainties stor'd ;
The richest viands crown the gospel board.

The soul, entangl'd by some hurtful snare,
Witness'd the shepherd's kind, restoring care.
Unruly men had faithful warnings giv'n ;
The weak were strengthen'd in the way to heav'n.

The scriptures were the rule of what he taught ;
He studied these, with close and steady thought :
He, text with text, compar'd ; and brought to view
From grace's storehouse, things both old and new :
These were his constant joy, his constant song ;
They rul'd his heart, and dwelt upon his tongue.
By these, as by a chart, he shew'd the way,
To shun the dangers of the rocky sea.

He introduc'd not fancy's airy dreams ;
Nor the dull round of philosophic themes.
'Twas not his aim to teach *Platonic* rules ;
Nor yet the foolish jargon of the schools.

On useless questions, he disdain'd to dwell;
To lull the conscience, on the brink of hell;
While ruthless death, the sinner's steps, attends,
And sure destruction, o'er his head, impends.
"Reason's a gift divine, *Euphronius* cries,
A precious gift, the off-spring of the skies:
It dignifies mankind; by this preferr'd,
We stand distinguish'd from the brutal herd.
But human reason should not still presume
To guide the soul, in revelation's room.
Let reason humbly learn to know her place,
And bow submissive to the word of grace.
Dim-sighted reason must the helm resign,
And be directed by the page divine;
Hence form her judgment, hence her notions draw,
And own the page divine her sov'reign law."

With gentle speech, exhortative and mild,
(So speaks a father to a fav'rite child)
He prest his flock to ev'ry pious deed,
And in the paths of virtue to proceed.
Be witness, ye, who have, from year to year,
Had large experience of his pious care.
Remember still the solemn charges giv'n,
As he enforc'd the sacred laws of heav'n.
Walk as he walk'd; his bright example trace;
So will you best adorn the truths of grace.

With

With studious care, his preaching was design'd
 To fix conviction, on the thoughtless mind ;
 By gospel bands, the humble soul to draw ;
 Or rouse the guilty, by the thund'ring law.
 The terrors of the Lord, the preacher knew,
 And often brought them, to the sinner's view ;
 Death's sure approach ; th' eternal judgment near ;
 The solemn reck'ning, at the awful bar ;
 With serious air, he set, before their eyes,
 The certain process of that grand assize ;
 The sentence past, the guilty held in chains,
 In outer darkness, and eternal pains.

And while he spake, the thunders seem'd to roll ;
 Convictive terrors seiz'd the stupid soul.
 His just rebuke, the haughty sinner felt ;
 The haughty sinner trembl'd at his guilt ;
 Before his view, his youthful follies rise ;
 His crimes, enormous, reaching to the skies ;
 Rous'd from his impious dream, 'tis now his cry,
 " O mercy, save a wretch, condemn'd to die !"
 With humble heart, he thus begins to pray,
 And, on his bended knees, is heard to say,

Almighty Maker ! God of boundless love !
 Look down, propitious, on a guilty worm ;
 Vile, wretched, worthless, loathsome, self-abhor'd ;
 Yet, craving mercy, thro' the blood divine,

By

By Jesus, shed for men : my only ground
Of hope, for pardon, and access to thee.
Behold me, trembling at thy awful feet,
Stunn'd with the thund'ring voice of *Sinai's* curse ;
Oppress'd with guilt ; defil'd with foulest stains ;
O wash me, in the Lamb's redeeming blood.

And thou, Redeemer kind of ruin'd man,
Once bleeding, on the shameful tree, to save
My guilty soul from hell, and cursed sin !
To thee, I look, thou healer of mankind !
With weeping eyes, and deeply mournful heart ;
In tender love, behold my prostrate soul,
Helpless and self-condemn'd : I smite my breast,
And loud, for mercy, pard'ning mercy, cry ;
Of merit destitute, I nought can plead,
But what from thy own goodness, freely springs.
My mouth is stopt, and multiplied crimes
Call for thy vengeance, on my guilty head.
And, O thou Judge supreme, shouldst thou display
Thy awful wrath, on this devoted breast,
I must pronounce thee, just in my destruction.
Yet O ! let heav'nly pity plead, and save
The vilest wretch, that ever sued for grace.

The God of mercy hears the humble cry,
And saves the soul, that stood condemn'd to die.

He's

He's pardon'd, cloath'd in righteousness divine,
 And heav'nly graces, in his temper shine.
 Now saints rejoice, and angels shout above,
 To see the wonders of redeeming love.

But dear *Euphronius* felt his frame decay,
 By slow degrees, his vitals waste away.
 His happy mind, compos'd to sweetest peace,
 Wish'd only for the day of his release.

Calm was his temper, and his soul serene,
 With patience arm'd, amidst the trying scene :
 No murm'ring thoughts disturb his happy mind ;
 Like the smooth sea, unruff'd by the wind,
 Its billows sleep ; it seems a mighty plain,
 And one majestic smile adorns the main.

Clear was his prospect of the vast reward
 Of heav'nly bliss, by sov'reign grace prepar'd.
 His setting sun was cloudless, bright and clear,
 Rejoicing, that the happy goal was near.
 Celestial comforts all his pow'rs sustain,
 Support his fainting heart, and ease his pain ;
 Till he resigns the last remains of breath,
 Infolded in the friendly arms of death.

His happy soul, then, takes his destin'd flight
 To reach the coasts of uncreated light ;

Released

Released from the weight of cumbrous clay,
By angels guided in th' etherial way,
To the unclouded realms of everlasting day.

They quickly reach the paradise above,
Where boundless pleasures and immortal love
Extend their sway; thro' all the wide domain,
For ever flourish, and for ever reign.

The blisful fields and sweet etherial bow'rs,
Adorn'd with painted ranks of deathless-flow'rs,
Breathe heav'nly fragrance: prospects ever new
Invite the eye and open to the view.

The beating storm of adverse life is o'er;
The noisy tempest stuns his ears no more;
With heav'nly transport, glowing in his breast,
He gains the port of everlasting rest.

The gath'ring crowds around the corpse attend;
Each one laments the loss of such a friend;
The pensive widow heaves the deep'ned sigh,
And briny tears descend from ev'ry eye.

 PART FOURTH.
Death's Dominion destroyed.

BUT see, the mighty ruler of the day
 Advances, with a mild and gentle ray.
 I'll quit the solemn theme, suspend the lyre,
 Walk o'er the mead, the blooming scene admire ;
 Shake, from my bosom, each corroding care,
 And taste the sweetness of the balmy air.

The rosy-finger'd morn bedecks the east ;
 For ev'ry sense, prepares a plenteous feast ;
 And jocund day, with gaudy lustre, gilds
 The hills and vales, the purling streams and fields.
 The season temp'rate, and the æther pure,
 Inchanting scenes the ravish'd sight allure :
 Lo cheerful spring adorns the flow'ry plains,
 In ev'ry field, refreshing fragrance reigns ;
 The gentle zephyrs fan the blooming trees,
 And wafted odours swell the vernal breeze ;

The

The flow'rs expose their lovely charms to view,
Their op'ning tufts drink up the silver dew.

The fiercer winds in gloomy caverns lie ;
No roaring tempests discompose the sky ;
'Tis all serene ; creation smiles around,
A beauteous robe adorns the fertile ground ;
While softest music warbles thro' the grove,
And ev'ry note is innocence and love.

The sprightly lark attunes her *matin* lay ;
The cheerful linnet hails the new-born day.
The shrill-tongu'd thrush, in lofty strains, abounds,
The distant hills reflect the pleasing sounds.

The pearly dew-drops ev'ry leaf adorn,
Refresh the grass, and bless the springing corn ;
Earth's kind productions quickly shall appear,
And smiling plenty crown the jocund year.
Harvests shall spring from the manured soil,
And ripen'd crops reward the peasant's toil.

The fertile earth and the extended skies
Proclaim their Author infinitely wise,
And infinitely great ; but still we trace
Sublimier wonders in the world of grace.

He form'd the sun, that central source of light ;
With all the rolling glories of the night ;

Pale *Cynthia*, moving in her silver car ;
 Each roving planet, and each fixed star.
 He kindled up, at first, their glowing flames ;
 He tells their numbers, and he calls their names.
 What worlds on worlds, th' assisted sense may view,
 High in the concave of etherial blue !
 He form'd, sustains, and manages the whole,
 From the equator to the distant pole.
 He bid them all perform their mystic round ;
 The morning stars, in joyful songs, abound.

Man is the fruit of his creating breath ;
 Nay more, the purchase of his pain and death.
 Th' Almighty's call first wak'd him from the ground ;
 The moving clay obey'd the vital sound.
 The *creature* rose obedient to his word.
 But, by his blood, the *rebel* is restor'd.
 Mysterious proofs of sov'reign mercy shine,
 And boundless wisdom, in the plan divine.

To dwell below, the great Redeemer came,
 Assum'd our nature, bore our guilt and shame.
 He sunk beneath our woes, a heavy load,
 And gave his life to make our peace with God.
 His hands were bound, our liberty to gain ;
 His blood was shed to wash away our stain ;
 He groan'd, that we might sing with chearful voice ;
 He wept aloud, that sinners might rejoice.

He

He dy'd, the king of terrors to destroy,
And make the gate of death the gate of endless joy.

The faithful soul can now in triumph sing,
“ O death ! where is thy formidable sting ?
Where are the terrors of thy vengeful eye ?
Thy dart, from which, the guilty wish to fly ?
No sting appears, no killing dart I see ;
No terrors brood upon thy brow, for me :
Thou hast a heav'nly smile upon thy face ;
I long to clasp thee, in a fond embrace.
Come, thou blest messenger of peace and love,
Transmit my soul, to the bright realms above.
But whence hast thou this sweet celestial air ?
Once, black as hell, but now an angel fair.
Strange transformation ! but the cause I see,
JESUS has dy'd, has shed his blood for me ;
Thanks be to God, who gives the victory !
Faith in his name forbids my slavish fear,
And makes me triumph e'en when death is near.”

Ye echoing skies ! repeat the Saviour's name ;
His love, thro' all the starry worlds, proclaim.
Ye circling spheres ! dwell on the charming sound ;
Bear it, ye winds ! the wide creation round.

Death shall not o'er the just for ever reign ;
No ! he, that conquers all, shall soon be slain.

Him to subdue, the kind Redeemer gave
His precious life ; he dy'd, the dead to save !
Death could not him, a pris'ner long detain ;
He quickly broke the adamantine chain.
Vain were the *Roman* watch, the *Jewish* seal,
And all the *traits* of pharisaic zeal :
The destin'd hour arrives ; the conqu'ror rose,
And nobly triumph'd over all his foes.
The rosy morn had scarce unbarr'd the skies,
But vanquish'd death precipitantly flies,
With all his ghastly train ; and Jesus gave
Full proof of vict'ry o'er the gloomy grave.
Pris'ners of hope ! the glorious day is nigh,
When Christ your bands shall loose, and death
himself shall die.

THE

To the congregation at large, and the church of Jesus Christ, at Haworth, late under the care of our honoured brother in the Lord, Mr James Hartley; grace and peace be multiplied.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

THE unfeigned regard I had for that eminent servant of God, whose death occasioned the following discourse, and a strong desire to contribute my poor mite towards perpetuating the memory of so good a man, and so valuable a member of society; together with, a concern that we may all attend to the important charge he left with his flock, have induced me to make the following meditations public, in conjunction with *The Reign of Death.* An intimate and endeared friendship subsisted between me and your late pastor, without interruption, for more than thirty years. It somewhat resembled that between David and Jonathan. He is fled from this world of toil and strife, and I am left behind, to weep and rejoice at the remembrance of former times.

Yours

You will easily perceive, that the following pages contain the substance of what was delivered to you from the pulpit. Some things indeed are here contracted, which were then more largely insisted on; and some thoughts are added for the farther illustration of the subject. For this liberty, I suppose you will allow, that no farther apology is needful.

I am sensible, this discourse is not formed on a popular plan, nor have I the vanity to think it will be acceptable to every reader. The things, however, recommended in the text, appear to me of great importance, and particularly needful to be insisted on, in the present day. And if any thing here suggested on the subject, may, under a divine blessing, become serviceable, for the conviction of the secure sinner, the comfort of the mourning soul, and the happy revival of primitive order and discipline in the house of God, the publication of this sermon will fully answer the end, desire and earnest prayer of,

Dear Brethren,

Your affectionate friend,

And devoted servant,

In the gospel of Christ,

WILLIAM CRABTREE.

BRADFORD,
April 10, 1780.

T H E

Christian Minister's Farewell, &c.

2 CORINTH. xiii. 11.

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.

A Very mournful dispensation of Divine Providence has occasioned the reading of these words in your ears, this day. A dispensation which, no doubt, is severely felt by many in this assembly, as well as in other places. A breach is now made, which had been long expected, and greatly feared. Death, our last enemy, dissolves every connection among men, whether natural, civil, or religious; however close, however firm or strong they be. He cuts the ties which unite us together, in the several relations in life. We have alarming proofs of this, from
day

day to day. Death is frequently making breaches in families, neighbourhoods and churches. But, perhaps, none are more painful and affecting, than the breaches made between gospel ministers and the people of their charge, especially when the union has been close, firm and hearty; as was the case, I have reason to believe, between you, my dear brethren of this church, and your late worthy pastor, who is now numbered with the dead.

The last time I found him capable of conversing, I asked him, if any portion of God's word lay upon his mind, which he could wish to have preached from, upon the occasion of his decease. He immediately mentioned the words I have just read. You see, then, dear brethren, we have a text of your late venerable pastor's choosing; and it is the last text he chose for your edification. Had he himself been employed in opening and applying the subject before us, you might have expected great things. But this is not the case. He is gone to his everlasting home, to his father's house above; and we are left behind, in the regions of sorrow and pain, to make the best improvement we can, of the time, talents and advantages yet in our hands.

The blessed apostle is here closing his excellent letter to the church at *Corinth*; and in the words now under our regard, with a very serious wish for their welfare, he takes an affectionate leave of them; sums up, as it were, the whole of what he had wrote to them, gives them his best advice, and assures them of the presence of the God of love and peace with them, in a practical conformity to what he recommends.

It was scarce possible for your late pastor to have selected a passage from the inspired volume, with a particular application to you, more expressive of his love to you, and his desire for your welfare and happiness, than that which we have read. The text, I believe, contains the sentiments, and was the index of his dying heart, in respect to you. You may consider it as a token of the sincerest regard for you; you may consider it as his last advice to you.

Men are apt to pay great regard to the cautions, counsels and charges of dying friends. And tho' some may carry this to such a length, as that it borders on superstition; yet certainly there is something solemn
and

and striking, in the requests and admonitions of a man on the verge of the eternal world. The last accents of a tongue just going to be bound up in the silence of death, demand close attention, and often make a deep impression. The circumstances of the speaker have a natural tendency to enforce what is delivered by him. Hence, the all-wise God has sometimes inspired his servants, in these circumstances, with such Messages, as he designed should make a deep impression on the hearers, and be long kept in memory. The patriarch *Jacob*, when just stepping into the eternal world, by a spirit of prophecy, foretold what should befall his offspring for ages to come. He called his sons, and said, *Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.—Hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father.** He signified, in the most solemn manner, his disapprobation of some parts of their conduct, and gave them some important hints in reference to their future proceedings. *And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.†*

God

* Gen. xlix. 1, 2.

† Ver. 33.

God sends his summons to his servant *Moses*, who had been *faithful in all his house*, to go up to mount *Nebo* and die, and *be gathered unto his people*. And in order to this, he must deliver a message to the chosen tribes, as a dying man; and leave them a parting blessing. *And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel, before his death.** *Joshua*, the son of *Nun*, calls all *Israel* together, to hear his farewell sermon. And to enforce what he had to say upon his audience, *Behold*, says he, *this day I am going the way of all the earth*. And having delivered his discourse, and dismissed the people, the next we hear of him is, that *Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died.* § We have also, the last words of *David*, the sweet singer of *Israel*.—From all which it appears, how reasonable it is to pay due attention to the advices and counsels of dying saints, as they are conformable to, and founded on, the divine word. Upon this principle, the apostle *Paul* thus addresses *Timothy*; *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word;*

- he

* Deut. xxxii. 49, 50, and xxxiii. 1. § Josh. xxiii. 2, 14.
and xxiv. 29

*be instant in season, out of season; reprove, re-
buke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doc-
trine; and afterwards adds, I am ready to be
offered up, and the time of my departure is at
hand.** So when we hear a dying brother,
with a panting heart, a faltering tongue, and
quivering lips, thus bespeak us, *Finally, bre-
thren, 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:* Should we
not be all attention? Should we not ponder
these sayings in our hearts?—You can have no
doubt of the dying speaker's sincerity and af-
fection; you need not be told that what is
said, is the result of the closest thought, and
maturest deliberation.

In the famous and flourishing city of *Co-
rinth*, the apostle *Paul* had, by the special
direction of the Almighty, published the glad
tidings of free and full salvation, in the name
of Jesus. The Lord had told him, *he had
much people in that city, to be called out of
darkness into marvellous light.*§ Accordingly,
the word had great success. Many were
turned to God, and became obedient to the
faith. A numerous church was gathered,
and

* Tim. iv. 1, 2.

§ Act. xviii. 1, 10.

and large gifts, and great grace bestowed on the members of it. This ambassador of Christ, continued preaching the word among them for a considerable time; and an abundant blessing attended his labours. But being called into other parts of the vineyard, great irregularities took place among the *Corinthian* converts, and many shameful things were done by them. Yet these things did not abate the apostle's love to them, and zeal for their welfare. He wrote to them an excellent epistle, and after that a second; of which, the words now under consideration are a concluding part. *Finally, brethren, farewell, &c.* In which we may observe,

I. The affecting manner in which the apostle takes his leave of the *Corinthian* church. *Finally, brethren, Farewell.*

II. The solemn charge he gives them: *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.*

III. A precious and comprehensive promise annexed: *And the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

D

I. Observe

I. Observe the affecting manner in which the apostle takes his leave of the *Corinthian* church.

1. He salutes them under the endearing appellation of *brethren*. He uses this term, not by way of compliment, without any meaning, as is but too often the case. In the mouth of an inspired messenger of Christ, this word is emphatical. Hereby he indicates his affection for them, and would quicken their attention and regard to what he has to say. The *Corinthians* had behaved to the apostle in a very disrespectful manner. They had despised him for his natural defects; particularly for some impediment, as it should seem, which attended him in speaking. They had preferred others to him, who was the chief of the apostles.* Notwithstanding which, he still loves them, and styles them *brethren*. A bigotted, censorious spirit knows not to shew mercy, even on the most respectable character. What pity is it, that the professing followers of the *Prince of peace*, should be so unlike their divine Master! O that christians of all denominations among us, were more concerned to live
under

* 2 Cor. x. 10. and xii. 11.

under the governing influence of that charity, which *thinketh no evil; which beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things.**

Christians, true christians of every name, are *brethren*. They have all one Father; by whom they are *begotten again to a lively hope.* § They are all *partakers of the divine nature*, and bear the divine image. There is a striking likeness between them, in heart, speech, and behaviour. Their spirit, temper, and disposition, are materially the same; for they have all *the mind of Christ.* † They all speak the same language; the language of *Canaan.* ‡ Their lips are as *threads of scarlet; and their tongue as choice silver*. Their walk, for substance, is the same; for it is such as *becometh the gospel of Christ.* (a) They are, as *the sons of God, blameless and harmless, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*. They deny *ungodliness and worldly lusts; and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* (b) Like brethren, they all constitute one spiritual family; called the *household of faith*. They

D 2

all

* 1 Cor. xiii. § 2 Pet. i. 4, and 1 Pet. i. 3. † 1 Cor.
ii. 16. ‡ Zeph. iii. 9. (a) Phil. i. 27, and ii. 15.
(b) Tit. ii. 11, 12.

all look to, depend upon, and are richly supplied by, the hand of their heavenly Father. Their spiritual interests are naturally involved in each other. They weep and rejoice together. They partake of each other's sorrows and consolations. They mingle their prayers and praises together. They throw, as it were, their whole stock into one promiscuous heap; no one *caring for his own things; but every man for the things that are Jesus Christ's*. And they are entitled to, and interested in, the same glorious patrimony, settled on them by their heavenly Father. They are *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*. As such, they ought to *love as brethren*, and cheerfully attend to the advice given in our text.

2. The apostle expresses a parting wish for the *Corinthian* church, *Farewell*. This was not, as observed above, a word of course, without any thought or concern. It is expressive of his sincere desire for their welfare and prosperity in every view. The *English* word, is a compound of *fare*, and *well*. *Fare* is put for the entertainment a person is favoured with, at home or abroad: and to *farewell*, is to be well accommodated, and plentifully supplied. This term, then, seems
to

to imply a wish for the happiness of the *Corinthians*, both as men and as christians; both in body and soul.

He wished them well in their church-state. He had this in view in his preaching while among them, and in both the excellent epistles which he wrote to them. In which, he points out their defects, answers their objections, solves their enquiries, and reproveth them for their irregularities; with the firmest integrity, and warmest affection. In a word; he does all in his power to establish good order among them. And here he expresses his earnest wish, that they might profit by all he had done for them, spoken and wrote to them. It was his desire that God might dwell among them, rule over them, and in them; and so make them a happy, honourable, peaceable and fruitful people, in their relation one to another, as brethren in fellowship together.

He wished them well as individuals. His desire and prayer to God for them was, *That God would grant them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man. That Christ might*

*dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, might be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.** He affectionately desired that their souls might prosper, as the soul of Gaius is said to do; that they might grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they might abound in hope, thro' the power of the Holy Ghost; enjoy access to, and communion with God, and be filled with the fruits of righteousness to his praise and glory.—Such was the apostle's concern for the dear saints at Corinth, for whom he was willing to spend and be spent. May succeeding ministers breathe the same spirit!

3. This farewell was *final*: *finally, brethren, farewell, q. d.* To come to a close; to sum up all in a word, and so take my leave of you.

This term *finally*, seems to have reference to what had already been done. The apostle here would lead them to recollect his preaching among them, and review what he had
wrote

* Eph. iii. 16—19.

wrote to them. And permit me, my dear brethren, on this occasion, to remind you, what your late worthy pastor has done for and among you. He has served you in the gospel of Christ, with unwearied diligence and fidelity, for more than thirty years. He has watched over you, as a shepherd over his flock. He has fed you with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. You dwelt on his affectionate heart. His *care for you was natural.* He was *gentle among you as a nurse cherisheth her children*. He opened up to you the truths of the gospel, in their beauty, harmony, and rich variety. In this pulpit, he maintained and enlarged upon the several parts of doctrinal, experimental and practical divinity, in a judicious and masterly manner. While health would permit, his public preaching was accompanied with private visits, in which, you, no doubt, can recollect his wholesome counsels, his pious exhortations, his faithful reproofs and fervent prayers. All which rendered him, under God, *a helper of your joy, and a strengthener of your hands*, in the way to heaven. And all his labours among you, were with a design to promote the great ends specified in the text. *Perfection, comfort, unity and peace,*

were the great things to which his doctrine and conduct led. For the truth of this, I appeal to your consciences in the sight of God. And I believe you have not the least inclination to deny it,

But your dear pastor has now bid you a *final* farewell. He has often bid you farewell, when he has taken his leave of you for a season. This hath sometimes been with heart-felt pleasure, occasioned by the steadiness and fervor of your minds in the ways of God; at other times, perhaps, he has taken his leave of you with pain and sorrow, on account of what he has heard from you, or seen among you. But these kinds of salutations are now over. You hear his voice no more. How often have you heard him pour out his soul in prayer to God for you? But his prayers are now turned into praises. And he is reaping the fruits of a good conscience to God and you, in the regions of peace and undisturbed repose. He will, I trust, have the unspeakable satisfaction of welcoming some (O that I could say, *all*) of you, to the realms of bliss. So shall you be *his joy and crown of rejoicing* for ever. But till then, he has once for all, in the language of the text,

bid

bid you farewell. This farewell is a final one.—We pass on to

II. The solemn charge here given. *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.* This charge consists of four branches.

I. *Be perfect.* A perfect freedom from sin in the present state, is not intended here; nor indeed in any other part of the inspired volume. The saints of God, 'tis true, are said to be *complete*, and to be *without spot*.* But this is to be understood of them in point of justification, as found in Christ, and clothed with his spotless righteousness. *Comparative* perfection is ascribed to God's people, with respect to their conversation. So we read of some being perfect *in their generation*; i. e. when compared with those among whom they lived.† Perfection in other parts of scripture seems to intend, *uprightness* or *sincerity*. So *Job was a perfect and an upright man*; † he was thoroughly sincere; but at the same time, he utterly disclaimed all pretensions to sinless perfection.

But

* Col. ii. 10. § Cant. iv. 7. Gen.

† Job. i. 8, and ix. 20.

But the perfection here intended, as I apprehend, is to be understood of those things which belonged to the church at *Corinth*, in a *social* capacity. On this head, very great imperfection had appeared among them. And it most certainly was their duty to rectify what was out of order. Some had been awfully criminal among them, and others had connived at their sin. These, the apostle had sharply reprov'd; he had charged them to repent of, and turn from, those evils which were so pernicious to their peace, comfort and prosperity; and so be more perfectly conformable to the rules of Christ.

He here implicitly charges them, also, to labour after the strictest discipline in future. It is certain, there can be no spiritual prosperity in the house of the Lord, where there is no concern for purity of discipline. We should not contract the doors of the sanctuary, so as to shut out him *that is weak in the faith*; yet we should, on the other hand, be careful not to open them wider than what God's word allows. If men of corrupt principles, or of a vain conversation, are admitted into the connection, or any are suffered to continue, when they appear of that stamp, the
the

the purity, peace and comfort of the church will be greatly injured, if not overthrown. The presence and smiles of the Holy One of *Israel*, will be withdrawn. On the other hand, if gospel order is duly attended to, tho' our number be small, and our circumstances low; yet peace will be within *Zion's walls*, and prosperity within her palaces.

This perfection, likewise, includes a steady adherence to the grand and leading doctrines of the gospel. While some expend their zeal and vigor in favour of circumstantials in religion, and some particular modes of expression; striving about *words, to no profit, but to the subverting the bearers*; there is in others, too much coolness and indifference, respecting the fundamental articles of the christian faith. These ought to be dearer to us than our lives. We should *buy the truth*, but not *sell it*, at any price whatsoever.* We should be valiant for it. *Contend earnestly, and strive together* for it.† This is the church's crown and glory; and she should hold it fast unto the end. The blessed Redeemer highly approved of, and commended the churches at *Pergamos* and *Philadelphia*, for their steadiness

* Pro.

† Jude iii. Phil. i. 27.

ness in the truth.* And, such a conduct certainly contributes to the perfection of the church of God. It indicates great weakness to be perpetually *tossed to and fro, with every wind of doctrine.*

Add to this, a zealous discharge of every duty, civil or religious. A daily care to live in strict conformity, as far as may be, to that divine rule, which is *holy, just and good.* An endeavour to stand complete in all the will of God: to conduct ourselves in the family, the closet, the church, and the world at large, *as becometh saints.* O that the professors of christianity had but a just sense of the importance of this! There are most certainly, greater degrees of holiness, both of temper and walk, attainable in the present state, than even christians in common are acquainted with; for want of diligence in the ways of God. Hence there should be a *going on towards perfection.* Not as tho' we had already attained, or were already perfect; but we should, with unabating vigor, *press forward* in the pleasing path of holiness. The Searcher of hearts complains of some, that he had not *found their works perfect.* §

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* Rev. ii. 13, and iii. 18.

§ Rev. iii. 2.

It should seem, the *Corinthians* had been very deficient in their duty one towards another. Christians in church relation ought not to live to themselves, nor only *mind their own things*; but every one also should mind the things of others. The beauty and advantage of church fellowship very much depend, on each member's being found in the constant discharge of those social and relative duties, which are enjoined in the word of God. They are to caution, exhort, support, relieve, strengthen and edify one another, according to the ability bestowed on them for that end. Had not the blessed apostle these, and such like things in view, when he gave this charge to the *Corinthian* church, *Be perfect*? Do not these several particulars contribute to the perfection of a gospel community? But I forbear to enlarge.

II. *Be of good comfort.* Tho' the children of God have great reason for grief and sorrow; tho' they are often, on just grounds, weeping and complaining while in this world, yet they have frequent exhortations to rejoice. They are often *in heaviness, thro' manifold temptations*; their souls are, at sometimes, *cast down within them*; and they are so
oppressed

oppressed with sorrow and affliction, that they can scarcely speak to God or man; yet at the same time, they are never without solid and substantial ground of comfort. God has given them *everlasting consolation, and good hope thro' grace*. It is their duty, as well as privilege, *to be of good comfort*. It is suitable to their profession of faith and confidence in the Most High. It is well-pleasing in his sight, and honourable to his cause and interest in the world. And certainly it must be of advantage to themselves. *The joy of the Lord is their strength*. A serene, vigorous, chearful temper of mind, gives them the boldness of a lion in the face of their enemies. It is serviceable in the discharge of duty, and in fighting *the good fight of faith*.

The God of all grace, in infinite condescension, shews regard for the comfort of his saints. He charges his ministers to comfort them. The apostle *Paul*, under his direction, laboured much for the comfort of the saints, *Phil. iv. 4. 1 Thes. v. 15*. He prayed earnestly for it, *Col. ii. 2*. He laid before them the grounds of consolation. And was much concerned for the promotion of their spiritual joy, and christian chearfulness; that,
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being inspired with courage and magnanimity, they might glory in tribulation, rejoicing in hope of the promised rest. A melancholy, dejected, timorous spirit, is an affliction to a man's self, uncomfortable to those about him, and dishonourable to God.

Permit me just to touch on the grounds and reasons which real saints have, for being of good comfort. 1. They are interested in the free and unchanging love of God in Christ Jesus. This is a solid ground of consolation to them. It comforts their hearts more than the choicest wine. It may serve to animate the mind, and inspire it with holy courage, and humble triumph, under the darkest dispensations. For *who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, thro' him that hath loved us. For I am persuaded, &c. Rom. viii. 35, 39.*

2. The blood of Jesus has atoned for all their guilt, and they are clothed in his spotless righteousness. The obedience of Christ unto death for his church, makes void every indictment

indictment against her, removes the curse of the divine law, and puts to silence the clamours of a guilty conscience. This disarms death of his dreadful sting, and dispels the gloomy horrors of the grave. Yea, it brightens the prospect of approaching judgment, and the eternal world. This makes room for the faints in *the holiest of all*, and gives them boldness before the throne of God. This, consequently furnishes out the saints with solid grounds for joy and triumph. They *joy in God, thro' Jesus Christ, by whom they have received the atonement.* They sing a new song to him that *batb loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood.** Hence they are clothed in the spotless robe of a Saviour's righteousness, and *justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.†* They are made the *righteousness of God in Jesus*; who is the end of the law for *righteousness to every one that believeth.* As such, it affords them matter of solid joy and comfort. Surely, shall one say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* And again, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.†*

* Rom. v. ii. Rev. i. 5. Eph. i. 7. § Act. xiii. 39.

† Isa. xlv. 24, and lxi. 10.

3. There are immense treasures of grace laid up for them in Christ Jesus, whose riches are unsearchable. The needs of God's people are many; if we consider, the sins they have to strive against, the temptations they have to grapple with, the afflictions they have to bear, and the duties they have to perform; but *my God shall supply them all, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 13.* All their springs are in him. *Thro' his poverty they are made rich; and his grace is sufficient for them.*

4. The good work of grace and salvation is already begun in them. They are *born of God; called out of darkness into God's marvellous light; and adopted into the family of God.* So that they may well say, *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Psa. cxxiii. 3.* And that salvation which they have begun to experience, is full, free, complete and everlasting. It will surely put an end to all their sins, and all their sorrows. It will leave neither its guilt to sting them, its power to oppose them, nor its pollution to defile them. Let them, on this ground, be of good comfort, and say, *Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid;*

*afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is also become my salvation!**

Moreover, 5. They are heirs of the kingdom of glory in the world to come. This is stiled, an *exceeding great and eternal weight of glory*. *The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with it*. It is the *blessed hope of the saints*, and the *grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ*. It is their *Father's good pleasure to give them this kingdom*; and therefore it is fit and reasonable, that they should rejoice in the hope of it. § These things, with many others that might be named, furnish the children of God with a solid foundation for comfort and joy. And since they are charged to be of good comfort, how necessary is it, that they have these things much in view; that they may encourage themselves in the Lord their God, and comfort one another with the words of everlasting life!

III. The third branch of the exhortation is, *Be of one mind*. This advice is often given, and therefore must be of great importance.

* H. xii. 2, 3. 1 Pet. i. 5, 6. § 2 Cor. iv. 17.
Rom. viii. 18. Tit. ii. 13.

portance. The disciples of Christ are charged to be *of the same mind* one towards another; to be *all of one mind*; and to *endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit*.* Thus it was in the primitive church, Acts iv, 32. *The multitude of the disciples were of one heart, and one soul.* And most certainly, this ought to be the case still. There is as much necessity for it now as there was then. It is as needful, for the prosperity of the church, and the glory of God, as ever. And the bad consequences attending the contrary, are as numerous, and as much to be dreaded as ever. Consequently, the arguments enforcing it, are as powerful as ever. It must be allowed, that a perfect agreement in religious sentiments, is not to be expected, so long as we are imperfect in knowledge. It never was the case, nor ever will be, while we are in the body.

The *Roman* pontiff affects to tyrannize over men's consciences, and even their understandings; by requiring them to believe only as the church believes. But this is as opposite to the spirit of the gospel as darkness is to light. The religion of Jesus requires no man to assent to that which he cannot see reason for, and sufficient proof of. It requires none

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* Rom. xii. 16. Eph. iv. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 8.

to do violence to their own understandings ; or to pretend a belief of that, of which they cannot see the evidence.

I take the general sense of this clause to be ;—That care should be taken, as to the admission of members into a gospel church ; that none be received, who are strangers to the necessary and important truths and duties of religion. That the members of such church should guard against a whimsical, fanciful turn of mind ; a perpetual fondness for singularity ; and an ambition to discover what no one has ever seen before ; that they should beware of disturbing the brethren with their own *nostrums*, which are, perhaps, not at all suited to inform or edify, but only calculated to puzzle and perplex ; and that they should lay aside all inclination to *strive about words to no profit*.

The professing followers of Jesus, and members of gospel churches, can never be too much guarded against such a temper as the above. It has done immense mischief in the societies of the saints ; and is spreading its baneful influence in many places at this day. It originates in that pride from *whence cometh*

cometh contention ; it betrays much vanity of mind ; and has a tendency to draw off the attention, from the most weighty and important things. It favours strongly of carnality ; and is what the apostle blames the Corinthian church for, more than once. For whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions are ye not carnal, and walk as men ?
1 Cor. iii. 3.

To rectify this, the apostle set out in his first epistle to this people, in the following manner ; *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you : but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment.* He takes his leave of them here as he begun there : which may intimate, that the things mentioned here and there, were what he principally aimed at, in both his epistles. *Be of one mind.* q. d. “ Pay the same uniform attention to the great and fundamental truths of the gospel ; evidence the same zeal in promoting them ; attend to the same thing ; and engage in the same laudable designs, for advancing the common cause of christianity, in which ye are all embarked.—This I take to be the spirit of the exhortation.

1. This oneness of mind, then, should be preserved as much as may be, in the most important doctrines of the gospel. Men may widely differ in their ideas of many texts of scripture, and of many circumstances relative to the truths they believe in common, and yet preserve the unity of the spirit. But if the essential doctrines of the gospel, in their substance and reality, are deny'd by any, in the relation of church members, they are far from the apostle's rule laid down in the text. *How can two walk together, for mutual edification, except they be agreed, in the most important things? How shall they all speak the same thing, if they are not of the same judgment?**

2. —In all the branches of instituted worship. Such as, the ministry of the word, prayer to God, and the observation of the peculiar ordinances of the gospel. Thus the primitive christians *continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Act. ii. 42.

3. —In reference to the order and discipline of God's house. In this it is a happiness

* Phil. i. 27. Jude xx. Eph. iv. 3.

ness for church-members to *see eye to eye*. A church is the *household of God*; there are *rulers* there: which idea supposes *rules* by which it is governed; things are to be *set in order*; and *done decently and in order*. Now the rules and orders are laid down in the word of God; and it is necessary that the saints should be acquainted with them, and of one mind about them: that they may *stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*. Col. iv. 12. What is done in the house, and by the family of God, should be with unanimity. Nothing should be undertaken, or prosecuted, thro' *strife or vain glory*. They should not be *self-willed*; but *submit one to another in the fear of God*; and not be *wise in their own conceits*.*

Here, my brethren, give me leave to speak freely to you. You have not now, as formerly, a judicious pastor to go before you in the management of church-affairs. No! You are now left in the wilderness, as *sheep without a shepherd*. Let it be your study and endeavour, to act with unanimity in every weighty concern that may come before you. *See that ye fall not out by the way*. Thus it will appear to all, that you have profited by the la-

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* Phil. ii. 3. Eph. v. 21. 1 Pet. v. 5. Rom. xii. 16.

bours and example of your late pastor. Nothing would have distressed him more while living, than the thought of your being involved in strife and contention after his decease. But *I am persuaded better things of you, my brethren, tho' I thus speak.* Yet let me put you in mind of one thing, and beseech you, *in the bowels of Jesus Christ,* to endeavour after it. I mean, unanimity in the choice of another minister. I hope, thro' your prayers, and the intercessions of others for you, God will, in his own time, send you *a pastor after his own heart.* You have his promise to plead on that head, Jer. iii. 15. But be persuaded not to fix your expectations too high. You can hardly think, humanly speaking, to be provided with one in all respects equal to the last. Be that as it may; labour to unite in one object. It has often fallen out, that churches have split and been divided upon the death of a pastor.—Hence, I hope, you see the propriety and force of the exhortation, *be of one mind.*

IV. Live in peace.

Peace is an essential ingredient in true felicity, whether in this world or the next.

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The gospel is a proclamation of peace. To procure peace, the Son of God shed his blood on the cross. To bring it into the heart and conscience, the Spirit of all grace is given. *God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, in the churches of the saints.* To live in peace, therefore, corresponds with the whole design of christianity, and the great ends for which the Redeemer lived, suffered and died.

Now in order to a church's living in peace.—Care should be taken, as hinted above, who are admitted to fellowship among them. That they be such as give evidence of their faith in Christ, love to God, and subjection to the gospel. *There were added unto the church daily, such as shall be saved.*—Party debates should be avoided.—Every one should fill up his place with steadiness and honour; *they should not forsake the assembling of themselves together.*—Unchristian-like tempers should be mortified. Envy, wrath, bitterness, prejudice and malice, should never be cherished. Their direct tendency is the destruction of peace. 1 Pet. ii. 1.—Care should be taken not willingly to offend one another, in word or deed. The wisdom which is from above should have its due influence upon every
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every mind ; it is *pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated* ; we should give none offence to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God. —On the other hand, we should not be forward to *take offence* on every slight occasion. This argues great weakness, and naturally results from a high opinion of ourselves. Such a temper makes a man very uneasy to himself, and has a direct tendency to break the peace of society. *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.* Prov. xvi. 32.—All evil surmifings, groundless suspicions, and rash censures should be avoided, with the greatest care. If these are indulged, peace will soon be wounded, if not destroyed. *Why dost thou judge thy brother, or set at nought thy brother ? We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Let us not therefore judge one another any more.* Rom. xiv. 10,—13.—There should be a readiness to reprove one another, to confess our faults one to another, and exercise a spirit of forgiveness. Reproof should be faithfully given, and thankfully received. To despise reproof, is brutish, and occasions great pain and distress to those who are concerned for peace and holiness. We should rather say, *Let the righteous*

righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness. And we should be ready to *confess our faults*, and not conceal, or strive to extenuate them, much less to justify ourselves when in the wrong; that would certainly strike at the root of peace. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.* Jam. v. 16. A spirit of forgiveness is likewise exceedingly necessary. There can be no living in peace without it. Nor have we reason to believe ourselves forgiven of God, if we are not ready to forgive one another. Mat. vi. 14, 15. What a powerful argument does this apostle use to engage to this; when he says, *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*—For the same purpose, there should be great prudence used in the management of the temporal affairs of the church. In contributing towards the support of the Redeemer's interest, and the relief of the poor, every one ought to lay out according to his ability. That there *may be an equality*, and one be not *eased, and another burdened.* 2 Cor. viii. 14. The rich should not give according to the rate of the poor; but every one according *as God has prospered him.* The Deacons should faithfully discharge their office,

fice, and be able to give a good account to the church, of their stewardship. 1 Tim. iii. 13.—These are some of the things which make for the peace of christian society, and without a due attention to which, a church cannot live in peace.—We pass on to

III. The precious promise made to those, who are enabled to conform to the advice given; *The God of love and peace shall be with you.*

The all-seeing God, as the God of providence, is with all men. And as the *God of all grace*, he is *ever* with his people, while in this world. But there is something peculiarly emphatical in these words, the God of LOVE and PEACE *shall be with you*. He hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.** And this word shall stand fast to a thousand generations. Yet this is perfectly consistent with the suspension of divine comforts, on account of what is displeasing to God, in the temper or walk of his people. For the presence and smile of the God of *love and peace*, are only promised to those who duly attend to the charge given in the text.

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* Heb. xiii. 5.

He is stiled the God of love and peace, with the greatest propriety, because both these center in him. *God is love.** The lengths and breadths, the depths and heights of love, are with, and in him. He is also stiled, *the God of peace*; yea, the VERY God of peace.† Love and peace have been manifested, in our election, redemption, and justification. And will farther appear, in our sanctification and complete salvation. These blessings are all of God: and the fruits of that love, and those thoughts of peace he had towards us. He loved us, and therefore *gave his son* to die for us; Jesus loved us, and *washed us from our sins, in his own blood.*†

He is the author of love and peace in the hearts of his saints. He *circumciseth the heart* to love him. He *sheds abroad his love in our hearts*, by the Holy Ghost. The dear Redeemer has *left his peace with his people*, as a legacy; and *given it to them*, as a portion. His peace *passeth understanding*, and it *keeps and rules the heart*.

Moreover, the Lord requires love and peace of his people, and discovers his approbation

* 1 Joh. iv. 2. Eph. iii. 18. § Rom. xvi. 20.

† Joh. iii. 16. Rev. i. 5.

bation of them, where they are found. As they are good and pleasant in themselves, so they are acceptable in his sight.* Now, this God of love and peace *shall be with you.* The meaning of this promise seems to be given, in the apostolic benediction below. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.*

1. The God of love and peace shall be with you, to counsel and direct you in the way of truth and righteousness. *Ye know but in part. Ye see but as thro' a glass, darkly.* You are often crying, *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.* In answer to this, the God of love and peace shall be with you, to guide and keep you in the truth. Christ is the anointed prophet of his church; the inspired volume is put into your hands; and the gospel of the grace of God is preached to you. You hear the voice behind you, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it.* Hence, *the path of the just, like a shining light, shineth more and more to the perfect day.*§

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* 1 Joh. ii. 23, and iv. 21. § Ps. cxix. 13. Is. xlv. 13.

2. The God of love and peace shall be with you, for your protection and defence. You are in the midst of enemies ; like sheep among wolves ; beset on every side. The powers of darkness encompass you round.* But *the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms.* He covers you from danger, with *his feathers, his wings,* as a hen protects her callow brood ; his *truth is your shield and buckler.* He is a *wall of fire round about you ;* and the glory in the midst of you. As the *hills stand round about Jerusalem, so the Lord standeth round about his people, from henceforth, even for ever.* So that the church may boldly say, *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. We shall be more than conquerors, thro' him that loveth us.* §

3. The God of love and peace shall be with you, in a way of fellowship and communion. He has, in every age, indulged his people with nearness to himself in his ordinances. He *meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.* † He *looketh forth as the morning* on such as worship him in spirit
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*Ps. lvii. 4. § Deut. xxxiii. 27. Zech. ii. 5. Ps. cxxv. 2.
† Is. lxiv. 5.

and truth ; he brings them to his *banqueting-house* ; and spreads the *banner of his love* over them. He causeth them to *sit under his shadow, with great delight*, and pluck the *fruits of the tree of life*, which are divinely *sweet to the taste*. They *pour out their hearts before him*, tell him their joys and sorrows, their fears and complaints, their burdens and reliefs. And the *secret of the Lord* being *with them*, he *shews them his covenant* ; unfolds unto them the *sure mercies of David* ; and they are encouraged to say, *This covenant contains all my salvation, and all my desire*. The King *sits with them at his table* ; he *comes into his garden, and eats his pleasant fruits*. He *manifests himself to them as he does not to the world*. So that when the promise in our text is accomplished, the children of God can say, *Truly* ; however astonishing it may seem, it is a real fact ;—*truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.**

4. The God of love and peace shall be with you, to rule and govern you. It is the glory and felicity of the church, that *the Lord reigns* in the midst of her : That he sways his sceptre there ; makes *his people willing*,

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* Ps. xxv. 14. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Cant. i. 12, &c. 1 Jo. i. 3.

*in the day of his power ; and brings them to acknowledge themselves his loyal subjects : That he puts his laws into their inward parts, and writes them in their hearts. Hence they cheerfully submit to his authority.**

5. The God of love and peace shall be with you, to bestow a constant succession of gifts for edification. Gifts for private and public usefulness, are from God. *Every good and every perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights. The spirit of grace and supplication, he has promised. The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, is his gift.* It is the happiness of the church of God to be filled with all knowledge, and that the members thereof, be able to admonish one another. Ministerial gifts are from God. If one minister die, the Lord can raise up another. If *Moses* must be called home, there is a beloved *Joshua* ready to succeed him. If *Elijah* mounts the fiery car, and soars up to the regions of bliss, a double portion of his spirit falls upon *Elisha*.—You have lost a prophet of the Lord ; but the God of love and peace will be with you, and send you another, I

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* Is. xxxiii. 22.

trust he will. May he also be a *pastor after God's own heart*.*

6. The God of love and peace will be with you, to *blefs the provisions of his house*. It is the presence and blessing of God, that render the ordinances pleasant, and profitable to the souls of the faithful. There is a *feast of fat things, in the mount of the Lord*. There are *green pastures*, where the sheep of Christ lie down. We read of the *fatness of God's house*; the *river of his pleasures*; and the abundant satisfaction of the faints therewith. But the reason is, the God of love and peace dwells there, and abundantly blesses the provision of his house. This being the case, the church is plentifully refreshed with *the river of God*, which is full of water. The *father of mercies*, and God of all comfort, fills his faints with *all joy and peace in believing*; extends *peace* to them *like a river*, and *righteousness as the waves of the sea*; so that their heart becomes *like a watered garden*. And by the word and ordinances, the *whole body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*.§

Moreover,

* Jam. i. 17. Zech. xii. 10. Eph. i. 17. Rom. xv. 14.

§ Ps. xxiii. 2. and xxxvi. 8. and cxxxii. 14, 15. Col. ii. 19.

Moreover, by the blessing of God on the means, sinners are convinced and turned to the Lord. The divine word is directed, like an *arrow to the hearts* of God's enemies; it becomes *the power of God to salvation*; and *turns sinners from darkness to light*; and so is instrumental, in increasing the church *with men like a flock*. But then, all this is owing to *the arm of the Lord being revealed*, and his presence granted to his church.*

In a word, the accomplishment of this promise is the church's glory. The presence of a wise and judicious prince is the glory of a state; how much more honour then, must the presence of the LORD, put upon his people. This makes them, *beautiful as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners*. Cant. vi. 4.

Now, the certainty of the Lord's dwelling with his people, as above, may be concluded, from his love to them. He *loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob*. The church is said to be his *rest*, and his *portion*, where he *will dwell*.—In that *everlasting covenant*, which is ordered in all things

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* Act. ii. 41. Isa. liii. 1.

and sure, he has engaged, not to *turn away from his people, to do them good*; and he has promised, to *put his fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from him.* Jer. xxxii. 40. Of this covenant, the Lord *hath ever been mindful*; he will not *break it, nor alter the thing* that is gone out of his mouth.

— The relation subsisting between God and his church, is close and lasting; and from this we may conclude on the certainty of his presence with her. He is the *head*, and his church the *body*: he is the *husband*, and they the *spouse*; he is their *Father*, and they his *children*: he is their *Sovereign*, and they his *subjects*; he is their *Shepherd*, and they his *flock*; he is their *Master*, and they his *scholars*. The husband dwells with his spouse, the father with his children, the sovereign with his subjects, the shepherd with his flock, and the master with his scholars. So, *the God of love and peace shall be with you.**

— This is no more than what he has given you the firmest assurance of, by promise. *In all places where I record my name, I will come to thee, and I will bless thee.* Exod. xx. 24. Our

* Col. i. 18. Rev. xxi. 9. Jer. iii. 19. Isa. xxxiii. 22.
1 Pet. ii. 25. Is. liv. 13.

Our adorable Redeemer, has repeated, and confirmed this promise to his people, under the present dispensation. Mat. viii. 20. *For where two or three are gathered together, in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* And he that has made these promises, is *not a man, that he should lie, nor the Son of man, that he should repent: hath he said it, and shall he not do it? hath he spoken it, and shall he not make it good?**

If any object, that in many places where there were once flourishing churches, the glory is now departed, and scarcely the form of godliness remains: I would observe; that this is but a confirmation of the truth under consideration: *Be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.* We have seen above, that there is a sense in which he will *never leave nor forsake his people.* And there is also a sense in which he *will not be with them,* when they walk contrary to the rules of his word. i. e. He will not *then be with them, as the God of love and peace,* to afford them his gracious smiles. If they sink into lukewarmness, or impurity; no wonder, if their church-state is over-
F 3 thrown;

* Num. xxiii. 19.

thrown ; they scattered here and there ; and the *candlestick removed out of its place*. No wonder, if their *wood, hay and stubble are burnt up* ; but the true saint shall still *be recovered and saved, yet so as by fire*. All this shews the Lord's just abhorrence of sin, and vindicates the faithfulness of his word.

The records of all ages prove, that the ruin of a gospel church-state, hath ever ensued on the lukewarmness, contentions, and other disorders of nominal christians. Witness the overthrow of the churches in *Asia*, and other parts of the *Eastern* world. *Let God be true tho' every man be found a liar*. His promise is sure. Nor can an instance be produced of a church being dissolved, while God was in the midst of her ; or of the Lord's departing from a people whose works were upright before him.*

Thus, my dear brethren, I have attempted an improvement of this precious portion of God's word, recommended to me for that purpose, by your late worthy pastor.

Suffer me to subjoin a few remarks by way of use. 1. Hence

* *Wallin* on the text.

1. Hence learn, the happy connection there is between duty and privilege; between practical godliness and the comforts of christianity. It is in vain to expect the latter separate from the former. Those who walk in *the darkness* of impurity, can have *no fellowship with* the God of light. None can enjoy his gracious presence but such as are conformed to his will, and observe his ordinances and commands. He dwells with none, as the God of love and peace, but such as love, reverence and obey his laws, put on his yoke, learn of him, copy after his example, and *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. In keeping his commandments, there is great reward.* The Lord never deserts his church in general, nor believers in particular, while they walk conscientiously before him. *Your iniquities separate between you and your God, and your sins hide his face, that he will not bear.* The reason why the church's Bridegroom absented himself from her, as represented in the Song of Solomon, was her negligence, and sinking into a carnal slumber, upon her bed of ease. Nor did he manifest himself to her, till she was roused from her security, and went forth into the *streets, the lanes, and broad ways of the city, to seek him whom her soul loved.*

2. Must

2. Must gospel ministers die, as well as others, and bid a final farewell to their dear people! How should this consideration serve to quicken their diligence in their great Master's work? May I, may my dear fellow-labourers in the Lord's vineyard, improve our time and talents in the best manner we are able, for the good of mankind at large; but especially, of the particular flocks committed to our care! The truths of God, and the souls of men, are, in some sort, committed to our trust. It is an awful and solemn charge. There is none in this world equal to it. How ought we to *labour in the word and doctrine!* To be instant in season, out of season; to keep back nothing that may be profitable to the souls of men! What fervor, what zeal, what painfulness, what fortitude and patience, are needful to be exercised and exerted here! And, *who is sufficient for these things?* May we *obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful!* The season allotted us will quickly be over; our strength will be weakened by the way; our tongues forget to move; and our lips be sealed in perpetual silence. Shortly the Judge of all will say to us, *Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.* O may we acquit ourselves

selves in this great work, with wisdom, fidelity and affection in the fear of God; that we may *be pure from the blood of all men!* How awful will it be in the day of accounts, if the blood of any should *be required at our hands!* And, on the other hand, how happy to hear the God of heaven and earth, say, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*

3. Let the churches learn to prize, and profit by, their ministers while they live. *Your fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?* No! They die like other men. Be their lives ever so precious, their numbers ever so small, or their labours ever so extensively useful; yet they must *go the way of all the earth.* This should remind those among whom they labour, not to despise them on the one hand, nor idolize them on the other. There is a medium between the two extremes. As the servants and messengers of the Most High, they are entitled to some regard, especially when they make full proof of their ministry, and shew a willingness to *spend and be spent*, for the good of immortal souls. This respect should be shewn, in a constant attendance on their public

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lic labours ; a chearful reception of their wholesome instructions and godly advice ; a concern and endeavour to make them easy ; a disposition of mind to sympathize with them in all their afflictions, and remember them affectionately at the throne of grace. What our gracious Redeemer said to his disciples, deserves due attention. Luke x. 16. *He that beareth you, beareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.*

4. Tho' the church's ministers die, yet the Lord liveth. Ministers must take their leave of, and bid a final farewell to, their dear people, in whose happiness their lives were bound up ; but the living God dwelleth with his saints, and shall be in them. He will *never leave them nor forsake them.* If he *hides his face,* it is but *for a moment.* To cheer their drooping hearts, he says, *Fear thou not, for I am with thee.* *A woman may forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ; yet will I not forget thee.* Comfort one another, brethren, with these words, in your present circumstances.

5. Let us keep the parting hour in view, when we must bid a final farewell to all below,

low,

low. The time of our departure is near at hand. Shortly we must put off this tabernacle. We too are going the way of all the earth, and shall soon reach *the house appointed for all living*. May we be divinely taught, to *number our days*, and *apply our hearts unto wisdom*! And may we be looking forward to the happy, happy day, when pastors and churches shall meet together at the right hand of God in glory! What a blessed assembly will that be! When we shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and the churches of Christ be the joy and crown of their ministers for ever. 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20. Here we live separate, and at a painful distance from many whom we love in the truth, and for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them; but there will be no such obstruction to our communion in the heavenly world. We shall bid farewell no more; but shall be *caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air*; and so shall we be ever with the Lord.

Yet I greatly fear this will not be the case with all here present. Are not many of you yet in your sins, unrepented of, and as such, unpardoned? How often have you been
warned

warned of your danger, with plainness, faithfulness and affection, by our deceased brother ! Your state, as sinners, has been laid before you ; the evil nature of sin set forth in a striking light ; and the awful consequences of continuing in a state of impenitence clearly pointed out. The only remedy which infinite mercy has provided, has been fully made known. You have been *warned to flee from the wrath to come* ; and *persuaded*, by the *terrors of the Lord*, to leave your sins, consider your latter end, and enquire after the *one thing needful*. Yet you have been deaf to all his counsel, and despised all his reproof. You now hear the voice, you see the face of this servant of God no more ! How awful for you, if he should be a swift witness against you in the great and terrible day of the Lord ! You disregarded his labours of love, while living ; O that you might recollect, and profit by them, now he is dead !

What shall I more say on this mournful occasion ?—There is in this numerous assembly, the disconsolate widow of our deceased friend ; who most sensibly feels the weight of this providential stroke. Your loss is truly great. Your present circumstances demand

mand our pity and christian sympathy. The painful feelings of your mind cannot well be described. The breach which death has made is irreparable. Yet be not swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. Look forward to the heavenly world, where your dear companion is now at rest, and waiting for your arrival. Your age, and many infirmities and afflictions, forbid *us* to hope, and *you* to fear, that your stay will be long behind him in this wilderness. And remember, farther, that tho' your earthly husband is dead, your *Maker is your husband*, and he *liveth for evermore*; he will take care of, and provide for, you. No doubt, the dear man who is now taken from you, did, while living, in the most affectionate manner, often recommend you to the care of him who hath said, *Let thy widows trust in me.* Jer. xlix. 2.

A word more to you who constitute the church of God in this place, and I will draw to a close. We sympathize with you in your present circumstances. You have lost a friend indeed. I hope you have many friends yet alive. Yet, I know not where you will find one equal to him who is dead. His time, his strength, his life were spent in the service

vice

vice of God for your good. He scarcely thought any thing too much he could do for you, and was always content and easy with what he received from you. The good of your souls, and the glory of God, in the advancement of the Redeemer's interest among you, were the objects he kept in view. His pious and prudent behaviour in civil and social life, you have known for many years. Whatever trials or discouragements he met with, such was his regard for you, as determined him to abide by you, and live and die amongst you. Were any of you in a backsliding state? What pains did he take for your recovery? How forcible were his words, and how penetrating his address, to persons in these circumstances!

Nor was his concern for your welfare at all abated, but rather increased, in the course of his last illness. An instance of which I have from his own hand, in the last letter I received from him, which, at his desire, I laid before you in public, on the day of his interment. Part of which I beg leave here to repeat, that in future days you may recollect the workings of his heart toward you, and the earnest desire he had to the last, for your
advancement

advancement in holiness, your continued peace and prosperity.

“ I could wish you,” says he, “ to address the church in a close and affectionate exhortation ; directing them how to behave themselves in their families ; their closets ; their monthly meetings for prayer ; the public worship of God ; and in their whole conduct, both to one another, and to all men.”

These are the very words of your dying minister, which I hope you will never forget. I have often heard him express much satisfaction of mind, in your stability in the doctrines of the gospel, your peaceable disposition ; your readiness to comply with the order and discipline of the house of God, to fill up your places, to support the interest of Christ, and the like. These things, together with your being the seals of his ministry, and the children which God had graciously given him, rendered you dear to him. You will, I hope, give further proof, that the good opinion he had of you was well founded. *Remember him who has had the rule over you, who has spoken unto you the word of God : whose faith follow, considering the end of his*

his conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. Then may you rest assured, that the God of love and peace shall be with you.

I shall close with the following memoir.

Mr *James Hartley* was born in the month of *March*, 1722. His parents being but low in the world, he had not the advantages of a liberal education, to brighten and improve his good natural abilities. I have heard of nothing remarkable in the first twenty years of his life, excepting some traces of ingenuity and good sense, which he then gave proofs of, on various occasions. But about the year 1744, the gracious Redeemer, who had marked him for his own, and set him apart, as a *chosen vessel to bear his name before the Gentiles*, arrested his conscience, and brought him under deep conviction of the sinfulness of his heart and life. He was, for some time, a hearer of that zealous and indefatigable servant of Christ, the late Rev. Mr *Grimshaw*, of *Haworth*; whose preaching was greatly owned for the conversion of souls. Yet, I believe, our deceased brother, had the greatest advantage, under God, from the ministerial labours

labours of that pious and steady man, whose character he has so justly represented, in the beginning of his *Trial of the two Opinions, try'd*. I mean, the late Mr *Richard Smith*, of *Wainsgate*. Under the ministrations of this good man, Mr *Hartley* was led into, and established in, the truth as it is in Jesus. Being throughly convinced that it was his duty to *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*, he submitted to the ordinance of christian baptism by immersion, as he was well persuaded, that this is the *one baptism* instituted by the great head of the church. He for some time stood a member of the church at *Wainsgate*. But such gifts and grace were bestowed on him, and he made such progress in divine knowledge, that his judicious friends soon perceived him designed for public usefulness.

About the year 1748, Mr. *Hartley* began to exercise his talents in a ministerial way, to the satisfaction and spiritual advantage of many. He was an exception to the general rule, that *a prophet hath not honour in his own country, and among his own kin*. The Lord made him the instrument of raising, and gathering the church, of which he was after-

pastor to his dying day. This church was settled, and he ordained over it, *June 12, 1752.* He studied the sacred scriptures with great closeness, which are able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works. His method of handling divine subjects, was clear and natural; his reasoning nervous and manly; and his ideas were clothed with *sound speech, which could not be condemned.* His natural turn was sedate and thoughtful. He never disappointed his hearers, with crude and indigested harangues. He studied, by the *words of truth and soberness,* to inform the judgment, rouse the conscience, and lead the soul to God and holiness. Those that heard him with attention, could scarcely forbear exclaiming, *How forcible are right words!* His disposition was open and communicative; and as he was of a candid and peaceable temper himself, so he had a talent for composing differences among contending parties, which was much admired. In this kind of work he was often employed, in the neighbouring churches; and he had such a method of reasoning persons out of their prejudices, that he very often succeeded. On all these accounts, his usefulness was very extensive, both at home and abroad. But

But the *earthen vessel* had long been going to decay, and is now dashed to pieces. Mr. *Hartley* was afflicted with an *asthma* for many years. But this disorder seemed to have entirely left him, for some time before his death. Last summer, he had a slight stroke of the palsy. This was followed, with all the symptoms of a decline. These increasing more and more, he was fully persuaded, that he was *going the way of all the earth*. But this did not at all discompose his mind. His only fear was, that his disorder would be tedious, and himself become burdensome to the people; as he was now incapable of public exercise. In a letter, bearing date, Aug. 18, 1779, he writes thus;

“ I say little, unless I am put to it. But think within myself, there is no apparent probability of my recovery. Sometimes, death would look a little gloomy; but in the general, am not discouraged at the prospect of it. Sometimes I long to speak to the people again; at other times, am pretty willing to resign. Sometimes distressing thoughts for the interest here, will needs crowd upon my mind; and then, again, I think, I ought to leave it with him, who is infinitely more careful of it, than I am, or ever was.”

Such were the workings of his mind, under the languishments of declining nature. He lived sweetly on those evangelical truths, which he had faithfully preached to others. As his disorder prevailed, his confidence in God, and hope in Christ, increased. He was quite composed in the views of death, and sometimes filled with the comforts of the Holy Ghost. He could not bear any to express their desire for his recovery, or even to pray for it. I having one evening preached to the people, upon my return into the house, he said, he hoped we had not been praying for his recovery. I told him, we had not; with which he seemed much pleased. Being a little more chearful than usual at one time, his affectionate wife expressed her hope that he might yet recover. He, with some degree of warmth, replied to this effect, "That he would not recover for ten thousand worlds; it is cruel," says he, "to desire it. But I am persuaded, God will not inflict so great a punishment upon me." He was reduced to so weak a state, that for some weeks he could scarcely bear to speak. Till at last the glimmering lamp of life was extinguished, *Feb.* 2, 1780, in the 53th year of his age. The church's loss is great, but his gain is greater. *May we all be followers of them, who thro' faith and patience now inherit the promises! AMEN!*

E P I T A P H I U M.

FAR from affliction, toil and care,
The happy soul is fled ;
The breathless clay shall slumber here,
Amongst the silent dead.

Slowly his earthly frame decay'd,
His end was long in sight ;
Nor was his steady soul afraid
To take her awful flight.

The gospel was his joy and song,
E'en to his latest breath ;
The truths he had maintain'd so long
Were his support in death.

Now he resides where Jesus is,
Above this dusky sphere ;
He was no stranger to the bliss,
While he sojourned here.

His body rests beneath the ground,
 Till that tremendous day,
 When the last trump shall give the sound
 To rouse his sleeping clay.

The church's loss we all deplore,
 And shed the falling tear ;
 We shall behold his face no more,
 Till Jesus shall appear.

But we are hast'ning to the tomb ;
 O may we ready stand !
 Then, dearest Lord, receive us home,
 To dwell at thy right hand.

F I N I S.

P. S.—In 1755. Mr. *Hartley* published, *The Head-stone brought forth*, A SERMON, occasioned by the Death of Mr. *Joseph Greenwood*.

In 1767. *The Trial of the Two Opinions* tried, &c.

And 1774. *The Christian's Triumph over Death and the Grave*. A SERMON, occasioned by the Decease of Mrs. *Beatson*.

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