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Published at the request of the Congregation of Leith and Johnson.

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SERMON

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER HUNTER, B.A.,

MINISTER OF LEITH AND JOHNSON,

BY THE

REV. DUNCAN MORRISON, M.A.,

MINISTER OF KNOX'S CHURCH, OWEN SOUND.

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“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”—2 TIMOTHY, iv. 6—8.

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1870.

To the Elders and Congregation

OF THE

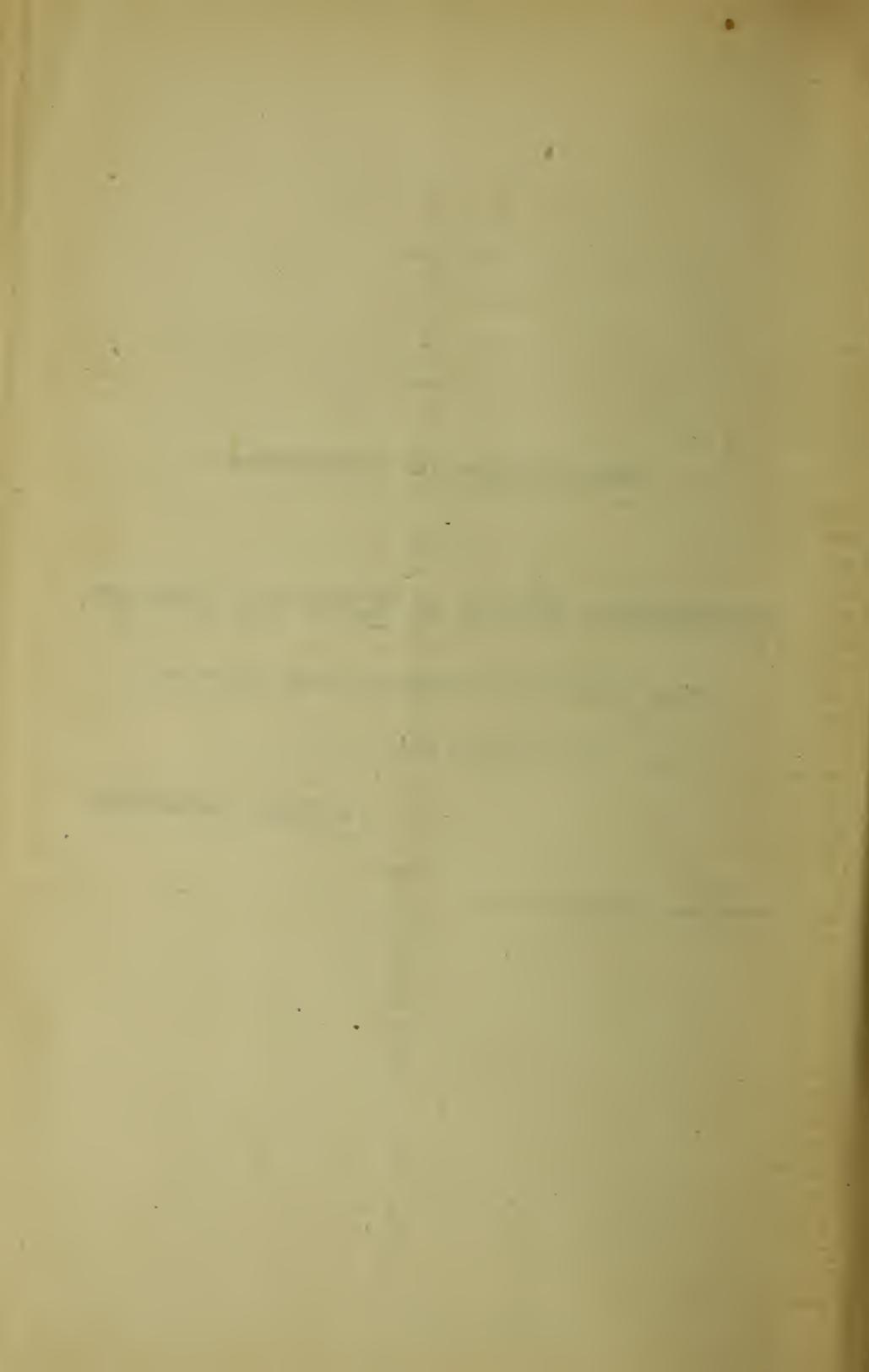
Presbyterian Church of Leith and Johnson,

This Discourse is Respectfully Inscribed,

BY THEIR MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

DUNCAN MORRISON.

OWEN SOUND, December, 1869.



S E R M O N .

2 TIMOTHY IV. 6—8.

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

SUCH was the language of the Apostle, in view of the martyr death which was to arrest him in the midst of his labors. He had finished his course and had kept the faith, and so was not greatly moved in the day of trouble. He looked backward upon the course which he had run, and forward to the glory to be revealed—backward upon the work of a life-time, and forward to the shining crown,—feeling that the labors, and the life, and the conquest, and the crown, were all of God. He stood upon the brink of the river, calm and unmoved—like the conqueror in the capitol, waiting for his crown. He felt, as all must feel, the bitterness of death; but he felt, as the Christian only can feel, that the Saviour’s arms were round him and beneath him; that his times were in God’s hands; and that the light affliction—the glittering axe of the executioner, that was to strike off his head in a moment—would work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In discoursing upon this subject, I would call your attention to the truth, that every man has his appointed course to run; and, secondly, the peculiar feeling with which the Christian contemplates the close of his course.

I.—Every man has his appointed course laid out for him—his work assigned him—his path fixed, with all its details—its bright days and dark days—as surely as rising and setting suns. The Apostle felt this when he gave utterance to the language of the text. He knew that his steps were ordered; his days numbered; that the whole race which he had to run was the appointment of heaven. And the same may be the feeling of every Christian, as he hastens on to the close, for every Christian is called to a noble life—*every living soul*, I may say, is called to a noble life—to glory, honor and immortality. He may refuse to move in that path set before him in the gospel—to take one step in that narrow way which leads to God’s right hand. He may drop to a lower level, and move on in a path of his own choosing; but he cannot drop from the all-encompassing Providence of Him in whose hands are all his ways, and who knows how to use a man in the lower level to which he has descended, no less than in the higher orbit in which He would have him to move. I have seen children playing with melted lead, dropping it on the sand, and dropping it with the view of getting it to run in certain grooves previously prepared. I have seen the perverse liquid so dropped in the sand, refusing to run in those prepared paths, and forming a path for itself; but the child, anticipating its progress, and adapting himself

to its movements, would, with his finger, make a new path for it in the sand, and guide it to points and purposes of his own. And so in the higher realm. God knows how to guide the perverse man in his way, and to make use of him in that lower life which he chooses, even when he does not know it. Take the case of Judas. He was called to the Ministry and the Apostleship of the Lord Jesus. That was God's eternal decree. That was the path in which He would have had him move on, in dutiful obedience to the Divine will. But he fell from the Apostleship, and voluntarily descended to a lower level; but in that lower level to which he perversely descended, he was anticipated by Him who sees the end from the beginning, and made use of him there, although, like the proud Assyrian, *he did not think so, neither was it in his heart to do so*. God's decree was that he should be an Apostle, and all the outward circumstances of his life were fitted to accomplish this decree, and such as to enable him to finish his God-appointed course with joy. But those very circumstances, which would have lifted him to glory and made him shine like a star—those very circumstances, perverted and misused, proved his ruin and aggravated his fall. Those very winds and waves that would have borne him to a noble destination, unused or misimproved, would drive him, a miserable wreck, upon the shores of an undone eternity! The seaman, cast upon an island, is not to blame the winds and waves for his calamity; they were his best friends. And man is not to blame God for his sins—for his everlasting perdition. He is not to blame the circumstances of his life for his misery—those circumstances were his best friends; and had he only used them aright, they would have made him a noble vessel. God hath no pleasure in the death of the sinner. There are many ships upon the sea this day, and many are the paths which they are pursuing; but on all that broad ocean there is no waif or wanderer. Every one is pursuing some definite path, bound for some desired haven. And there are many millions of human beings this day upon the face of the world, and each one has his own course to run, under the all-encompassing providence of Him who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. There is nothing loose or uncertain in the counsels of God. There is no wandering star in the firmament of astronomy; and there is no wandering star in the firmament of mind. Every one has his own appointed orbit, which he is called upon to pursue; but which, as a free agent, he may refuse to pursue, and take to some eccentric course of his own. But even in that eccentric course which he has chosen, he will find ere long, that he has been beset behind and before by Him in whose hands are all his ways; so that whether it be the wild Ishmael, roaming the desert, concerning whom God said, *foreseeing his path: He shall be a wild man*; or the saintly Apostle, going from land to land and shore to shore, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom—we can see how true it is, that every man has his course to run, which has either been appointed of God, or provided for by God, in the counsels of eternity; and how really every man will be made to feel at the close: O Lord! thou hast searched me and known me; Thou knowest my downsitting and uprising, and art perfectly acquainted with all my ways. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and been about my bed and my path, and thou hast spied out all my way.

But it is not with the reprobate or the reviler we have to do this day, but with the Christian. His is eminently a course prescribed by God—a work appointed him to do. Christ, speaking of himself and the special work to which he was called, said: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." So with Abraham. He had his course to run, his work to do; and in entering upon it, he went forward,

not knowing whither he went. But before his course was closed, he found that all his steps had been ordered—that all his way was of the Lord. So with Joseph; and to this he refers when he seeks to comfort his conscience-smitten brothers, at the time of their father's death. They were afraid that now that he was gone, Joseph would visit them with due retribution for all their cruelty. But what did he say! "*Fear not; for I will nourish you and your little ones, for it was not you that sent me hither, but God, that I might preserve much people alive.*" So with St. Paul; and he felt that he was immortal till his work was done. It was the consideration that his times were in God's hands—that the work which he was doing was the work of God—that cheered him in all his perils on land and sea; that made him happy in the Mamertine prison in Rome, and the happiest man in that little water-logged craft, buffeted by the wintry winds upon the Adriatic, which was to be wrecked upon the shore of Malta; the happiest man among all the two hundred and seventy-six soldiers and sailors that walked the deck: for his was a faith which grew brighter amid the wane of years and the gathering storms of persecution, and led him to say in view of the martyr death that was before him: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

All this is very plain from the teaching of the Word; but it is no less plain from the teaching of Providence. How true is it that God is in history! We can see this both in the history of nations and individuals. Think of the life of Joseph—of David or Daniel! You can see the hand of God in the dreams of Joseph,—in the sleepless night of Ahasuerus,—in the shipwreck of the Apostle,—in the early life of Martin Luther. But consider your own life: how you have been led; what influences have been brought to bear on you; how your life has been shaped and your character moulded into its present fashion! Oh, how truly we are the clay and He the potter! Look back upon the past years through which you have so silently and thoughtlessly glided, and see what God hath wrought! Your birth—marriage—present employment—your state in life—your opinions; religious experience—your friendships, preferences and prejudices—losses and gains—joys and sorrows—successes and reverses: these were not loose contingencies for which no provision was made, and which no foresight could anticipate, but the wise appointment of Him who doeth His will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of earth. These, for the most part, were not of your own seeking, but of God's ordaining. It was the reading of a certain book, or the hearing of a certain preacher, that made such a deep and abiding impression upon your mind. It was an accidental meeting, one night, that led you to be this man's wife, or that wife's husband. Like two rivers that rise far apart on the hills, sometimes diverging and sometimes converging, but which ultimately meet at a given point, and flow on in one united stream—like these you met at a given point, and thus linked together in feeling and in destiny, you move on together, acting and reacting upon each other, in the most important interests of your being, till you reach that blessed state where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God!

God is in history; and God is in biography. He has been in your life. Its pattern, so to speak, is in the loom, and the shuttle is flying: now casting a dark, and now a golden thread; and thus the work goes on from day to day, amid crosses and losses, and joys and sorrows, till the pattern is completed—till the work is done. So with life, in all its details,—its sorrows and joys; dark days and bright days. And just as every thread is necessary, whether white or black, to the weaver, in order to

make out his pattern, and a certain number necessary to complete his work, so also here. It was necessary that you should have just such a wife; or that you, O woman! should have just such a husband! It was necessary that you should meet with that reverse which deprived you of your property,—that stroke of sickness which removed you into a corner,—that bereavement that smote down your first-born, or deprived you of the desire of your eyes, and removed lover and friend into darkness. There was a *needs be* for all those things which have variegated your life and made it so many-colored,—a *needs be* that you should just have had such an upbringing; such a father, mother, children; such surroundings: in order that the divine pattern which God had in His mind, should be realized. You are often perplexed, often at a standstill, in regard to the dispensations of Providence; but the day is coming, when, standing in the clear revealing light of heaven—when looking back upon the way in which you have been led, you will exclaim with a great number that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: “Great and marvellous are all Thy works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are all Thy ways, Thou King of saints.” The mason goes to his work, amid muss, and mud, and planks, and scaffolding, and piles of stone and loose material. He works, and works, not knowing very well the end for which he is working. But there stands over him a man with a bright eye in his head, and a splendid design in his mind, guiding all and directing all; and as the mason works, and works, amidst the dust and din from day to day, the design becomes more and more apparent, till the top stone is raised amidst shoutings of joy, and the building on which he has been laboring for years, shines forth in all its goodly proportions, as a monument of the country’s glory. So is it with the life of every believer. He is working, so to speak, amid the dust and dirt of common things; but God’s bright design is ripening—ripening every hour,—

“Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain,—
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

Such was the feeling of the poet, in looking back upon his checkered life; and similar was the feeling of the Apostle when he said: “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

II.—In the next place, let me call your attention to the feelings with which the Christian contemplates the close of his earthly career. He looks upon himself as a conqueror, and death as a triumphal entry into that land of unclouded light and unsullied purity—where no tears are shed, and where no graves are dug, and where God’s people, rejoicing always before Him, go no more out, but are forever with the Lord. Long before now, the Apostle had expressed a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which, in his estimation, was far better; and now that his departure was at hand, that his work was done, that his mission was fulfilled—now that every grace was shining, and that patience had had her perfect work—we can imagine how his

eye would sparkle, and his breast would heave, with the hopes of immortality. It is, indeed, a solemn thing to die—solemn even to the Christian; and many for fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Many speak lightly of death; but no one can feel that sinking of the heart, that breaking up of the constitution, that unearthly darkness coming over the eyes which precedes the fatal hour—without a deep and overwhelming awe—especially in the case of the man unprepared to die. Oh! it is not the pain of dying, the mortal struggle and rending asunder of the vitals, that lends such a terror to the last hour—it is the consciousness of sin lying at the door. The sting of death is not the pain of body; but the sting of death is sin. Take that away, and in many a case, death is little more than falling asleep. It is the consciousness of a dread hereafter, for which the man has made no preparation—of the guilt of a lifetime lying upon his soul; of mercy long slighted; the blood of the covenant long trampled upon as an unholy thing; communion sabbaths long disregarded, and the whole life uncleansed and unforgiven. It is the fear of meeting with an angry God—of rushing into His dread presence before whom the heavens shall flee away, and no place be found for them: it is *this* which lends to the last hour all its alarm, and makes death the king of terrors. But in the case of the Christian, the sting has been taken away; and even when faith is feeble and faltering, it is still strong enough to break the dread, and lighten the stroke and gather comfort from Him who has so beautifully said: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and the floods, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.” And if this may be said of one whose faith is weak—whose mind is beclouded by long and lacerating disease, what are we to say of one who goes down to the grave like the Apostle, with his mind in full vigor, with strong faith, and every grace burning brightly? How truly does he go down to the grave a conqueror, and more than a conqueror through Him who loved him! The Apostle was to die by a cruel death—his blood was to flow on the scaffold—his head was to be smitten off with the cold steel, and the time was at hand; but his eye was on a far-off home, upon the serener sky beyond, upon the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge would give him, upon the shinings of constellations, and the welcomes of the redeemed, and the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs that had preceded him to glory: and so death was swallowed up in victory. He does not even name death. He speaks elsewhere of death being abolished by Christ—as if it had no existence; and quite in keeping with that statement does he speak of death here: “I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand;” as if he were an emigrant, about to embark for a distant, but welcome shore. “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

The Apostle had his full share of troubles. He speaks of perils by sea, and perils by land, and perils among false brethren; the watchfulness which he had to exercise over his inner man, lest he should be a castaway; the care which he had over all the churches; and that thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, that overshadowed his spirit and kept him down. But all his troubles were over now, and he stood waiting for his call. He was a man of like passions with ourselves, and had to struggle hard

with a fiery spirit and a proud, imperious will. No one groaned more than he under those lustings of the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, which every one feels; but amid all those struggles, he held strongly to those grand old truths, which he loved to proclaim with growing earnestness, to the triumphant close. He had had his full share of troubles, and those had written deep lines upon his brow, and wrought rich grace in his soul—had filled him with many holy memories and joys, and built him up in faith and hope, and all those graces which are best learned in the school of affliction; and now looking back upon the checkered past, he could see that all was of God, from first to last—that the things that crushed him, and grieved him, and stood in his way, as he thought, turned out rather for the furtherance of the gospel; and not only so, but to the building of himself up in all those ripe graces which shone with such splendor in the evening of his little day. His course is run, his work his over, and he has no regrets to utter about the divine dispensations—no tears to shed about the losses he had to endure; but on the contrary, blesses God for them all—for the path in which he had been led, for the discipline to which he had been subjected, the labours and successes with which his life had been crowned. How different the review of the gay and worldly man, or even the man who only in later years has learned to walk with God! Think of Solomon, whose early life was so beautiful, but whose later years were so stained! There is some reason to believe that his last years were years of penitence, but how sad the retrospect: *All is vanity and vexation of spirit!* So Lord Chesterfield, at the age of seventy-six. Hear him: “I have read Solomon with a sort of sympathetic feeling—I have been as wicked and “vain, though not so wise; but I am now wise enough to feel the truth of his reflection, “that all is vanity. This truth is never sufficiently discovered or tested by mere “speculation. Experience is necessary to conviction, though that be at the expense “of morality.” Now read the text, and see what was the feeling of the Apostle in reviewing his life: “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

But the Apostle looks forward as well as backward: “*Henceforth there is laid up.*” With him the past is now the past. What he had written, he had written; and now his look is toward the eternal shore, and past and present and future are all, luminous—all lying in the light of Him who doeth all things well. The *henceforth* was now everything to him; and the time is coming when the *henceforth* will be everything to us—when our feet, too, shall stand by the river of death, on a narrow neck of land, which the next wave will overflow; when the next hard breath will break the slender thread of life which separates us from the eternal world; when we shall feel the earth sinking beneath our feet, and eternity, like a great ocean, gathering round and round, cutting us off forever from the fading shores of time—from the familiar scenes in which we have long walked, the old Church in which we have so often worshipped, and the friendly faces that we have learned to love as our own souls: the time is at hand when the great, the awful future will fill the whole soul, and dwarf into utter insignificance all the little affairs of the present—when the world will grow dim, and friends shall weep, and the roar of the eternal ocean shall strike upon the ear, and the tossing of the waves shall be felt beneath our feet; and the powers of the

world to come shall take hold upon our spirits, all alive *then* to the importance of salvation, and, prepared or unprepared, will hurry us into the eternal world. Blessed indeed, is that man who, in that solemn hour, is able to look forward with something of the spirit of the great Apostle—who, when lover and friend are removed into darkness, is able to rest peacefully upon the Rock of Ages, and say: I know in whom I believe, and I am persuaded the He will keep that which I have committed to Him till that day. I go, I know not where—to regions and worlds unknown; but I go to Him and with Him who loved me and gave Himself for me; and I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. HENCEFORTH! HENCEFORTH! Never, till you come to die, will you feel how thoroughly the past is the past, and how all that you have lies in the solemn *henceforth*—how truly a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things the man possesseth; but in the richness of his nature, the sweetness of his feelings and affections, the purity of his tastes and habits, and the grandeur of that relationship which pales all earthly splendor—a child of God! *This* was that crown of righteousness, in view of which the Apostle rejoiced.

Paul was a poor man as regards this world, but he was rich in faith, in knowledge, in the sweetness of his affections, in his attainments in grace, in a thousand holy memories pertaining to the past, and earnestings pertaining to the future; an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ—he felt that all things were his, things present or things to come—for he was Christ's, and Christ is God's. Many are the classes that come to the grave, and many the forms in which they come; but there are only two classes rise up on the other side. And how different the spectacle presented there from that presented here! Here rises one, thin and shrivelled up—a naked spirit, with all its once goodly sensibilities gone, but retaining all its powers and passions in full force—powers and passions which nothing can satisfy, and which no duration can extinguish. What spirit is this that looks so thin and woe-begone? Is it the spirit of some poor prophet, who ate the bread of affliction and went down to the grave in misery? No! He was a millionaire! He lived in splendor. He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day! He filled a large space in the public eye, and down to the grave he came at last, enclosed in a golden coffin, and followed by a long procession of mourners bearing the badges of woe. But, passing through the portals of the grave, he has to leave all behind—for strait is the gate and narrow is the way; and now, rising up on the other side, he enters upon an eternal career of unprovided nakedness, seeking death and cannot find it. But here is another—and oh, how wondrous is his beauty and his fragrance! See how, as he passes into the other life, the golden gates are thrown open, and angels come flocking to meet him; how the radiant vista opens to receive him; how, in the centre, he that is chief, rises and says: "Welcome! welcome home!" Who is this that has met with such a grand reception? A crowned sovereign? Some great scholar or statesman, on whose lips listening senates hung? No! He was a poor man. He never owned an acre. He had to rise early and sit late, and to him were appointed weary days and nights, in which he spent his all! And he came to his grave in a pine coffin, and was hastily buried in a corner appointed for strangers. His was a hard lot! but still, accepting the position which God assigned him, he early gave himself to the Lord; grew in grace, and laid up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt—and having finished his course,

laid himself down to die, wearing a smile, filled with hopes full of immortality. And here is another and another, emerging from the darkness of time, like the stars of night, till the whole firmament is aglow. And how varied their history; their experience; their original situation and circumstances! Some come from lowly places and humble homes; and some from the high places of the field, where they were not ashamed to witness for Jesus—the princely merchant, the wise statesman, the devoted pastor, the learned philosopher; and thousands whose names were splendid even here, but who learned to cover themselves with true honor and renown—thousands whose memory shall be held in everlasting remembrance—for, having turned many to righteousness, they shall shine as the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.

These remarks find a fitting illustration in the case of the REV. ALEXANDER HUNTER, whose sudden death has cast a shade over this place and neighborhood. His sun went down while it was yet day: but not in darkness—not without giving promise of a glorious morrow. His was the unspeakable advantage of being brought up in a pious home; and being early impressed with religious truth, and the surpassing value of the soul, he grew up to manhood, devout in spirit; conscientious in the discharge of duty; resolute in purpose; strong in faith, giving glory to God. At the suggestion of friends, who had marked his piety, his high talent and indomitable energy, he gave himself to the work of the ministry. And in those preparatory studies, in which he so much distinguished himself, his fellow-students are living witnesses to his remarkable industry and success. He had not the advantages of some of them in an early scholastic training, and he could not perhaps compete with some of them in the lighter graces and refinements of literature. But in all the higher studies, where success is only attainable by force of intellect, and sweat of brain, and unflagging zeal—he felt himself at home—won honors in every year of his college course; and in the Theological Hall, he rose to the very highest place, and won for himself the greatest distinction which the *Senatus* has in its power to grant to a student, namely, the degree of Bachelor of Divinity: although, from some technicality in the examination, the Board refused to confer the honor so hardly and nobly won.* But now removed into that fair world whose sun never sets, and whose honors never fade, he can easily forget the little disappointments of time, and smile at the importance which they once assumed—for in the light in which he now walks, there is no shadow; and in the honor which he now wears, there is no sting—even that crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give unto all them that love his appearing.

Mr. Hunter was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on the 16th June, 1828, and consequently was in the forty-second year of his age when he died. His parents removing to the neighborhood of Lanark soon after, he received the elements of his education in that village; and while there, pursuing his early studies, attracted the attention of the teacher, by his energy and intellectual power. Even then he manifested that thirst for knowledge for which he was so distinguished in after life—a thirst which grew with his years, so that in spite of the difficulties of his situation—a life of labor, in which he had to rise early and sit late—he cultivated his naturally strong powers to a great

* It is to be observed, that Mr. Hunter not only won the honor of B.D., but won it in a year when the candidates were more numerous and more equally matched than in any other year since the establishment of the degree. The contest was one of unusual keenness. Out of a maximum number of 500 marks, Mr. H. made the astonishing number of 425—nearly seven-eighths. Mr. Smith, the present esteemed minister of Belleville, 423; Mr. Hart, of Perth, 415; Rev. Mr. Gordon, Almonte, 409.

extent, and mastered an amount of information which served him in good stead in the high calling to which he devoted himself. And his was not merely a thirst for secular knowledge—in which all more or less take delight,—but his was a thirst which carried him to the deeper fountains of truth, and the more solemn questions which pertain to our spiritual life. And so much did he distinguish himself in this respect, that when admitted to the membership of the church over which the late Mr. McGill presided, Montrose street, Glasgow, that man of God remarked to his (Mr. Hunter's) father, that in all his experience as a minister, he had never examined one of his age that had attained to such a degree of Christian knowledge.

He was the third of a family of ten sons and two daughters, and with the family he immigrated to this country in 1842, and settled on a beautiful farm in the township of Pilkington, Wellington County, where they soon succeeded in adding largely to their original possessions, and raising themselves to a position of independence and influence in the neighborhood. But before they did so, they had, like all our early settlers, to labor hard for years, and face many difficulties of which we have little experience,—and in all these our departed friend had his full share. But he was always hopeful and cheerful, pressing on to nobler attainments and to a richer experience of divine things. The death of his father, a most worthy and pious man, which took place about fourteen years ago, and the often-expressed desire of his father that he should give himself to the work of the ministry, had a great effect in leading him ultimately to take this step; and I can remember as if it were yesterday, how, in visiting the family about that time, how modestly he made known to me his father's desire, and then not till I had first broken the ice, and suggested the propriety of giving himself to a work in which faithful men were so much needed at that time. I remember how diffidently and anxiously he looked upon such an undertaking; but after he made up his mind, and left his happy home, and the splendid fields which were now yielding abundantly, he never looked back, but prosecuted his higher studies with a zeal which carried him over every difficulty, till he finished his course with joy, and won for himself a high place in the kingdom.

Mr. Hunter was qualified, in many respects, not only to discharge his duty efficiently in the pulpit, but to take a prominent place in the courts of the church; and if he did not make himself felt in the higher court till the last meeting, it was simply because he thought *his* time had not come. To a singularly earnest and affectionate nature he added a calmness, and steadiness, and thoughtfulness, which lent great weight to his counsels, and which bade fair to raise him to a high place in the church. One so highly gifted by nature, and so well furnished by education for the work of the ministry, could not but be a success. You yourselves are all witnesses this day to his fidelity as a pastor, and his kindness as a friend—how earnestly he counselled you and warned you, and never so happy as when he saw that the work was prospering which God had given him to do.

His was but a short ministerial life—only five years; and he gave them all to you—the fruit of all his studies and talents to you. He came to you while yet a student; diffident and doubtful as to whether God had called him to the work of the ministry, and whether he was the right man to build up a people so scattered and peeled as you had been; but you know how he won upon your affections; how he rose in your esteem, as year after year passed on; how he gathered in a people that were once no people, and was the means of not only building two new churches, but

of building yourselves up in faith and charity, till now, as a people, you can look forward to the future without fear of disorganization, and as individual believers, to the blessed hope, and to the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour. He has done a good work among you, and it is known to myself how dear that work was to him—how much his mind ran upon you, even in the mortal struggle; how often he bore you upon his heart at the throne of the heavenly grace, and what a deep interest he took in you all—in the mission schemes, in the sabbath schools, in every family, in every individual pertaining to the congregation. I am sure you can never forget his pastoral visits; his going out and coming in; his words of counsel and comfort, which he spake while he was yet with you; his growing earnestness in the work, as he hastened on to the close; how much he longed for more spiritual life in the church; how grieved he was when he heard of anything like backsliding among the members; and how faithfully he warned you from this place, and preached to you the gospel of the kingdom.

His ministry has now closed; his voice is silent; his right hand has forgot its cunning; all that is earthly has been committed to the quiet grave, and his spirit has gone to God who gave it. He could truly say: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." It is pleasant to me to think of his earnest, peaceful close; of his gentle surrender of his spirit to God; of the words of faith and hope that fell from his lips during the mortal agony; of the tender concern which he felt, not only for his little family—ever so dear to him, but for you—for the little flock over which the Holy Ghost made him the overseer. He has gone to his Father and his God; but though he is gone into the region of the unseen and eternal—though dead, he yet, like righteous Abel, speaketh. By this church, which he was the means of building, he speaketh; by these silent graves around us, over which he stood in the solemn hour when the dust was committed to the dust, he speaketh; by the Sabbath schools which he established and watched over with such tender solicitude, he speaketh; by the souls he has been the means of converting and quickening, he speaketh; by the holy memories of his quiet and beautiful life—his going out and coming in for these five years, he speaketh; by his own silent grave, where he lies with some of his beloved people around him, he speaketh;—from all these memorials of the past comes that long, earnest, pleading voice: *Prepare, O Israel, to meet thy God!*

