A Sermon, Delivered in the Chapel of Waterville College, April 3d, 1825

Stephen Chapin
SERMON.

DELIVERED IN THE

CHAPEL OF WATERVILLE COLLEGE;

APRIL 3d, 1825,

ON ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF

MR. OBED WILSON,

SON OF THE REV. OBED WILSON OF BINGHAM.

BY STEPHEN CHAPIN, D. D.
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN SAID COLLEGE.

WATERVILLE:
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1825.
Rev. and dear Sir,

From respect to departed worth, and affectionate regard for their deceased Associate, Mr. Obed Wilson, the subscribers, in behalf of the Students of Waterville College, solicit for publication the sermon you delivered on account of his death.

WILLARD GLOVER,
E. W. FREEMAN,
EBENEZER MIRICK.

Professor Chapin.
SERMON.

1. KINGS, 14th CHAP. 18th VERSE.

And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord.

THOSE words were spoken in reference to Abijah. His father Jeroboam was, in his youth, a servant in the family of Solomon. But, being a young man of valour and industry, Solomon advanced him to be ruler over the charge of the house of Joseph. The house of Joseph included the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Over these two powerful families Jeroboam was made deputy Governor, or superintendent of the revenue. Solomon in order to enable him to adorn his capital with superb and royal buildings, had levied upon all his subjects a heavy tax. While in this employment, he had a fair opportunity to witness the spirit, with which the public bore these burdens. When he learnt that they produced a general dissatisfaction, he took occasion from that circumstance to ingratiate himself into the affections of the people. He could harp upon a very popular string by insinuating, that these taxes, which were draining them of their necessary means of support, were laid out upon works which were of no public benefit, but which merely served to gratify their king, who, in his old age, had degraded his throne by yielding to
the dictation of an outlandish queen. There, too, he acquired great ability in managing public business and became versed in the art of government. In this political school he soon prepared himself to become the leader in that powerful rebellion, which formed a signal epoch in the Jewish history. Some time before the secession of the ten tribes, the prophet Ahijah met Jeroboam, as he went out of Jerusalem, and showed to him by rending his own garment into twelve pieces, and by giving him ten of them, that God, to punish the idolatry of Solomon, had resolved to rend ten tribes from him, and to give them to his servant Jeroboam. He then assured him, that, if he would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord to do them, he would build him a sure house, as he had done for his servant David, and that he should reign over Israel according to all the desire of his soul. But he, at the same time, informed him, that these events were not to take place, till after the death of Solomon. Inflated with the prospects of these honours, Jeroboam, it seems, could not wait the prescribed time; but he divulged the secret, and began to manoeuvre to bring about a revolt, before the king’s decease. Perceiving this intention, Solomon sought to slay him. Jeroboam, therefore, fled for safety to Shishak, king of Egypt. Here he remained until the Jewish throne was vacated. When he heard that all Israel had come to Shechem to make Rehoboam king, he hastened home, and placed himself at the head of the disaffected party, and came forward in their name to represent their grievances. He promised all due submis-
sion, if the king would lighten the oppressive yoke, which his father Solomon had imposed. Rehoboam, instead of giving them, as a just and wise prince would have given, prompt assurance, that every unnecessary burden should be, at once, removed, bade them retire for three days, until he had taken counsel what to do. He, in the mean while, first convened the old men, who gave that advice, which, if he had taken it, would have saved the nation from the woful evils of civil war and lasting division. But the counsel of the young men was more congenial to his proud and infatuated spirit. They advised him to cure this teasing and dictatorial spirit of the malcontents by the boldness and the severity of his measures. When, therefore, they returned on the third day, he spake to them roughly, and said, "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins; my father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." This was more than their chafed minds could brook. It was threatening that oppression which makes a man mad. The ten tribes instantly withdrew all allegiance from the house of David, and exclaimed, to your tents, O Israel. They then formed themselves into a separate government, and placed Jeroboam on the new throne. Their sovereign, as a wise politician, immediately built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, on the west, and Penuel, on the east, of Jordan, to become, in alternation, the cities of his royal residence. But there was one subject, which gave him much anxiety. He well knew
that his subjects still retained their former religion, and that they had long been habituated to venerate Jerusalem as the only consecrated place of worship. He feared that this attachment would excite them very powerfully, to return to the crown of David. To prevent this event, which he so much dreaded, he concluded to form two golden calves, and, to accommodate his subjects, he set them up, one at Dan, and the other, at Bethel, the two extremes of his dominions.

Having thus managed like a crafty politician, he probably fancied, that his kingdom was firmly established. But he was soon undeceived. While he stood by his altar to burn incense, "behold, there came a man of God out of Judah, by the word of the Lord, unto Bethel; and he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee—Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes shall be poured out." Indignant at this prediction, the king put forth his hand to seize the man of God; but his hand dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. This miracle terrified Jeroboam, and he begged the man of God to entreat the Lord, that his hand might be restored. This request was granted, and his withered arm was again made whole. But, though alarmed, he was not converted. About this time his son Abijah fell sick. Jeroboam, feeling all
the affection of a father, was extremely anxious to know whether his son should live or die. He, therefore, bade his wife disguise herself, and go to Shiloh to Ahijah, in whom he had confidence as a true prophet of the Lord. He probably felt ashamed to have it publicly known, that he himself had no faith in the religion and priests of his own consecration. But he was defeated in this attempt at concealment. God, before she reached Shiloh, revealed to his servant, both her character and the object of her approaching visit. When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings. Arise thou, therefore, get thee to thine own house; and when thy feet enter into the city the child shall die. This prediction was fully verified. As soon as Jeroboam's wife came to Tirzah, and crossed the threshold of the door, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord.

We have no means, by which we can settle, with certainty, the age of Abijah. He was, to be sure, called a child. But we must remember, that the Jews were accustomed to use this term in addressing their children, while they remained under age. Considering what was said of him, we may well suppose, that he was a young man, who had passed his minority. At any rate, he was so far advanced in years, that his character was fully established, and well known through the nation. Abijah was a prince, and heir to the
crownd of Israel, and high hopes were cherished, that, as soon as he mounted the throne, a better administration would be enjoyed. His rank and virtues gave him great influence and made him the hope of the nation. He was a young man, distinguished for a noble independence, and decision of character. Amid all the profligacy and idolatry of his father's court, he stood alone, unswayed by the popular current, and frankly avowed his unbroken attachment to the religion and to the God of his fathers. In this time of national defection, he was a rare instance of youthful firmness in supporting the standard of truth. It was not the finger of scorn, nor the language of threats, nor the weapons of persecution, that could tempt him to recant his opinions, or to embrace the new system of idolatrous worship. He was a man of ardent piety and of quenchless zeal in maintaining divine institutions. Had he not possessed an eminent degree of grace, the God of truth, who knew his heart perfectly, would never have given him so high a character. In him, saith Jehovah, there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of his fathers. Signal merit was ascribed to him, because he maintained his integrity in the profligate house of Jeroboam. Indeed, nothing but invincible regard to the cause of righteousness could have induced him to hold on in his self-denying course. These are some of the traits of character in this young man, which made his life so much desired, and his death so much lamented. When he died, God required all the tribes of Israel to
mourn for him. The words of our text teach this sentiment:

"We should mourn the death of young men of piety and influence. We will,

I. Specify some of the things which go to form the influential character. And then,

II. State some of the reasons why we should mourn their death.

In enumerating some of the traits which go to make the influential character, we mention,

1. The possession of wealth. We do not name this as the most important particular; but, still, it may be said of property, as well as of knowledge, that it is power. Solomon says, the rich hath many friends and ruleth over the poor. Large estates and great political influence are, almost invariably, connected. Hence, all governments take their character from the manner in which wealth is distributed. If, as in some eastern states, the soil is holden by the king; the government is despotic. If property be shared out among a few individuals, as it was in the prevalence of the feudal system, the government, of course, is aristocratic, and each powerful noble controls a circle of obsequious vassals. But, if interest be pretty equally shared among the people, the power lies with them, and the system of policy will be republican. The man then who has great possessions, has powerful means of injuring, or benefitting the community where he resides. Antiochus conquered Egypt by scattering, with a princely munificence, the prey, and spoils, and riches, among those who would betray their country for the sake of gold. It was
the immense wealth of Xerxes, which enabled him to stir up all, against the realm of Greece, and to employ against it 1200 ships of war, and 800,000 soldiers. Had not Nehemiah possessed immense treasures, he would not have been so bold and successful in repairing the ruins of Jerusalem, and in correcting and reforming the many errors and profanations of his nation. For twelve years, he supported, at his own table, one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, beside his own servants, and numerous foreign visitors.

2. Honourable descent. It is true, that, in this country, personal merit is, as it ought to be, the grand criterion of public estimation and reward. In theory, we acknowledge no hereditary rights, and we discard all influence, arising from birth and blood. Yet, after all, parentage has a powerful sway. The man, who is descended from a noble family, and who can trace his connexion through a long line of ancestors renowned for their riches and public virtues, derives, from these circumstances, an immense influence. It is true, he may lose his commanding station by his follies and vices, and degrade himself below the ranks of his cotemporaries. But when he first comes upon the stage of action, the public are prepossessed in his favour. They very fairly conclude, that he has received an education, suited to his high birth and fortune, and that there will be a strong resemblance between the son and the sire. They are slow to believe, that he will be guilty of that baseness of conduct, which will forfeit his character, and dishonour his illustrious progenitors. A man of honourable ancestry sets
out in life with an influence, which a man of obscure origin must acquire by exhibiting, for a course of years, eminent talents, and a life of unsullied integrity. David, it seems, believed that his descent would even give influence to his prayers. "O turn unto me, and give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid." If there were no advantages in high birth, why has the spirit of inspiration declared, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles.

3. A good share of common sense, and a correct knowledge of the human character. If a complicated piece of machinery were put into the hand of a skilful manufacturer, and he were bidden to give it that motion, which was intended by its contriver, he would first examine its general structure, and all its component parts, that he might learn where to apply the moving power, and how to adjust its regulator. Without this previous examination, he might, by an ignorant application of moving forces, utterly ruin its delicate mechanism. If the influence, of which we are now treating, were simply physical, it would be enough for the man, who wished to exert it, to examine the shape, and size, and weight of men, to ascertain their gravity and muscular vigour. This examination would enable him to decide what power of engines he must employ to control their motions. But we are speaking of moral influence—of an influence over mind, not over organized matter. If it be necessary for the anatomist to understand the structure of the human body, before he is quali-
tied to perform surgical operations, much more is it necessary for the man, who wishes, either to dispel darkness, to correct error, to please the fancy, to move the passions, or to gain the will, to be well versed in the science of human nature. He, who does not carefully watch the movements of his own mind, and especially how it is affected by the actions and reasoning of other men, is liable to become the dupe of sport, and the victim of fraud. But the man, who studies himself, and the art of self-government, will know how to read the character of those about him, and in what way he can best bring them over to his views. That military prowess, which has captured a given fortress, will, under similar circumstances, take a second, or a third. Few individuals ever maintained such a steady and extensive sway over the actions and opinions of men, as did the famous Oliver Cromwell; and few men ever possessed such quickness and accuracy in deciding upon the dispositions of those, with whom he was conversant. As soon as he put his eye upon a man, he formed his judgment respecting the peculiar traits of his character. This decision, though it seemed to be the effect of intuition, rather than the result of observation, was rarely incorrect. Hence, in all his numerous appointments, he scarcely ever selected a wrong agent to execute his orders. The mighty ruler, who appoints the fittest deputies to accomplish, in various places, his numerous and diversified designs, gives to himself a kind of omnipresence. How can the public do less than to regard the mind, that is sending out its powers in so many directions, and accomplishing, simultaneously, so many impor-
tant purposes. All Israel feared king Solomon, because they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.

4. Ability and success in managing the affairs committed to our trust, constitute another important source of influence. It is true, that the best concerted measures, and consummate skill and steadiness in executing them, sometimes prove wholly abortive. Hence say the scriptures; Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. But still, generally speaking, those men are most prospered, who are wise in counsel and excellent in working. Hence prosperity, in any undertaking, inspires confidence. The public are prone to believe, that not only talents, but the favour of heaven are with those who seldom fail in accomplishing their designs. There is a wonderful charm in unfailing success. The steady victories of David spread the terror of his name and inspired his troops with invincible courage. So important, in their estimation, was his existence, to ensure conquest, that they guarded his life as a sacred treasure, and would not permit him to expose himself to the hazard of battle. For said they, "thou art worth ten thousand of us." Such were the wonderful powers of Caesar, that he could at once command his armies and write commentaries on the field of battle. Pliny says that he could employ, at the same time, his ears to listen, his eyes to read, his hand to write, and his mind to dictate. His promptness in fixing his course, his steadiness in pursuing his object, his self-possession in the most agitating scenes, his vigilance, which suffered nothing to
escape his notice, his care, which permitted nothing to be neglected, his courage, which nothing could intimidate, and his fertile invention, which, at once, supplied relief in the most pressing emergency, gave him the entire control over his men, and procured for his counsel the credit of inspired oracles. Nothing more fully evinces the existence of a mighty genius, than the ability to direct a grand and complicated movement to a triumphant close. To manage the whole successfully, there must be a pervading intelligence, a watchfulness, that never slumbers, an invention, which no complicated difficulties can puzzle, a power, that can touch at once ten, or a thousand springs, and that elastic strength, which no constancy of effort can tire, until the final object is obtained. This talent affords some distant resemblance to that divine and all powerful mind, which, while it adorns the heavens, paints the flower; while it guides the revolving spheres, it directs the floating atom.

5. A just estimate of the powers we possess, and a deportment suited to the station which we are qualified to fill. Modesty is a lovely trait in the human character, especially in young men, while coming forward upon the theatre of action. As men are more inclined to overrate, than to undervalue, their talents, we are particularly pleased to see them in the dawn of life, place their guard on the side of the greatest danger. The modest youth pays a compliment to the vanity of his superiors, and presents a mind docile to correction and improvement. But the modesty, which stands opposed to impudence and ar-
rogance, is not inconsistent with that nobleness of mind, which leads men to avow and to vindicate, when calumniated, those high talents, which their Creator has graciously given them. St. Paul, with all his pre-eminent grace and humility, was sensible of the high place, which he occupied both in the intellectual and religious world. It is abundantly evident from his writings, that he put a high value upon his gifts and labours. He says, that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles, and, that he laboured more abundant than they all. When he was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, which was far better, he assured his Philippian brethren, that his longer continuance in the flesh was necessary for the good of the church. Some minds are born to rule and fill responsible stations. In early life they are generally conscious, that their powers are shooting forth, and ripening for their future eminence. Their controlling influence is soon felt and acknowledged. They begin to be looked up to as guides and counsellors. Now it is the duty of every man to watch the intimations of providence, and to be willing to fall into the rank which he feels competent to occupy, and which the public are shewing their willingness to assign him. One advantage of a public education is, that it gives the youth, who pursues it, the best opportunity to compare his own powers with those of other men. If his powers be feeble, he will be sure to learn the fact, though at the expense of much mortification. But if his talents are distinguished, he will be in little danger of fall-
ing into the conceit, that his genius is a prodigy, because, in the race, he finds many among his fellow students, who can hold way with him, and contest the literary prize, with the fairest prospects of victory. Every man, while at his allotted post, should display an elevation of character and conduct suited to his standing in the world. It is not for the Judge to write foolish ditties, nor for the general to sport in evening fireworks. Alexander, when invited to run in the Olympic race, replied "I will, if you'll give me kings for my antagonists." "He, when abandoned by his soldiers, among barbarians, not yet fully subdued, felt in himself such a dignity and right of empire, that he could not believe it possible, that any one would refuse to obey him. Whether in Europe, or Asia, among Greeks or Persians, all was indifferent to him: Wherever he found men, he fancied he should find subjects.

6. You will allow me, my young friends, nor do I deem it inconsistent with the gravity of this discourse, to say to you, that a steady regard to the laws of good breeding, will give weight to your character, and render your presence acceptable in all the circles, in which you may be called to move. I am not about to urge upon you the observance of any local and spurious system of civility. But I would warmly urge you, scrupulously to observe the principles of christian politeness. There is no merit in honest clownishness, any more than in the heartless refinement of the courtly sycophant. The connexion between good breeding and good morals is much more intimate, than some seem to ima-
gine. Both have their foundation in reason and piety. Without them, you can support no just claim to the character of a gentleman, or a christian. To learn good breeding, you need not study the false pages of Stanhope, or reside in the splendid courts of princes. You may visit city assemblies; you may take lessons of the most accomplished masters of ceremonies; you may bow and move in a drawing room, with all the gracefulness of Chesterfield, and yet, after all, you may be utter strangers to genuine politeness. This consists in a lively sympathy in all the varied states of those with whom we are conversant, and in adapting, with ease, our deportment to existing circumstances. It consists in a wise endeavour to make all, in our company, easy and happy. It will make us cautious lest we should give them pain, either by words, looks, or gestures. In short, it is doing the kindest things in the kindest manner. It is something far more dignified in its nature, than the cold courtesies which form the false currency of the fashionable world. To learn this sort of politeness, you need only to study human nature, and carefully observe those things, in the manners of men, which give pleasure, and those which give pain; and then studiously practice the former, and omit the latter, and you will not often wound the feelings of others, or violate the usages of the most improved society. For, a man, who has piety and a good share of common sense, has all the essentials of good breeding, though he may be a stranger to some of its unessential forms. Every man is pleased to receive attention and acts
of kindness. He at once feels an attachment to those, who, he perceives, are in various ways contributing to his happiness, and he stands ready to comply with their wishes. Reflect then what is that course of conduct, which sound sense and benevolence require you to pursue, in all your various relations in life, and then govern yourselves accordingly, and you will certainly exert a powerful sway over the opinions, the affections, and the will of your fellow men.

7. But of all traits of character that command influence, Christian integrity and active benevolence are the most important. A man may have a mind of the greatest powers, and these may be enriched and embellished by the highest attainments in science and literature, yet, if he is known to be under the supreme dominion of selfishness and malignity, he will be dreaded and shunned, as a giant in wickedness. Could we, in thought, divest Jehovah of his goodness, we should rob him of the glory of his name, and change him into the most terrific and odious being in the universe. But now he has the love and confidence of all holy beings, because his wisdom and his power are under the control of infinite benevolence.

Daniel preserved his reputation unsullied and his influence undiminished, during those political convulsions, which attended the subversion of the Babylonish monarchy, and the erection of that of the Medes and Persians. Through the continuous reigns of four Sovereigns, two in each of these empires, he was the confidant and the prime minister of state. But how did he acquire
and preserve this protracted influence? He gained and kept it by displaying at all times, unbending integrity, and a constant regard to the highest good of the public. Though men are depraved, and though they are apt to be allured into practices, which gratify, for the moment, their evil propensities, yet no man, in his sober moments, is disposed to yield himself to be governed by one, whose known object is to enrich himself at the cost of others. Moral influence is in proportion to moral goodness. The best man, other things being equal, is the most powerful man. The men, who are constantly governed by the fear of God, and whose talents are devoted to the public welfare, are the ruling stars, which form the glory and the blessedness of this nether world. Surely then,

II. When they are extinguished in death we have reason for deep mourning.

1. Because such removals are great tokens of divine displeasure. It was so viewed in the death of this pious prince of Israel. When God takes away those who have reached, or passed, the common boundary of life, he acts according to his general promise. But the case is different in the death of young men. Their removal is a signal judgment. Hence God threatened Eli, that there should not be an old man in his house forever, but that all the increase of his house should die in the flower of their age. How deeply did the whole nation of Israel bewail the death of king Josiah. This prince was distinguished for the powers of his mind, and for the ardour of his zeal in restoring the divinely established re-
ligion to its original order and purity. When he was cut off, in early life, "all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day."

2. Such deaths disappoint high expectations. As a person sinks in years, our expectations respecting him are diminished both in number and in strength. We see him closing his part and retiring from the scenes of public life. If he have acted his part well, he retires with applause, and his exit disappoints but few hopes. All these observations must be reversed, when applied to young men of piety and talents. Lively hopes are cherished, that they will render important services to their country. But if they are cut off, a thousand expectations are disappointed, and all mourn, that blossoms, so fair, should be blasted by the early frost of death. Similar appearances may attend the opening and the closing scene of a prominent character; but they will be viewed with very different sensations. The first sparklings of genius are tokens of a rising fire, but its last efforts are the trembling flashes of an expiring light. The earliest grey of the morning is the harbinger of the coming day, but the scintillations of the evening are prophetic of the approaching night.

3. The removal of such men greatly weakens the barriers of vice. How deeply are we indebted for the restraints, imposed on the conscience, the shame, and the fears of mankind! Could you remove them all, you would raise the sluices of un-
godliness, and all the dearest interests of the civil community would be swept away. How assiduously have all wise legislators laboured to close the avenues of wickedness! What frightful beacons have they set up in the ways of evil doers! Fines, bonds, and exile, prisons, flames, and racks. What immense sums are annually expended in inflicting punishment upon public transgressors! But the example of the good and powerful, while it takes nothing from the public chest to support it, does vastly more to restrain and reform the vicious, than all the formidable and expensive apparatus of coercive and retributory measures. The sudden repeal of the whole penal code, the demolition of every prison, and the destruction of every instrument of correction, would be an evil far less threatening, and far less to be deplored, than the contemporary death of all those men who form the pillars of society, and who are, in truth, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Ten such men would have saved Sodom from the vengeance of everlasting burnings. And it was the existence of such men, scattered among the Jewish nation, that saved them from suffering after the example of the cities of the plain.

Such characters, not only impose a strong restraint upon the dangerous passions of men; but they exalt the standard of virtue, and strengthen the tone of public morals. One such individual often enlightens and controls the councils and the manners of large communities. Joshua gave a momentum to the morals and religion of his nation, which was powerfully felt many years after
his death. The body politic has many members, but its prosperity and growth depend upon a small number. Men of exalted talents and goodness form its stamina and life blood. The scriptures consider such rulers, not only as strong rods, but as the very breath of civil community. Hence, say they, "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, under his shadow shall we live among the heathen." All then who can discern the connexion between the agency of a few, and the welfare of the many, must mourn the death of such important members.

4. In their death the kingdom of Christ loses its most important agents. The scheme of mercy is vast, and its accomplishment is the grand object of all the counsels and works of Jehovah. Though the Redeemer is almighty, and needeth not the aid of any of his creatures, yet he has condescended to employ a great variety of agents in executing his purpose of mercy. He takes his instruments from all the grand divisions of creation. He employs in his service beings inanimate and sensitive, irrational and reasonable, beings active and passive, hostile and friendly, in a word, all the orders of Angels in heaven, and all the inhabitants on earth, compose the mighty host of the Lord of Sabaoth. To aid his cause, he bids the sun to shed his genial rays, the heavens to distil in showers, and the earth and the ocean to yield their supplies for the support of his animate kingdom. The sea must bear upon his bosom our ships, and the winds must waft our missionaries to their destined field of
labour. Christ, in carrying forward his cause, demands all the resources of his people. Some must employ their physical strength, others their mental powers, some must contribute their wealth, others must labour in dispensing the treasures of the gospel; some, through infirmity, can employ nothing but their heart and tongue, and the most that they can do is to offer their prayers and bid, God speed to the glorious enterprise. Though all these various kinds and grades of agents are made necessary, through the purpose of God, yet they are not all equally important. The natural house has its parts, and some of them contribute more to its strength and beauty than others. It scarcely feels the loss of a scantling; but remove one of its pillars, and the whole fabric is marred and weakened. Our flocks may die, our fields may be blasted, our ships may be sunk, our banks may be consumed, our stocks may fall, and the number of our passive agents may be greatly diminished; but all these occupy a humble station in the economy of means. Another set of the same kinds may be again supplied. The earth will yield another harvest, new fleets may be built, the mines will yield another supply of gold and silver, and another generation will soon arise. How slight then the loss of these inferior instruments, when compared with the removal of men of knowledge and piety—men who control the great concerns of science, government, and religion! Though we have no certain means by which we can exactly determine the grade, which Angels occupy in building up the Redeemer's kingdom, yet from all the light that
the scriptures afford us on the subject, we are led to conclude, that the part they sustain, is less important than that of distinguished saints. The Angel who appeared to Cornelius did not proceed to preach the gospel to him; but, that Cornelius might know how he might be saved, he directed him to repair for instructions on this subject to an appointed ambassador of Christ. How severe then the calamity to lose the most efficient agents, and the brightest stars in the kingdom of God!

The demand for such men is exceedingly great. The mass of mankind are either incapable, or indisposed to take the management of public concerns. They choose the easier course, and quietly resign themselves to be governed by the laws of prescription. Like figures of wax, they take any shape, and perform any part, at the pleasure of the plastic and guiding hand. The national compact is a mighty machine. It embraces, however, but few moving agents. Every commonwealth possesses physical powers, vastly superior to its intellectual strength. Vast multitudes can execute what is laid out to their hands; but we have but few experienced designers. Our competent teachers are a feeble corps, when compared with the immense numbers, who desire instruction; and our spiritual labourers are few indeed, when compared with the many millions, who are perishing for lack of knowledge. The vicious, the slothful, and the wavering form a mighty host, in comparison with the small company of staunch friends to vital piety, and active benevolence. How much then do we need a
great augmentation of the number of men of genius, of learning and of piety,—of men who have made an entire consecration of their rich endowments to the cause of humanity! How sore then must be the judgment, which diminishes the number of such characters, and thus increases and renders more frightful the disparity between the vicious and the virtuous powers in the moral system. The death of a standard bearer, even in a well officered army, would be a much heavier loss, than that of a private soldier. For, while he bravely fights, and supports his floating banner, he animates and directs the courage of those about him; but if he fall, others may be panic struck, and thus his death may turn the fortune of battle. But this evil would be greatly aggravated, if it should occur in an engagement, where many posts are left unoccupied, and where many of the troops are rendered inefficient, and even hurtful, merely for the want of suitable commanders. The company, with which God has been pleased to achieve his conquests in this revolted world, has ever been chosen and few. And though their weakness, when compared with the strength of their foes, has served to set off the triumphs of grace; yet it has ever been their prayer, and a prayer, too, endorsed by the holy spirit, that God would greatly increase the number of his army. Perhaps in no period of time has there been such a demand for valiant and able soldiers of the cross, as at the present day. The Church, which for ages has been guilty of a mysterious slumber over the ascending command of her Redeemer, is now roused to obedi-
ence. Her spirit of benevolent enterprise is much in advance of her treasury. Her greatest want, however, is not of gold and silver and physical agents; but she feels the greatest deficiency in the competent number of well qualified men. Facts, recent ones too, prove that the religious community will not withhold their charities, when they are convinced that a suitable agent stands ready to receive them, and to expend them on the field, where they are greatly needed. The Christian world could easily find wealth to establish new schools of learning,—they could engage the press to pour upon the world almost an inundation of religious books—they could indefinitely multiply their physical strength—they could charter ships, and put in requisition all modes of conveyance both by sea and land; but alas! they have no power for the production of grace, or of intellect. Of all the helps, which God is pleased to employ in advancing his cause, men of talents and pious zeal are the fewest, rarest, and most important. What an increase of young men of this class do we need to take charge of our children and youth in our Sunday and common schools! How many men of finished education are wanted to supply our highest seats of learning! How many hundreds of teachers of religion are called for to supply the immense numbers of young and feeble societies! In this state, and even in our own denomination, it is said, there are eighty vacant churches! What then must be their number in the wide range of our infant settlements, and throughout the whole Christian world! From every pagan nation how
strong is the Macedonian cry: “come over and help us!” But how are these pressing calls to be answered? How many missionary stations are now languishing for want of fresh supplies! How many new ones might be commenced, had we the adequate means for their support! Where shall we find the men, who are well qualified and willing to renounce their dearest earthly comforts, and to hazard their lives for the privilege of planting the standard of the cross on the enemies’ ground? All, who can be spared from home service, to be sent out as the heralds of truth, would form but a feeble band indeed, and upon this boundless field they would be lost, like a drop in the ocean. Upon this globe a mighty conflict has long been continued. The armies engaged in it comprise the inhabitants of three worlds, heaven, earth, and hell. The question at issue is momentous. It is, whether the Son of God shall change this revolted world into a loyal empire, or, whether the prince of darkness shall erect upon it an undisputed and lasting dominion. To the sons of men, this conflict admits no neutrality, and a seat in heaven, or a bed in hell, will be awarded each individual, according to the standard he follows. Though almost six thousand years have gone by, yet all, that the armies of the living God have as yet done, is to skirmish a little upon the outskirts of the enemy’s territories, and to win over a few of his subjects. Through the instrumentality of mortals, the seat of the war is to be carried into the very heart of satan’s kingdom, and he must be dislodged from all his habitations of cruelty, and the whole earth turned into
a paradise of peace and holiness. How melancholy then to see the arrows of death thinning the ranks of those who are warring so gloriously under their heavenly Prince!

I have dwelt already, too long, perhaps, upon the illustration and proof of this subject. I will therefore draw to a close by attempting to make some application of what has been said. While listening to the subject, your minds have often gone back to the late melancholy providence which has taken place among us. Surely we have great reason for deep humiliation and sorrow. From the first establishment of this Seminary to the present season, God, in signal mercy, has spared the lives of its students. The death we now lament is the first instance of mortality, that has ever occurred in the whole number, who have ever been enrolled as its members. But now God has commenced the work of death, in a manner peculiarly solemn and instructive. He has cut down one of the brightest ornaments of this College. When the fairest flowers are taken, we ought to mourn and tremble under the correcting rod of heaven. The sickness and death of the young and beloved Wilson has given such a pang of grief, as we shall never forget. When he came among us, he soon attracted the notice and gained the affections of all around him. The government felt for him the interest of a parent, and indulged the pleasing thought, that he would complete his studies, and that his name would adorn the list of their alumni, as a distinguished blessing to the church and world. But God has been pleased to call him home, in the morning of
life; and their great support under this bereave-
ment is, that the residue of the spirit is with him,
and that he can rear up others to fill his place.

There was something unusual in the whole his-
tory of the lamented Wilson. In his first years,
he was remarkable for his sedate countenance.
Scarcely a smile ever dimpled his cheek till af-
ter his fourth year. In his childhood he show-
ed a great love of books, and was noted for the
rapidity and extent of his reading. He even then
discovered an unusual attachment to figures, and
often displayed surprising powers in the quick-
ness and accuracy of his mental calculations.
Mathematics was his favourite study, and, had
his life been spared, he would have shone in that
department. His retentive powers were remark-
ably strong. What he learned, seemed to be en-
graven upon a memory of brass, and few men
like him could relate, with such readiness and
precision, the substance of their reading. He
possessed a quenchless thirst for knowledge, and
it was the grand object of his youth to drink at
the fountain head. So great was his desire to
gain the advantages of a public education, that
he shook off the encumbrance of poverty, and
every weight, and resolved, by industry and econ-
omy, to clear his way to classical honours. And
such was the ease with which he conquered every
subject which he engaged, and such the rapidity
of his progress in every branch of science, to
which his attention was directed, that his friends
and instructers entertained high expectations of
his future distinction.

To his contemplative mind the concerns of his
soul and a future state beyond the grave were subjects of great moment. He often meditated on the relation of this world to its Creator, and upon the connexion between a life on earth, and the retributions of eternity. When he was about fourteen, his mind was specially turned to consider his state as a lost sinner before God. Though his convictions were not remarkably pungent and distressing, yet they terminated in a rational and steady hope in the mercy of God, through the merits of the Redeemer. He pretty soon after this united himself to the Methodist Church in Bingham, where his father resides as a located minister of the Gospel. The christian spirit, and the exemplary conduct, which he uniformly exhibited, during the rest of his life, gave increasing evidence, that he was, in truth, a subject of the renewing grace of God. In the summer of 1824, he entered College, with a fair prospect of a protracted and prosperous life. But that God, whose judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out, saw fit to disappoint all his designs, and to call him home in the morning of his life. After a short, but painful sickness, he expired, sabbath morning, on the 12th of Dec. 1824, in the 22d year of his age. In his expiring moments he expressed the steadfastness of his hope, and his assurance, that it would be well with him beyond the grave. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

In his person he was large, and his appearance, commanding—his countenance was mild, intelligent, and winning—his manners, easy and agreeable—his judgment sound, and his taste refined.
Amid strangers, he was rather silent, but with his intimates, affectionate, social, and instructive. As a scholar, he was studious and regular—as a son, respectful and obedient—as a brother, loving and sympathetic—as a friend, endeared and faithful—as a christian, meek and devout. But are all these lovely traits perished? Ah! no; though removed from earth, they shine with brighter radiance in the heavenly world. The hope which he has left behind, that he has gone to that rest, which remains for the people of God, ought to take away all the bitterness of grief and console his surviving connexions under this heavy bereavement.

With his bereaved parents and family we desire to mingle our tenderest sympathies. You have, I trust, already reflected, that he was a blessing too rich for you long to enjoy. Had he been spared, you might have loved him too well; he might have gotten between you and your God. You might have been proud of his talents and of his fame. He may be a greater blessing to you in his death, than he would have been in his life. Perhaps in eternity you will learn, that you had not grace enough to bear so great a mercy. O, then weep not, but bless God that you were ever made the parents of such a child; that he was spared long enough to answer the great design of life, and that he has now gone to swell the number and the hallelujahs of heaven.

The classmates of the deceased will receive our concluding address.
My young friends,

It is with the mingled emotions of grief and
hope, that I speak to you on the present occasion,—with grief, when I reflect on the sufferings and death of your much esteemed associate,—but with hope, when I consider, that this affecting providence may be blessed to your individual and everlasting good. We have been attempting to show the value of talents and piety. These, your late partner in the walks of science possessed, in an unusual degree. He made great sacrifices, and ardently prosecuted his studies, to discipline and enrich his mind with the treasures of knowledge, that he might be the better able to serve his Creator, and become a greater blessing to the world. But he was not permitted to accomplish his pious and benevolent design. God had a different design in view, and gave him an early release from the pains and temptations of life. But you are spared, and, generally, are blessed with fine health to enable you to pursue, with steadiness, your literary career. Imitate his example and tread in his steps, as far as he followed the Redeemer. In all your efforts to gain the treasures of knowledge, may you be stimulated by pure and exalted motives. Do not toil to accumulate the riches of science, merely for mental decoration, or to gratify a spirit of vanity. Remember that knowledge concealed is like the sun eclipsed, or like a private cabinet of the richest stones and jewels. Knowledge is valuable only as it makes you happy and useful. Should God deny you, in your subsequent life, the possession of wealth, do not fancy that your poverty will prevent your influence. Cultivate and discipline your powers and
pray that your hearts may be richly imbued with grace, and you will be blessed with the most essential qualities to benefit mankind. Munificence is not the only kind of charity. The counsels, which you may give to those who need direction; the consolations, which you may administer to the afflicted; the instructions, which you may impart to the youthful mind, may be richer gifts, and do more good than the distribution of thousands of gold among the sons of want. Prosecute then your studies in the fear of God, and for the purpose of rendering yourselves more extensively useful to your fellow men. May your days be many, and distinguished for activity in promoting the welfare of human society. When you leave this seat of learning, and are scattered abroad, wherever you reside, may you be "as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarryeth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of man." But permit me to remind you, that no worth of character, and no important station, will shield you from the arrows of death. You are mortal, and hold life by a frail tenure. To-day, you may flourish in all the bloom of spring; to-morrow, you may be struck with the icy hand of death, and your spirit take its flight to the world unknown. O, then be entreated by these considerations, and by the mercies of God, by the price of your souls, by the agonies of the cross, by the terrors of retribution, and by the bliss of heaven, to fly to the blessed Redeemer, in whom you will find pardon and eternal repose.
LINES,
COMPOSED BY THE FATHER SOON AFTER HIS SON WAS LAID IN THE GRAVE.

Sleep, sleep! my lovely son, in soft repose;
Thine earlier mother clasps thee to her breast.
Her claims are strong; a prior right she holds:
Of her thy comely form was first composed;
From her thy nourishment was e'er derived.
Now in her bosom, free from cares and pain,
In quiet rest, repose thy weary frame,
Till Gabriel’s trump shall sound and bid thee rise.
No more shall sickness waste, nor pain distract,
Nor weariness oppress, nor cares perplex:
Thy labours e’er, the classic page is closed.
Those eyes, which oft grew dim, in scanning e’er
The learned volumes, now are closed in death.
That heart, the seat of virtue, once so warm
With strong affection, once so sensibly
Alive to aught, that could afflict a friend,
Has ceased to beat.
O! How can I forget that countenance,
When filial love, affection’s brightest glow,
Flushed e’er the cheek, now rendered pale by death?
Must that instructive tongue, now silent lie,
That voice, no more be heard?
But stop, my soul! no more these mournful sighs.
Why cling so fast around the lifeless clay?
Let go thy grasp. Relinquish all thy claim.
Dust to its dust commit, nor once repine.
Thy God commands; ’tis wisdom to obey.
And thou, dear partner of my griefs and woes,
Whose very soul, seems almost overwhelm’d
In deepest anguish, come, let’s dry our tears,
And bow before the altar of the Lord,
And learn submission to his sovereign will.
His ways are just. His wisdom cannot err.
United then, the weighty cross we’ll bear.
Regard thy health, nor sink beneath the load,
And waste thy life away in useless grief.
Remaining friends may yet require our aid;
Surviving children still demand our care,
And duties still remain to be performed. Let's turn our eyes from the fair tenement Bereft of life and numbered with the dead. And O! would the bright telescope of Faith, But lend its aid, and upward lead our thoughts, Trace out the pleasant path he took, when first He left this house of clay, we'd search him out, In those bright ranks of blissful souls redeem'd From sin. With what delight he now beholds Th' enrapturing glories of the heav'nly world! What joys ecstatic thrill through every nerve, While gazing on the Saviour's beauteous face, Whose smile fills heaven with joys unspeakable. My God, forgive, forgive, the bold intrusion! While Fancy leads me to the blissful spot, Where first he strikes the golden harp, or where His soul attempts the first Hosanna— Or where in speechless adoration falls Before the sacred throne. Here, Fancy, stop! Those heavenly plains must not be thus profan'd By thoughts unhallowed, ideas unrefined. Let it suffice, his loved companions here Are now exchanged for choirs of Angel-Saints; His college-room below for that blest house "Built without hands," where joys forever dwell. O! when will that bright messenger return, That call'd his soul away, and bid us rise And follow him, leaving these ills behind, And hail him on those blissful plains above? How high the sacred waves of joy will rise! How pure the bliss! the pleasure how refin'd! When first we meet, will not our joys increase At every fresh recital of past grief? And will not each arrival, from the earth, Which joins the happy train of spirits pure, Cause louder shouts of praise; till all the saints arrive, — and join in general chorus round The throne of Deity? Then all with one consent They prostrate fall and, speechless, homage pay. But whither, Fancy, wilt thou lead my thoughts? Shall I forget I'm in a house of clay? I look around, and almost seem surprised
That I'm not there. Pains and infirmities
Still compass me around, a fleshy clog
Yet binds me down to earth.—Have patience, then.
The standard of the Saviour's cross still bear.
Resume thy toil. In conflict still engage.
The conquest will be gained, the victory won.
The message soon will come and bid thee rise
To hail thy kindred in thy native skies.