

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Maine History Documents

Special Collections

1811

The Works of God, an Important Study: a Sermon Delivered June Twenty-six, 1811

Asa Burton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

This Monograph is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

THE WORKS OF GOD, AN IMPORTANT STUDY.

*Inspected by Mr.
Maxwell,*

*June.
1814.*

A
SERMON,

DELIVERED JUNE TWENTY-SIX, 1811,

AT THE ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. BENJAMIN WHITE,

TO THE

PASTORAL CARE OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WELLS.

(DISTRICT OF MAINE.)

BY ASA BURTON, D. D.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN THETFORD, VERMONT.

ALL THY WORKS SHALL PRAISE THEE O LORD.—David.

KENNEBUNK, MAINE,
PRINTED BY J. K. REMICK.

1811.

SERMON.

JOHN, V. 17.

*BUT JESUS ANSWERED THEM, MY FATHER WORKETH HITHERTO, AND I
WORK.*

CREATURES have no knowledge of the views, feelings and characters of intelligent beings, but what they obtain by ~~in~~ internal, visible signs. Words and ^{et} actions are the signs by which invisible things are made known to finite minds. God has revealed his character, his counsels, and designs, by words and actions. The works of creation and providence are the *acts* of Jehovah, and the Bible contains the *words* he has spoken. By these actions and words he speaks to us. We hear his voice. Hence God has published three volumes for the instruction of mankind; the work of creation is one, the works of providence another, and his holy word the other. From these all our knowledge is derived.

These sacred volumes gospel ministers ought to study. For it is the work which they are called to explain, and enforce the truth they contain. Natural philosophy explains the material creation, its properties, its established laws, with their influence, and the effect they produce.

Metaphysics is that philosophy, which teaches the nature, properties, operations, and laws, which appertain to immaterial, spiritual, intelligent beings. Divinity exhibits to view the character of God, the mediator Christ Jesus, the character of man, and every other truth im-

portant for us to know, which is contained in either of the volumes God has published. Accordingly if ministers have not more or less knowledge of natural philosophy, metaphysics, and divinity, they have not the qualifications, which are necessary, to teach *all* the truths attached to their profession. An acquaintance with the works of creation, will enable them to confute the Atheist, and demonstrate the being, and perfections of God. If well versed in the volume of providence, they can answer the numerous objections, which infidels often make against the character and government of God. And by a knowledge of the Bible they can teach the fallen race of man what they must believe and do, to obtain eternal life.

And a knowledge of the works of providence is as *really* necessary to make good divines, as a knowledge of those truths taught in the word of God. Indeed all the sentiments contained in the Bible are only parts of that grand scheme of operation, which God in his providence is unfolding to our view. As almost every subject adapted to such an occasion, as the present has been repeatedly discussed, may not the utility of a knowledge of the works of providence in the gospel ministry, be more for our edification and instruction, since it is a subject less frequently investigated. This is the subject the text presents to view.

The Lord Jesus healed the impotent man, who lay at the pool of Bethesda, on the sabbath. The Jews, his enemies, considered this a profanation of the sabbath for which he ought in their view to be put to death. Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. Our Lord justified himself by the example of God his Father. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Here our Savior represents the Father as constantly working, on the sabbath as well as other days. The works here intended are not those of creation ; for they were finished

in six days ; but the works of providence, are a series of events, that began as soon as creation was completed, and will continue to the end of time.

This world is the grand theatre upon which these works are exhibited. And could we trace the events back, which have occasioned the present assembly, we should find them connected with the first link in the incomprehensible plan of Jehovah. And we may feel assured that the events of this day will effect our state of existence through endless ages. By a careful attention to the subject of divine providence we may see it is not unadapted to this solemn occasion. A brief explanation and illustration of it will be attempted by a number of particular observations.

1st. The works of providence imply two things, an agent constantly operating, and the effects produced.

The works of providence are a series of events produced by an independent efficient agent. This agent is God. His agency is continually operating in preserving all things in existence, in supplying every want, in governing and directing all things in the wisest and best manner. The agency of God in the natural world is clearly expressed in such passages as the following. Thou makest darkness, and it is night ; he causeth the grass to grow for cattle and herbs for the service of man ; he watereth the hills from his chambers. The scriptures teach his agency in the moral world in these passages. The kings heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will ; a man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. His agency is also *universal*. This is taught by our Lord. Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing ? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. And of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. When the ministers of God

would have their hearers feel, that he is ever present with them, they must teach them, that the motion of their lungs, and the circulation of their blood, are the effects of his agency. That in him they live, move and have their being. Hence God is here, present with every individual in this assembly. We may all say, thou God seest me.

2d. And all rational, designing agents, must have some ultimate end in view, in all their operations.

The object which is sought on its own account, and not for the sake of something beyond it more valuable, is an ultimate end. Hence, if we acted without any ultimate end in view, we should be doing one thing for the sake of another without ever arriving to any final period. This would be to act without any aim or design. For design necessarily implies some ultimate end.

Hence God, who is a moral agent, aims at some ultimate object in all his operations. He certainly does not aim at the increase of his own attributes, or blessedness; for these are infinite and incapable of any increase. But he can display, communicate, or diffuse them. And if his essential fulness contains all good, both natural, and moral, then a perfect diffusion of it is the highest good which can be produced. May we not, then, with propriety say, that the highest possible communication, and ~~diffusion~~ *diffusion* of God's essential fulness is the highest good, which can be obtained, and of course his ultimate end in all his operations? This is making himself, or a communication of himself, his ultimate object. This agrees with his word, which makes his glory his end, and which asserts that all things are of him and through him, and to him, who is blessed forever. He has but one ultimate end. This is the highest diffusion of his own fulness, at which he aimed in the creation of the world, in all the events he has since produced, or ever will produce through eternity. He has the same end in view in the

condemnation of unbelievers, he has in the salvation of believers.

By making this evident, ministers show their hearers, that God is perfectly holy, and wise in all the acts of his universal government, and has the same end in view in all his works. It is on this ground only they can vindicate his character and government. On this subject they ought to preach frequently, and reflect the most clear, and convincing light to view, to silence gainsayers, and confute the objections of infidels.

3d. All the works of God are only means and instruments by which he attains his ultimate end.

He always works by means, except in the production of miraculous events. All the works of creation are used as means in the production of providential events. The sun, which warms the earth, the clouds, which water it, are the cause of vegetation, and the preservation of life. By water he drowned the old world, and by fire destroyed Sodom. Flies, lightning, hail, and other parts of creation, were the means he used to punish Pharaoh, that haughty tyrant, and effect the deliverance of his people from cruel bondage. In these ways he displayed his glorious power, and boundless goodness. As soon as God had finished the works of creation, he began to put them to those uses for which they were designed.

Again. Not only the works of creation, but one event of providence is the cause of another in a successive train. The peculiar fondness of Jacob for his son Joseph, and his dreams, were the means of creating the hatred and envy of his brethren against him. And their hatred led them to sell him, and occasioned his imprisonment in Egypt, his deliverance, and exaltation to the high office with which he was honored by Pharaoh. The salvation of thousands, while the famine in the land prevailed, the removal of his father's family into Egypt, their bondage, their redemption, all the judgments inflicted

on the Egyptians, and the miracles wrought at the red sea, and in the wilderness, and all the events, which the Jews have experienced from that day to this, were occasioned by the malignant passions Joseph's brethren exercised towards him. Innumerable instances might be selected from the Bible to show, that one event is the means of another in a connected successive train.

And can the ministers of Christ pursue any method better adapted to encourage their hearers to use appointed means, than to convince them, that God always operates in this way? If he accomplishes all his purposes by means, then they know to prolong life, they must eat and drink, and to be saved, they must repent and believe in Christ. Show them, that one thing will be the occasion of another, this will make them give heed to their steps, lest they effect their own destruction.

4th. Means are wisely adapted to their respective, immediate ends.

All the wonders Moses wrought in Egypt were wisely adapted to their respective ends. One was, to convince Pharaoh, that the God of the Hebrews was the only true God. Another was to fill the whole earth with his glory. How wisely were the dreams of Joseph, and the hatred of his brethren, suited as means to effect his being sold into Egypt, and that series of stupendous events, which followed? If his brethren had highly esteemed and loved him, they would not have sold him for a bondman, and the great events, which followed, would never have had an existence. Hence their love would not have been a proper mean for the production of the events designed by the all wise Jehovah. Through all the works of God, what design, what astonishing contrivance, and wisdom, are displayed.

Infidels, and others, are often saying, many alterations might take place in the works of God, yet they would be equally as good and wise. Ministers by showing, that

means are perfectly adapted to their respective ends, would remove all ground for such cavils and objections.

5th. The connexion of events is especially worthy of our consideration in the illustration of this subject. For the influence of means depends on this. If God had not established a connexion between one thing and another, ~~many~~ *causes* would never have produced any *secondary* effects. If there were no connexion between a cause and an effect, one thing would never produce another. But all the works of creation and providence are connected as links in a chain. This connexion is established by Jehovah agreeably to the dictates of his wisdom and benevolence. He said, let every thing bring forth according to its kind. This word has ever been obeyed. With the disobedience of our first parents were connected an endless train of events. And with the feast of Ahasueras, all those recorded in the book of Esther. And with the death of Christ, the salvation of all the elect, and other most serious events innumerable.

What astonishing wisdom was necessary so to connect, and arrange things, that events so opposite in their tendency, as natural and moral good and evil are, for instance, should terminate in the same glorious end ultimately. Poison by its combination with other ingredients, instead of producing death, is often the means of preserving life and health. And the wickedness of the Jews, which tended in its nature to the final dishonor of God, and ruin of souls, being connected with the death of Christ, will occasion glory to God, and the salvation of millions. By virtue of this connexion all things, whatever their tendencies are, will finally promote the everlasting Glory of God, and the highest felicity of his holy Kingdom. By this connexion a chain of events is formed reaching from the creation of the world through time into a boundless eternity.

Here opens to view a capacious field for the display

of ministerial talents and benevolence ; in showing that all God's works are only parts of one entire connected scheme of operation ; in showing how evil of every kind is necessary, and will at last, occasion the highest good ; in showing how all the perfections of God shine with resplendent brightness through all his works.

The works of God may be compared to a building. In the erection of a building reference is always had to its use or end. Then the wisdom of the architect is displayed in the choice of the materials, in forming, shaping, arranging, and connecting them in such a manner, that they will perfectly answer his design. God has been collecting materials, forming, arranging, and connecting them for several thousand years, and his plan will not be finished, till the day of Judgment. Then the top stone will be laid and his perfections will shine with infinite splendor and brightness.

Again. We see water diffused in drops, springs, brooks, and rivers, in every part of this world. Their uniform motion is towards the centre. Though they run in opposite directions, yet, in their course, they are constantly uniting, and the streams increase in magnitude, the nearer they arrive to their final resting place, and, by their final collection, constitute a vast ocean of waters. The sea is composed of drops.

God is the primary, independent, efficient cause of all the works of creation and providence. In this sense he is the Alpha, or beginning. Individual events, though small at the first, like drops of water, yet by uniting, like drops with drops, and streams with streams, they, at last, terminate in one and the same end ultimately, which is the highest diffusion of his own fulness. In this sense he is Omega, or the end for which all things were made. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, God blessed forever.

Indeed it appears very evident, that the great object

at which God aims in all his works is the collection of a society in heaven, which shall, in all respects, resemble himself. This sentiment is clearly taught by our Savior in his prayer the night in which he was betrayed. He prayed, that his chosen might be one, as he and the father are one.

This society will be composed of saints and Angels. They will resemble God in knowledge, in benevolence, and blessedness. To this society he will make a perfect communication of himself. They will all partake of his fulness. Their endlessly increasing felicity is the greatest created good. And in the purity, beauty, felicity, and glory of this society all his views centre, all his works terminate. Hence he says, whether Paul, or Apollos, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. And of Christ it is said, he is made head over *all things* to the church. And when all, who are to be members of this society, are gathered together in heaven, and made perfectly holy and happy, then his end will be obtained, and his works will be finished. Then this heavenly host will forever reflect the brightest glories of the Godhead. To them his fulness is communicated. And the highest communication of his fulness is the brightest display of his glory, the highest diffusion of his blessedness, and the greatest, created good. To this end all things, by an established connexion, tend; and in this they will finally issue under the directing hand of Jehovah.

From the view we have taken of the works of providence, so far as our time will permit, we have reason to cry, Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.

IMPROVEMENT.

The subject furnishes matter for a variety of reflections and remarks. Only a few of them will be noticed; and briefly illustrated.

1st. What do the volumes, which reveal God's eternal plan of operation, separately teach us? From the volume of creation we learn how many different ranks, and grades of beings God designed to create. From the volume of providence we learn what events he determined should have existence. The whole of this volume, however, will not be completed, till the wheels of providence shall cease to roll. The sacred volume reveals the scheme of salvation in all its parts. These reflect light upon each other, and present to view an unbounded field for study, and the improvement of the minds of all, who delight in God. These gospel ministers ought to study with careful and prayerful attention. For they contain that system of divinity, which it is their duty to unfold and teach their hearers.

2nd. The works of God do not contain more nor less parts, than are necessary in a perfect plan.

Some object and say, many parts of the creation might be annihilated, and many events of providence are needless. Every particle of dust, and drop of water, is not necessary. Many things might be spared without any damage to the divine plan. But this is an error.

The earth is composed of particles. If one might be spared, for the same reason, why not another, and another, until the whole material system is annihilated.

The ocean is composed of drops. If one may be annihilated, why not, for the same reason, another and another, till it is exhausted? Who can say, how many parts may be destroyed, and no more? And, if one event viewed singly, is not necessary, with equal reason, every event, separately considered might be pronounced needless. But a perfectly wise governor would not form a plan, which would contain too few, or too many parts. Would any of you, if you knew exactly how many materials were requisite in a building to answer your end, collect a greater or less number, than was necessary? H

you did, would it not evince a deficiency in knowledge, or in power, or in goodness? Is God so perfect, that he cannot err, nor do wrong? Then we must believe, that every part of his works is necessary. For a deficiency, or redundancy, would argue imperfection.

Then to vindicate the character of God, Christ's ministers should be able to show, that every hair, every sparrow, and every event, which takes place, is necessary to the perfect attainment of God's ultimate end. This they may argue from the perfection of his character.

3d. This subject reproves those, who censure the government of God.

Some say the divine plan would have been more perfect, if natural and moral evil had never existed. This is implicitly saying, it is imperfect. On what ground do they determine the divine plan and government are not perfect? Do they infer it from his character? No. For a perfect character cannot err. Do they learn it from his holy word? No. For that says, his work is perfect. Do they infer it from a view of his plan in all its parts, relations, connexions, and dependencies? No. For this implies such a comprehensive view of it, as to see clearly that the final termination of his plan would have been far better, if evil had never existed. But this view infinitely exceeds any created capacities. Then their judgment is premature, and rash.

A child sees a father collect a great quantity of materials, and cast them into a promiscuous heap, without any regard to order or arrangement. The child cannot see, how these materials can answer any valuable purpose. He therefore accuses his father of weakness and folly. In this case he ought to suspend his judgment, if he have not confidence in his father's wisdom, until the work designed is finished.

God is now collecting materials, arranging and connecting them with a design to erect a temple to the glo-

ry of his name. And this building will not be finished till the day of Judgment. Those, then, who are not now convinced of its perfection, neither from the character of God, nor from his declarations, ought to wait, till the top stone is laid. Then inspect the whole work in all its parts and connexions, and form their Judgment. And to judge of his work, while in an unfinished state, without any regard to the perfection of his character, or the declarations of his word, manifests great ignorance, and wickedness of heart.

Christ's death was a natural evil. And crucifying him was a moral evil. When we view those evils as necessary to the salvation of millions, were they not requisite in the divine plan? And who can say, that every evil is not equally necessary to reach the end at which wisdom and benevolence unitedly aim? Instead of Judging prematurely and rashly, it becomes men to feel their nothingness, and to admire and adore the perfections of God, which shine with sufficient lustre through all his works to silence every objection, and murmur.

4th. Are God's works great and manifold? From this we infer the greatness of Jehovah.

What are elegant cities, what are lofty pyramids, what are the greatest, and most magnificent works of man compared with the works of God? There is more wisdom displayed in the lily, which adorns the valleys, and in the grass, which cloaths the meadows in green attire, than in the most magnificent works of men. The structure of a lily is beyond the power and wisdom of man.

When we reflect, what a vast number of materials were connected in the temple Solomon built; with what art they were shaped, and joined together; the number of hands employed; the length of time it required to finish it; its costliness and magnificence; we are ready to say, what a stupendous fabric. We admire the work.

And when we consider, the innumerable events of

providence, which are only parts of one entire work ; the wisdom displayed in their arrangement and connexion ; that each person in the holy Trinity has an assigned part in it ; that men and Angels have been employed as instruments in it, and nearly six thousand years have been spent in finishing it ; yet it is not completed ; the most glorious parts, according to prophecy, are still to be connected ; what reason we have to admire and adore the greatness of its Author. All the works of men, compared with it, dwindle into nothing. They are lost, like a drop, when cast into the ocean.

When ministers present to the view of their hearers the stupendous works of God, and his incomprehensible plan of operation, in what way can they impress on their minds more deeply a sense of his infinite greatness ? Or teach them more effectually to adore and reverence his name ? Or make them feel more sensibly their own nothingness ? Or make them cry out with more profound awe, all the inhabitants of the earth are grasshoppers in his sight ? They are nothing, and less than nothing and vanity.

Furthermore. This subject leads all to reflect on the universal agency, and presence of Jehovah. All events are directed by his unerring hand. Not one hair falls to the ground without his notice. And events are taking place in every world, and in every part of every world, at the same time. Then his agency, and presence must be universal.

This truth the ministers of God should teach with such clearness and energy, as to make their hearers say, whither shall we go from his presence ? Into heaven ? He is there ; displaying his boundless love and grace. Into hell ? He is there ; he is there manifesting his awful wrath. Shall we go unto the uttermost parts of the earth ? He must conduct our flight. No, we cannot shun his presence. He is here. How awful is this place.

This is none other, than the house of God, and this the gate of heaven. Shall we dare to be inattentive, or drowsy, or to trifle in the presence of God? When he is speaking to us by his ministers from heaven? And when we reflect that before his solemn bar we may be suddenly called to receive our eternal destination?

5th. We learn from this subject, that God makes great use of the passions of men in the government of the world.

Did not the hatred, and envy of Joseph's brethren give rise to an astonishing series of events? Did not Pharaoh's pride occasion his awful overthrow in the red sea? Had he been humble, he would not have fought against God. It was the envy of Korah and his company, which caused their dreadful end. Did not Absalom's pride lead him on to death? Did not Ahithophel's pride stimulate him to commit suicide? What was the means of Vashti's divorcement, but her haughtiness? Or of Haman's shameful end, but his pride, and enmity against the Jews? The pride and envy of the great men of Babylon against Daniel caused him to be cast into the den of lions, and terminated in their own destruction. As we are taught, that pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall, so we find with this facts correspond.

Does not this show impressively how important it is for the watchmen of Zion to teach men, that their passions ought to be under the government of God, and those, which are sinful, will, unless subdued, effect their ruin. If men believed this, they would no more feed their pride, nor indulge anger, envy, revenge, or any other sinful passion, than they would feed a viper in their bosom. No, they would realize the importance of being born again and cultivating those holy affections, which prepare them for endless felicity.

6th. Are all events connected? Then not one is un-

interesting, or trifling in its tendency. The least event has great influence in the scheme of Jehovah. This our Lord taught, when he said, the hairs of your head are all numbered. Men are prone to view eating fruit, dreams, silent murmurings, partaking of a feast, and many other events, to be of no consequence. But this is not learned from the Bible. Seriously consider, what great and lasting events were connected with our first parents' eating a little fruit; with Joseph's dreams; with the feast of Ahasuerus; with the murmurings of the Jews in the wilderness. No events are trifling in their nature. For they are connected as links in a chain, by virtue of which the least may be followed by those, which will affect our states forever.

Then let the messengers of the Lord teach men, that playing and trifling in the house of God, vain discourse, and worldly thoughts on the sabbath, and all their views, feelings, words, and actions, from day to day, will affect their future, endless state of existence. Show them how a mote, or one drop of poisonous liquid, may occasion the death of an Emperor, and the downfall of an Empire. Show them, if God had connected the ruin of kingdoms with a single wish, we might by wishing as easily effect their overthrow, as speak a word, and arrest the sun in its course as Jothua did, when he said, sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon. With a sense of this truth, who can be vain? Who will neglect watching, and praying, that all things may work for his good? Who will feel safe, except he abide under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty? Who would not feel serious as death, when he reflected, that all things, even the most trifling word, were preparing him for heaven, or for hell?

7th. This subject contains abundant matter of Joy to the people of God.

They have his infallible promise, that all things shall

work together for their good. When their enemies rise against them, as Pharaoh did against the Jews, as Absalom did against David, as Haman did against Mordecai, as the princes of Babylon did against Daniel, as the Jews and Romans did against the Lord of glory, God will cause their malicious schemes to prove a mean of their destruction, and a mean of salvation to his people. The righteous are ever safe. The government of God aims at their eternal felicity. If darkness prevail, soon you will salute the dawns of an eternal day. If your enemies prevail against you, the day is nigh, when you will forever triumph over them. If tempests rage, they will waft you to the haven of eternal rest. Then rejoice, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

8th. But, on the other hand, the enemies of God always have reason to fear, and tremble. If you abound in wealth, yet you are to burn in hell. If you are raised to stations of honor, yet you are to fall, and be clothed with endless shame. If you rejoice, soon you will utter nothing, but lamentable cries. Every step, which Haman took, for a long time, was apparently in his favor, and advanced him to the summit of earthly greatness, grandeur, and bliss. Yet they terminated in his sudden, and shameful death. The rich man in a moment fell into hell. The man, who said, soul thou hast goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry, was suddenly summoned before the dread tribunal of Jehovah. In equal danger all the enemies of God live, though their present prosperity is ever so great. Every thing is against you. Can you in view of these solemn realities, be more unaffected, than the Devils, who continually tremble?

9th. While the ministers of Christ are teaching the system of divinity revealed in the sacred oracles, they are only explaining and enforcing those events of providence, which must, if ever, take place in this world.

The work of redemption is the greatest work of providence, to which every thing else is subordinated. While explaining the incarnation of Christ, all he said and did; while exhibiting to view his holy life, his affecting death, his resurrection, and glorious ascension to heaven, we are only illustrating events, which have taken place in this world. And while explaining the depravity of man, the nature of conviction, the doctrines of regeneration, justification, sanctification, and adoption into the family of God, perseverance of saints, or any other sentiment, we are only exhibiting to view those events of providence, which must, if ever, take place on this theater of action. All the doctrines contained in a system of divinity, are links in the great chain of providence. Hence explaining the volume of revelation is unfolding to view the book of providence. These volumes open to our view an unbounded field. However far the student in divinity advances in it, he has only entered it. However much light he reflects, it is only a glimmering ray compared with the light, which will be enjoyed in heaven. We only explain things, which have their beginning here, and by their influence on the state of every mortal hereafter, will never have an end. Here things have a beginning. In eternity they are completed. Yet things in their preparatory, and finished state, in many respects, widely differ.

Here Christ was abased. There he is exalted. Here he suffered. There he rejoices. Here he served. There he reigns as king over all worlds. Here he died. There he lives forevermore. Here the light dawns. There it shines with unclouded brightness. Here the saints' salvation is begun. There it is perfected. Here sinners rejoice. There they will weep, and mourn. Here the ministers of the gospel, with their flocks, are preparing for a solemn Judgment, and endless rewards. There they must render their final accounts, and receive their

final rewards. Time and eternity are connected. And the events of providence, like a rapid stream, are wafting mortals to their eternal states of abode. How impressive, how affecting the thought.

But the Pastor elect claims our particular attention.

Dear Brother, what are your feelings, in view of this subject, and on this interesting occasion? Are you ready to exclaim, who is sufficient to undertake the arduous work of the ministry of reconciliation. While you thus feel, remember Christ is with you. And Christ strengthening you, you can do all things. You can pray, you can preach, you can perform every ministerial duty to divine acceptance. Your work will be arduous. Do you wish to have it otherwise? Would you wish to be idle, or to have your powers decay, or your acquired abilities lost, for want of use, and an opportunity for exertion? Be encouraged. Put on the whole, christian armour. And with those spiritual weapons fight. Be a good soldier under Jesus your leader.

Here on earth spend your time in sowing the seeds of righteousness. Then in heaven you will reap an eternal, and joyful harvest. Many souls in this place may be your crown and joy. Be faithful, and every event of providence, whether adverse, or prosperous, will prepare you to join the songs of the redeemed in heavenly mansions. Devote yourself wholly to your work. And may you not labor in vain, nor spend your strength for nought. But by the kind providence of God be instrumental in presenting, at last, many sons and daughters, before him arrayed in spotless purity, with exceeding joy.

To the church and society in this place a few words may be addressed.

God is visiting you with events both prosperous and afflictive. You have sustained a great loss in the death of your late pastor. Do you lament, as David did, over Abner, saying a great man is fallen in Israel? Is the

light you have enjoyed extinguished ? In consequence of this, has a dark cloud been hovering around this Zion ? Does a remembrance of these solemn things fill your hearts with sorrow ? Behold God in his providence is dispelling the gloom and giving you occasion to rejoice. He has prepared another light to shine in this golden candlestick. He stands ready by a solemn ordination, to become a fixed star among you. How kind is God in sending you, so soon, another teacher and uniting your hearts and voices so harmoniously in his settlement.. Rejoice in his distinguishing goodness.

Yet what effects, the union, which may take place between you and him this day, may occasion, who can tell. His preaching and residence here will be a favour of life, or of death to the precious souls to be committed to his charge. If you sincerely wish his administrations may prove blessings to you ; pray he may be faithful, pray he may be successful, receive the truth from his lips in love, be watchful, be diligent doers, as well as attentive hearers of the word.

Afford him all the assistance in your power by maintaining faithful discipline in the church. Let this strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart by a holy life and conversation. And oh, may the union to be formed this day between you and him be a link in the great chain, which shall mutually promote your everlasting peace.

Then, when your warfare here ends in victory, your labor in rest, your race in winning an incorruptible crown, with what delightful wonder you will review the merciful dispensations of providence towards you, while on this earth ; and with raptures of joy praise the true God for his redeeming love.

Finally. This is the first time, and probably the last, I shall ever address this numerous audience. It is, without doubt, the last time we shall meet till we are assembled at the bar of God.

I intreat you, then, to keep the subject to which we have attended constantly in view. It will remind you, that every event, however small, has great influence.— All your thoughts, all your feelings, and passions, both sinful and holy, all your words, all your actions, are the fruits of your hearts. They will be exhibited publicly before an assembled universe, and show what rewards will be suited to your respective characters.

Hourly indulge serious reflections. Now reflect, do you yet live? Does your pulse beat, and your lungs heave? Then God is here. All his works proclaim his universal agency and presence. That God is here before whom the shining hosts of heaven bow with profound reverence, and haughty Devils tremble. God is here connecting all the parts we individually perform this day with events which are past, and those which shall follow. He is here seriously attending to the government of the world. And Angels, ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, are hovering around us, seriously obeying his orders. And shall we trifle?

God is here. He is working, and bringing all things to a final period. Time will soon have an end. Eternity is nigh. That great day is approaching, when we must stand before the solemn tribunal of Jehovah. Yes, that great day is nigh, when Christ will appear in a cloud arrayed with glory. When the dead will arise. When this world will be dissolved, and have an end. When the wheels of providence will cease to roll. When all our works, public and private, good and evil, will be exhibited. When final sentences will be pronounced.— When the righteous and the wicked will be eternally separated. When endless states of bliss or woe will commence. With such events the last great day will be signalised.

In view of these things, my friends, can you trifle?— Can you remain thoughtless, secure, and unaffected?

If you can, ask yourselves, are the Devils so hard ? No. For they tremble. Is lifeless matter so unmoved at the presence of God ? No. For the hills and everlasting mountains tremble before him.

Then, while God is speaking to you by all his works, by his holy word, by his ministers, listen, hear, and obey. Come and be united to Christ in eternal bonds of love. Come and feast on the marriage supper of the Lamb.— Come, for all things are ready. Christ is ready to receive you for his bride. The Father is ready to receive you for sons and daughters. The holy spirit is ready to sanctify and comfort you. Angels are ready to minister unto you. Saints are ready to associate with you. Now you have this which may be the last invitation, harden not your hearts nor slight the offer, lest God swear in his wrath, you shall never taste of his supper.

AMEN.