

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

FUNERAL OF DR. SAMUEL BENION,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, A CONCISE MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

1 PETER i. 24, 25.

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

SURE I need not remind you, brethren, you cannot but remember it, you cannot but be thinking of it at this time, that it is not full two years since we were upon a like sorrowful occasion met together in this place, to solemnize the funeral of a very able, faithful minister of this congregation, whose memory I hope is, and will be, precious among you, Mr. James Owen. If you and I had made a due improvement of that severe stroke, surely we had not felt the smart of this: but, LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, and men *will not see, they shall see*. If God judgeth, he will overcome. God grant, that this present dark dispensation of providence may so revive the impressions of that, as by both together we may be duly humbled under the mighty hand of God; that Elihu's complaint of old, Job xxxiii. 14. may not be taken up against us, *God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth not*, does not understand the meaning, nor answer the ends of what he says; or that of the prophet, that *the righteous*, as to our world, *perish*, and *no man lays it to heart*, or is duly affected with it; nay, merciful, useful, good men are taken away, and none consider it. O that we knew how rightly to expound, and that you knew how rightly to apprehend, such events as these.

He whom we have now followed to the silent grave, and left there, then followed with us, and was a deep sharer in our griefs on that occasion. But must the successor in the work of life so soon suc-

ceed in dying work too? All who go before us, say to us, as Christ to Peter, *You cannot follow me now*, because your work is not done; but *you shall follow me hereafter*, John xiii. 36. But here is one, who soon followed to the grave his predecessor in this pulpit; for death is not tied up to the rules of proportion, or due distances; every man must go in his own order, the order appointed by him in whose hand our times are.

Considering age, and bodily strength and vigour, we who are ministers must think, that he whom we have now laid in the dust was, a few days ago, likely enough, in a course of nature, to have seen most of us laid there. I thought concerning him,—This is the Joseph, that shall put his hand on my eyes, Gen. xlvi. 4. and do that office for me, which I am now doing for him: but living and dying, it seems, do not go by livelihoods: the Sovereign Lord of life has ordained otherwise, and the number of his months (which were far from being months of vanity) are cut off in the midst.

Now, what shall we say to these things? *What is this that God hath done unto us?* For my part, I am quite at a loss, am full of confusion, and know not what to say. The tidings astonished me, and made me cry out to God, as the prophet did, Ezek. xi. 13. *Ah! Lord God! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?* But what shall I say to you? I wish I were better able to perform this service which your aged pastor has called me to. How to order the course before you I know not, and yet something I must say, both as a mourner with you, and as a monitor to you, that I might both soften the ground, and break it up.

I have something to say as a mourner with you: I am willing to hope you have no need to raise up

your mourning, of singing men, or singing women, to move your passions; you are sensible of your loss, and here is a grievous mourning for it; we are lamenting one, that I perceive is universally lamented, and have the tears of many mingled with ours on this occasion. But my business will be, to show you what reason we have thus to lay to heart this breach made upon us, that we may be able to give a good answer to that question, which, whenever we are of a sorrowful countenance, we should put to ourselves, *Wherefore look we so sadly to-day? Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* That if there be no good reason for the grief, we may dismiss it; if there be, we may direct it aright.

For my own part, I have all the reason in the world to bewail the loss of a very dear and affectionate friend, with whom I have many a time taken sweet counsel. You, for your part, have reason to bewail the loss of an able, faithful minister, from whom you have many a time received good counsel. And that we have of late lost so many such, cannot but aggravate the grief. *O that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears*, that we might sorrow after a godly sort; not for them who are gone; if we loved them we should rejoice rather in their joy, that joy of their LORD, into which they are entered; but for ourselves, and for our children, who are left behind: and God give us grace to sow now in these tears for them, that we may hereafter reap in joy with them. And the truth is, as there are none of the afflictions of this present time that has more in them to justify our grief, nor over which we may more safely say, *We do well to mourn*, than the death of good people and good ministers; so there are none that (when the matter is considered entirely) has more in them to qualify our grief, and to balance it; for to them, whom to live was Christ, to die is gain, everlasting gain. By St. Stephen's death the church lost a minister, and therefore, justly, when they carried him to his burial, made great lamentation over him, which well became devout men, Acts viii. 2. and is recorded for our imitation; yet, at the same time, it gained a martyr. And, *if I be offered* (says St. Paul) *upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice*, not only myself, for my crown, but *with you all*, for the benefit which may accrue to you thereby.

The wise man recommends it to us as an excellent means of increase in wisdom, to frequent the house of mourning, and to accommodate ourselves to the temper of it: there (says he) *the heart of the wise is*, and there it learns many a good lesson, while the heart of fools is in the house of mirth, and there learns many a bad one. Two houses of mourning this death, this so great a death, calls us to. Go to the house whence we fetched those dear remains we have now laid by, or laid up rather, in the dust, and 'hat is a house of mourning for its father, for its

master, who was every way its glory and blessing: this is a more common case, and what occurs often; but besides that, here is another house of mourning, this place of your religious assemblies is so. The gates of the daughter of Sion are covered with a cloud; and justly, when one of the masters of the assembly is removed, his light to be seen, and his voice to be heard, no more among them. We find it made the character of those whom God will gather, gather with everlasting loving-kindness, that they are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and that to them the reproach of it is a burthen. When the solemn assembly is thus deprived of its guides and glories, one after another, and broken with breach upon breach, all who wish well to it ought to be sorrowful: and coming thus from one house of mourning to another, we are inexcusable, if by both together some good impressions be not made upon our souls, which will abide and command there, and if by the sadness of the countenance our hearts be not made some way better, God by his grace make them every way better.

I must say something also as a monitor to you; for the business of your watchmen is to give you warning, which you are to take at your peril. Believe it, sirs, this rod has a voice, a loud voice; whether you perceive it or no, the man of wisdom will. That you therefore may approve yourselves wisdom's children, *hear ye the Lord's controversy*, and send us not to plead it with the rocks and the mountains, to as much purpose as with you; for a hearing it will have, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear. You are called to hearken to the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war; for when ambassadors are recalled, heralds are sent: none of you, I hope, have said, *We will not hearken*.

God has a controversy with you of this place, of this congregation, from the head of which two such eminently useful men have been removed in so short a time, in both of whom you thought you had goods laid up for many years. He has a controversy with us who are ministers; for hereby our hands are very much weakened, and our glory is waxen thin. Lord, *show us wherefore thou contendest with us*. It highly concerns us, I am sure, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, which is gone forth against us, and by earnest prayers to stand in the gap, at which our glory seems to be going out, and our ruin to be breaking in, that we may make good the breach. The putting out of our candles is a bad omen of the removal of our candlestick; it is, at least, a call to us, to remember whence we are fallen, and repent, lest it be removed. We know what our sins have deserved, and what Providence threatens us with, and are concerned to meet God in the way of his judgments; in such a day as this, he may well wonder if there be no intercessor; for even the Jews themselves, when our Saviour spoke of taking the

vineyard from them, and giving it to others, startled at the very mention of it, saying, *God forbid.*^a And shall we be less solicitous about privileges more precious?

The text I have read to you, will lead us both to the lamentations we have to make, and to the admonitions we have to give, on this solemn occasion.

1. In the places from which it is quoted, it is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, who, that he might prepare the way of the Lord, even in the desert, is ordered to proclaim this, *All flesh is grass*, &c. Isa. xl. 6—8. I need not tell you, John Baptist was that voice;^b it is his testimony concerning himself, and a modest testimony. He was only the voice, God was the speaker. And I am apt to think, that as John was the voice crying, so he was the grass that was to wither, and the flower that was to fade, which he was to give notice of, that the people, which mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not,^c might be satisfied he was only his forerunner; for all his glory was to be done away, and would be no glory, in comparison with the glory of the Messiah, which excelled, and would remain. John's ministry and baptism soon came to an end, and gave way to him who was to come. He himself spoke of it to his disciples, when they were jealous of the growing honour of our Lord Jesus, and he spoke it with all possible satisfaction, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*^d And Christ speaks of John's being but for a season, a burning and shining light.^e His office was *pro tempore*—for the time being, an introduction of good things to come, and his brightness like the morning star, which disappears when the sun rises. This grass began to wither about eighteen or nineteen months after his first showing unto Israel, when he was cast into prison by Herod, and was quite cut down, some time after, when he was beheaded: and his baptism did not long survive him, but his followers soon became the followers of Christ, to whom he had justly and generously consigned them, and turned them over.

Ministers, who, like John Baptist, are friends and servants of the bridegroom, like him must wither as grass, and all their glory fade. But Christ their Master, the *Word of the Lord*, the essential, eternal Word, *endureth for ever*, the *Word of life.*^f For though he also, like John Baptist, was cut off in the midst of his week,^g yet he rose again, rose to die no more; *Death has no more, no longer, dominion over him.* And of him it is witnessed that he liveth.^h This is he who by the gospel is preached unto us, as an everlasting Father, and everliving Priest: his word also, which he has spoken and delivered to us, as it is a quickening so it is a living word, the last revelation, and which shall last through all the revolutions of time to the endless ages of eternity.

2. Here it is brought in by way of instruction and encouragement to the young converts, whom the apostle in the foregoing verses is exhorting to holiness and love. Be *holy*, and *love one another*,ⁱ and so prepare yourselves for the blessedness of heaven, which consists in the perfection of holiness and love; for you are born again, not of corruptible seed,^k not of the Gentile learning, or the Jewish law, both which wither as grass, and will perish in the using, but by the word of the gospel, which is quick and powerful, and abides for ever; which will continue in the world while that stands, and in the sanctified soul while it lives: in the former it has lighted a candle which all the devils in hell cannot blow out; in the latter it has opened a well of living water, *springing up to life eternal.*

This consideration is very proper, and should be very powerful to quicken and confirm those who have delivered themselves into the mould of the gospel, and are leavened by it, that the principles they go upon are not doubtful or mutable, but eternal truths that will never fail; and though their ministers die, (Christ's followers as well as his forerunners are as grass, and their glory as a flower,) yet their faith does not die with them, for it rests not on the testimony of mortal men, but of the immortal God: they are lights, but they are not *that light*;^l they seem to be pillars, but they are not our foundation; we soon see the end, the exit, of their conversation, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him therefore let us stedfastly adhere, and in him let us encourage ourselves and one another, on such a sorrowful occasion as that which brings us together at this time.

Two doctrines naturally arise from this text,

I. That man and his glory are fading and withering. *All flesh is grass.*

II. That God and his word are everliving, and everlasting. *The word of the Lord endureth.* The former of these will furnish us with matter of lamentation, the latter of consolation; and God by his grace make both instructive, both to him that speaks and them that hear.

I. That man and his glory are fading and withering. We may truly say, This day is this Scripture fulfilled before our eyes, as we have heard so have we now seen, *All flesh is as grass*, and that grass withers. Nay, all the glory of man, all that which he is most valued and admired for, is as the flower of the grass, and that flower fadeth and falleth away.

1. Every funeral proves that *all flesh is as grass*, and that that *grass withers*. The body is here called *flesh*, because as flesh it is apt to putrify, it has no consistence, nor can any confidence be put in it; flesh is continually wasting, and would soon be consumed if not continually supplied, and, there-

^a Luke xx. 16.

^b John i. 23.

^c Luke iii. 15.

^d John iii. 30.

^e John v. 35.

^f 1 John i. 1.

3 T

^g Dan. ix. 26, 27.

^h Heb. vii. 8.

ⁱ Heb. vii. 15, 22.

^k Heb. vii. 23.

^l John i. 7, 8.

fore, from it rather than from the bones (which without the flesh are a skeleton, and the very image of death) the living body has its denomination. Flesh is sometimes put for the corruption and sinfulness of our nature, to which our frailty and mortality are owing: *The body is dead because of sin*, and therefore it is fitly called flesh when it is spoken of as withering.

All flesh is grass, that is,

(1.) It is weak, and low, and little as grass. Mankind is indeed numerous as the grass of the field, multiplies, replenishes, and covereth the earth; but like grass, it is of the earth, earthy, mean, and of small account. Alas, the kingdoms of men which make so great a noise, so great a figure, in this lower world, are but as so many fields of grass compared with the bright and glorious constellations of stars, made up of the holy and blessed inhabitants of the upper regions. Man in his present state looks great, when set in the scale against the beasts that perish; but very little, yea, less than nothing, and vanity, when compared with the angels, and spirits of just men made perfect.

Proud men think themselves like the strong and stately cedars, oaks, or pines, but they soon find themselves as grass, as the grass of the field, liable to be nipt with every frost, trampled on by every foot, continually insulted by common calamities of human life, which we can no more resist or guard ourselves against, than the grass can secure itself from the fatal blast, when the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.

(2.) It is withering, and fading, and dying as grass; having both its rise and maintenance out of the earth, it hastens to the earth, and retires to its root and foundation in the dust. It soon withers, and is gone ere we are aware. In the morning, perhaps, it is green and growing up, its aspect pleasing, its prospect promising; but when we come to look upon it in our evening work, we find it cut down and withered. Nay, the grass upon the house-top, which seems advanced above its fellows, and proud of its advancement, withers first, and is least accounted of, withers before it grows up, and never fills the mower's hand; as if the nearer it came to the habitations of men, the greater impression of frailty it received, and the plainer instruction of frailty it gave.

If it be not cut down by disease or disaster, it will soon wither of itself; it has in it the principles of its own corruption.* Age will certainly wither it, and it shall not return to the days of its youth; it will be withered in the grave, there it will be mingled with, and not distinguished from, common dust. The bones will there be unclothed presently, and the poor remains of this withered grass the worms

shall feed sweetly on. Let but the earth open her bosom a little, and it will appear like Ezekiel's vision, a *valley full of dead and dry bones*; very many they are, and lo, *they are very dry*:^m but see, with an eye of faith, what they shall be shortly; these dry bones shall live, and shall again be clothed and covered, not with corruptible flesh, but with incorruptible, when what is sown a natural body shall be raised a spiritual one.

Is all flesh grass? all, without exception of the noble, or the fair, the young, or the strong, the well-born, or well-built, the well-fed, or well-bred? Is all grass, weak and withering?

[1.] Then let us see ourselves to be grass; and humble and deny ourselves. Is the body grass? Then be not proud, be not presumptuous, be not confident of a long continuance here; forget not that the foot may crush thee. Am I grass? Then I must expect to wither, and prepare accordingly, and lay up my portion and happiness in none of the delights and accommodations of this animal life, which will all wither and perish with it, but in something suited to the nature of an immortal soul, and which will last as long as it lasts. Am I grass? Then I may wither suddenly, and know not how soon, and therefore must never be secure, nor adjourn the necessary preparations for my removal hence to any further day; but what I do, must do it quickly, before I wither, and it be too late. Grass falls; let me not be such a fool as to lay up my treasure in it. Stars fall not; let me therefore be so wise as to lay up my treasure above them, where neither moth nor rust corrupt.

Is the body grass? Then let us not indulge it too much, nor bestow too much time, and care, and pains about it, as many do, to the neglect of the better and immortal part. After all, we cannot keep it from withering, when its day shall come to fall; let us, therefore, be most solicitous to keep the soul from perishing, and to get that nourished up to life eternal; for that labour will not be in vain, but will turn to a good account.

[2.] Let us see others also to be as grass, and cease from man, because he is no more than thus to be accounted of. If all flesh be grass, then let us not trust in an arm of flesh, for it will soon be a withered arm, and unable to support and protect us; and they who make it their arm, will be like the heath in the desert, destitute and dejected. Grass is too short, too slender, to lean upon: the Egyptians are flesh, and not spirit, and therefore they shall help in vain. Let the Rock of Ages then be our stay, and let our hope always be in the Lord our God.

This is given also as a reason why we should not be afraid of the power of man, when it is most threatening, so as by it to be either driven from our

* *Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*—Death only discovers the feebleness of the human frame.—*Juv.*

^m Ezek. xxxvii. 2.

duty, or discouraged and disquieted in it: *Who art thou, what a fool, to be afraid of a man, that cannot only do no more but kill thy body, (which is our Saviour's argument,) but must himself die, and the son of man, that shall be made as grass? Sure, thou forgettest the Lord thy Maker, whom thou oughtest to fear, and on whom thou hast all imaginable encouragement to depend: if he be for thee, what can a handful of grass do against thee?*

Let this consideration also moderate our affections to all our creature comforts and enjoyments: If we set our hearts upon them, when they wither, where are we? What was too well beloved, will then be too much bewailed; and the flowers that are laid in the bosom, or much smelled to, will soonest go to decay. Let those, therefore, who have yoke-fellows, children, and friends who are dear to them, take heed of making them too dear; but labour to be as though they had none, because they are all grass, whose time is short, and the fashion of which passeth away.

Thus let this be read as the inscription on every grave, even the graves of the common people; let this be heard as the voice of every funeral knell, *All flesh is grass. But,*

2. Such a funeral as this we are now solemnizing, goes further into the text, and proves likewise, that *all the glory of man is as the flower of grass, the beauty or verdure of it, and that that flower falleth away.* If the grass wither, it follows of course, that the flower thereof falleth away; so that the Ethiopic version reads the text, *When the grass is dried the flower thereof is shaken off.* Life indeed may survive its beauties and joys, but take away that, and those fall of course.

We are now to consider, not common men, but men of distinction, and to see them withering and falling; which will bring us closer to this sad occasion. And here,

(1.) Let us inquire, What is the glory of man in this world? and what of it may be found in the character of that man, that son of man, whose death we are this day lamenting, and whose mortal part we have just now laid in bed?

There is indeed a glory of man, which is counterfeit, and mistaken for glory; Solomon says, *For men to search their own glory, is not glory*, Prov. xxv. 27. The glory men commonly pursue and search for, is no glory at all; it is nothing to the weight, the substantial weight of glory, which all who are governed by the principles of divine revelation set their eyes and hearts upon; yet, because it is taken for glory, and is courted and caressed accordingly, we must not pass it over without observing, that that also withers and falls away, as the flower of the grass, and leaves those ashamed of their pride. and

confidence, who called it glory, depend on it, and have nothing wherewith to balance the loss of it.

Is beauty and comeliness of body the glory of man? So they pass with some, who judge by the sight of the eye; but at the best, they are only the goodness of grass; they are deceitful, they are vain, they are a flower which death will certainly cut down: and commonly it is withered first: either time, or the end of time, will change the countenance; either wrinkled age, or pale death. Look into the coffin and tell me, where is the rosy cheek, the ruddy lip, the sparkling eye, the charming air, and all the delicate features: they are all cut off, like the foam upon the water. The bubble is broke, and as the prophet speaks, *Instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of well set hair baldness.* We should therefore make sure the beauty of grace, the hidden man of the heart, which neither age nor death will sully.

Is wealth the glory of man? Laban's sons thought so, when they said concerning Jacob, Of that which was our father's hath he gotten *all this glory*, Gen. xxxi. 1. But this also is a fading flower; *riches make themselves wings*, and sometimes flee away from us. However, when we take wing, we must be stripped of them, and go naked out of the world, as we came naked into it.

Is pomp and grandeur the glory of a man? That also withers away: they who are advanced ever so high must come down to the grave, and their glory shall not descend after them. Great names and titles of honour are written in the dust. And if after death they be written on the dust, yet how is the inscription reproached by that which lies under! Pompous sepulchres, like the whited ones our Saviour speaks of, appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men's bones,^a which yet they who go over them are not aware of.^c

Let us therefore be dead to these glories, not value them, nor ourselves, or others, by them, in comparison with spiritual glory; let us not envy those who have these glories, nor fret at our want or loss of them; but always look upon them with a gracious and generous contempt and indifference, as those who know better things, and hope for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, a glory that fadeth not away.

But besides these glories of men, which they who are wise can humbly put a slight upon, there is a glory, which is in this world truly the glory of man, and which they who are wise justly put a value upon; and yet that, as to its bright reflections upon this world of ours, withers and fades, and falls at death as the flowers in the grass. The continuance of the best gifts is in the other world, when they are transplanted thither, not in this.

^a Matt. xxiii. 27.

^c Luke xi. 44.

^c Matt. vi. 20, 30.

The flowers in the grass are most pleasant to the eye, and most taken notice of; those are the pride and pleasures of the spring. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like that part of the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.^p Yet the flower fades and falls away before the rest of the grass does, and the fairest is first crompt. The choicest fruits keep the worst; and that we are least sure of, which we think we have reason to be most fond of. Witness this funeral. We have left in the dust, not only grass, but the flower of the grass; one who had very much of that which is really the glory of a man in this world, and was thereby distinguished and endeared. It is one of the lilies of the field that is withered in our hand, and dropt out of it. Give me leave to show you in some instances what I think there was in him that was really the glory of a man, that you may duly lament his fall, and be affected with it.

[1.] Is a large capacity of mind the glory of a man? That he was blessed with above most I have known. Every soul is upon some account called the great soul of man; so high is it advanced above the beasts, and so nearly allied to the world of angels: but that soul which is now retired from the world, was in a peculiar manner a great soul; it was an extraordinary genius that presided in it, piercing in its searches, quick in its perceptions, and vastly extended to take in a great multitude and variety of ideas. God gave to him much of that largeness of heart which he gave to Solomon, that is, *wisdom and understanding exceeding much.*^q

Those who knew him well, and sat down under his shadow, could not but observe in all his performances, both sacred and learned, such a compass of thought, and copiousness of expression, as showed him to have an uncommon constitution of mind, formed for something great, and likely out of its abundance to enrich many: it was a soul too great indeed to be long confined to a body, and pent up in a house of clay, which is such a cloud upon the prospects, and such a clog to the elevation, of a mind thus raised and enlarged. His soul, I confess, has sometimes seemed to me fluttering and struggling to get clear of its cage, and longing to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven, to remove to the glorious light and glorious liberty of the children of God; ambitious to see that which is within the veil, and which cannot be seen in this land of darkness and mistake; where, at the best, we know but in part, and prophesy but in part, and must be content to do so, till that which is perfect is come.

[2.] Is learning to be reckoned the glory of a man? It is certainly so; for it is the elevation of that part of man which is most his honour: and the dust of a learned man we have now been mingling with the

common earth. His soul (that great and stately room) was richly furnished with all manner of precious things, and there was no reason to complain either of confusion or of emptiness in it; it was neither bare walls, nor set about with toys.

How early he began to gather, in the days of his youth, (and manna must be gathered in the morning,) we who knew him then, well remember; and were pleased to observe what great and good preparation he made for the temple, and the service of it; what a noble offering of dedicated things he brought into it, when he devoted himself to the work of the ministry; what a full stock he began to trade with, and how well able, with the good householder, to bring out of his treasury things new and old.

And while he has been trading with this stock, he has been manifestly adding to it; for there is who scatters, and yet increases; who scatters, and so increases. He sat not down content with what he had attained to, but was still eager and vigorous in the pursuit of knowledge, still pressing forward; and how greatly God prospered him in those pursuits they know very well, who for some years past have been under his tuition, and have lighted their candle at his taper; and to all others also that conversed with him, it recommended him as a lovely and pleasant flower, though the treasure being in an earthen vessel, it was but a flower of the grass, now withered and fallen away.

That part of his education which he had in the university of Glasgow, he often reflected upon with a great deal of pleasure; and took all occasions to mention with honour the learned professors at whose feet he sat there, and the great advantages he had by their instructions; which I thought myself obliged to take notice of, both in justice to them whom God made blessings to him, and to his praise likewise, that he always retained a grateful remembrance of those who were the guides of his youth. It was a great refreshment and encouragement to St. Paul, to hear that those whom he had had the teaching of, had good remembrance of him always, and that he was not out of mind when he was out of sight.

[3.] Is tenderness and humility, modesty and sweetness of temper, the glory of a man? They are so, and therefore we call compassion by the name of humanity, as if there were nothing that did better become a man than that, nor were more his ornament; this is true manhood, though another disposition, very different from it, commonly goes under that name. The most mild are really the most manly. While the fierce show themselves brutes, the gentle, and easy to be entreated, show themselves men.

And this glory of a man was one of the glories of that man we have now parted with, and it made him a flower above the common grass. On the humble in spirit God looks with particular regard, and so

should we. How often has he expressed to me such a diffidence of himself, and such a mean opinion of his own abilities, and all his performances, as has really been an hinderance to his cheerfulness, and sometimes to his usefulness! I have seldom heard him speak of any thing he did, but as one ashamed of it, though he was, as much as most, a workman that needed not to be ashamed. Such an humble sense as this of our own defects, will contribute much to our improvement. Those who never think they do well enough, will be striving (and not in vain) to do better; while those who always think they do well, are in danger of doing worse.

I have likewise observed in him a most tender concern for others, and for their comfort, and a care that all about him should be easy and pleased; his conversation was as endearing as it was edifying: herein he aimed to follow the great apostle, who made himself the servant of all, and became all things to all men, that he might recommend religion to their good opinion; and a greater than he, for even Christ pleased not himself, but taught us by his example, as well as by his doctrine, to deny ourselves.

His compassion for the sick and pained, the poor and needy, was that which first put him upon the study of physic, as his *παρρηγορ*—his *by-business*, in which how serviceable he was to the sons and daughters of affliction, and how sensibly he sympathized with them, many who have been the better for it will witness. Bowels of mercies well become the elect of God, who are holy and beloved.

[4.] Is the faithful discharge of the ministry of the gospel the glory of a man? It is so, and it was his glory, and made him one of the flowers of the grass, a sweet savour to God in them who are saved and in them that perish. This earthen vessel, which is now broken and laid aside, had a treasure lodged in it of inestimable value, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What greater glory can a man have on this side heaven, than to be employed as an ambassador for Christ, and an angel of the church, and to obtain mercy of the Lord, to be found faithful in that embassy, in that ministration. We have all the reason in the world to humble and abase ourselves; but the office we are in we have reason to magnify. Let none be ashamed of it, but those who are a shame to it: then indeed we may blush to think that we are called by so worthy a name, when we walk unworthy of it, otherwise it is a high, because a holy, calling.

It is now about eleven years since, with an exemplary seriousness and humility, he laid his hand to that plough, immediately upon the death of my

honoured father, who had been one of the guides of his youth; how hardly he was persuaded to succeed him, and how modestly he preached his first sermon on Elihu's apology, *Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom*, I well remember. How can I forget that ingenious and judicious confession of faith, which he made some time after at his ordination, and with what a clear head, and fixed heart, he then solemnly devoted himself to the service of God in the work of the ministry, and with such a diffidence of himself, as was really a presage of something great; for *before honour is humility*.

How abundantly he laboured in the work of the Lord, and what pains he took in expounding, catechising, praying, preaching, visiting, as well as studying, many here can witness. I wish his dust were not a witness of it, fearing that his close application of mind to his work, his indefatigable prosecution of his several designs to do good, together with the tenderness of his spirit, and the too deep impressions which his cares and griefs made upon it, contributed to the shortening his days. They talk of some who live fast, who hasten their own deaths by their intemperance; but truly, those who live ill, cannot be said to live fast; for they do not live at all to any purpose, they do not the work of life, nor answer the ends of it: rather say, they die fast; for those who live in pleasures are dead while they live.' But here was one who did indeed live fast, did spend and was spent in the business of life, and gave this reason why he took so much pains in his work, because he thought he had but a little time to be working in. His heart seemed to be much set on that Scripture, and it is not long since he preached upon it on occasion of the death of a worthy good friend of his at Whitchurch, *I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day; the night comes when no man can work*.

[5.] Is great usefulness the glory of a man? and a delight in doing good? No doubt it is so: it was the honour of our blessed Saviour himself, and is mentioned as one of the proofs of his divine mission, that he went about not only working miracles, but doing good; and it was the honour of our deceased brother, in his low and narrow sphere, and according to the grace given to him.

Besides the labours of his ministry, what pains did he take for some years of late in the education of youth, for which God had every way wonderfully qualified him, and what pleasure did he take in those pains, because he had reason to think he did good that way, not only to the few that he taught, but to the many who hereafter might be taught by them. And there are those who, I hope, will, while they live, bless God for him, and for his happy care in that part of his work, in which he was as in his element,

and by the fruits of which, being dead, he will yet speak.

And his spending his spare hours in caring for and ministering to the sick, and so doing good to the bodies of others, (perhaps to the prejudice of his own,) was a further instance of his delight in being useful, and a benefactor to mankind. And *who is he that will harm us, or can, if we be thus αγαθοι μιμηται—followers of him that is good,* and doth good, in his goodness and beneficence?

Well, here is the glory of man, of this man; let us be ambitious of this glory, and not of vain glory. See true honour in the paths of wisdom and virtue, and seek it there. This is honour that comes from God, and is in his sight of great price. He who in humility, sincerity, and holy love and charity, lays out himself to serve Christ and his generation in his place, shall be accepted of God, which is what he aims at, and over and above, shall be approved of all wise and good men.

(2.) Having seen this flower flourishing, we are now to see it withering, and the glory of this man fallen away; the black and dark side of that cloud which we have been taking a pleasant prospect of the bright side of. As to himself, this glory is not fallen, is not lost, is not stained, is not touched by death; it is not like worldly honour, laid in the dust, and buried in the grave: no, this flower is transplanted from the garden on earth to the paradise in heaven, where it shall never fade, nor fall away, nor ever so much as close, or hang the head. This that was a star in the right hand of Christ, a star that helped to show the way to Bethlehem, though withdrawn from our orb, shines as the sun in the firmament of the Father; shines to himself, to his Master, and the world of holy angels and glorified saints. This great soul is there filled, its capacities vastly enlarged, and yet replenished; his learning is there completed; his searches after knowledge all crowned, and all his longings satisfied; he who knew but in part, and prophesied but in part, and was lamenting the deficiencies of both, has now attained to that which is perfect, and that which is in part is done away, he having no more occasion for it. The candles are put out when the sun rises. His graces are perfected too, and all the remainders of corruption done away. Whatever men say, there are no consummate virtues on this side heaven, nor any finished man. The great good work in this world is in the doing. In the New Jerusalem it will be said, *It is done.*

But it is his usefulness that we want, that is it which we bewail the loss of; as to us and the world we are yet in, this grass is withered, this flower is faded and gone, this star is fallen. The works of good men follow them, but they forsake us, and we

are deprived of the benefit of them; and therefore, however in love to them we may see some cause to rejoice, for they are better where they are than where they were, yet as to ourselves, we are losers by it; nor can we say of good ministers what was true of our Master, that it was expedient for us that they should go away. No, their abiding in the flesh would certainly be more profitable for us. Our Saviour considered that, when he said, concerning his disciples, *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.*

This is the lamentation thereof, and shall be for a lamentation, that we have lost one whose continuance with us would have been a great blessing to our dark world. Over him we may mourn in the ancient forms of mourning, *Ah, my brother! Ah, my lord! and Ah, his glory!* The flower we were pleased with the enjoyment of, we are now pained for the withering of; *Ichabod*, where is the glory of it? It is gone, it is fallen away.

[1.] We have lost an eminently good and useful man, and one who was by the liberal hand both of nature and grace, that is, the God of nature and the God of grace, made truly valuable and desirable.

You of this congregation have lost a faithful guide in the things of God, an interpreter, one among a thousand, a master of your assembly, whose words were as goads to quicken, and as nails to fasten. May that fruit of them remain among you now he is gone. One whose profiting appeared unto all men, and who was likely to have been yet more and more serviceable to your faith and holiness, and longer the helper of your joy; who was far from any thing that savoured of faction or party-making, but was entirely governed by principles of catholic charity; in the essentials of religion zealous, in things indifferent, and which are controverted among the wise and good, moderate; in both conscientious.

The loss his pupils have of him I cannot express, nor they neither, so admirably fitted was he with a head and heart to serve them. What a tender concern he had for them and their welfare, was very evident, and how much he laid to heart the death of two of them who were very hopeful a little after he came to this town, and how long the impressions of that affliction stuck by him, those about him observed. They having been so dear to him, I hope his memory will always be precious to them, and they will not only do him honour at his death, by lamenting their loss of him, but do him honour after his death, by a diligent building upon the foundation he laid.

We who are ministers have lost one who was very much our ornament and strength, and likely to be more and more so, and that is come upon us which St. Paul dreaded in the death of Epaphroditus,

Sorrow upon sorrow," of this kind, we are *broken with breach upon breach*.

As for his near and dear relations, when I come to put my soul into their stead, I must say, *Their heart knows its own bitterness*; but a stranger cannot pretend to describe it. Call them *Mara*, for the *Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with them*.^v

[2.] We have lost him in the midst of his days, in the midst of his usefulness, when he had not reached quite half way to that period of human life which Moses long since fixed at seventy. This is a very great aggravation of our loss, and makes the burthen lie very heavy upon us. When God would make the land tremble, and every one mourn, he threatens that he will cause the sun to go down at noon; and so darken the earth in the clear day. This is our case; here is a sun gone down at noon, eclipsed in its meridian lustre; a valuable life, to our great surprise, cut off abruptly, without the previous notice of age, or any chronical distemper. At night the sun knows its going down, and we expect it; we are none of us so ignorant as to count upon an eternal day within the horizon of time; but till night we think ourselves sure of the sun. What a confusion is it to us then if it go down at noon! So uncertain are all our enjoyments, and so little do we know what a few days may bring forth concerning us or them, even the dearest.

We looked that this had been he who should long have been a burning and shining light among us; that he should long have strengthened our hands, and adorned our interest, and that we and ours should have reaped much fruit from his labours; such a workman we hoped might have been an instrument of gathering in a great harvest of souls to Christ, might have been a spiritual father to many children, nay, to many fathers; but our expectations are dashed, and laid in the dust. *We looked for light, but behold obscurity*; we forgot that the life we valued so was a vapour, which, as it proves, appears for a little while, and then vanishes away, and leaves us astonished. We said, Surely this life shall comfort us, concerning our work, and the toil of our hands; but behold his death does so much the more afflict us. We were exceeding glad of the gourd, and said, under its shadow we shall live, but little thought it would so soon have withered! Lord, *what is man at his best estate*?

[3.] That which yet further aggravates our grief, is that we have few such left behind. I know God has the residue of the Spirit, and can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham. But which way to look for such men as these, we do not see. Here is a breach made, and what prospect have we of the repair of it? Our hands are weakened, and who shall strengthen them? A gap is made, and who

shall fill it up? Jehovah-jireh—*let the Lord provide* for us; for how to provide for ourselves we know not. We have too much reason to renew the prophet's complaint, *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits; my soul desired the first ripe fruits; but alas! where are the clusters?* It is the Lord's doing, and we must acquiesce in it: if we must be emptied and brought low, his will be done. *Let us now fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great; but let us not fall into the hands of man*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

(3.) Let us, in the next place, inquire what is our duty now we are lamenting the fall of such a flower of the grass, that we may sow in these tears.

[1.] Let us be deeply humbled for our sins, which have provoked God thus to contend with us; into this channel let us turn our tears, and then they will turn to a good account. Sorrow for sin is that godly sorrow which is not to be repented of. O that the providence of this day might have this good effect upon us, to open springs of repentance in us, that we may look not only on our dying Master, but on our dead and dying ministers, and mourn. Ministers are sent, by the labours of their lives to be the death of our sins, to bruise the head of those old serpents, as instruments in Christ's hand. Is this work done? Is sin crucified and mortified in you? If not, sin is the death of your ministers, who should have been its death. Your unmortified lusts are the greatest mortification to your ministers; it is sin that silences them; it is sin that slays them; perhaps efficiently, at least to such a tender spirit as this was, people's unprofitableness, and unsuitable walking, saddens their ministers' hearts, and perhaps does more than you are aware of to the shortening of their days. If we improve not the advantages we have by a powerful lively ministry, it is just with God to deprive us of it.

O think the worse of sin for this, and resolve never to be reconciled to it; lay the axe to the root of that mischievous thing, which separates between you and so much good. Is there any of you in an unconverted state? Return to God now in compliance with the call of this providence. Have any of you been hitherto cumbering the ground? Now at length begin to bring forth fruit, lest all the dressers of the vineyard be removed, the rain withheld, and you laid under the curse of barrenness, the just punishment of the sin of barrenness.

[2.] Let us by prayer and universal reformation go forth to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and stand in the gap to turn away his wrath, that he may not make a full end. If you have any interest at the throne of grace, improve it now: let your closets and families witness for you, that you

are of those whose hearts tremble for the ark of God : O lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left, that it may yet be left and increased. At such a time as this God wonders if there be no intercessor ; which in another place is thus expressed, *He wonders if there be none to uphold* ; which implies, that those who intercede on the behalf of the declining interests of God's kingdom, do really uphold them, and help to recover them. O pray that God would pour out a double portion of his Spirit on those who survive ; and if the Spirit be but poured out upon us from on high, even the wilderness will soon become a fruitful field for all this.

And if you would have your prayers effectual, you must return to him who smites you. For God's sake, for precious Jesus's sake, for your own souls' sake, for your dear ministers' sakes, if you love them, and would keep them alive, if you would comfort them, and reap the comfort and benefit of their labours, leave your sins ; amend what is amiss in your hearts, and lives, and families ; be reformed by this.

The death of good ministers is not a judgment upon them, it is their gain, the happy period of their toils and griefs, *They rest from their labours*, and are *entered into the joy of their Lord* ; but it is a judgment upon you ; it is your loss, and should be your grief. To you therefore, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men : O that you would hear the voice of the Lord's controversy, and answer the intention of it, which is to part between you and your sins.

[3.] Let the withering of this flower be a seasonable conviction to us of the vanity of this world. Let it help to take our hearts off from it, and awaken us to think of leaving it. Let us learn to cease from man, from such men, for even their breath is in their nostrils, and not raise our expectations too high from them. Are such *flowers as these withered*, the choicest flowers that grow on this earth ? And shall we expect happiness and satisfaction in any thing under the sun, in any thing that springs out of this earth, or is found in it ?

When such a one dies in his full strength ; one who was so likely to live, and live to good purpose ; why should we count upon many years to come, or think of death as a thing at a distance ? If the flowers be thus withered and cut down, let the weeds expect to be plucked up : for if this be done in the green trees, what shall be done in the dry ? If the fruitful flourishing trees be removed, let us who cumber the ground, not expect to stand long. The Lord awaken us all, by this and the like providences, to consider our latter end, and to make necessary preparations for it with all diligence.

[4.] Let this providence help to endear heaven to us, and draw up our hearts and affections thither. The glory even of the saints in this world, is as the

flower of the grass, withering and fading ; but it is not so in that world, where they are crowned with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They are not there as the flower when it shooteth forth in its weakness, but as the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Converse much with that world, frequently contemplate that glory, till by the Spirit of the Lord you be in some measure changed into the same image, even the image of the heavenly.

I believe your ministers were very dear to you ; let them be so still. Though while they were continued to you, they were more yours than they are ; yet now they are gone to heaven, they are far more excellent than they were, more wise, and more holy, and every way better. Believe this, and love them, and long to be with them. Think whither they are gone, and let your hearts by faith, hope, love, and holy devotion, follow them to the things which are above, on which as Christians we are to set our affections. To the upper world their nobler part is removed *out of the body*, thither let ours attend them while in the body. Think where they are, and sit with them in heavenly places ; keep up a spiritual communion, not only with the innumerable company of angels, but with the spirits of just men made perfect, to whom, as believers, we are already come. Think what they are doing, and join with them, as well as you can, by your humble, thankful praises of *him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb*. As we pray, so let us endeavour, to do the will of God on earth, as the holy angels and blessed saints above are doing it. Think of the joy they have entered into, and let it make death desirable to you, that if in life you follow them, who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises, you shall at death remove to them : let the death of your dear friends and ministers, make you think with desire and pleasure of that removal.

And here I cannot forbear transcribing some expressions of that blessed martyr St. Cyprian, which have sometimes much affected me, and are much to the same purpose with this head I am upon, and therefore I shall not translate them. *Amplectamur diem qui assignat singulos domicilio suo, qui nos isthinc ereptos et laqueis secularibus exutos paradiso restituit et regno caelesti—Let us embrace the day which assigns each to his habitation, which takes us from these earthly snares, and gives us to paradise and the heavenly kingdom.—Quid non properamus et currimus ut patriam nostram videre, ut parentes salutare, possimus ! Magnus illic nos carorum numerus expectat, frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat : jam de sua immortalitate segura, et adhuc de nostra incolumitate sollicita. Illic apostolorum gloriosus chorus ; illic prophetarum exultantium numerus—What speed we make, when the object is to see our country, or to salute our parents ! An immense multitude of dear*

friends await our arrival, secure themselves of their own immortality, and anxious only for our salvation. There is the glorious company of the apostles ; there are the exulting prophets.—Ad hos, fratres dilectissimi, avidè cupiditate properemus, ut cum his cito esse possimus, &c.—To these, beloved brethren, let us hasten with all possible expedition. Serm. 4. De Mortalitate.

II. Though man and glory are fading and withering, yet God and his word are ever-living and everlasting. Ministers die, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. The word of the gospel, that last revelation, after which we are to look for no other, does not change, shall not cease, till the mystery of God shall be finished. The glory of the law was done away, but that of the gospel remains. The glory of ministers falls away, but not the glory of the word they are ministers of. The prophets, indeed, do not live for ever, but the words which God commanded them did, and will take hold, as words quick and powerful. On such a sad occasion as this, it is very seasonable to consider, *that the word of the Lord endures for ever ; that is,*

1. There is in the word of the Lord an everlasting rule of faith and practice for us to be ruled by ; so that our religion *shall not* die with our ministers, and therefore *should not* : in the word it will still live, and therefore must still live with us.

(1.) It is our comfort, that Christianity shall not die with our ministers, nor that light be buried in their graves. Were the divine truths and laws intrusted with tradition, those invaluable treasures as the world goes, would in time be lost, or wretchedly embezzled. While religion passed in that way of conveyance before Moses, men lived to be very old ; yet that did not secure it, but it almost perished : care is taken, therefore, now to preserve it in the written word, and it is its effectual security, so that it can never perish, neither shall any pluck it out of our hands. If we were all in our graves, our religion would be found in our Bibles, pure and complete, and by that sure word of prophecy, a much firmer deed of entail than an uninterrupted succession of pastors, would be transmitted to the last ages of time. Thus upheld, the throne of Christ shall endure for ever, and be as the days of heaven.

(2.) It is our duty not to let our Christianity die with our ministers, but let the word of Christ, contained in the Scriptures, still dwell in us richly, that is still the same : when we have another minister we have not another gospel, nor durst an angel himself bring us any other. You see gospel ministers, like the priests under the law, cannot continue by reason of death, but as Christ's priestly office by his intercession in heaven, so his prophetic office by his word and Spirit on earth, are unchangeable ; the word of God lives and abides for ever.

The death of our ministers should therefore make

us love our Bibles the better, and be more conversant with them, for in them the Spirit speaks expressly, speaks to us. Your ministers said no other things but what are contained in the Scriptures ; blessed Paul himself witnessed no other things but what agreed with Moses and the prophets ; Christ himself bid his hearers search the Scriptures ; that sacred book you have to be your guide, if your teachers should be removed into corners, into graves. Let me engage you therefore, in God's name, to stick to your Bibles, stick close to them ; consult the Scriptures as your oracle, as your touchstone ; speak according to this light, walk according to this rule, and let its perpetuity engage you constantly and unmovably to persevere to the end in your adherence to it. Does the word of the Lord endure for ever ? Let it be in you a well of living water.

You profess to make the Scripture the commanding rule of your worship, and say, you cannot admit any religious rites but what are there appointed ; but you contradict yourselves, and give the lie to your profession, if you do not make the Scripture the commanding rule of your conversation also. Govern your thoughts, words, and actions by the word of God, and not by the will of the flesh, or the course of this world. As our religion may be found in our Bibles, so our Bibles should be found in our hearts and lives. Value and love a ministry that will lead you into the understanding and application of the Scriptures, for these will make the man of God (both the minister and the Christian) perfect, and thoroughly furnished both for every good word and work.

2. There is in the word of the Lord an everlasting fountain of comfort and consolation for us to be refreshed and encouraged by, and to draw water from with joy ; and an everlasting foundation, on which to build our hopes. When we find that all flesh is as grass, and even the flower of it withers, there is no comfort like this, that the word of the Lord endures for ever. Hence let me recommend strong and lasting consolation to those who are this day lamenting their withered grass and fallen flower.

(1.) With this, let me comfort the near and dear relations of him that we now have parted with ; the flower you delighted in, and promised yourselves so much from, is withered and fallen, and laid in the dust ; but the word of the Lord endures for ever, and that will never fail you ; the more you expect from it by faith, the more you will find in it to your comfort ; it is by the word that God comforts them who are cast down ; and because it endures for ever, they are everlasting consolations that are drawn from it.

Let this comfort the aged parents ; they have the word of God to be their stay, when this staff of their old age is broken under them ; God will be better

to you than ten sons, than ten such sons, a God all-sufficient, a God that is enough.

Let the fatherless children, who are not yet capable of knowing their loss, be left with the everlasting Father, and be sure that the word of the Lord endures for ever; *With thee the fatherless findeth mercy, and the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

Let the widow, the prophet's widow, trust in God, and that word of his which endures for ever, the comfort of that afflicted state. *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name*, and he has *betrothed thee to him for ever*, by a bond which death itself cannot untie, in loving-kindness and tender mercies. Let this be the comfort of the house of mourning, though it be not so as in months past; though it be a beheaded, broken family, yet the covenant of grace made with the house, and the church in it, is well ordered in all things, and sure; and let that be all the desire, for it is all the salvation, 2 Sam. xiii. 5. and may be so improved in this cloudy and dark day.

(2.) With this, let me encourage the students. The Lord has taken your master from your head to-day. I know you loved him dearly, and doubt not but you truly lament the loss of him, and are ready to say, *My father, my father!* Your counsels are ruffled and your measures broke by this providence; but remember, the word of the Lord endures for ever. Study your Bibles, and you will find them the best tutors; tutors that will never die; in them learn Christ, and you have the best learning; let God's word be your delight and your counsellor, make it familiar to you, and when you go it shall lead you, when you sleep it shall keep you, when you wake it shall talk with you. Take God's statutes as your heritage for ever, and let them be the rejoicing of your hearts. Grow in Scripture knowledge, and in the things of God; speak Scripture language, accustom yourselves to it; that is sound speech which cannot be condemned.

And for your comfort, the seed which serves the Lord, among whom the word of the Lord endures, shall be accounted to him for a generation. The Lord God of the holy will never forget, will never forsake, the sons of the prophets who adhere to him, and are mindful of him. Be ye humble, diligent, and faithful, and you will find God the same to you that he was to him who is gone; and the best are no better than he made them; you will find Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him I commend you, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to make you instrumental to build up others in holy faith to the heavenly kingdom.

(3.) Let me, with this, speak comfortably to this poor congregation. These two things are come upon

thee, the death of two ministers; two *such* ministers! *Wherewith shall I comfort thee?* What more comfortable than this, That *the word of the Lord endures for ever?* You have not lost that. You may perhaps be tempted to think it is in vain to seek for such helps, such helpers, any more; you have procured some of the best, and God has removed them from you, perhaps for the same reason that he once and again lessened Gideon's army, because it was too numerous for him to work by. God delights to perfect strength in weakness; he will secure to himself a succession, and, I hope, to you too. Bless God for your aged minister who is yet continued to you; value him the more; seek out for another in the room of him that is gone, and God, I trust, will send you one to be a helper of your faith and joy.

Let God's word endure for ever your guide, and it will endure for ever your comfort. Love the Scriptures, make much of them, be daily learning yourselves, and teaching your children, out of them. Christ's scholars never learn above their Bibles, while they are here under tutors and governors; at death they shall take their leave of them, and go thither where there is no occasion for them.

4. Let us all, both ministers and people, comfort ourselves and one another with this word: *All flesh is grass*; but the Eternal Spirit is the life of our souls. The glory of man fades and falls away, but the glory of God-man does not: on his head shall the crown ever flourish. The glory of the gospel is the same; and the crown of glory prepared for the faithful, fadeth not away; in these is continuance. The foundation of God stands sure for all this, and it is an everlasting foundation.

Let not therefore the atheists or profane, those enemies of our holy religion, rejoice against us, though we fall, though our grass withers, and our flowers fall thus; for though we sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto us, an everlasting light, and our God our glory. His word shall endure for ever, though the ministers of it are lights that are but a little while with us, and it is only for a season that we rejoice in their light. That never-failing word is the firm and immovable rock upon which the church is built, and therefore the gates of hell cannot, shall not, prevail against it. While the earth remains, the seed time and the harvest of the world will continue; nay, heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of Christ never shall, not one *iota* or tittle of it. Divine revelation shall ride out the storm of all opposition, and triumph over the powers of darkness; shall not only keep its ground, but gain its point; shall go forth conquering and to conquer, till the mystery of God shall be finished, the mystical body completed, and the kingdom delivered up to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.