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A Better Country.

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A Better Country.

AN ASSOCIATION SERMON,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

AT ORANGEBURG, (S. C.)

Nov. 6th, 1809.

BY JOHN M. ROBERTS, A. M.

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"They desire a better country, that is an Heavenly." Heb. xi. 16.

IN this biographical chapter which treats of immortal heroes and invincible martyrs, the Apostle, sublimely and pathetically, delineates and exemplifies the nature, operations and triumphs of evangelical faith. Every stroke of his inimitable pencil, demonstrates that, he paints from the glowing image in his own inspired breast. He collects a bright cloud of faithful witnesses. He marshals, before our admiring eyes, a devout, magnanimous veteran phalanx of antediluvian and postdiluvian saints; of patriarchs and prophets, judges and kings, of male and even *female* heroes in the cause of God. We behold these intrepid, unconquerable sons and daughters of the King of Sion, singing songs of praise and shouting victory, in the hottest battles, in the most fiery trials and deepest waters of affliction. After suffering in bonds and prisons, in dens and in caves, in mountains and in deserts—After subduing kingdoms of darkness, quenching the violence of fire, and stopping the mouths of lions, these fearless servants of the most high God, are crowned with celestial laurels. Under the storms of persecution and the edge of glittering swords, they breathe the undaunted spirit, and utter the appropriate, triumphant language of St. Paul. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things, that are seen, are temporal, but the things, that are not seen, are eternal. Neither tribulation nor distress, sword nor famine, principalities nor powers, things present nor things to come, life nor death, shall separate us

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day. It is better to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. O death ! where is thy sting ! O grave ! where is thy victory !” This is the spirit, this is the power, this the language and the victory of that supernatural gift, that spiritual principle, that cardinal virtue, that divine grace—Faith ; which, in all ages, generations and nations, has influenced, governed and characterised, the sincere, humble disciples of our adorable Redeemer.

Our text is fraught, is impregnated with the spirit of this primary, christian grace ; and therefore the doctrine of its nature, importance, necessity, and consolations as a fundamental principle of our holy Religion, will be the first proposition discussed and illustrated in this discourse.

Arguments to prove, that it is vital, genuine faith, with its concomitant, holy lights, which enkindles an ardent desire for the heavenly country ; and that the heavenly country is infinitely better than any earthly country, will constitute our second proposition.

We shall, then, conclude with a practical application of the subject—

May the spirit of divine wisdom assist hearers and speaker !

We are, in the first place, to discuss and illustrate the nature, importance, necessity and consolations of evangelical faith—In the first verse of the chapter, containing our text, we have a concise, comprehensive, grand definition of this characteristic of regenerated souls. “ Faith, says the Apostle, is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen”—True faith substantiates, embodies, realizes, and approximates beings, objects and enjoyments, invisible, distant and future. It penetrates through, and looks beyond a world of clouds, “ and the dark valley of the shadow of death.” —It gives us eyes to see and ears to hear the elements melting with fervent heat, the sun darkened, the moon turned to blood, the stars falling from Heaven, the sound of the last trump, the graves opening, the dead arising, and the universal conflagration : It beholds the eternal judge descending, seated on his august throne, all nations, and all worlds gathered before his dread tribunal ; the books opened, the process of the tremendous trial, the witnesses and testimonies, the final decision, and the irreversible sentences. Faith unbolts the harsh sounding iron doors of Hell, and alarms us with the

most terrific spectacles, frightens us with the most ghastly objects and gloomy scenes—with fallen angels in chains of darkness, “scarred with thunder,” lakes of unquenchable fire, worms that never die, smoke ascending up for ever and ever, eternal wailing and gnashing of teeth, groans that never cease, sorrows without end, and torments everlasting! But this lamp of pilgrims, this pillar of fire in time’s dark night changes the scene, unlocks the pearly gates of Heaven, and discloses to our transported view, the beatific glories of the adorable Trinity; the radiant company of holy angels, and glorified Church of disembodied Saints: It delights our eyes with rivers of pleasure and oceans of joy; and charms our ears with the golden harps of seraphs and the enrapturing songs of cherubs.

“Faith works by love and purifies the heart. It teaches us to deny ourselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly.” It enables us unreservedly, with soul, heart, mind and strength, to receive, love and revere the whole testimony, record and revelation of God. It fully and satisfactorily convinces us, that “all scripture is given by divine inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness.” By the energies of this holy vital principle, we gratefully, gladly and cordially embrace and adore Jesus Christ, as the only Redeemer of guilty, sinful, condemned, ruined man. In his incarnation, active and passive obedience, righteousness, passion, death, resurrection and intercession, we realise and experience by faith, atonement, justification, adoption, peace, sanctification and eternal life. Faith rests upon him as its only solid, its adamant foundation. It flies to him as its only sanctuary, asylum, city of refuge and ark of safety. It follows him as its only guide; and walks in him as the “way, the truth and the life.” It is cemented, incorporated with him, as the branches with the vine, the stones with the edifice, and the body with the head. Like the vital fluid through the various vessels of the animal system, true faith flows and circulates thro’ the whole system of evangelical piety, giving it life, motion, vigor, symmetry and beauty. As the planet, on which we live, would be dark, cold, sterile and useless, without the vivifying, cheering beams of the Sun, so would religion be, without faith. Apostolic, operative, fruit-bearing faith, is, therefore, the life and soul of pure and undefiled Religion.

In the gloom of their guilty fears and despondency, what caused hope and peace to dawn in the hearts of our federal parents? It was faith in the true Messiah, the promised seed of the woman. What rendered Abel’s offerings holy and accept-

able to the Lord? Faith in the Mediator of the new covenant; in the blood of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. What immortalised Enoch, as the man who walked with God, and matured his virtues for transplantation to the heavenly country, without the dissolution of the body? Faith in him, who is the resurrection and the life. When impiety, like a plague, had infected the whole human species with incurable malignity, what preserved Noah and his family from its pestilential, fatal influence? It was faith in him, who was the antitype of the ark, and who delivers all, who believe on him, from a deluge of vengeance. When Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other three unpardonable cities were consumed with burning streams of fire and brimstone, what secured Lot's life and escape? Faith in him, who snatches penitent, believing sinners, as brands, from everlasting burnings. When the venerable patriarch, the father of the faithful, received the strange, mysterious command, to sacrifice his beloved, dearest son, what armed him with fortitude to obey the shocking unexampled mandate? It was faith in him, who in lively, significant colours, was typified by Isaac, was crucified on Mount Calvary and became a propitiation, for the remission of sins. What protected the children of Israel from the awful judgments of that tragical night, in which the destroying angel passed thro' the rebellious, incorrigible land of Egypt, and slew all the first born of man and beast? It was faith in him, who was a "Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, and whose blood cleanseth from all sin." What determined and emboldened Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to answer the idolatrous, tyrannical Nebuchadnezzar without timidity and say, "Be it known unto thee, O King! we will not serve thy God, nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up. Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace?" It was faith in the son of God, who walks with his disciples through flames, and suffers not a hair of their heads to be singed. What gladdened the soul of the devout, old Simeon and made him exclaim, "Lord, now lettest thou, thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It was faith, whose eye is strong and vigorous, when our natural eyes are dim with age and our bodies feeble with decrepitude. When Stephen, the proto-martyr, fell a victim to bloody persecution under a storm of stones, what opened the portals of Heaven, and gave him a full vision of his merciful intercessor at the right hand of God? It was faith in him, who, with a celestial smile, says to all his faithful, dying saints, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joys of your Lord."

This, my Brethren, is not that theoretic, merely historic, spurious, speculative, inefficient Faith, which leaves our hearts carnal, our affections frozen, our consciences sleeping, our understandings darkened and our wills unsanctified. Such a false, illegitimate Faith makes us imagine ourselves rich, whilst we are poor, clothed in purple, whilst we are in rags, full of spiritual discernment, whilst we are blind, and safe whilst we are in the most imminent danger. Let the professors of this superficial, pharisaic, hypocritical Faith possess the tongues of men and angels, and they will still be nothing but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. They will be strangers to the power of Godliness, and far from the kingdom of Heaven.

You, my Christian brethren, you from experience, from a gracious, happy experience, know and feel the nature, importance, necessity and consolations of saving evangelical Faith. You are experimental witnesses, that this heart anatomising, soul-illuminating principle, prostrates, at the foot of the cross, every lofty thought and proud imagination—that it strips sinners of their fig-leaf righteousness, makes them detest their abominable idols, and forsake their sandy foundations—that it annihilates human merit and legal hope—that it stops the mouth of unsanctified reason and vain philosophy—that it constrains all, who feel its power, to acknowledge themselves guilty, condemned and exposed to the wrath of an angry God, without an interest in Jesus Christ. When, by the effectual saving operations of the Holy Spirit, you were convinced of sin, righteousness and judgment to come, did you not feel and see your hearts “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” With ten thousand voices, did you not hear ten thousand crimes crying to Heaven for vengeance? When the inflexible justice, the spotless holiness, and immutable truth of God, began by his violated law, to roll thunder, to flash lightning, and to uncover the bottomless pit to your view, did not your awakened, alarmed souls, quake and tremble? Whilst you felt the pangs of conviction sharper than a two edged sword—whilst you were eating wormwood and gall—whilst your wounded spirits were bleeding—whilst you were bitterly crying, “to whom shall we go,” where shall we find help, “is there no balm in Gilead, no physician there?” At that critical, awful, tremulous moment of extremity, did not the sun of righteousness shine into your hearts with healing under his wings? Did not a heavenly voice sweeter than music, say to you, “Your sins are forgiven, go in peace and sin no more?” Then were you enabled to believe in Him, who has been made “unto you, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” The Leopard’s spots

and the Ethiopian's sable hue were changed. The rock was softened and the steel melted. O! what a sacred tide of love, gratitude and joy rushed through all the avenues and channels of your penitent, believing, regenerated, reconciled souls! May we not, with propriety, say, that the graces, principles and virtues of vital Religion form a golden, celestial, everlasting chain, which is fastened to the cross of our compassionate Redeemer, and reaches to the throne of Heaven, where it brightens into unfading glory and immortal bliss? For those cloudless, serene, happy regions, where Faith is converted into vision and Hope into fruition, do you not my Brethren, feel the most ardent predilection and inextinguishable love? This question leads us to prove that evangelical Faith alone, with its concomitant holy lights, enkindles an ardent desire for the heavenly country, and that the heavenly country is infinitely better than any earthly country—This is the second and last proposition to be discussed and illustrated.

Do not your own experiences and consciences, my Christian Brethren, bear testimony, that Faith in the merciful author and finisher of your salvation alone, has set your affections on things above and taught you to seek treasures in Heaven, which neither moth nor rust can corrupt. Whilst shut out from the light of Faith, and in worldly prosperity, were you not disposed to say to your souls, "Eat, drink and be merry, for you have much goods laid up for many years"—Did not your heart secretly say, "Who is the Lord, that we should serve him, or what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" Did you not in your affections worship the mammon of unrighteousness, the creature more than the creator? And did not the language of your conduct say to God and godliness, to Jesus Christ and his Gospel, to the Holy Ghost and all his teachings, to Heaven and all its ineffable glories—"Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of you?" In a state of unbelief, impenitence and unregeneracy, were you not under the dismal shades of this error, this infatuation and illusion? And what light dispersed these shades of death and illumined your souls with the beams of heavenly truth? Was it the light of unassisted reason, of philosophy, or education? All these lights condensed in one focus, are too feeble to dart a single ray through the black clouds of guilt and human depravity. Celestial rays, emanating from the sun of righteousness, brought you from darkness into the marvellous light of salvation, and made you willing to deny yourselves and take up your cross, renouncing the world, the flesh and the devil. You can feelingly, thankfully and joyfully adopt St. Peter's language and say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." You consider yourselves to be exiles, strangers and pilgrims on earth. Knowing that you have no continuing city, no permanent residence in this world, you are marching with courage and ardor to the heavenly Canaan. A foretaste of the fruit of that better country, inflames your desires and quickens your progress. You are fully satisfied, that the heavenly is infinitely better than any earthly country, because, in the first place, it is perfectly exempt from sin, whose poisonous breath has infected this globe with all its contents and appendages—whose prolific seed has given birth to innumerable evils of every name, size, complexion and form—whose dismal, portentous shadow has enveloped the whole human race, in an intellectual and moral eclipse. Sin tore the immaculate crown of original rectitude from our heads, obscured the lustre of reason, and kindled war among our passions. Sin is the parent of guilt, remorse, ignorance, malice, jealousy, revenge, envy, vanity, pride, calumny, strife, fraud, avarice, murder, adultery and blasphemy. Sin is the greatest plague, burden and torment we have on this side of the grave. As long as we tabernacle in the flesh, this insidious, formidable enemy will assail and harass us. Sometimes, it pierces like a thorn in the side, sometimes bites like an adder, and at other times, rushes on us like a roaring lion. Has not every christian in this assembly, frequent occasion to use the language of St. Paul: "O! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!—when I would do good, evil is present with me"—but blessed be the God of all power and grace, the night of sin, temptation, folly and error, is far spent, and the day, the never ending day of truth, holiness and happiness will soon shine with meridian splendor, on all true believers in Jesus Christ! How indescribably happy must that place, that soul, that family, that community, that country, that world be, in which sin, guilt and remorse have no dominion, no influence, no existence. Experience, fact, reason and scripture afford incontestable evidence, that there is no such a place, nor such a country in this world. But such a place, such a country is Heaven. Who would not with David, wish for the wings of a dove, that he might fly from the tempests of this cloudy atmosphere and insalubrious climate, and be at rest! Omnipotent spirit of grace, sanctify our souls, and make us meet for the inheritance of saints in light!

But again, the heavenly is infinitely better than any earthly country, because, it is completely free from death, pain and

sorrow. Mortality and dissolution are enstamped in unerasible characters, upon all sublunary objects. It is appointed unto man and all animals to die: The whole inanimate creation must come to dissolution—shall be dissolved. The king of terrors, with his sweeping, irresistible scythe, is incessantly mowing down the human race. This globe is a vale of tears, a land of pain and trouble. Floods of affliction inundate individuals, families, neighborhoods, provinces and empires. Where is the country, where the family, where the individual, in whose history you will not find many pages wet with tears and black with woe? Consult the memoirs of private characters, read the annals of nations: Do not calamities furnish the principal materials? Turn your eyes to the tragic scenes and gloomy desolations of war. Behold hecatombs, millions of human beings, immolated on the bloody altar of false ambition and insatiable avarice! Rivers of blood, mountains of dead bodies, dying groans and the shrieks of widows and orphans, torture your eyes and your ears. These woes and agonies are found on earth. In the heavenly country, every tear shall be wiped from our eyes. “There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.—At God’s right hand, are fulness of joys & pleasure for evermore.” There Eden blooms with more than primeval beauties. Neither the freezing winds of adversity nor all the storms of death and hell can enter there, to wither the flowers of the celestial Paradise. Eternity will brighten every tint and augment every perfume.

Lastly, the Society of the heavenly country is infinitely better than any society on earth. The holiest, wisest, best characters in this world, are subject to imperfections, defects and sin; but glorified saints and angels of light, are consummately holy, wise and happy. The capacious powers of their immortal, beatified souls, are expanded and sublimed with all the inexhaustible treasures of divine knowledge, love and truth. All the secrets of nature, the labyrinths of Providence, and the mysteries of Redemption, are unveiled to their astonished, transported minds. From every atom of creation, every event of Providence and article of Redemption, a blaze of perfect order, wisdom, justice, goodness and glory bursts upon their sight.

Ye highly favored possessors of Faith and heirs of Heaven! You shall enjoy with angelic spirits & the souls of just men made perfect, the most edifying, enrapturing converse; the most pure, extatic friendship & love, union & communion. There you shall meet and dwell with all your pious, deceased parents and children, brethren and sisters, relations and friends, in bliss, that eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor heart conceived.—

When, O, when, ye resplendent inhabitants of the heavenly regions! when shall we leave this world of phantoms, shadows, dreams, sins and sorrows, and be transmitted to your happy seats and society! When shall we bid a final adieu to this land of trial and temptation, conflict and trouble! Auspicious, glorious day of complete Redemption! when wilt thou dawn!—Almighty captain of our salvation! tranquillize the waters of Jordan with thy presence and thy smiles, that we may sail to the peaceful shores of the promised land, without a rough billow or adverse wind!—Let us, now, conclude with a practical application of the subject.

We have asserted and endeavored to prove, that the doctrine of evangelical Faith is an essential, fundamental truth of the Gospel, and that Faith itself is a necessary, vital principle of experimental Religion—that without it, we are in a state of rebellion, irreconciliation and enmity to our righteous Judge—walking not in the strait and narrow path of holiness which leads to the heavenly country, but in the broad road of ungodliness, which leads to the regions of misery & despair. Are you all, my Friends and Brethren, penitent, sincere, cordial believers in Him, whose name is the only one given under Heaven, by which we can be saved? Has Jesus Christ, the compassionate Friend of sinners been made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption? Is he your all-sufficient Priest, Prophet and King? Is he the only hope and refuge of your souls? Do you find his yoke easy and his burden light, his ways pleasantness and his paths peace? Are his promises precious to you and his cross your glory? Are you willing and ready not only to follow him into Jerusalem, where the multitudes spread boughs of palm trees in his way, and eulogized him with hosannas? Or to Mount Tabor, where he was transfigured, and worshipped by resuscitated prophets, & was owned as the son of God, by the voice from the excellent glory? But are you willing and ready to follow your gracious Redeemer to the agonising garden of Gethsemane, and there to sweat great drops of blood with him? To the awful summit of Mount Calvary and be crucified with him? Are there not some in this crowded assembly, who are strangers to such a fervent love, to such a supreme attachment, to such an unshaken Faith in the compassionate Redeemer of guilty, miserable sinners? O! how many can be found in this numerous assembly, who are thus disposed to follow him! Are there not some, whose eyes, filled with unbelief, have never been opened to see the light of the sun of righteousness and the beauties of holiness? Whose ears have never been unstopped to hear the voice of the celestial charmer and the accents of redeeming love? Whose hearts en-

tomed in impenitence, harder and colder than marble, have never been awakened to spiritual life, to breathe heavenly air and eat the food of angels? Faithless, graceless, and christless souls! Why will you despise and reject your best friend? Whilst you are sick unto eternal death, will you refuse the only Physician, that can heal you? Whilst you are in captivity and chains, will you contemn the only hand, that can give you liberty? Whilst you are standing on brittle ice over a bottomless ocean of flame, will you disregard the only power, that can pluck you from danger? In the midst of sunbeams, will you shut your eyes? Addressed by ten thousand monitory voices, will you still be deaf to instruction? Did the eternal son of God descend from the homage and praises of all the heavenly host, into this world of apostacy and sin, to suffer all the vials of divine wrath for our salvation, and will any of us still reject him, and trample the precious blood of atonement? Do patriarchs and kings, prophets and apostles, profane and ecclesiastic historians, enemies and friends, miracles and doctrines, reason and conscience, experience and fact, heaven and earth, angels and devils, time and eternity, judgment and hell, irrefragably prove, the importance and necessity of Faith, repentance and holiness, and can any of us still remain unconvinced, unconverted? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" "If the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear?" It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than it will be for us who live in the regions of gospel light and religious instruction, and yet will not believe the truth as it is in Jesus? Hear the tender, compassionate, expostulating voice of your gracious Redeemer. "O! my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me. O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Unbelieving, ungrateful sinners! Can you hear such moving, affecting language and still be unconcerned and indifferent about the Saviour and his salvation! Behold he knocks at the door of your consciences once more! Again, he condescends to bring you messages of grace, peace and reconciliation. Again, he addresses you not only in his inviting language, but with all the pathos of his sufferings, with all the rhetoric of his boundless mercy, and with all the irresistible tenderness of his dying love. He again, cultivates and waters barren fig trees, and cumberers of the ground. Again, he holds out the golden sceptre and says, "Why will you die?" From infancy to youth, from youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age, I have invited and called, warned and admonished

you, exercised patience and forbearance toward you, and will not my goodness and long suffering lead you to repentance, faith and obedience? O! that you would remember the things that belong to your eternal peace, before they be hidden forever from your eyes. "Now is the accepted time and now the day of salvation." My justice will not always sleep. It will soon awake and stand at the gate of Paradise, with the flaming sword of vengeance. Soon will I lay down my mediatorial, intercessory garments, and come clothed with flames of fire to punish all my incorrigible enemies. Then you may cry, "Lord, lord," but it will be too late. Then may you entreat rocks and mountains to fall upon and conceal you, but they will not comply with your request. Lethargic, infatuated, thoughtless sinners! hear and obey the voice of your merciful Redeemer, before death arrests you and the awful day of judgment appears! The door of hope will then be shut forever. The day of grace will be forever gone, and every ray of mercy extinguished, by the dark clouds of despair. No more shall you hear the voice of peace and pardon. No more shall the ministers of the gospel publish the glad tidings of salvation to you—no more, with solicitude, importunity and tears, entreat you to seek the kingdom of Heaven and be reconciled to God. No more will you have the advice and aid of religious relatives and friends, who now, pray and weep over you. No more will you have the Holy Bible, which you now perhaps ridicule or neglect. No more will the Holy Spirit visit your hearts with his suasive influence. These, with your own consciences, will be swift witnesses against you. Then will you bitterly lament, and cry, "O that we could recal past days, golden opportunities, and precious privileges which have been abused, and lost! But alas! it is too late! O wise children of God, happy believers in Jesus Christ! whom we once reproached and despised. We behold you in Abraham's bosom, in glory and bliss; but we are tormented in these unquenchable flames! Come Lazarus, come happy friends, pious fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, children! O! come, and mitigate our excruciating pains! O! give us only a drop of cold water! But we see there is an impassable gulph between you and us. Farewell then, farewell, wise and happy souls! O! that we had followed your advice and imitated your example! Farewell Heaven and mansions of eternal rest! Farewell light and peace! O that we could be plunged into a bottomless gulph of oblivion, or petrified into everlasting insensibility! O! that we were brutes without souls, reason, or conscience! But God is just—he has been infinitely good to us; but we have ruined, yea murdered our own immortal souls!"

My hearers, this is not fiction. The colours of the picture, though dark, are taken from the word of God. May almighty grace awaken and convert every impenitent, unbelieving sinner in this congregation!

But I hope the class of unbelievers is not numerous. I trust there is a cloud of witnesses, a number of sincere followers of Jesus Christ, in this large assembly. Do I not address many persons of every age, sex, rank, condition and denomination, to whom the name, character and religion of our blessed Redeemer are dearer than life? Who, should it be the will of Heaven, are ready to sacrifice, on the altar of the cross, pleasures, honors, wealth and life? Do I not behold a faithful tribe of Israelites without guile, holding fast the pure faith, once delivered to the saints, valiant for the truth of the gospel, armed with the whole armor of salvation and pressing forward to the heavenly Canaan, thro' opposing, as well as conquered nations & subjugated cities of internal and external enemies? Do I not behold, in the persons of my venerable Fathers in the ministry, Enochs walking with God, Noahs of righteousness, faithful Abrahams, Isaacs & Jacobs—meek Moseses, zealous Calebs & Joshuas, patient Jobs, devout Daniels, seraphic Isaiahs, and heavenly minded Pauls, the aged? Among my coeval and younger ministerial Brethren, do I not see Josephs feeding God's people, Peters, boldly defending their master's cause, Timothies wise in the scriptures, eloquent Apolloses and beloved Johns?—Reverend and highly esteemed Fathers in the sacred work of the Ministry! Your heads have grown grey in the labors of your Lord's vineyard. You have been faithful stewards of the mysteries of the gospel. You have been blest with many seals to your ministry, which shall be a crown of endless rejoicing to your souls. You have been burning and shining lights in the morning and meridian of your day, and now, as your sun is going down, he shines with broader, more mild and serene effulgence. Even, after your splendor and glory shall have travelled beyond the horizon of this world, your path will be luminous to fire our souls with similar zeal and fidelity. O! that your prophetic mantles may fall upon us, your sons, when you ascend to Heaven, in chariots of divine love! Let us, my Brethren, who enjoy youth, health and vigor, through divine aid, be fervent in the spirit of the holy ministry. Let us exert and consecrate every nerve and talent to the honor of our gracious Redeemer and the salvation of immortal souls. Let our faces be flint, and our breasts mail against all the fiery darts of Satan, infidelity and unrighteousness. Let us demonstrate our Faith to be sound and unadulterated, by its solidity, durability, and uniform, increasing lustre.

Let us all, my friends, through Heaven's aid, on the wings of faith, love and holiness, soar to sublimer and more exalted heights of devotion and happiness. Whilst our feet and bodies are on earth, let our hearts, our affections and conversation be in Heaven. Let us cheerfully, resolutely, and faithfully follow Jesus, the gracious author of our Faith, and captain of our salvation, through this wilderness, and he will, at the end of our journey, bless us with the full fruition of all the indescribable treasures of that better, heavenly country, in which there is an eternity of perfect bliss, and a never-ending association of holy angles and glorified saints. Into that happy, celestial assembly, may the Lord, finally, bring us all!—and to the adorable Trinity, shall be ascribed all possible praise, honor and glory, now and for ever.—Amen.

FINIS.