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T H E D E A T H O F

M. R. C H A R L E S B E A L E R.

D E L I V E R E D A T E U H A W,

By HENRY HOLCOMBE, V. D. M.

Pastor of the Euhaw Baptist Church.



P U B L I S H E D A T R E Q U E S T.

The Memory of the Just is blessed. PROV. 10. & 7.

C H A R L E S T O N :

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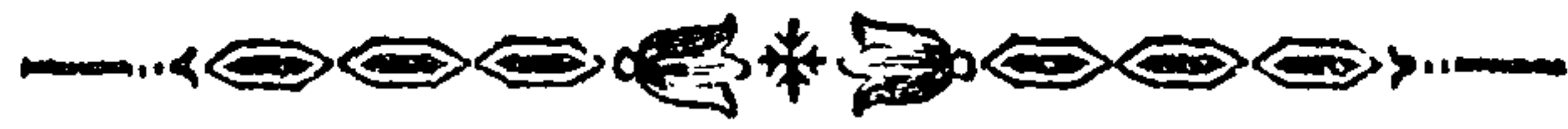
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following discourse has undergone several alterations since it came from the pulpit ; but the most material is in point of brevity. It sees the light as a mark of respect to the memory of a good man ; to encourage an imitation of his examples ; and, at the expence and particular solicitation of his amiable and pious widow.

A SERMON, &c.



I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE. JOHN, II & 25.

FROM these words, when flesh and heart failed, our late worthy friend, Mr. Bealer, derived great consolation. They were made the happy means, as his dissolution approached, of brightening his prospect beyond the grave. And, hoping they might be useful to his surviving friends and relatives, he requested me to make them the foundation of a sermon to his memory. For this purpose they are now proposed to your consideration. This truly valuable passage of holy writ, consists of two general parts. In one of these, our divine Lord asserts his fullness for all the purposes of life and immortality: In the other, he proclaims the believer's interest in these inestimable blessings. Depending on divine aid, I intend briefly to elucidate these interesting and important points, and then to conclude in a manner suitable to the solemn occasion.

First, this compound proposition: *I am the resurrection and the life*, claims our serious attention. No one can imagine that our blessed Saviour is literally the resurrection. This is a revival after death: He is a divine person. Nor can it be thought, that by the *life* here, he simply and literally intended himself. His expression is a figure of speech called a metonymy; by which the *effect* is sometimes put for the cause; at others, the *cause* for the effect. In this figurative sense, Christ is the resurrection and the life: Or, to speak in plain, unornamented language, he is the *cause* of the one, and *source* or *author* of the other. That this is the true meaning of our divine Redeemer's words in this place, will appear by adverting to the occasion on which they were

were spoken. He was about to perform an illustrious miracle in the resurrection of Lazarus: And when he intimated his intention to Martha, she seemed to distrust his power, and tacitly denied his divinity. She believed that, being personally present, he could prevent the most inveterate disease from terminating in death; and that on application to the Father, her Lord might obtain power even to raise the dead. But she does not appear to have had just ideas either of his omnipresence, or omnipotence. Now to ennoble her apprehensions of his character and perfections, he declared himself the resurrection and the life. And she could have understood nothing less by his interesting declaration, than that as the Father raises the dead; *even so*, by the self same undivided and essential power, the Son quickens whom he will. He is the efficient cause of the resurrection, both of those who are dead in sin, and of those who are in their graves. Even these shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. And why did Martha, or why should *we*, think it incredible that Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life, should raise the dead. He who animated, can doubtless reanimate. And it is undeniably clear, from the inspired writings, that Christ is the author of all the life, and breath and being in the whole creation. It is with infinite propriety that he calls himself, in the text, with emphasis, *the Life*. Life is an essential attribute of his nature. And all the streams of vegetative, animal and spiritual life flow from him, as their common source. Surrounded with primordial darkness, he said, "Let there be light, and there was light." His all powerful fiat launched forth from their chaotic state, all the rolling and shining worlds of illimitable space. They with all their contents and inhabitants, are but the emanations of his wisdom, power and goodness. "Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, visible or invisible, all things were created by him and for

for him." And he unremittedly pervades, animates, directs and controls universal nature. In his mediatorial capacity, he has received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to all the Father has given him in the covenant of redemption, for that gracious purpose. Jesus Christ receiving the election of grace, as the divine Father's special donation, came into the world that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. In him, as the glorious and all-animating head of the church, is eternal life, and through his merits and intercession, it sweetly flows in copious streams to every member of his mystical body. And the happy person who drinks of this water, shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. These rivers of living water, glide with rich and unwasting supplies into their original source. Those to whom Christ, as a consequence of their union with him, communicates eternal life, shall never perish. He is engaged, by purpose by promise, and by all his perfections, to keep those who have past from death unto life, from coming or falling into condemnation. But this leads me in the

Second place, to attempt an elucidation of what my text declares respecting a believer's interest in life and immortality. "Though he were dead, yet shall he live." A *natural* death, or the death of the body, must be here intended. For the true believer, whose faith works by love, and purifies the heart, and with whom we have now to do, cannot lose his faith, and be brought under the power of a *spiritual* death. No: The end of *his* faith is the salvation of his soul. He that, at any time, lives a spiritual life, and, as one of the effects of it, believes in Christ, shall never die a spiritual and eternal death. Believers, in common with others, must die a natural death. Their unspeakable and peculiar advantage, consists in gloriously triumphing over death in the resurrection of life.

Then, "O grave, where is thy victory?" shall burst from millions of enraptured and harmonious tongues.

As

As to the wicked, though their bodies shall rise, it shall not be to any thing deserving the name of life : It shall be to shame and everlasting contempt. They shall rise to death, instead of life : The second death, which is the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. On believers, this death, this inconceivably *dreadful* death, has no power ; and their *graves* shall soon resign their prisoners. The bodies of believers, though sown in dishonor, shall be raised in glory. Omniscience shall discover, and omnipotence shall collect enough of the scattered particles which composed their bodies, to denominate them the same ; and reanimated and united with their glorified spirits, they shall be like the glorious body of Christ. He is the *exemplar* and *earnest*, as well as the efficient cause of their resurrection.

They all rose, representatively, when he rose ; and, he will not be completely, or, in every point of view, risen, till they rise. Their bodies, contaminated with the leprosy of sin, must see corruption, but finally, they shall live. When Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory. But, to proceed. The divinity of Christ, salvation by grace, the saints final perseverance, and the resurrection of the body, appear to be the exhilarating and important doctrines contained in my text. It is not an elaborate defence, but a practical improvement of them, that my method, and this truly solemn occasion require.

First, my brethren, let us rejoice, though amidst the trophies of death and the ravages of time, in Christ, as the resurrection and the life. And let us, to whom, we trust, he is revealed by grace as God over all, blessed forever, and our redeemer adore, with profound reverence, his transcendent excellencies. He who gives life and raises the dead, must be God : But Christ does both. He is all in all, in what relates to life and immortality. By him, our souls naturally dead in sin, and our vile bodies which see corruption, are quickened and glorified. Our illustrious redeemer is the light, the life, and the glory of the believing world. He is the author, the object,
and

and the finisher of faith. The alpha and the omega of salvation. This lays an ample foundation for us,

Secondly, to glory in his merits, as the sole procuring cause of our eternal salvation. Merits which save to the utmost, all who sincerely trust in them, are sufficient *alone* for our dependence : But such are the merits of Christ. He that believeth, says our almighty Savior, or, simply, trusteth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. All that we need, or desire, for soul or body, in time and eternity, is to be found in Christ. And the true believer's entire trust and dependence are in the merits and intercession of Christ. The well-informed believer readily confesses that his best works have no merit in them ; but much imperfection. Nor would he for a million of worlds trust in his own works as a *condition* of his salvation. He relies on grace.

He depends no more on his *faith* in the important article of acceptance with God, than he does on his works. Faith he considers as the gift of God ; and not a *condition*, but a *benefit* of the covenant of grace. He knows and freely acknowledges, that Christ is the author of true faith, as much as he is of salvation. But though the believer dare not lay the least imaginable stress either upon his graces or his works, with a view to his admittance into Heaven in respect of merit, he assiduously cultivates holiness of heart and life, as intrinsically excellent and necessary. It is his privilege and honor to be holy here ; and among other necessary uses, his holiness qualifies him for the business and the bliss of Heaven. He zealously maintains good works ; but not from legal principles. My brethren, you are much and unanimously established in the doctrines of sovereign and free grace. This is the genuine result of gracious experience : For we naturally look for life, more or less, by the deeds of the law, till divine light discovers our utter depravity. Then we are shewn, by the Holy Spirit, the way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. And we shall find by the issue of things ; we shall find in death, and in judgment, that our trust in Christ cannot be too entire. O why do men, and some good, and I
may

may add, great men, endeavour, through a dangerous mistake, to remove or destroy this scriptural and glorious foundation ! I presume it will not be said that there are two ways of salvation. And the apostle of the gentiles very explicitly maintains the impossibility of salvation, partly by grace and partly by works. So that we are saved either by our works, or by the merits of Christ. Some, though they grant we are not saved by the *merit* of works affirm, that we are saved by works as a *condition*. But, if there is but one way of life, and works are the *condition* of life, I beg leave to ask, what becomes of those who die under an incapacity of fulfilling this condition : We have no doubt of the salvation of those who die in their infancy. And the penitential thief went from the cross to paradise. So that none can deny that some are saved without works, and consequently, altogether by grace. And though all believers, who have ability and opportunity, maintain good works ; if they are not saved without the consideration of them, as to the matter of their justification before God, there must be two ways of salvation : But this is evidently a theological absurdity. “ I am the way,” says Christ, “ no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Let us look to Jesus, and endeavour to be found in him, not so much as mentioning our own imperfect righteousness ; and, like our dear deceased brother, we may triumph even in the hour of dissolution. For, upon this divine plan, we may consider, for our consolation, in the third place, the righteous shall hold on his way. He that lives and believes in Christ shall never die. Neither sin, death, nor hell, shall ever separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. And, finally, the promise in my text secures the resurrection of the body to an endless and glorious life. Blessed be God, we are not involved with atheists and Deists, in a gloomy night of clouds, while we contemplate human nature, even in its most melancholy state.

The exhilarating and glorious prospect of a part in the resurrection of life, dissipates the gloom of death,
strikes

strikes a lucid vista through the grave, and anticipates the bloomy joys of paradise. "Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel." But how dismal is the view, and how desperate is the case of the stubborn wretch who will not come to Christ for life! Unillumined by the son of righteousness, he lies in a loathsome, horrid dungeon. He has no real peace in life, will find no support in death; but, abandoned to keen despair, must take up his fearful residence in all the endless horrors of infernal darkness. What a striking contrast is formed by the lives, deaths, and future states of the wicked and the righteous! Those spend their days in sin, are driven away in wrath, and justly cast into hell; these live holy, depart in peace, and are graciously received to glory. Even enemies to holiness, would fain die the death of the righteous.

Were I fond of panegyric, and possessed of abilities equal to the merits of the deceased, I might exhibit a life highly attractive and worthy of imitation. But I decline amplifying on the delicate subject, and shall only attempt a few short remarks in the language of strict truth and moderation. Mr. Bealer was a German. He came to this country a poor orphan, at ten years of age; and was kindly received by an opulent and worthy family. Proving industrious and diligent, and acquiring considerable skill in agriculture, he was encouraged in the line of his business, by several gentlemen of great wealth and respectability.

At a proper time of life he entered into the conjugal relation and acquitted himself as a tender and affectionate husband. Blessed with children and servants, he proved a prudently indulgent parent, and a generous master: And, by the blessing of heaven on his labor and frugality, he abounded in all the necessaries of life. He enjoyed the enviable medium betwixt penury and affluence. Towards his neighbors, and towards strangers of all descriptions, he uniformly used kindness, benevolence and hospitality. He was punctual in his engagements, of undoubted veracity, and strictly honest. As

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a citizen

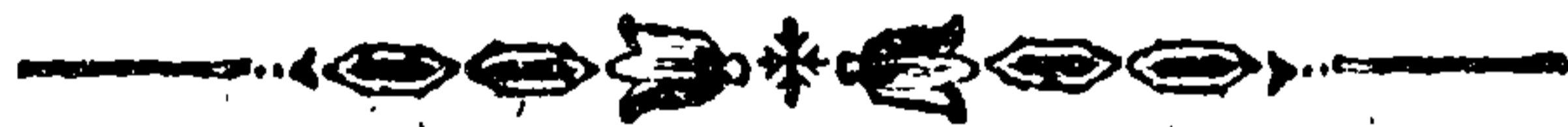
a citizen, he cheerfully contributed his part for the support of government, and with principles truly republican, shewed, on every proper occasion, a becoming concern for the good of his country ; nor did he spare to risk his life or health in its defence. In his military capacity, he was tender of prisoners, cruel to none, and of unquestionable courage. To these truly valuable moral endowments, God was pleased to add in a remarkable degree, his renewing grace. And though this crowning and special blessing was bestowed at a period of his valuable life somewhat advanced, his attainments in vital religion were conspicuously eminent. Decency and simplicity marked his appearance — modesty, cheerfulness and affability distinguished his deportment. In conversation he was free, pious and edifying : In prayer he was brief, but frequent and fervent. He was a constant reader and a sincere lover of the holy scriptures. Upon the maxims, and by the excellent rules of these lively oracles, he formed the most shining parts of his truly amiable character. He heard the word preached, and walked in all the sacred ordinances of the gospel with a high degree of reverence and devotion, and was distinguishedly zealous in the cause of God. It is well known that for several of his last years, he appeared to have the prosperity of religion infinitely more at heart than his own private interest. In his happy family, among mankind at large, and in the house of God, he was undeniably the exemplary and eminent christian ; but in his office as a deacon of this church, he even exceeded himself. In the discharge of this important trust, all his gifts and graces seemed to converge to a single point, and shine and burn unrivalled. But alas ! he is gone ! A lingering and painful tympany, as heaven's awful messenger, has borne him hence. Vain, in his case, was the best of medical assistance.* But in all his continually increasing distresses of body, he possessed his soul in patience. He frequently expressed his hearty
reconciliation

* *His physician was Doctor HOWSEAL.*

reconciliation to all the dispensations of providence, and his sincere affection for all men. With the utmost pleasure he spoke, on the verge of time, of the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul, and declared his full assurance of future happiness. Important instructions, wise counsel, and pathetic exhortations flowed from his dying lips. The last words he uttered were "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name." To the last moment

"His mind was tranquil and serene,
No terrors in his looks were seen,
A Savior's smile dispel'd the gloom,
And smooth'd his passage to the tomb."

Ripened for celestial society, and filled with the divine consolations of religion, he cheerfully resigned his happy soul to God on the 13th of March,* in the 55th year of his life. The emotions excited by this awful, solemn, and, yet pleasing, event; in his worthy family, in this church, and in the vicinity at large, *language* is too cold to describe.



The following Hymn was sung, by particular desire, upon the solemn occasion.

H Y M N 181.

Dr. Rippon's Selection.

1. When sins and fears prevailing rise,
And fainting hope almost expires,
Jesus, to thee I lift mine eyes,
To thee I breathe my soul's desires.
2. Art thou not mine, my living Lord,
And can my hope, my comfort die?
Fix'd on thy everlasting word,
That word which built the earth and sky.
3. If

* 1792.

3. If my immortal Savior lives,
Then my immortal life is sure ;
His word a firm foundation gives,
Here let me build and rest secure.
4. Here let my faith unshaken dwell,
Immoveable the promise stands ;
Nor all the powers of earth and hell,
Can e'er dissolve the sacred bands.
5. Here, O my soul, thy trust repose,
If Jesus is for ever mine,
Not death itself, that last of foes,
Shall break an union so divine.

