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Per. Nov. 12,  
For Mr. Joseph Colburn



**MR. PALMER'S SERMON,**

**ON THE DEATH OF THE**

**REV. ROLAND GREEN,**



A  
SERMON

DELIVERED AT *MANSFIELD*,

*JULY 31, 1808 ;*

BEING THE FOURTH LORD'S DAY, AFTER THE  
INTERMENT OF THE

REV. ROLAND GREEN,

*PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN THAT TOWN ;*

WHO DIED *JULY 4, 1808,*

*IN THE 71ST YEAR OF HIS AGE,*

*AND 4TH OF HIS MINISTRY.*

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BY STEPHEN PALMER, A. M.

*PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN NEEDHAM.*

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE HEARERS.

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Dedham :

PRINTED BY *H. MANN.*—1808.



A

## FUNERAL SERMON.

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*MATTHEW XIV. 12.*

AND HIS DISCIPLES CAME, AND TOOK UP THE BODY AND BURIED IT, AND WENT AND TOLD JESUS.



HE burial, which is here related, was that of John the Baptist. The funeral service was performed by his disciples, whose conduct, upon the occasion, was very commendable: In the words, which have been read, these disciples are represented, as not only paying a tribute of respect to their spiritual Guide, but as discharging an important duty to themselves. When their Master was dead, they first honored his memory, by committing his remains to the dust; and then went and communicated their bereavement to Jesus:

JOHN was a distinguished personage. His character shines with eminence and lustre in the sacred writings. It was predicted, that *many should rejoice at his birth*, because he would possess *the spirit and power of Elias*. He was indeed that other *Elias, who was for to come, and prepare the way of the Lord*. This character he uniformly supported, fulfilling the prophecies respecting him.

AN assemblage of virtues adorned his private life. Possessing a mind of the firmest texture, and guided by a sense of duty, he was neither warped by pleasure, nor seduced by temptation. He did not covet the honors, nor indulge in the luxuries of the world; but was temperate in his views, as well as abstemious in his habits. He did not seek to be *clothed in purple and fine linen, nor to fare sumptuously every day*; but had his rayment of *camel's hair*, and a *leathern girdle about his loins*; and his meat was *locusts and wild honey*. He fully practised the duties of self-denial; and in all his habits was rigidly virtuous. His moral and exemplary deportment qualified him for much usefulness in his public station; and gave great energy to his preaching. It was a very high and honorable attestation, which was borne him by our Lord—*Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist*. He also tells the multitude, that when they went out into the wilderness to see him, they went out to see more than a prophet.

IN public and professional life, John *was a burning and shining light* ; and even the Jews *were willing for a season, to rejoice in his light*. By his ministry he did much towards preparing the way for the reception of Christ, and for the advancement of his kingdom in the world. Fortitude and fidelity were leading traits in his character. He did not *trim his way to seek love*. He was not *a reed shaken with the wind*. He rose above *the fear of man, which bringeth a snare*. Uninfluenced by flatteries, and undaunted by threatenings, he never shrunk from the duties of his profession ; but was uniformly faithful in the discharge of them. He was not afraid, to address the multitude, in the uncourtly language—*Ye generation of vipers !* Though persecution finally raged against him ; yet he was still faithful to his sacred engagements. Neither the tyranny of Herod on the one hand ; nor the implacable resentment of Herodias on the other, could shake the firmness of his mind, or ever induce him to violate his conscience. He attacked the prejudices and reprobated the vices of his hearers with such plainness of speech, as abundantly showed, that he sought their reformation, and not their applause ; and his faithful labors were crowned, with much success. For many became his disciples ; and even *the multitude counted him as a prophet*.

BUT *your fathers, where are they ? And the prophets, do they live forever ? What man is he, that liveth and*

*shall not see death? In the world ye shall have tribulation.* This holy man, with all his eminent and useful virtues, was not exempted from affliction; from persecution—from death. He incurred the displeasure of Herod, because he reprov'd that unprincipled man for marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. In consequence of this reproof, Herod cast John into prison, where it is supposed, that he suffered the evils of confinement about the space of a year. Nor was he set at liberty, till he became *free among the dead.*

THE circumstances of his death, as related by the sacred Historian, are as follow—*When Herod's birth day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask; and she being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry; nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel; and she brought it to her mother.\**

\* According to JOSEPHUS, Herod had married the daughter of ARETAS, king of PETREA, in ARABIA. And Philip had married his niece Herodias, by whom he had a daughter, named *Salome*, and who danced at the celebration of Herod's birth-day. As Herod was going to ROME, he passed through his brother Philip's dominions, and there falling in love with Herodias, it

THUS ended the life and labors of this eminent saint, this harbinger of Christ. In a cruel and barbarous manner, he *fell before wicked men*. And what was an aggravating circumstance, he was cut off in the midst of his days, and in the midst of his usefulness.

BUT though his death was an occasion of mourning to others; though it was affecting to the interests of Zion; yet to him it was undoubtedly matter of rejoicing. Great was the enlargement he then experienced. He went from the prison of a tyrant, to the Paradise of God. He exchanged the persecutions of time, for the joys of eternity. *Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.*

WHEN the death of this good man was announced, *his disciples came, and took up the body and buried it*. In doing this, they testified their love and respect to the deceased. This was the last office of charity they could perform. What now could they do more? And we may add, what could they do less? It is a satisfaction, as well as a duty, to show respect to our

was agreed between them, that on his return, she should leave her husband, and be married to him; and which was accordingly done. This was indeed an unlawful marriage. For not only the husband of Herodias, but the wife of Herod, was still living. With propriety did John bear testimony against it. But friendly reproof is not always taken in love. It brought upon this holy man the resentment of Herodias, as well as of Herod. While the one imprisoned him, the other contrived his death; and neither was satisfied, till it was effected.

deceased friends. If we go back to the early ages of mankind, we shall find that it has ever been a practice to pay a tribute to departed worth. Even in the heathen world, the remains of the dead have been much regarded, and funeral honors have not been withheld. The ATHENIANS enacted a law, that whoever found an *unburied corpse*, should commit it to the earth. Though the SCYTHIANS were a barbarous people; yet they paid great attention to funeral obsequies. Some of them even guarded the tombs of their fathers, lest their remains should be disturbed. It was from principles of respect and veneration to the dead, that the EGYPTIANS invented and practised the art of embalming. Among the ancient GREEKS and ROMANS, where it was formerly a practice to burn the bodies of the deceased, their ashes were deposited in *costly urns*, and preserved as *sacred relics*. And when *burying* among them was afterwards substituted for *burning*, their funeral ceremonies were splendid and expensive. Lamps were lighted in sepulchres, and graves were adorned with flowers. At a later period of the Roman Empire, the body of CONSTANTINE, the first christian Emperor, was buried in a *golden coffin*.

It is well known, that the Jews anointed the bodies of the deceased, applying spices and odours; and were often very lavish in their expenses, upon funeral occasions. In what a splendid manner was king Ahasuerus committed to the tomb! It was not unusual among them, to bury wealth with the dead. The Jewish



Historian informs us, that when HIRCANUS opened the sepulchre of David, nearly eight hundred years after his interment, vast treasures were found in it.

WE do not, however, mention these things by way of justification. Much less do we urge them as an example. Such customs were superstitious and extravagant. Though they might testify the good feelings of the heart; yet they were feelings carried to excess.

WE are not pleading for such funeral pomp and expensive arrangements, as make "the rights of the dead, the wrongs of the living." We ask only for a decent interment. Death will make those unpleasant in our view, who were once *the desire of our eyes*. Their cold remains naturally call for the covering of the grave—for "the charity of dust to spread o'er dust." Hence it was, that Abraham was desirous of procuring a burying-place, that he might inter the remains of his wife. Or, as he expresses it, *That I may bury my dead out of my sight*. When a friend has fallen by the hand of death, a decent interment is no more, than a reasonable service. It is a tribute deservedly due. For this reason, Joseph of Arimathea *went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus*, that he might lay it in the tomb. For this reason, *devout men carried Stephen to his burial*. And for this reason, the disciples of John *took up the body of their Master, and committed it to the dust*.

WHEN they had done this, they *went and told Jesus*. They left their friend in the grave, and went to their Saviour for counsel and comfort. And is not the same duty equally incumbent upon us, in our afflictions? How much consolation might we derive from following this example!

WHEN trouble has come upon us, it is a relief to our feelings, to unbosom ourselves even to an earthly friend, whose sympathy will be soothing. Hence it was, that Job called upon his *friends to have pity upon him, because the hand of God had touched him*. It is justly observed, that communication will enhance joy and diminish sorrow. But after all, weak is an arm of flesh. Feeble and imperfect are the best efforts of the human mind. Though our earthly friends may tenderly sympathize with us; yet we may experience wounds, which they cannot heal.

BUT if we go to Jesus, he can *bind up the broken hearted*, and can give peace to a *wounded spirit*. He can make up outward losses, by the inward communications of his grace. He can turn crosses into crowns, and troubles into comforts. *All the weary and heavy laden*, he has invited to *come to him*; and has promised, *that he will give them rest*. He is merciful and compassionate. *We have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*. He himself *was a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief*. In the days of his humanity, how tenderly

did he sympathize with the distressed? What was his sensibility, when he wept at the grave of Lazarus! And on another occasion, when he met the lifeless remains of one, who *was the only son of his mother, and she a widow!* Such was his compassion upon her, that he restored her son to life, and gave him back to her arms. He is still the widow's friend; and *in him the fatherless may yet find mercy.*

WILL he not then compassionate her, who goes and acquaints him, that the husband of her youth is suddenly taken from her? Will he not tenderly regard afflicted children, who tell him, that their father is no more? And a bereaved flock, who acquaint him, that their spiritual Guide is taken *from their head*; and that they are left *as sheep without a shepherd*?

THOUGH he is now exalted to the right hand of the Father; yet he is still the same compassionate Saviour; and retains all his tender mercies. What encouragement, then, have the afflicted to go, and acquaint him with the bereavements and trials, they experience?

BUT perhaps it may be asked, How are we to go? The disciples of John went personally to Jesus, and acquainted him with the death of their Master, as one friend acquaints another. But to us, this is im-

practicable. For Jesus has gone to the Father, and no longer dwells on earth. It is, therefore, not a personal, but a spiritual interview, we are to seek; and this we may yet obtain. For though our blessed Lord has withdrawn *his bodily presence* from the world; yet he has given *commandments and ordinances* in which, if *we blamelessly walk*, we may meet him in spirit. He has left a throne of grace, where he still gives audience to the humble suppliant. *By prayer and supplication*, then, we may still *make known our requests unto him*.

Prayer is a duty, in all circumstances and conditions of life; especially in time of affliction. For *is any among you afflicted? Let him pray*. If we will not ask for comfort, how can we expect to receive it? It is only in a course of duty, that we can hope for a blessing. The command and the promise go hand in hand. *Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you*. He, who granted a blessing to Jacob, *said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain*. Prayer is not more a duty, than a privilege. And how can an afflicted soul be so lost to its own peace, as to omit the duty, and forfeit the privilege?

But when we address the throne of grace, we must remember the *requisites* of prayer; remember to *lift up holy hands* and to *ask in faith*. *Believe also in me*, is the direction, which Christ has given. We must

believe him *able and willing to save* ; and trust in him for all, that we need. If he has suffered and died to redeem us from spiritual death, have we not reason to believe, that he is ready to assist and comfort us in temporal affliction ? Why should we doubt his compassion ? Why should we doubt his willingness to afford all that relief, which our necessities require ?

WHEN we go to Jesus, we must go also in a humble and penitent frame of mind, on account of the sins we have committed. It is for our iniquities, that chastisement comes upon us ; *and in faithfulness we are afflicted*. When, therefore, we cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus, we must cast our *honor in the dust*. It is *the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite*, which he will *revive*. Can we presume to hope, that our Saviour will regard us in our afflictions, when our hearts are only hardened by them ? We dishonor him and wrong ourselves, by indulging the thought. If we would receive comfort under our afflictions, we must be softened and humbled by them.—*Oncemore—*

WHEN we go to Jesus, we must go in the the exercise of a resigned temper. We are not to complain, when we are afflicted ; but must acknowledge the rectitude of the divine Government. God does us no wrong. *His way is perfect*. Shall *a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins* ? We are *punished less than our iniquities deserve*. Hence it is our duty, not only to *ascribe righteousness to our Maker* ; but to give glory to his name ; because *in wrath, he remembers mercy*.

BUT though we have no grounds to complain; when we are afflicted; yet we are not forbidden to mourn. The disciples of John were undoubtedly much affected, when their beloved Master was taken from them. They probably went in tears to Jesus. *A stoical apathy*, or a stupid insensibility is by no means required of us. How is it possible for human nature to be unfeeling, while it has life? "How is it possible to take from nerves their sensibility; from education, its delicacy; and from adversity, its sting?" We ought, it is true, to guard against excessive or immoderate grief. This, by impairing our health, would tend to increase our troubles. *The sorrow of the world worketh death.* Still, however, afflictions are not sent in vain; and they ought suitably to affect our hearts. If we neither feel nor improve them, we shall add spiritual to temporal judgments. While, therefore, we are resigned, we ought also to be affected.

IN reviewing our subject we are led to reflect upon the frailty and uncertainty of human life. *Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.* On earth, *we have no continuing city.* We are born to die. The pious and the useful are not exempted from the arrests of death. John the Baptist, that faithful messenger, sent to prepare the way for the Messiah, was cut off in the vigour of life. The ministers of the gospel are frail and mortal like other men. *He, who holdeth the stars in his right hand, may remove them at his sovereign pleasure.*

Though they be a treasure to the Church ; yet *this treasure is in earthen vessels*. Like the *priests* under the law, *they are not suffered to continue by reason of death*. It is indeed appointed unto all men, once to die ; and there is no discharge in that war. Oh that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter end ! The certainty of death and the uncertainty of life should lead us to serious reflections ; and so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Again—

FROM what has been suggested, have we not reason to rejoice, that we have a compassionate Saviour, to whom we may repair for present comfort, as well as for future peace ? What can be matter of greater consolation ? Does not the consideration call upon our hearts for gratitude and praise ? Here is a source, whence we may derive that comfort and support, which this world can neither give nor take away. This comforted and supported Job, when the hand of affliction lay heavily upon him ; when “ his head was made bare to every blast of adversity.” Though he could call nothing in this world his own ; yet he had a witness in heaven, and a record on high. Though his riches and his honors, his health and his friends, had forsaken him ; yet he could say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*. The hope of a pious man will be as an anchor to his soul, amidst the storms and surges of affliction. Future prospects will support him under present sufferings. Hence—

LET us be persuaded, when trouble has come upon us, to *go and tell Jesus*. This is an incumbent duty. If we profess to love Christ, how can we refuse to intrust him with the sorrows of our souls? We ought ever to maintain a holy intimacy and communion with him. If we draw near to him, he will draw near to us. To go to Jesus is a privilege, as well as a duty; and a greater privilege we cannot enjoy. When all the streams of earthly comfort seem to be dried up, here is a *fountain opened*, whence flow streams of *living water*. Here the soul may *drink abundantly* of peace and comfort. *Whoever drinketh of this water shall never thirst.*

THE subject of our discourse administers counsel and direction to those, who are called to suffer affliction. May it afford consolation to you, my *Brethren* and *Friends* of this *Church* and *Society*, under the bereavement you have lately sustained! God, in his righteous providence, has been pleased, in a sudden and affecting manner, to take from you, your aged and venerable Pastor. His death has led me to the subject, which has been now considered, and is the occasion of my being with you to day. Though an *occasional discourse*, at this time, may in some measure appear *unseasonable*; especially since I have been preceded by *elder Brethren*, whose talents and feelings have both enabled and disposed them to do justice to the memory of the deceased; yet, as a particular friend and acquaintance, I am unwilling to withhold my tribute. The affecting event is still impressive up-



on my mind ; and “the days of my mourning are not yet ended.” Your deceased Pastor shared in my high esteem and respect. He was my *own friend* and my *father’s friend*, whom I could not forsake, and whom I cannot forget.

MANY of you will doubtless recollect, that a particular and endearing friendship long subsisted between him and my father.\* The recollection awakens the

\* THE Rev. JOSEPH PALMER, Pastor of the Church in NORTON. He was ordained Jan. 3, 1753—and died April 4, 1791.—in the 62d year of his age, and 39th of his ministry. For the space of thirty years, habits of the greatest intimacy subsisted between these two professional brothers. Their affection was mutual and uninterrupted, till the death of Mr. PALMER. Mr. GREEN was very sensibly affected by the event, and took a sympathetic part with the afflicted family. He prayed at the funeral of his friend—And, on the succeeding Lord’s day, preached at NORTON, to the bereaved Church and Society. His text in the forenoon was Rev. II. 1.—*These things saith he, who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand.*—And in the afternoon, Heb. XIII. 7.—*Remember them, which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

Mr. PALMER’S *Widow*, survived him a little more than fifteen years. She died May 20, 1806, aged 72 years. Mr. GREEN attended her funeral ; was a bearer, and prayed on the occasion.

THE surviving children will not cease to venerate his memory, for his friendship to their parents, and for his kindness to them. The Author, in particular, feels peculiar veneration, for the aid and assistance he received, when entering upon the duties of his profession. He was then an orphan, left in early life ; and his father’s friend acted a father’s part.

tender sensibilities of my heart. His death has brought that of my father very fresh to mind; and revived the feelings, which have not lost their pain. You may, therefore, readily conceive, that I have affecting impressions on this occasion.

FROM sentiments of gratitude and respect to the memory of *your* Pastor and *my* Friend, I am now led to mention a few particulars respecting his life and character.

HE was a native of Malden, in this Commonwealth, and passed the earliest part of his days in that town. Before he was seventeen years of age, he entered the University in Cambridge; and in 1758, received its public honors. On leaving the University, he turned his attention to the study and profession of divinity, and in early life commenced a preacher of the gospel. In 1761, and a little before he was twenty-four years of age, he was ordained Pastor of this Church and Society; and for nearly forty-seven years, he has carried on the work of the ministry in this place.

IT pleased the God of nature to furnish him with strong intellectual powers, which, cultivated and improved by a liberal education, qualified him for much usefulness in the world. Quickness of perception, vivacity and energy of thought, were prominent features in the complexion of his mind. In private life, he was pleasant, social, and instructive. A charming companion was deservedly his character. From the

impulse of feeling, as well as from sentiments of duty, he was disposed to *rejoice with them, who rejoiced ; and to weep with them, who wept.* In the chamber of sickness and in the house of mourning, he took a sympathetic part with the distressed ; and *in their afflictions, he was afflicted.*

In the appropriate duties of his profession, he was much engaged. The interests of Zion lay near his heart ; and he was a faithful laborer in the vineyard of Christ. In a very happy degree, he possessed the gift of prayer ; and on special occasions, his thoughts and expressions were ready, pertinent, and impressive. In the public services of the Sanctuary, he was instructive and edifying. He did not *offer stones for bread,* but his preaching was practical and evangelical. *One was his Master, even Christ.* He did not go to human systems and creeds ; but to the word of God, for counsel and instruction. He did not *teach for doctrines the commandments of men ;* but what alone, he believed to be scriptural, he inculcated and enforced. Having carefully founded his opinion, upon what he conceived to be the true sense of the gospel, he was *strong in the faith, and valiant for the truth.* He never disguised his sentiments ; but what he believed, he openly avowed. The vice of hypocrisy was a stranger to his heart. In his method of preaching, he used *plainness of speech.* He did not flatter to conciliate and deceive ; but he warned and reproved to reclaim. This showed, that he *sought not your's, but you.* It will not be an unmerited tribute to say,

that in point of plainness and energy, his preaching bore an analogy to that of the distinguished personage, whose character has been briefly delineated in this discourse. We have reason to hope and believe, that he has been instrumental of *turning many to righteousness*, as *the seal of his ministry and crown of rejoicing*.

BUT alas! He is now no more. His life is ended. His work is done. Closed are those lips, which were wont to instruct; and silent is that voice, which was so long and so lately heard from this sacred Desk. But he has gone, we trust, to receive the reward of his labors; and to join kindred spirits, in the blessed mansions on high.

*THE body has been taken up and buried, with every mark of decency and respect. No more can now be done for the deceased. The last office of charity has been performed. What now remains is, that you go and tell Jesus; and go in the manner, which has been prescribed.*

MAY the Father of mercies afford the supports and comforts of his Spirit, to the afflicted *Widow*, who has now lost the husband of her youth, *the friend that was as her own soul!* We commend her to Him, who has styled himself *the widow's God and Judge*. It is a commandment with promise, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.* Trusting in God, may she be supported under this bereavement; and under those bodily infirmities, with which she has long been exer-

cised. Now *the shadows of the evening of life are stretched out around her, may the light of the divine countenance be lifted up upon her. We wish her a blessing from the house of the Lord.*

**MAY** divine consolations be also administered to the bereaved *Children*. I know how to sympathize with you. What you experience, I have been taught to feel.

*Inur'd to sorrow from my tender years,  
My father's ashes drank my early tears ;  
A faithful mother late my griefs increas'd,  
And tender feelings move my filial breast.*

**YOUR** bereavement is affecting. But God is able to support you. Murmur not at the providence ; but bow in submission to the divine will. You have reason to rejoice, that your father was spared to you so long. He lived till he was *old and grey beaded*, to counsel and pray for you. As his life has been useful, let his death be instructive. *Go and tell Jesus*. Put your trust in God, who, in tenderness and love, is *a Father of the fatherless*. *Fear him and keep his commandments. Seek him early, and you shall find him. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.* In these things, you have been instructed by your deceased father. If you follow his counsels, you will honor his memory.

I mourn with you, my *Brethren* and christian *Friends* of this *Church* and *Society*, in the death of your Pastor. God has come near to you ; and may the providence bring you near to him. *Go and tell Jesus*.

It becomes you, as a People, to cultivate a temper of mind, correspondent to the trial you experience, and to the blessing you have enjoyed. You have occasion to *sing of mercy*, as well as of *judgment*. For long have you had the faithful labors of your Pastor. But few Churches have been thus highly favored. He has *come to his grave in a good old age, as a shock of corn in its season*; and his life and usefulness were ended together. It becomes you now to remember *the years of the right hand of the Most High*. Remember also *how you have received and heard*; and consider, *that though dead, he yet speaketh*.

You are now left in a destitute state, in a dark and difficult day. But He, with whom is *the residue of the Spirit*, is able to repair the breach, and to send you another Pastor after his own heart. To this end, ask counsel and direction of him; and to this end, use the means, which are calculated to obtain the blessing. Be not wanting to yourselves, and God will not be wanting to you.

LET public worship be still supported and continued among you. It is gloomy and affecting, to see the doors of the Sanctuary unopened, on the christian Sabbath. The habit of neglecting public worship is easily contracted; and when this is the case, religion and the profession of it will languish of course. If we examine the character of those, who, from a principle of disrespect, habitually absent themselves from the house of God, we shall find but little to commend.

It is generally the case that such persons are corrupt in sentiments and dissolute in morals. We soon perceive, that they have become unsocial and rustic in their manners, as well as evil and licentious in their lives. How can it be otherwise! How can people expect to be amiable and virtuous, who neglect the means of becoming so! The public institutions of religion, are of the highest importance. They constitute the very bands of society. Were the neglect of them to become general, it would be attended with the most unhappy consequences to the community. Civil government, as well as moral principles, would be disregarded. Immorality would abound; *confusion and every evil work* would follow. Make it, then, an object with you, my *Brethren*, that public worship be supported among you. Be not destitute of preaching; but let this *sacred desk* be steadily supplied.

In selecting candidates to supply you, be judicious and circumspect. Employ none, but such as are regularly called and duly qualified. *Mark those, who cause divisions, and avoid them.* Let not sound principles give way to visionary schemes. Be not *carried about with every wind of doctrine*; but *try the spirits whether they are of God.* In short, *ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

In your destitute state, be careful to *follow the things which make for peace.* BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS, FOR BROTHERS TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY! Guard against party spirit;

and let not *any root of bitterness spring up among you*. Exercise candor and charity towards one another. Even wise and good men will often vary in sentiment. The opinions of the mind, like the features of the face, will be unavoidably different. But still we may, and ought to unite in affection. In the social relations of life, we must learn to bear and forbear. It is in vain to expect, that we can have every circumstance, correspondent to our wishes. Be persuaded, then, to abstain from all appearance of controversy, and unite in the common interest.

LET a spirit of order and religion be found in your families. Private families are constituent parts of the community. They are Commonwealths in miniature. If a *church* were to be found in every *house* ; if every family would call on the name of the *Lord*, the happy effects would be soon felt in society. From this consideration be induced to look well to *our* households, in religious, as well as prudential, respects.

In short, look to your own hearts, and see that they be right with God. Let not a spirit of religion languish among you, though your Pastor is dead. Live in the practice of every incumbent duty ; and then may you hope for the blessing of God ; that he will take you under his special care ; and in due time send forth another faithful laborer into this part of his vineyard.

*FINALLY, Brethren, farewell. Be perfect ; be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. AMEN.*



# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY ANOTHER HAND.



**T**HE Rev. ROLAND GREEN was born at Malden, September the 16th 1737, graduated at Cambridge in the year 1758, and settled in the gospel Ministry at Mansfield August the 27th 1761.

He was a person of a lively make and athletic constitution. Possessing a cheerful disposition, he enjoyed the social part of life in a high degree; but such was the frame of his mind, that all his troubles and afflictions were cautiously kept to himself. In his official capacity he was punctual, energetic and faithful. In his family he was kind, indulgent, provident, and exemplary. He was strong in his attachments, ardent in his affections for his Country, fervent in his friendship towards his Brethren in the Ministry, and a lover of order and decorum. In a dangerous illness a few years previous to his death, as he and his family then thought him near his end, he manifested great calmness and christian resignation; and to his anxious Children waiting for his dying words, he summed up all his directions in this language, "Seek first the Kingdom of God."

For several months before his decease he enjoyed his health better than usual. The day prior to his exit, he administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the morning exercise he was impressive, inviting his hearers to celebrate the victory obtained by our Saviour at his death, and as the celebration of our Independence was to take place the next day, he took occasion to impress on their minds the superior importance of celebrating the triumphs of Christ, above that of our Independence. On the morning following, (July 4) he arose with uncommon health and cheerfulness, and as he had several invitations to attend the celebration of our national Independence at Norton, he rode moderately to the Rev. Mr. Clark's, about 4 miles, and there met with his friends. He was congratulated on his good state of health, and after conversing a short time, went out with the Rev. Mr. Reed and the Rev. Mr. Clark, in order to go to the meeting house. He had not moved far, before he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and at 2 o'clock

**P. M.** expired without a groan, without a struggle. After the first attack he revived, had his senses, and was composed, but this was of short duration. He lived, after the first seizure, 2 hours and 45 minutes. His Remains were removed to Mansfield the next day, and on the 6th, in the afternoon, they were buried by his FAMILY.—Every mark of respect was shown by a large Procession, consisting of about 600 Persons, who moved in the following order—

**BAND,**

(playing a funeral dirge.)

**MALE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.**

**BEARERS.**

**CORPSE.**

(Pall supported by the Rev. Mr. THACHER, Rev. Mr. MOREY, Rev. Mr. REED, Rev. Mr. PALMER, Rev. Mr. RICHMOND, Rev. Mr. CLARK, Rev. Mr. FISK, and Rev. Mr. WHITAKER.)

**MOURNERS.**

**PARTICULAR FRIENDS OF THE DECEASED.**

**FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.**

**SINGING SOCIETY.**

**MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.**

**STRANGERS.**



THE  
SUBSTANCE OF A  
SERMON

PREACHED AT MANSFIELD,

JULY 3, 1808—P. M.

—:~:—  
BY THE REV. ROLAND GREEN,  
*Late Pastor of the Church in that Town.*  
—:~:—

N. B. This was the last Sermon he ever delivered. Of course it may be considered, in some respects, as containing his *dying words*. To his *People* they were his **LAST WORDS**. What is here inserted is a **SUMMARY** of what was then delivered.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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EPHESIANS V. 6.

*Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God, upon the children of disobedience,*

**T**HE Apostle urges the Ephesians to universal holiness ; and enforces the duty from the consideration of the divine compassion, displayed in the gospel. He strongly cautions them against the gross impurities of the Heathen. Gross immoralities are to be abhorred. For the Apostle observes—*No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance, in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* Such as are impenitent, and allow themselves, either in the lusts of the flesh, or the love of the world, do not *savingly* belong to the kingdom of grace ; nor, *as such*, shall they ever come to the kingdom of glory. Let none, then, in this respect, amuse and deceive you, with vain and sophistical reasonings, who would attempt a vindication of these things ; or, at least, extenuate the evil of them ; as though they were not provoking in the eyes of God—or that you may indulge them, and escape with impunity. Satan deceived our first parents with

vain words, when he said to them—*Ye shall not surely die.* On account of *these things*, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience and infidelity. If the Heathen are punished for them, much less can we suppose, that, those who profess the gospel; who have so much greater advantages, for purity and virtue, in all their branches, and are under such peculiar engagements to cultivate the same, shall escape with impunity.\*

By *the children of disobedience* may be meant the *Heathen*, who disbelieved and refused the gospel; or more generally, all obstinate sinners, who will not be reclaimed. Disobedience is the very malignity of sin; and *the wrath of God comes upon the children* of such, sometimes in this world; but more awfully in the next. We ought not to be partakers with them in their sins, that we may not be sharers with them in their plagues. We partake with other men in their sins, when we pursue the same course of disobedience; when we comply with temptation and consent to sin; but more generally, when we engage with them in their sin, prompt them to it, and do not, when in our power, prevent them from it. Because of these things, *the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.* Many sophistical reasons men have, to palliate and excuse their vices; but if the wrath of God falls upon the Heathen for these things, let us not imagine, that we can practise them with impunity; and let us not presume to be partakers with them. *These things* have reference to the verse, preceding our text, where the enormities of the Gentile state are displayed.

THE method of our discourse is, to enquire—

I. WHAT we are to understand by the wrath of God.

II. WHO may expect to endure his wrath.

I. WHAT we are to understand, by the wrath of God,

THE word wrath denotes the highest degree of displeasure and resentment. When we read of *the wrath of God*, or any other passion, it is by way of allusion to man. For in reality, God is not subject to such passions as we are. Our conceptions of God are very imperfect. We want language, when we speak of the incomprehensible Deity; and are forced to borrow metaphors from creatures, especially from man, to describe him. Thus we call such a manner of acting, as would be the effect of love among men, *the love of God*—and such a manner of acting, as would be the fruit of

\* Vid. DODDREDGE in loc.

anger and resentment among men, we call *the wrath of God*. When we read of *God's wrath*, we are not to understand by it, any such violent emotions, of the mind, as in man, when provoked to wrath; but only, as when a man is angry with another for some fault or offence, he will punish him severely for it, if he has power so to do. So God's punishing sinners, with exquisite tortures in hell, is called his wrath. Sometimes *the wrath of God comes* upon sinners in this world, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, Egypt and Jerusalem. It is spoken also to denote a future punishment. The day of judgment, when God will inflict upon the wicked the full and deserved punishment of their sins, is called *the great day of his wrath*. Rev. VI. 17. However dreadful the displays of divine wrath are, in this life, upon communities and particular persons, they are not to be compared with the dreadful execution of divine wrath in a future state.

On whom *the wrath of God comes*, it implies, in the first place, a loss of divine favor, and all the blessings which follow it. When the final and dreadful sentence shall be given, they shall go away—from whom? From the presence of God and Christ; from the company of the blessed; and from all the joys and glories of heaven! Was this all, it would be a dreadful punishment; but it implies also a total loss of all that is good and happy, in the last period of time. The Spirit of God will utterly forsake them; nor excite in them one faint desire after holiness, when once the soul is banished from God and heaven. How will they view their lost happiness? When *the wrath of God comes*, then closes the scene of all the means of grace, and a consideration of having despised those means, will but increase their woe. Secondly, it implies a positive punishment; not only a sense of what they have lost, but an infliction of punishment. They shall go away into everlasting punishment, which no doubt implies, that they shall suffer pain—the pains of hell. There sinners will dwell. There is the never dying worm. There miserable wretches suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. These are dreadful images, and fearful representations of the state of everlasting condemnation, which will be the portion of the wicked. A sense of God's wrath, impressed upon the conscience, is dreadful; but it will be greater, when the punishment shall come from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

## II. WHO may expect to endure the wrath of God.

WHEN we read in the context of *the lusts of the flesh*, of covetousness, and the like, we may say, in consequence of all sin, comes *the wrath of God*. It comes upon such children of disobedience, as live and die in a state of impeni-

tence ; unreformed and without an interest in the pardoning mercy of God, through Christ. Such sins as are more immediately committed against God ; such as are forbidden by the first table of the law ; or those against the second table, which prescribes our duty towards our neighbor, deserve this wrath. The Heathen shall not escape. They will be punished, for their rebellion against the light and law of nature. And shall those, who know the mind of God, as revealed in the gospel ; who have a clear revelation of truth and duty, *escape* ? Such may expect this wrath who are neither awed by threatenings, nor moved by mercies. Neglecting mercies and means of grace will greatly aggravate the condemnation another day ; and the gospel, which was *ordained to life*, will, to such offenders *be unto death*. Christ told the unbelieving inhabitants of *Chorazin and Bethsaida*, that it *would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for them*. The Heathen, who had been guilty of gross immoralities, never had such means of escape, as we have under the gospel ; and if we add to all our other sins, that of disobeying the gospel and despising an offered Saviour, *the wrath of God will come in a dreadful manner*. Those, who have sinned against warnings, counsels and invitations, are objects of this wrath. On the impious and profane ; the ungodly and irreligious, *comes the wrath of God* ; nor will any such escape. No outward profession of religion, nor zeal for doctrines, nor modes of worship, will make up the want of moral honesty, in the great day of accounts.

### IMPROVEMENT.

1—LET us learn, then, not to make light of any sin whatever. For *God's wrath will come upon all transgressors of his holy law* ; and without a pardon, through the blood of Christ, the least sin will sink us down to hell forever.

2—Let us be thankful for Jesus Christ. If this wrath comes upon a guilty world ; and it inevitably will, how should we rejoice, that Jesus Christ has taken this wrath upon himself ; and has, in his own person, *endured the cross, despised the shame* ; and has opened a way for sinners to escape this wrath ! It follows —

3—That sinners are to be entreated to fly from this wrath. Oh ! Be entreated to take the warning ; now be entreated to make application to the Son of God, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. You see what is coming upon this impious world, *dead in trespasses and sins ; AND BE ENTREATED TO PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD, AND FLY FROM THE WRATH TO COME.*

FINIS.