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SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF

THE REV. PAUL LITCHFIELD,

OF CARLISLE;

WHO DIED ON THE FIFTH AND WAS BURIED ON THE MINTH OF MOVEMBER, 1827, AGED 75.

BY JOHN H. CHURCH, D. D. Pastor of the Church in Pelham, N. H.

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SERMON.

ROMANS XIV. 7, 8.

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

THE spirit of the devoted servant of Christ is here expressed. Here is the mark of his high calling in Christ Jesus. This is the self-denial, so much inculcated in the gospel, and so essential to a life of communion with God, and a meekness to glorify and enjoy him forever.

The passage, in its connexion, enforces the duty of christians to receive each other as servants of the same Lord and engaged in the same cause; while sincerely differing in things not inconsistent with vital godliness. Notwithstanding their difference in minor things, they were agreed in living, not to themselves, but to the Lord, as being entirely his, in life and in death.

This is the spirit, which we should ardently strive to possess. It should constantly be the object of our pursuit. It comprises, in substance, all our personal religion. It should be the main-spring of all our actions. Nothing should be done, without this spirit of entire devotedness to the Lord.

The subject may be illustrated by describing this spirit; and showing its influence on the Christian in living and dying to the Lord.

- I. In describing this spirit, two thoughts occur; a feeling conviction that we belong to the Lord—and a purpose of heart to be wholly devoted to him.
- 1. A feeling conviction that we belong to the Lord.—What truth is more sensibly felt by the fervent christian. How forcibly it strikes his mind in What is not the Lord's? every direction. hath made all things for himself. How must the lively christian feel himself, and all he has, to be the Lord's, if he only considers him as his Maker, and Preserver, and the Giver of all his talents. In this view, he has nothing, which he has not received of the Lord. And the whole is still the Lord's. What can the believer call exclusively his own? But the Lord has still higher and more endearing claims upon him. He has bought him for himself. Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price. And what is this price? Is it corruptible things? Is it silver and gold? No; it is the precious blood of Christ. The only begotten Son of God has been made a curse for him, and redeemed him from the curse of the law. The Son of God has loved him, and given himself for him. O let this truth be wrought in his mind by the exceeding greatness of Divine power, and how deep and habitual must be his conviction that he is not his own. but the Lord's, to live, and to die to him?
- 2. A purpose of heart to be wholly devoted to the Lord. *Deny thyself*, is the sweet command of Christ to every humble follower. His cheerful obedience to this command distinguishes him from the

selfish and unholv. "Inordinate self-love is the ruling passion of their hearts, and the governing principle of their lives. They have but one interest, and that is their own. A supreme regard to their own happiness is the main spring of all that they do for God, of all that they do for themselves, and all that they do for their fellow men." This is the spirit of the world-of every false-hearted professor. In appearance, he does much for God, for the Church, and for his fellow men. But his supreme regard is to himself. He would make every thing subserve his own interest, or honor, or enjoyment. Even the Lord himself must serve him. Nothing is right, unless it is for his good. All is well, if his happiness is secure, or his benefit promoted. his kindness to others is very partial and very limited, and intended chiefly for his own advantage and comfort.

But how different is the ruling purpose of the devoted friend of Immanuel. What a different principle prompts him to act. And what is this principle, but the love of God? This dethrones self, and subordinates all its interests to the Divine glory. The love of God gives to the mind a single eye, and fills the body with light. It inspires due regard to every object. God is loved supremely, because he is supremely excellent; and his glory is the riches of all worlds. What can the christian allow to interfere with the Divine glory? What can he so ardently desire as this—"Father, glorify thy name." In this supreme love to God is involved sincere love to one's own soul, and to every

neighbor. The two great commandments of love to God and to man stand, or fall, together. There is no obedience to one, without obedience to the other. The carnal mind, which is enmity to God, is enmity to every soul of man. But love to God is love to every soul, for his sake. It seeks his glory in their salvation. Here is full scope for a self-denying spirit. How much will the zealous christian sacrifice for Christ, that his name may be honored, and his people saved. How fixed will be his purpose, to seek, not his own things, but the things which are Christ's. How little he will think of himself, and of all his private concerns, compared with the honor of his Saviour, and the interests of his everlasting kingdom. How cheerfully he will deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ. is the prevailing purpose of his heart. For the love of Christ constrains him, to live not to himself, but to him that died for him and rose again.

II. The influence of this spirit on the Christian in life and in death.

This influence he feels in all the relations of life. It governs him in his daily walk, and in the various circumstances, in which he is placed.

1. It inclines him to have constant communion with God. The desire of his soul is to the Lord, and to the remembrance of his name. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee. My soul followeth hard after thee. This communion with God is his life. Prayer is his spiritual breath. As he renounces self and the world, his soul is assimilated to God as

the fountain of excellence and his exceeding joy. Christ is precious to his soul as all his salvation and all his desire. Beholding, with open face, as in a glass, his glory, he is changed into his image, by his spirit, that dwelleth in him. Looking, not at things seen and temporal, but at things unseen and eternal, and coming to the mercy-seat in the name of Jesus as his Advocate with the Father, how fervent are his petitions for grace to serve the Lord with increasing vigor and delight. And can he pray in vain? This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions, that we desired of him.

2. He is vigilant in keeping his heart. must be kept with God. This is his due. Give me thine heart. What can be truly given to God, if this be withheld? What can he accept, without the heart? But how great is its deceit and treachery? What vigilance is requisite to keep himself in the love of God. How must be watch the motions of sin, the law in his members, which wars against the law of his mind, to bring him into captivity to the law of sin. How zealously he must strive to subdue his iniquities, that he may live entirely to the Lord. How careful he will be to know the state of his soul: whether he declines or advances in the Divine life; and whether he is pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How can the selfdenying christian be regardless of these things?

- 3. He makes cheerful sacrifices for his Redeemer. What can be withheld, which the Lord needs: or duty bids him give? Can he think much of labor or suffering in Christ's cause? Can be enjoy ease at the expense of his Savior's honor? Can he count his life dear to himself, in glorifying his What can he love more than Christ? Christ is his all and in all. For him to live is Christ, Let his Savier be honored; and it is enough; his mind is satisfied. How cheerfully he honors the Lord with his substance, and with the This is the highest valfirst fruits of his increase. ue of property. Its noblest use is to expend it for him: who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. How can the devoted christian retain it, when wanted to relieve the saints to spread the gospel, to save souls ready to perish, and to build the temple of the Lord. Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him. What agreement can there be between a self-denying spirit and a heart of covetousness? How must the former seek the destruction of the latter? How can the spirit of Christ dwell in the avaricious mind? His temple shall not be a den of thieves; but the abode of love and His love shall fill the heart; and yield kindness. its precious fruits.
- 4. He that is devoted to the Lord, is patient and resigned to his will. He feels himself at the Divine disposal. The Lord may do with him, as it

seemeth good in his sight. He has a right to appoint him his seasons of pain and sickness, of trouble and sorrow, as well as of ease and comfort. How willingly may the believer refer himself and all his concerns to the Lord. Here is his safety. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. ed is the man that endureth trials. He rejoices in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but he glories in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope. How cheering is the assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love God; and that their light afflictions shall work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. All things are for their sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. season, they are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Can the lively believer shrink from trials of such blessed tendency? Will he not rather count them his joy? Does he not need them, for his cleansing from sin? And will he not glory in his necessities and distresses, that the power of Christ may rest upon him?

5. He closes his mortal life to the honor of his Lord. As he has lived to him, so he dies to him. He may be in a strait, whether to remain here in

the service of the Lord; or to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. But the question is not for him to decide. In a sweet, spiritual frame of mind, he does not wish to decide it. He leaves it wholly with the Lord. Precious in his sight is the death of his saints. In them, he is glorified. His grace can shine in their dying hours. much to his honor and praise, is their humble trust in his merits; their confidence in his truth and love; their humility and penitence for sin; their joy in his name; and their animating hope that through him, they shall sing the conqueror's song. In how lovely a manner, do they complete their christian course? They fall asleep in Jesus. They enter into his rest. They see him as he is. They are like him; and they shall serve him forever. Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.

On this subject, I remark;

1. The devoted servant of Christ has decision of character. He is not seen in a neutral position. You are not in doubt whether he is on the Lord's side. You see him decided. You learn the purpose of his heart—"As for me, I will serve the Lord. By his grace, I am resolved to do it. His grace is sufficient for me. I can do all things in his strength. I have his promise that he will be with me." How firm and resolute may he be? Who shall defeat his purpose to obey and honor his Lord? The Lord is his strength; the word of God his guide; the glory of God his end. Grace binds him to the Lord. Can he serve another master? Can he consent to serve the law of sin? Sin is

what he hates. He abhors that which is evil. He delights in the law of God after the inward man. He walks in the law of the Lord. Hence his walk is uniform and consistent. His christian character, he maintains in every circle, at home and abroad. In no place, is he ashamed of Christ, of his truth, his cause, or his followers, or of his relation to him. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

2. The religion, which involves no true self denial, is worthless in the Lord's sight. It lacks his How can he accept it? It does nothing for him in godly sincerity. It is all fleshly wisdom; the carnal mind, which he abhors and condemns. It may make a fair show in the flesh. may please its votaries. But what is its end? you embrace such a religion? Would you serve the Lord only as your convenience or self-interest allows? Would you have an easy way to heaven? Would you go there in flowery paths, and be regaled, all the way, with roses without thorns? Must no tribulation attend you? Must there be no sacrifice required of you for the Lord, or for his cause? Must you be allowed to seek your own things, and neglect the things that are Christ's? Must your private concerns be regarded as of more worth than his kingdom, or souls bought with his blood? Would you never contend; much less contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints? and never plead for such a life of godliness, as condemns nominal and lukewarm professors? Would

you be so easy and accommodating in your religion, that the ungodly shall commend you? But does this accord with the example of Christ and his Apostles? Is this living, not to yourselves, but to the Lord? Is this striving to enter in at the strait gate; and to walk in the narrow way which leads to life everlasting? Is this to be a good and faithful servant of the Lord; and as such to be approved of him in the decisive day? Or is this to be a slothful and wicked servant, whose end is destruction ?

3. The faithful in Christ Jesus are but known in times of peculiar trial. Then is the test of their Then their christian graces are called character. Could the strength of Abraham's faith have been known, had he not been called to offer Isaac as a burnt-sacrifice? Could the meekness of Moses have been seen, if he had not been the leader of a people, so disposed to murmur and rebel, and to lay their calamities at his door? Or can we now see the excellence of the christian's character, unless it is brought to the trial? Can you see his faith and patience, if he has no seasons of adversity? Or his self-denying spirit, if he is called to part with nothing for Christ; or to endure no hardness in his service? It is easy to rejoice in prosperity; the most selfish can do it. But can you say with the prophet; Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation? Do this, and you manifest your godly sincerity, to the praise of Divine grace.

- 4. The connexion between the life and the death of the devoted christian deserves notice. His living to the Lord prepares him to die to the Lord. Having lived the life of the righteous, he dies his death. Through rich grace, he has lively hope in death, in proportion as he has been diligent to be found of the Lord in peace, without spot and blameless. How evidently does his life of humble piety and zeal for the Lord, fit him, by Divine mercy, to end his days in peace: and his hope and peace in death give the finishing stroke to his christian character. Would you die this happy death of the righteous? Then live his life.
- 5. The departed saint still lives to the glory of his Lord. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. Whether saints For to this end. live or die; they are the Lord's. Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. Yes, the saint, that has fallen asleep in Jesus, is now a spirit of the just made perfect; he is before the throne; he sees the face of his Redeemer; and serves him day and night in his temple. joins in the never ending song: Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

You may suppose, my brethren, that in these

remarks, I have some reference to the beloved and respected servant of Christ, whose mortal part we are now to commit to the silent dust. I hope the reference is just. I trust he lived and died to the Lord, as redeemed by his blood, clothed with his righteousness and sanctified by his Spirit.

His character is well known. It is deeply imprinted on the hearts of those, who now mourn, that they shall see his face, and hear his voice no more. It has been formed by grace; and to God belongs the praise of every thing excellent and useful in his servant; who now rests from his labors; and whose works of piety and love follow him, as the proofs of his being sincerely devoted to the Lord. He meets, we hope, a gracious acceptance; and receives from his Redeemer's hand a crown of life that fadeth not away.

The Rev. Paul Litchfield was born in Scituate, March 12, 1752. He was the first-born of twelve children. His parents were respectable; and died, it is hoped, in the Lord, at an advanced age.

In early life, he was sober and regular in his conduct. He sought an education, that he might be fitted for the gospel ministry. He graduated at Harvard College in 1775. While in College, he was much devoted to the cause of religion. He was attached to the friends of evangelical truth; and exerted his influence for the salvation of his fellow men. His solicitude for their conversion was manifested by his efforts to turn them from darkness to light.

His theological studies, he pursued under the

direction of the Rev. Dr. Stephen West of Stockbridge; who is well known, as an author, by some able productions; and especially by his treatise on the atonement.

After being licensed to preach the gospel, he supplied several congregations; and was invited to settle in the ministry. But the Lord directed his steps to this place, as the field of his stated labors through life. Here he was ordained, the first Pastor of this Church, Nov. 7, 1781. The Church was formed on the 28th of February preceding; and consisted of ten male, and twenty female members. His call was voted on the 17th of May. He ministered to this Church forty six years. During the whole of this period, it appeared to be his great object to fulfil the ministry, which he had received in the Lord.

He possessed a strong, discriminating mind. He was fond of deep thought. It was not his manner to glide along on the surface of a subject. He preferred more thorough investigations and discussions. The ablest works on theology were his favorite study.

His views of the essential doctrines of the Bible were distinct and well arranged in his mind: and he had the talent of presenting these doctrines to others, with plainness and force. Who could hear him, without knowing the leading sentiments of his creed? When did he give an uncertain sound? How much did his doctrinal discussions enforce his exhortations to repent, to believe in Christ, and obey every Divine command? How carefully did

he connect faith and good works in his pastoral ministrations?

His natural gravity added to the solemnity of his ministerial performances. He also spoke under a sensible impression of Divine truth on his own mind. His preaching was therefore well adapted to impress his hearers. By the power of the Holy Spirit, it had this effect, as numbers, who heard him, can testify.

In the year 1798, was the season of most interesting attention to religion, which he was so happy as to witness among his people. It was a powerful work of grace. The fruit was considerable. At other times, he enjoyed a special blessing on his labors. In such revivals of religion, he took a lively interest; and prayed and labored to promote them.

The prosperity of Zion at large was dear to his heart. He rejoiced in the increase of orthodox, faithful ministers around him, and through our land. The cause of missions he warmly espoused;* and readily encouraged other objects of christian enterprise. He looked with confidence for the earth to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Christian principles appeared to influence him in all the walks of life, and in the discharge of relative duties. He manifested much affection and kindness in his family.† He was affectionate and

^{*} He bequeathed a generous legacy to the Massachusetts Domestic Missionary Society.

[†] Mr. Litchfield was happy in his matrimonial connexions. His first marriage was with Miss Mary Bailey of Scituate. She

kind to his other relatives. He was a lover of hospitality and of good men. His christian brethren and other friends were made so welcome and entertained so kindly, in his house, that they could afterwards call with pleasure.

His trust in God sustained him under the trials he endured. These appeared to mature his christian character, to promote his usefulness, and to increase his joy in the Lord.

In his last sickness, he had, as he thought, the Savior's gracious presence, and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He was visited with some darkness of mind; which was followed with reviving light and comfort. But his disorder so prostrated his system as to prevent a full expression of his views and feelings. He however conversed with members of his charge, and with some of his children. To the latter, he opened his mind with much tender affection. His dying words, they will long remember.—His end, in the judgment of his pious friends, was peace.

The removal of such a Husband is to you, Dear Madam, a very sensible loss. But you trust that his gain is unspeakably greater. You could pray for his continuance in life; but you cannot now de-

looked well to the ways of her household; was affectionate and discreet; truly sensible and pious; and appeared to die very happily, July 27, 1809; aged 59. His second marriage was with Mrs. Sarah Capron of Braintree, Oct. 12, 1811. She survives him. He had six children, five sons and a daughter. The daughter died in childhood. The sons are living. The youngest, Franklin Litchfield, was educated at Harvard College; and is now Consul at Porto Cabello.

sire his return. He lived to a good old age; and has departed in peace. Bless the Lord that you so long enjoyed his affection, his pious example, and his prayers. Follow him as he followed Christ; yea, rather live a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved you and gave himself for you, and you will soon see Jesus as he is, and be like him forever. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you; and make you to abound in peace and joy in the Holý Ghost, till you join the church of the first-born in heaven.

What an affliction to children is the death of a kind and pious Father! What tender scenes, my beloved Friends, does it open to your minds? You recall the past; and think of the future. You are reminded of your peculiar privileges, as children of parents in covenant with God, and as solemnly devoted to him in baptism. What tender solicitude has your Father felt for your salvation? How earnestly has he besought you, and especially on his dying bed, that you would choose the God of your parents, as your God? How many prayers has he offered for you? How much instruction has he given you? Is all this nothing to you? Can you neglect it all? Is this honoring your Father? Is it preparing to meet him before your Judge? Are you prepared for such a meeting? Are you born of the Spirit? Is the God of your Father your God, by faith in Christ? Do you live, not to yourselves, but to the Lord? Then, through rich grace, you will close your days in peace, and enter the New Jerusalem. How animating the thought!

But shall either of you fail of this blessedness? O prevent it, by pressing into the kingdom. Can you think of perishing from such a family and such privileges as you have enjoyed? O be wise. Christ. Secure to yourselves his unsearchable riches. Make him your Friend, and he will never The Lord bless you for his name's sake.

The death of such a Brother, my respected Friends, is to you affecting and solemn. It speaks loudly to your hearts, calling you to seek more earnestly the things which are above. Obey the call, I beseech you; and see that you are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

May the other Relatives duly notice the hand of Be humble; be penitent; and zealously seek the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May his grace be with you all.

The members of this Church will see cause to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. He gave and he has taken away a Pastor, who has been much and justly endeared to you. To some of you, he has been a spiritual father. How long he has broken among you the bread of life; and given you the tokens of the Savior's love. work is done. His ministry is closed. You will long and affectionately remember him and the things which he taught. Let him still speak to you. Walk in love, my dearly beloved, as Christ hath loved you. Love one another with pure hearts fervently. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, by any unkindness, or bitterness, or evil affection towards any man. Seek of the Lord a faithful Pastor, who shall determine to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Stand fast in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; and be of one mind, of one accord, and the Lord will be with you. commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

To this Congregation, the Lord speaks, as he never spake before. He has called from you his ambassador, to give account of his ministry. account does your minister render to the Lord, who sent him? Have you received him in love, for Jesus' sake? Has he persuaded you to be reconciled to God, through his only begotten Son? Must he testify that you will not receive and obey the Son of God, as your Savior and King? Can you persist in this purpose? Do you consider the consequences? Can you endure them? Are you ready to meet the minister of Christ before his judgment Are you prepared for the trial? If you are condemned, can you appeal? Can you find a friend in the universe? But now, today, you can make the Judge your Friend. He will be your Surety, if you condemn yourself and justify God. He will then acquit you in the judgment-day, and give you a crown of righteousness. Now hear his voice. Duly prize the ministry of reconciliation. Live not without it. The liberal support of the gospel is for your present interest and future blessedness. O fear and serve the Lord, and his mercy will be on you and your children.

My Brethren in the ministry, let us be more

faithful in our office, by what we have known of this respected Father and Brother in the gospel. Let his death deeply admonish us to be also ready. We also must give account of ourselves unto God. To whom is death so solemn, so full of tremendous results, as to the watchman of souls? What immense interests are in his hands? Who is the faithful steward of the mysteries of God? Who is wise to win souls? Who will receive the approving sentence—Well done, good and faithful servant. Bear Brethren, let us be clothed with humility; and let the love of Christ constrain us to live always to him; and may he accept and bless us in our work, for the honor of his name.

Let every one, in this house of our solemnities, prepare to meet God in judgment. The decisive day is at hand. Delay has ruined thousands. Let it not be your ruin. Be reconciled to God, through his Son. Receive the abundance of his grace, and the gift of righteousness, that you may reign in life by Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

HYMN.

What think you of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of him.
As Jesus appears in your view,
As he is beloved or not;
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath are your lot.

Some take him a creature to be, A man, or an angel at most: Sure these have not feelings like me, Nor know themselves wretched and lost: So guilty, so helpless am I, I durst not confide in his blood, Nor on his protection rely, Unless I were sure he is God.

Some call him a Savior, in word, But mix their own works with his plan; And hope he his help will afford, When they have done all that they can: If doings prove rather too light, (A little, they own, they may fail), They purpose to make up full weight, By casting his name in the scale.

Some style him the pearl of great price, And say he's the fountain of joys; Yet feed upon folly and vice, And cleave to the world and its toys: Like Judas, the Saviour they kiss, And while they salute him, betray; Ah! what will profession like this Avail in his terrible day?

If ask'd, what of Jesus I think?
Tho' still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, he's my meat and my drink,
My life, and my strength, and my store;
My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
My Savior from sin and from thrall;
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord, and my All.

