

**A SERMON DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH,  
AT THE FUNERAL OF REV. JAMES  
KENDALL, D.D.: SENIOR MINISTER OF  
THE FIRST CHURCH, IN PLYMOUTH,  
SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 20, 1859**

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A sermon delivered at Plymouth, at the funeral of Rev. James Kendall, D.D.: senior minister of the First Church, in Plymouth, Sunday afternoon, March 20, 1859 by George W. Briggs

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**GEORGE W. BRIGGS**

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S E R M O N

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AT THE FUNERAL OF

REV. JAMES KENDALL, D. D.,

SENIOR MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH,

IN PLYMOUTH,

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 20, 1859.

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*Ware*  
BY GEORGE W. BRIGGS,  
MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH, IN SALAM.

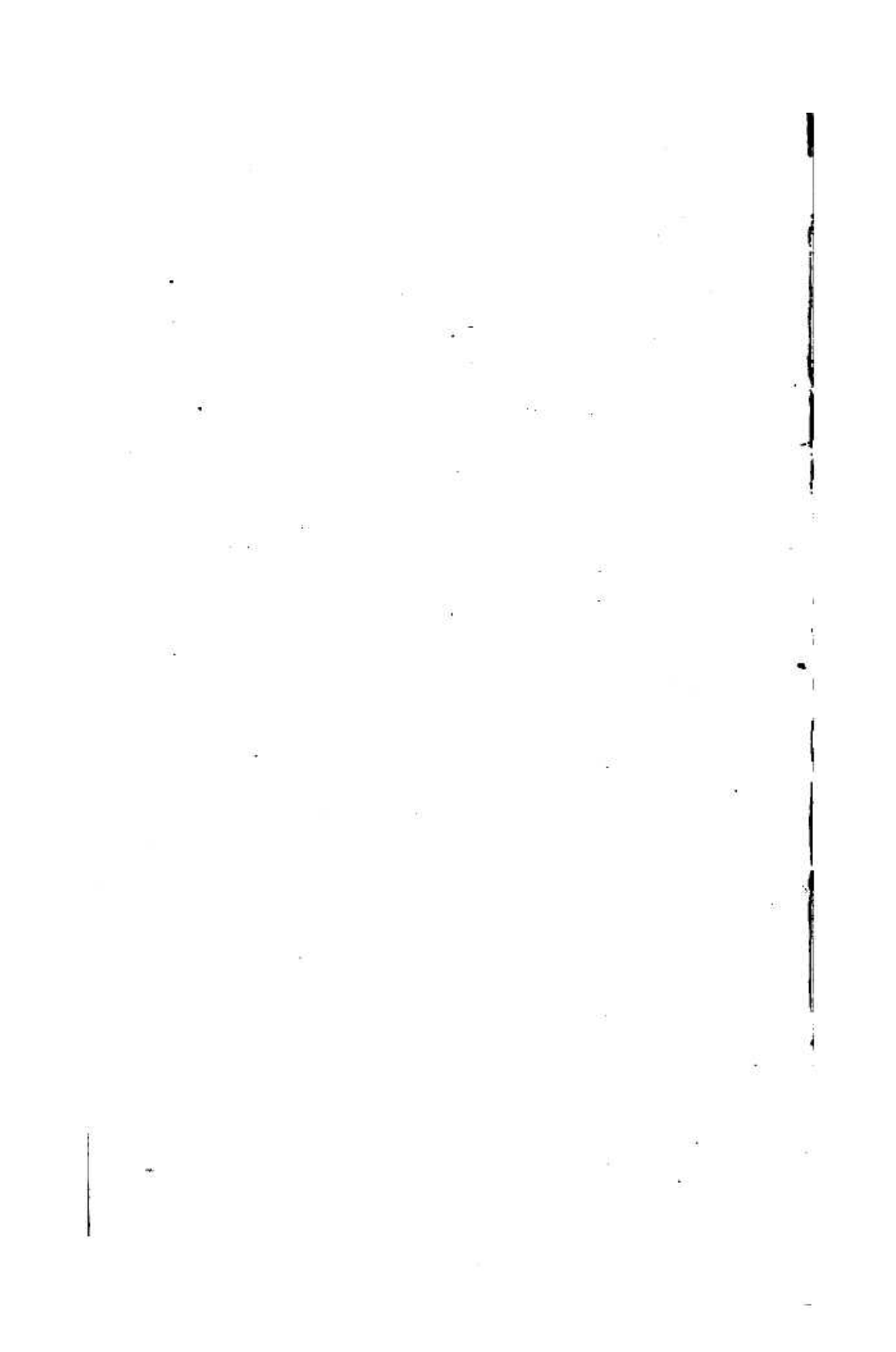
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NOTE.—The author desires to express his thanks to Rev. Dr. SPRAGUE, of Albany, for kindly permitting him to use the "Reminiscences of Dr. Kendall's Life," which are referred to in the following pages. He has thus been enabled greatly to enlarge and improve that part of the Discourse which attempts to give a sketch of the events of Dr. Kendall's life. The rest of the Sermon is printed as it was originally delivered, with slight alterations.



## S E R M O N .

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JOB V. 26.

THOU SHALT COME TO THY GRAVE IN A FULL AGE, AS A SHEAF OF CORN  
COMETH IN IN HIS SEASON.

The Christian mind sees a prophetic meaning, a holy beauty, in the ministry of death, in whatever period of life it may come. When the innocent or the faithful are called away, the angel of death is always a messenger of light, as well as of gloom. It is so even when the youngest die. Parental affection is smitten with peculiar grief when the budding beauty of the infant's life is blasted, and the lovely form, whose every motion was a spell to enchant the heart, is laid low in an apparently untimely grave. The mother to-day, like the mother in Rama, weeps for her child, and almost refuses to be comforted, when it is thus early gone. It is right that she should weep. Yet, in calmer hours, she begins to see that the departure of these little ones not only illumines the dark valley, but becomes a peculiar revelation of the immortality beyond it. The soul which had scarcely begun to develop its powers in the gardens of human love, is



transplanted into the garden of God, to unfold amid a heavenly beauty. It fades not into death, but into a higher life. And, at length, when faith has bidden the waves of grief be still, even the mother's heart hears the words, "Suffer little children to come unto me," "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," as if chanted by angelic voices around that little tomb, until her tears cease to flow, and she feels herself drawn up towards the heavens by the yearnings of human affection, and the inspiration of immortal hopes.

Light mingles with the gloom, also, when those of maturer years depart. Death seems most mysterious when it breaks into the midst of life, to interrupt its noblest work; when it takes the mother upon whose breast the infant rests, or strikes down the manly strength on which many lean for support and guidance. Why, we ask in wonder,—why are not such spirits left to finish the sweet and holy work which seemed to have been given to them alone to do? But we feel, and are inwardly assured, that the tide of life which flowed with a current so full and deep until it disappeared from sight, must still be rolling on, like the river after it passes beyond our view. Reverently and joyfully, we say, "Those who thus live can never die." And therefore, when human hopes are most sadly wrecked, when all that is most charming in womanly grace and virtue, or most inspiring in manly power and genius, is suddenly taken from our sight, the deepest and most sacred persuasions of immortality

are borne in upon the heart. As the stars of heaven come within our view only in a part of their glorious course, and then pass on into deeps of space impenetrable to mortal eyes, so these true and lovely spirits, brighter than the stars, only touch this earthly sphere in a little portion of their appointed track of light, and then pass quickly on, to be God's angels still in realms of life which "eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived."

But when the aged go, when those depart whose earthly life has been lengthened out through many years of varying, yet blessed experience, until infirmity has bowed the once vigorous frame, and the crumbling body is no longer a fitting dwelling-place for the immortal spirit, then the light dispels every trace of gloom. Then we look upon a "finished life." The fruit has ripened in our sight. It is not mysterious, but natural, that the heavenly reaper should come to gather in the harvest. When the race has been fully run, indeed, why should we grieve to have the spirit go to receive its crown? It is no mystery, in one view, that the young and innocent should die,—that they should be taken up into the guardianship of angelic teachers before the stains of earth could soil, or its sorrows cloud their spirits. It is no mystery, in any view, that the old and the saintly should die; that, when the temptations of the world have been bravely met, and its work nobly done, the soul should cast off the burden of the failing flesh, and lay aside that

which cannot be immortal, and put on the garments of a new and celestial youth.

We gather here, to-day, to pay our tribute of affection and respect to a "finished life;" to one who goes to his grave in a full age, and with a ripened spirit. Though increasing years seemed but slowly to impair his strength, and threw few shadows over his mind, and none upon his heart,—though his affections flowed out as freshly and tenderly as ever in all the relations of life and love, and a noontide brightness lingered even to his setting sun, still he has long been standing with his loins girt about, ready to cross the mysterious stream. He felt that his work was done; and with no reluctance to stay, and no impatience to go, he calmly waited for the expected summons. And now that he has gone, reverently and tenderly we bear the form which his spirit so long glorified to the altar at which he ministered for so many years, to let it rest here for a little space, while we contemplate his character, and give thanks for his memory; and then we carry it, with love and honor, to the place of its final repose. Most fitting is it that his form should rest here, on its passage to the tomb, in the place which he loved so well, on the day which he loved so well, to give another consecration, in all your hearts, to the place of your prayer and worship. And most fitting it surely is, that we should gather up some of the lessons of his life; not, simply, for his sake, in justice to his memory, but much more, for our own sake, in