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# SERMON,

PREACHED AT ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH,

AUGUST 21, 1825,

BY CHRISTOPHER E. GADSDEN,

On the Occasion of the Decease

OF

**GEN. CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.**

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Pinckney



☞ In preparing this Sermon for the press, it has been, with the consent of those who asked its publication, both amended and enlarged. It has been delayed to secure the advantage of the interesting extract in the Appendix No. I.

## SERMON.

GENESIS, chap. 50. part of the 7th, 9th & 10th verses.

"And Joseph went up to bury his father: And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: And it was a very great company. And there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation."

THE design of a funeral Sermon is to benefit the living. As the heart is made tender by the death of a friend, it furnishes a favorable occasion for inculcating the principles of virtue and religion. Under the pressure of calamity, the mind loses a degree of its energy, and even those who are most accustomed to religious reflection may, at such a time, desire to be led by the hand of sympathy to the springs of consolation which the gospel has opened. The praises of the dead are not to be excluded from such a discourse, so far as the purpose is to encourage the imitation of their virtues. To the character which is merely great, distinguished by talents and achievements, and nothing else, the religious teacher will not advert,



except as it may serve to illustrate the divine wisdom and power, since every gift of the creature must redound to the glory of the creator. But where goodness is united with greatness, or rather where the latter is directed and controled by the former, where the individual has evidently been governed by moral and religious principles, and his energies employed for the benefit of others, and not exclusively for his own, the preacher delights to expatiate on the excellencies of such a character. He will not willingly suffer to pass so favorable an opportunity for proving that the precepts of christianity are not impracticable; and for admonishing the vicious, strengthening the virtuous, and guiding the inexperienced by the power of example. Funeral solemnities have the sanction of divine revelation, as is evident from the text, and in the New Testament we read, "that devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."

Of him, whose death this community is now lamenting, it may be emphatically said that he was a good man. It is not necessary to vindicate this assertion, for it will not be disputed, and least of all by you who knew him so well; who, in every line of the psalm\* just sung, have felt the justice of the application, but a brief sketch of his life and character will afford us a

\* The 15th Psalm.

mournful satisfaction. It must be interesting from its subject and, under the divine blessing, it may be edifying.

CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY, was born in February 1746. His mother was a daughter of GEORGE LUCAS, Governor of the Island of Antigua, and of her intelligence there is this good evidence, that she was the means of introducing into this province the cultivation of indigo.\* CHARLES PINCKNEY, the father of the deceased, held the office of Chief Justice, and was one of the King's Council. His last Will,† will be read with great delight by the Patriot, the Philanthropist, the Christian, and I may add every Parent. It expresses a high sense of the "dignity of human nature;" of the obligations of piety, justice and charity; of the claims of our country, and those of the great "cause of virtuous liberty, as well civil as religious." It shows that he recognized his obligations as an advocate to maintain the honor of the legal profession, and to render it the minister of private and general good. But the christian will be chiefly gratified with the ardent piety and affecting humility of these expressions—"conscious, in some measure conscious, of the regard and veneration due to its great creator and most bountiful benefactor;" with the pious liberality indulged in the

\* See Ramsay's South-Carolina, vol. ii. p. 209.

† See the Appendix I.



founding of lectures "in humble imitation of those by the Hon. Mr Boyle, to encourage and promote religious and virtuous practices and principles among us and to raise an ardent love of the Deity in us:" and with the just solicitude expressed as to the most important part of his son's education, that he should be "brought up" not only "liberally" but "virtuously" and "religiously," and as to his conduct through life, that he should look for success to "the blessing of Almighty God," that he "should employ his abilities" not exclusively or even chiefly in secular concerns, but "in the service of God"—discountenancing "irreligion," and making "the glory of God and the good of mankind his *principal* aim and study." It is known from expressions of this worthy man, which were naturally treasured up, that he educated his sons with a view to their usefulness and not merely their respectability or any selfish considerations, and in particular that he wished them to be active in the service of the Church,\* and of their country. Happy parent! Thy solicitude hath been amply rewarded. Thy children have not disappointed thy expectations. They have reaped a renown, which even paternal partiality could scarcely have anticipated. May all parents learn from this result how much the character, the honor and the happiness

\* He is said to have expressed a hope that one might be a Statesman and the other a Bishop.

of their children depend, under God, on their example, their counsel and their dying injunctions. By whose example is a child so much influenced, whose opinions is he so likely to adopt, and to whose advice does he give so attentive an ear, as to those of a father whom nature and gratitude, and early and daily association have taught him to venerate?

No expense was spared on the education of General PINCKNEY. He was at Westminster, at the University of Oxford, at the Temple in London, and on the Continent acquiring military knowledge, and improving himself by travelling. His good sense and good principles saved him from the dangers of foreign education. He gathered the fruit without being made giddy by the height of the tree. He did not learn to despise his native land, "to think of himself more highly than he ought;" or to consider it the business of life to be adding to the stores of knowledge without ever applying them to purposes of utility. He did not become so addicted to books, as to be unfit for and averse to society; and to neglect the important study of men and things. A liberal education did not, as it too often does, render him less practical. On the contrary, the admirable mental discipline to which he was subjected, and the knowledge which he acquired, in particular that of a political and military nature, evidently enlarged the sphere of his usefulness.



As the strength of his mind rescued him from prejudice, so his virtuous principles prevented foreign attachments. He was an early, decided, and devoted promoter of the revolution, courting the scenes of difficult duty and danger, and *chusing* to be the companion of WASHINGTON. The friendship of these illustrious individuals was never interrupted, and the younger enjoyed a series of marks of confidence, commencing with his appointment as "aid de camp," greater than were bestowed upon any other man. Need I remark that it must have been no common merit which WASHINGTON would eulogize; to which he would commit the greatest interests of his country; and extend the hand of friendship. According to the judgment of that great man, General PINCKNEY was qualified for every variety of elevated station, executive, judicial, diplomatic or military. He was invited into the cabinet on two occasions;\* was offered a seat on the bench of the supreme court; sent on a foreign embassy† of extraordinary importance, and

\* As Secretary of War, and Secretary of State.

† "He was recommended to the President (says Judge MARSHALL, who, we have no doubt, is expressing, not merely his own sentiments, but those of WASHINGTON) by an intimate knowledge of his worth, by a confidence in the sincerity of his personal attachment to the Executive, by a conviction that his exertions to effect the objects of his mission would be ardent and sincere, and that whatever might be his partialities for France he possessed a high and delicate sense of national as well as individual honor, was jealous for the reputation of his country, and tenacious of its rights."

twice called to prominent offices in the army.\* It was as minister in France, that he is said to have uttered the sentiment so consistent with his high character, and valuable not only to his country, but to mankind.† It is a standing rebuke of the corrupt practices of diplomacy, and a maxim by which all countries ought to be regulated in their mutual intercourse. Double dealing; the recovery of rights by a sacrifice of principle; and the gaining of advantages by any other than fair and honorable means, whether in the concerns of nations or individuals he equally detested. His private life was passed in the midst of you. You beheld him exemplary as the head of a family, the kindest of brothers, a sincere and constant and generous friend, a good citizen, fulfilling alike his duties to the government and to the community, and placing his great influence zealously, and firmly, and perseveringly, on the side of law, and order, of morality and religion. Political measures when approved, he fearlessly vindicated, and those which he disapproved, he as fearlessly canvassed, and by peaceable and constitutional means sought to have them corrected.

\* In 1791, the command of the army was *offered* to him, which was afterwards given to St. Clair.

† To the appointment of Major-General which he received from President Adams, in 1794, he is understood to have been nominated by Washington.

† "Millions for defence but not a cent for tribute."



Every citizen is responsible to his country, and he was not the man to decline, evade, or perform insufficiently any duties, however arduous or hazardous or humble which she might enjoin. At the bar he appeared as a father to the younger members of the profession, instructing them by his example, and encouraging them by his condescension; as a brother not in name merely to his co-temporaries, respectful to the bench, enlightening, never misleading, the jury; the friend of the helpless, the detector of fraud and oppression, the bold champion of truth and justice. He well understood, faithfully pursued, and triumphantly advanced the legitimate purposes of that useful and necessary profession.\*

In general intercourse, the law of kindness was on his lips. It was the hand of a hearty well-wisher which was extended to you. It was the freedom of a man, who recognized you as his fellow citizen, which welcomed you. You saw no look of half-subdued pride. You heard no whisper of vanity. The most suspicious searched in vain for the least symptom of insincerity. The door of hospitality was widely thrown open, and when you entered it you were instantly made happy by a pure benevolence, and saw around you as much happiness as falls to the lot of humanity, affectionate children, domestics obvious-

\* See Appendix II.

ly well governed and well provided for, and at the head of this scene, the venerable patriarch with a countenance glowing with satisfaction, surrounded by the memorials of wisdom and piety, applicable to their mutual improvement for life and for eternity.

You beheld him enjoying with moderation a large share of prosperity, not unmindful of the divine benefactor, and of the peculiar duties to which it called him. In the day of trouble you would have found him, had you entered the private circle, meek, quiet, patient and practising a christian resignation. You met him in this holy temple, and kneeled with him, and those most dear to him at that altar of the Saviour on whom the great and those of low degree equally must rest their hopes; to whom all must look for present peace and everlasting safety. But let us contemplate more distinctly his instructive life.

I. *He was a pure patriot.* If it were necessary to confute those visionaries who have denied that patriotism is a virtue, it would be sufficient to state, that it is a modification of that love of our neighbour which is declared to be the second great commandment, and that it evidently controlled the conduct of those pious men whose lives are recorded in scripture, and of that perfect being who is the Christian's exemplar. He is recorded to have wept only twice, at the grave of his friend Lazarus, and in the prospect of the



ruin of his beloved country. How pathetically does he lament her sins, and though "she received him not," he charged his Apostles to begin their ministrations at Jerusalem. That the honored dead had this love of country, we know not from his professions, not so much from his services and sacrifices great as they were, as from two incidents by which it was remarkably tested. When war was declared against France, the second command, contrary to the reasonable expectations of many, was given not to General PINCKNEY, but to one who had been his junior in the army of the revolution. The third place in command was tendered to him, and he promptly accepted it. His services were needed, and he would not withhold them. It may well be questioned whether there was another man whose patriotism in the conflict with self-esteem and martial pride, could have thus memorably triumphed. The other instance occurred in our last war, when, differing from some with whom he had long concurred in political sentiment, who were perhaps incapable of a like magnanimity, he recommended his friends, who consulted him, to accept of military appointments, and declared, notwithstanding his advanced age, that he was prepared to do his part in the conflict. It would be aside from our purpose to shew that such a declaration, from such a man, at such a crisis was invaluable. It belongs to history to calcu-

late the amount of his claim accumulated through a long life, on the public gratitude. But we must remark that it beautifully harmonized with his whole conduct, and proved that the sentiment of which we are speaking was deeply rooted in his soul. Ambition has been called the infirmity of noble minds, and pride seems almost inseparable from elevated distinction. If he had these vices, it is gratifying to find them overcome when the question was between them and the country.

II. *He was independent in forming his opinions, and in declaring them.* Consulting experience diligently, and listening patiently to the opinions of the wise, he gave them all the weight to which they were entitled. But he was not guided by the authority of any man, much less by that of the unreflecting multitude. He had an opinion of his own, derived from the exercise of his understanding, and, with respect to those subjects where the mind of a creature must fail, from divine revelation. It may be said that this was an evidence of good sense. It was so, but I am now speaking of his moral, not of his intellectual character, and I refer to it as a rare and valuable virtue. Independence of character may proceed from undue self estimation, but they are not necessarily connected. It is an imperative duty to use the reason which God has given us, and to consult and obey the dictates of our own conscience. He who follows authority rather



than reason may be virtuous but it is by accident. No merit can attach to a man for having performed a good deed, or resisted a temptation unless it appears that he has employed his mind on the subject and duly exercised his self-judgment. In civil rulers this independence is indispensable. If they allow themselves to be guided by others, the public are deprived of the benefit of their talents and experience. To their superior ability the public welfare has been committed, and they, therefore, violate their trust if they follow rather than guide the popular sentiment. It may be truly said of the deceased, as WASHINGTON modestly but firmly said of himself, that he was no party man.\* His intelligence, his self-respect, but above all his conscience and his christian principles effectually prevented him from being trammelled in that way.

III. *He was a man of the strictest integrity.* In this expression there is no reference to pecuniary transactions, for into his elevated mind the sordid passion never entered. It would not be necessary to mention, if it were not a vice of high life that he was averse "to gambling of every kind, he neither made bets, nor played cards." "Honest purposes and honest means and no

\* It is known that he had ardent admirers in both the parties, which for a long time unhappily divided our country, and that while the one unanimously, there were several distinguished men of the other who advocated his election as Chief-Magistrate.

other" was emphatically one of his maxims. It is generally understood that he declined the highest honor in our country, rather than comply with a condition which to his scrupulous delicacy seemed exceptionable. This honesty of soul was stamped upon his countenance, and it was the charm of his manners. It added greatly to the measure of his usefulness, since his opinions were promptly and unequivocally expressed, not only when they were asked, but whenever they might be useful, without fear or favor.

IV. *He was remarkable for his consistency.* His opinions were deliberately formed, and therefore they were not easily shaken. An independent thinker is unaffected by the changes which take place in other minds. His conduct was regulated, not by the fluctuating standard of self-love, but by moral principle which is immutable. The man who has sinister purposes will of course change his conduct according to circumstances. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." He is "a reed shaken by the wind." It may be truly said to him, whatever may be his advantages, as it was to Reuben by his inspired father, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Moral eminence, and its consequence sincere, general lasting respect are inseparable from steadiness of purpose, and pursuit.

V. *He was charitable.* As he would not allow his humanity to interfere with the claims of



justice, neither would he permit the latter to degenerate into severity. His tenants knew that he was more than forbearing, that he did not enforce his dues even when there was ability to discharge them, and that some imposed on him, almost in the only way in which they could have done so, by exciting his compassion. In the practice of law, he uniformly declined to receive a fee from a poor widow,\* imitating in this respect his honored father, and there is reason to believe that his services were gratuitously enjoyed by many others. It is said that he appropriated a stated portion of his income to purposes of charity. He contributed to many public institutions civil and religious. The poor, and more particularly his dependants, those slaves who are unable to protect, to provide for and to govern themselves, found in him an ever vigilant, patient and generous patron.

VI. *He was prudent.* Prudence is a virtue enjoined in the holy scriptures, and it is the parent of other virtues.† It induces industry and furnishes the means of beneficence.‡ For want of it, many have survived their usefulness, and in an

\* *Proverbs* 31, 9. "Plead the cause of the poor and needy." See also the advice in the Will.

† There can be no greater commendation of this virtue than the representing it as characteristic of David, of Solomon, and of our Saviour. (See *1 Samuel* 16, 18. *2 Chron.* ii. 12. *Isaiah* 52, 13. *Ephes.* 1, 8.

‡ This is well expressed in our version of 112th Psalm, 5th verse:

"Yet what his charity impairs

"He saves by prudence in affairs."

evil day irredeemably tarnished reputations that were once bright as the sun, and without a spot.

The deceased would not live beyond his income (unless the necessities of his country, as they probably did more than once, compelled him to do so) neither would he consent to embark in an uncertain speculation. Parsimony he was utterly incapable of. The claims which the Almighty himself has instituted on our possessions for the relief of the poor, for the promotion of the general welfare, and for the maintenance of religion he duly recognized, but he could not be tempted by his native generosity, by what others might say or think, much less by ostentation, to neglect a just economy.\*

VII. *He was blessed with prosperity.* "A faithful man," it is the promise of the Almighty, "shall abound with blessings" There are exceptions, but in general the moral virtues have a present reward. Industry† and self-control, honesty and charity and prudence are usually crowned with prosperity. Judicious and virtuous pa-

\* "He was so scrupulous in his sense of justice," (remarks one who knew him well) "that he probably suffered more anxiety to pay a debt than his creditor did to receive it. He was without exception the readiest pay-master I ever knew. During the late war, when his income was reduced by the pressure of the times, he preferred living on the capital of his fortune to borrowing money."

† As an illustration of his sense of the value of time, and unwillingness to encroach upon the occupations of others, it is worthy of mention that he uniformly endeavoured to meet his engagements of every sort at the very minute. This strict punctuality is stated to have been also characteristic of WASHINGTON.



rents, capable instructors, fellowship with great and good men, especially with a Washington, and I may add the country and time of his birth (for had he been born a few years sooner he might have been the martyr of liberty, or a few years later the mere partaker of our rich inheritance, without the satisfaction of having contributed to gain it) were advantages of no common value. But how many have participated in like advantages without becoming either more useful or more happy. The deceased cultivated the talents, availed himself of the opportunities, and followed the worthy examples with which divine providence had favored him. Filial obedience, diligence in youth, imitation of excellence, devotion to his country, and to the great cause of civil freedom, were, under the divine blessing, the foundation of his success in life. While we are contemplating his bright career, his rising in splendor, and travelling on his course with scarcely a cloud of adversity, and then setting enveloped in beauty and sublimity, let us remember that such is the triumph of virtue. "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

But is this all? Can nothing more be said than that as a citizen of this world he had no superior? How great would be our sorrow if we had not good hope of his salvation! How great our mortification if we could not claim his testimony in

favour of religion, if we could propose him for imitation only as the present life is concerned.

VIII. *He was a pious man.* He was a Christian from conviction. He held the doctrine of the Trinity, and was able to vindicate it. He "got a right notion of those truths which mortals are capable of understanding, and believed those that pass all understanding." His judgment and affections were with the Church\* of his fathers, and his influence in support of its faith, worship and discipline, in their primitive excellence and integrity, was usefully exerted on several important occasions. He was a constant worshipper in the temple, and renewed frequently his public profession of faith at the holy altar. His manner indicated solemn feeling, proper humility, and the docility of a disciple.† At the institution of the Charleston Bible Society he was unanimously elected President. When he had attained the age of seventy he declared his resolution to withdraw as much as possible from public business, but at the solicitation of this Society he was induced to make an exception in its favor, and continued to discharge to the close

\* See Appendix III.

† An enlightened and sincere professor of the gospel, must, of course, be hostile to duelling, still it may be useful to state, on the best authority that he was "decidedly opposed to the practice," and condemned it "without hesitation." It is well known that he united in a petition to the legislature many years ago for its effectual suppression.



of life the duties of his office, I need not add, with ability, fidelity, and universal approbation.\*

In the welfare of this congregation, he manifested a peculiar interest. He was a vestryman for several years, regularly attended and took an active part at church meetings, and zealously promoted by his efforts and his contributions every measure of utility. He was a sincere friend of your clergy, always ready to assist them with his counsel, to strengthen them by his influence, and to advance their cause and welfare.†

The rare theological books which he presented to the library of your Society, and the lectures for which we are indebted to his liberality, though they were recommended by his father, will continue memorials of his zeal in the cause of religion, and of his solicitude that its principles might be understood, embraced, and valued by you and your children. May the returns of that lecture revive the recollection of his piety, and incite many to imitate him, in this respect, and not merely in properties of character of far less importance.

Among the evidences of his piety, might not his moral attainments with propriety be enumerated? For let me ask in what irreligious man has the same assemblage of virtues ever been found? In whom has the like degree of uprightness been discovered separate from religious principle? The

\* See Appendix IV.

† See Appendix V.

irreligious may have a love of country, but it is not of the disinterested self-denying ruling character which the Christian exercises. Their independence of conduct is founded in pride, not in conscientious motives; and it is not invincible by the power of self-interest. When has *their* consistency outlived more than two generations, their integrity defied the strongest temptations, their charity ministered to the necessities of the soul; or their prudence originated in the desire of usefulness? From the virtues of the deceased, their number, their character, and their permanence, it is a just inference, that they were founded in christian principle.

I shall conclude with some obvious reflections. *How important is it that men of influence should place their weight in the scale of virtue and piety. They can brace up the public morals. They can check infidelity. They can be the most effectual preachers. Oh, that the great men in our land might be made to feel how much the character and happiness of their country-men depend upon them! Retired piety does not become them. Their light must shine before men. They must not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. They ought to be valiant for the truth. Their influence is a talent for which they must give account. If they neglect to use it, much more if they employ it in the cause of immorality and irreligion, "how great the fault, and how horrible the punishment that will ensue."*



*The good opinion of mankind is not to be secured out of the path of virtue.* Probably there is not one in this assembly, and but few in this city, with whose early recollections there is not associated admiration of the character of General PINCKNEY. There is not one in our extensive country, with a single exception, to whom there has been attached a higher degree of personal respect. Even in the seasons of the greatest political excitement, this personal respect appears to have been scarcely if at all abated. To what cause is this extraordinary popularity to be attributed? Not to great talents and fascinating manners merely. The sober-minded look for something more, and even the multitude can be dazzled only for a time. Virtue is indispensable to the attainment of general and lasting estimation. This is a lesson impressively inculcated by the life of WASHINGTON, and of this his illustrious friend. It is the lesson of all history. The selfish the unprincipled, the immoral, whatever may be their talents and achievements, will not be honored by posterity, and not even by their contemporaries for any length of time. Let the rising generation, the hope of our land, behold the ever-green laurels of him whom we now commemorate, and be instructed that glory, even earthly glory, must be founded on something else than wisdom and valor and victory; that it will be questioned by the discerning, and can-

not outlive even one generation, unless it have the solid basis of moral goodness.

*How infinitely valuable is piety.* It alone can give a man peace at the last, and secure to him the crown of true glory which shall last forever. Alas that a virtue, which has such a reward, should be so generally neglected, and cultivated by the best men with so little diligence! Alas that the honor which cometh of God should have so few, and such cold votaries! "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" How insignificant do wealth and grandeur, station and influence, and the highest possible distinction among men appear, I do not say to the departed soul, but even to surviving friends, in the day of their mourning. Whatever satisfaction the worldly success of our friends, may have afforded us while they lived, when death has removed them, one pious sentiment uttered or one pious deed performed by them is worth ten thousand times more than any other recollection. Would you bequeath to those who sincerely love you, invaluable consolation and hope? Would you possess true glory and lasting felicity? "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Lastly. Let us not be unmindful that, *Men are instruments by which the divine being effects his*



*beneficent purposes.\** He orders the time, and place of their birth. He furnishes the means by which they are trained for usefulness. He puts the right spirit within them, provides the opportunity, protects them in danger, strengthens them for conflict, and crowns them with success. He guards their health and intellectual vigor, and protracts their day of usefulness. It is by his grace that men are enabled to overcome the temptations of their corrupt nature, of a wicked world, and of the enemy; and to acquire those virtues by which they adorn society, and become its best benefactors.

While then we humble ourselves under the present afflicting dispensation, and chasten our sorrow by Christian resignation, let us acknowledge with devout thankfulness our obligations to God for having blessed our country with the patriotic services, our city with the moral influence, and ourselves with the living example of him whose life and character we have been considering. Oh, may Providence in his kindness constantly raise up as the governors of this great people such men as shall effectually incite them to love the truth, brought to light by our Lord Jesus Christ; to fear God, to hate covetousness, to study to do good, and to follow after that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.  
AMEN.

\* It will be seen by the letter quoted in Appendix IV. how firmly this sentiment was held by the illustrious deceased.