A MOTHER IN ISRAEL.

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

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PREACHED IN THE

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SERMON.

JUDGES V., 7.

The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.

God has been pleased in his wisdom to endow woman with certain attributes of mind and of heart which qualify her for eminent usefulness. She is more calm in counsel, more fertile in expedients, more enduring in patience, and more hopeful in exigencies than man, and as history both profane and sacred testifies, she is scarcely inferior to him in courage and heroism. While the peculiar sphere of woman's influence is home, and her power is mainly felt in giving shape to household relations, the Providence of God has sometimes opened for her fields of public beneficence, and given to her a courage in critical exigencies which has surpassed the strength of the sterner sex, and made her illustrious as the deliverer of nations.

Deborah the wife of Lapidoth is an illustrious ex-
ample. She was raised up by God to sustain the drooping hearts of her countrymen at a time of deepest gloom and despondency, to roll back the tide of invasion, and to deliver Israel from the most galling oppression. She was dwelling in her home between Ramah and Bethel occupied with her household cares, when Jabin, King of Canaan invaded the land with an army so vast that they overspread the country and occasioned universal alarm. The principal men of the nation had either fled from their homes or been slain by the edge of the sword, and a general consternation had seized the minds of the Israelites. It seems that there was only one heart that was neither dismayed nor discouraged among the people. Deborah arose strong in faith and piety, wise in counsel and understanding, cool and determined in her moral courage, a Judge in Israel. By all those qualities which give influence in society she had acquired strong public confidence, while by the Spirit of the Lord she prophesied that the armies of the Israelites would certainly be victorious, and the hosts of Sisera would surely be scattered and destroyed. Endowed with an unusual spirit of patriotism and in the exercise of faith in God, she accompanied Barak to the field, and above the noise of battle her voice was heard giving animation to the soldiers, and predicting a splendid triumph to their arms. And
now in fulfillment of her prophesy as the Spirit of the Lord had rested upon her, the army of Sisera was utterly destroyed, the commander himself slain by the hand of Jael, and this song of Thanksgiving celebrated to God: "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel. Hear, O ye kings; give ear O ye princes; I even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel. The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

But it is particularly in connection with the church and the religious interests of mankind that the character and influence of a christian woman is displayed. This is a field in which are brought into action the most excellent virtues, and the brightest graces that ornament human life. True, the peculiar character of a christian does not attract the observation of the world nor call forth its applause; but the principles by which they are governed, and the active habits of piety which they exercise, render them honorable in the court of Heaven, and draw upon them the admiration and approval of God. In how many instances a christian woman has made noble sacrifices in the cause of Christ; in how many instances she has awakened a holy purpose in her children, who
have arisen by means of a mother’s piety and instruction to positions of eminent usefulness, are the familiar things of history, rendering the name, “a mother in Israel,” significant and impressive.

Previous to making a distinct application of this title to the excellent woman whose piety and example I shall commend to your attention in this discourse, let us consider the text itself—“A mother in Israel.”

I will call your attention

I. To the character here distinguished.
II. To the esteem in which this character is held.

1. The character here distinguished.

A Mother in Israel! The very name awakens associations hallowed and noble, and by this title we have described:

1. A Christian woman who has long been distinguished for her eminent faith and piety.

She is not a young Christian who has only recently awakened to the joys of forgiveness, but she has obtained a rich experience of the grace of God in Jesus Christ by years of discipline and instruction, and her pious affections have been deepened into strength by the dealings of Divine Providence. She is not “a babe in Christ,” but has grown up to full maturity in the Christian life, and for a series of years has exercised herself in all the graces and virtues which give worth to the Christian character. Her
relation to the Lord Jesus Christ was formed in the period of youth, when she cordially received him as her Saviour, and in an intelligent faith gave herself to his service. She has been spiritually incorporated with the true Israel of God, and her membership with the visible church has long since been constituted by an open confession of her faith in Christ, and a solemn dedication to the Lord. She is not a novice whose principles have not been tested, but she has obtained large experience of the love of her Saviour, and the number and beauty of her graces give the undoubted proof of the purity and permanence of her religious principles. She is strong in faith and fervent in her affections. "The Mother in Israel" has long walked in the narrow way; she has acquired knowledge in the school of affliction; she has obtained many a conquest over the corruptions of her own heart, and the inordinate affections of her nature; memory calls back to her recollection days of great conflict with temptation and of signal deliverance; she has heard the gospel message in a spirit of self-application and tenderness; planted long since in the courts of the Lord she is bringing forth fruit in old age. And now, with her ripe experience and strong faith, she is an instructor of the ignorant, a guide to the inquiring, a counsellor of the afflicted, a pillar in the sanctuary, "A Mother in Israel."
2. "A Mother in Israel," is distinguished for her deep solicitude in the welfare of the church.

The church of God is very dear to her heart, and because of the interest she has in its prosperity she is often heard to say, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Her whole soul seems to be bound up in the interests of Zion, and when it is prosperous her heart rejoices, or when afflicted her spirit grieves. With an intelligent watchfulness she marks the progress of events in their bearing on the church, and with the energy of purpose which is the endowment of a christian woman, she consults for its enlargement and progress. With a generous appreciation she recognizes the labors and trials of the Gospel Ministry, consults their comfort while occupied in the duties of their responsible calling, holds up their hands by prayer on their behalf while they are dispensing the word of Life, and upon the truth publicly administered she daily watches that there may come down the spirit of all grace, dropping like the rain and distilling like the fertilizing dew.

Oh how her soul rejoices when God's cause is revived, and there are everywhere indications of the Holy Spirit's unusual presence in the conviction of
sinnrs and the sanctification of believers. With what
anxiety then does she watch the progress of the truth
in awakening the careless, in bowing the hearts of
sinner before the cross, and filling the sanctuary with
inquirers. With what concern does she bend over
distressed ones who are troubled in conscience, that
Christ may be formed in them the hope of glory.
With what eagerness does she tell sinners of the
fountain of Christ's blood and righteousness, and urge
them to try its healing virtue. And with what emo-
tions of rapture does she hail the time of ingathering,
and exclaim with joy, "Who are these that fly as a
cloud, and as the doves to their windows."

But with feelings of deepest grief is "the Mother
in Israel" exercised when the church is afflicted and
few come to her solemn feasts. When the spirit of
piety burns low on the altars of the sanctuary, when
the hearts of God's children are cold, and lukewarm-
ness abounds, then she weeps over the follies of Israel,
trembles in view of the judgments of the Almighty
justly to be apprehended, and in pleading tones pre-
vails before God in the prayer, "O Lord save thy
people, the remnant of Israel."

3. "A Mother in Israel" is distinguished by her
love for Divine ordinances and her delight in Christian
communion.

It is a characteristic of the pious that there exists
in them an intelligent attachment to the house of God, and all the services of the sanctuary. It is regarded by them as the dwelling place of the Most High, as the fountain of unspeakable blessings, as the storehouse of invaluable treasures. Here God meets with his people, here the Holy Spirit through his word gives instruction and comfort to the soul, here the praises of the Lord are celebrated, and the spirit is prepared for Heaven. This is to the pious soul a sacred spot, a house of peace and love, a scene of Divine fellowship and grace. "I believe in the holy catholic church, in the communion of saints, in the forgiveness of sins, and in the life everlasting," is the golden chain of the believer's creed.

In all these privileges and employments "the Mother in Israel" has peculiar delight. Refreshing to her is the light of the Sabbath Morning, joyful to her mind is the invitation, "Let us go into the house of the Lord," sweet music to her ears are the songs of Zion. She loves the assemblies of God's saints, she is cheered by the voice of prayer, she is comforted and instructed by the lessons of heavenly truth, she is strengthened by the ministrations of the sanctuary. Dear to her soul is the very place of prayer, beautiful to her mind are the appointments of the church, and very gracious to her heart are the devotions of God's people. You will find "the mother in Israel"
in the company of those who keep holy day. Her voice tremulous with age is heard in the melody of Psalms. And often does she express her feelings in the ancient language of the church, "Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." Words can hardly convey her love for that word which has so often administered peace to her distressed mind, or tell her comfort as she has enjoyed the communion of saints.

In the House of the Lord she has often met with her Redeemer at the feast of ordinances, and her heart has been made to burn within her as she listened to the unfolded excellencies of her precious Saviour. So much is her delight in meeting with the people of the Lord, so large has been her comfort in the time of her affliction, that she is often heard to say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."

4. "A Mother in Israel" is distinguished by the zeal and prudence with which she engages in every good work.

There are works of piety to be performed by all the people of God, and the plaudit "well done," is pronounced only on the faithful steward. Our Lord has left for his disciples the injunction, "Occupy till
I come, and the reward of the pious shall be experienced in the approbation of our Lord, and that conscious satisfaction which is the result of well-doing. Here are the poor to be encouraged and assisted, here are the ignorant to be instructed and guided, here are children to be educated and trained for Heaven, here are the afflicted to be comforted and relieved, here are the oppressed to be defended and aided, and all around us are the objects of compassion and sympathy.

This is the peculiar field for a christian woman's activity and usefulness. Religion is her appropriate sphere, and the whole history of the church is filled with the praise of female piety and consecration. To what extent the world is indebted to her offices, eternity only can reveal. And in this department of labor the "Mother in Israel" displays those peculiar characteristics which constitute her an angel of mercy among the distressed. Endowed by nature with a large measure of benevolent virtues, combined with certain Providential circumstances in her position and history, she is qualified for a career of great domestic, social and public usefulness. At home she is the christian wife and mother, in the pious example which she sets before her household, in the quiet and discreet management of her domestic establishment, in the solicitude which she feels for the spiritual
welfare of her children, and in the joy which she experiences in welcoming them as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. In the church she is the established and intelligent upholder of the system of religious truth, the considerate christian hearer, the uniform and delighted worshipper, the pastor's sympathizing friend and assistant, the devout and praying disciple, and the cherisher and promoter of every religious and benevolent enterprise. In society she is the cheerful christian matron, affable in her manners, uniformly kind and conciliating in her relations, pleasing in her intercourse with the young, the favorite with her companions in years, and ready to embrace every opportunity to afford sympathy with the distressed, and bestow relief upon the objects of necessity.

Such is the character of "the Mother in Israel" as God has fixed her station in the church, and marked out her sphere of usefulness and activity. A christian woman, eminent in faith and piety; cherishing a deep solicitude for the welfare of the church; exercising a devout love for Divine ordinances and delighting in the communion of saints; and distinguished for her zeal and prudence in the performance of every good work.

Let us consider,

II. The esteem in which this character is held.
1. The community will bestow upon "the Mother in Israel" the respect to which the character is entitled.

As a law of human society such a character as I have described will always command the honorable consideration of an intelligent community, and be held in veneration by the virtuous minded. Her claims to regard are not based upon the qualifications which the world admire, or upon such exhibitions as draw forth the applause of the excited multitudes. Her excellencies are rather of a domestic and retired character, and associated entirely with religion.

True, the cultivation of the mind under a combination of certain Providential circumstances, has sometimes elevated woman to a position of commanding influence among the nations, and enabled her to fill important offices in civil government. Sometimes an unusual spirit of courage and patriotism, heightened and sanctified by grace, has been imparted to her in critical periods, rendering her like Deborah the deliverer of her country. But "the Mother in Israel" is a religious character. She is one of God's people, taught by the Spirit, and rich in christian experience. Her walk though not with the great and noble of the earth, is with the pious of the flock; and that which gives to her the crown of distinction, is the strength and simplicity of her
faith, and the purity and power of her godly living. While these humble graces of the christian woman do not shine in the circles of fashion or in the courts of princes, while the sphere of female piety is ordinarily confined within a narrow circle, and her meek and unobtrusive spirit so shuns observation that she is not seen from afar, still her pious graces will be manifested. Her religious affections will kindle altar-fires of love to God and good deeds to man, and her christian character, though she plans it not, will be as a city set upon a hill, a light shining in a dark place. Oh it cannot be otherwise but that "the Mother in Israel" should be a character esteemed and loved by the community in which she lives. The very kindliness of her disposition improved by grace, has won for her many friends. And her life-long relation to the church by a visible and professed avowal of her faith in Christ, has long identified her with the pious of the sanctuary. The poor whom she has befriended will love her, the afflicted whom she has comforted will esteem her, the young whom she has encouraged will reverence her, the aged with whom she has walked will respect her, the church which she has adorned will cherish her, and her children and children's children will rise up and call her blessed.

2. The memory of "the Mother in Israel" will always be gratefully cherished.
It is a pleasing thought in connection with the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ that good influences in our world are permanent, and a virtuous character never dies. While the memory of the wicked shall perish, that of the righteous shall only grow brighter with the lapse of years. A life moulded after the perfect model of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of truth, will set in motion a train of holy principles that will make other souls beat with noble thoughts and devout aspirations. There is a vital force in that godly and spiritual life that will send through the family and the community, unseen it may be by the human eye, but real and existing, a moral power that will give an impress upon the character of many generations. You cannot live and die with a name for goodness without stamping upon some memory the seal of virtue which shall be perpetuated long after you are gone.

But if the memory of the just is blessed, the memory of "the Mother in Israel" will always be held in grateful recollection. Indeed, the Holy Scriptures as well as the lessons of Providence impress upon our minds the great religious importance of preserving their names and cherishing their virtues. The remembrance of what they were in the moral excellence of their lives, in the pious affections which ornamented their characters, in the gentleness and
attraction of their christian intercourse, in the devotion which distinguished their communion with God, will have a most powerful tendency to mould our own hearts into the same graceful pattern.

"The Mother in Israel" will be remembered in the family circle from which she has been translated, and of which she was an ornament. Her gentleness of manner, her amiable spirit, her cheerful welcome and encouragement, her pious counsels and solicitudes will never be forgotten. Though she has gone from earth to Heaven, and filial love will mourn the separation, yet her pure spirit will still seem to be present in the dwelling, and her life of piety and faith will be a growing argument and incentive to the practice of virtue. She will be remembered in the community which she has adorned and from which she has passed away. As long as the generation that knew her shall continue, so long will her virtues be remembered; nay, coming generations who never saw her face, will learn her worth and catch the spirit of her benevolence.

And she will be remembered in the church. The day will be far distant when the recollection of the noble christian woman shall be forgotten. And when she ascends to Heaven, the pious will pray that the mantle of her faith and works may descend to children and children's children, and in the line of God's
covenant engagements, "I will be a God unto you and your seed after you," there may arise others of piety so eminent, of counsels so prudent, of activities so well directed and successful, that they also shall be crowned with Heaven's distinction, "A Mother in Israel."

3. The grace of God in raising up "the Mother in Israel," and bestowing upon her such rich endowments, shall receive all the praise and glory.

The character that I have described is not natural, nor is it the result of any mere human endeavor. It is a character built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, and is altogether of grace. "The Mother in Israel," has been called by the Holy Spirit, and by that same Divine Agent has been inclined to accept that call. She has felt the burden of guilt on her conscience, and with more or less agitation has asked, "What must I do to be saved." She has herself plead for mercy, and the grace that brought salvation to her soul is very precious.

On her Lord Jesus Christ she relies with an appropriating faith, and embraces him as her "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and true redemption." Persuaded that his service is both a duty and a delight, she joyfully denies herself, takes up her cross and follows him. The Holy Spirit dwells in her, and she is thereby strengthened for duty and trial, for
living or dying. She is clothed with righteousness as with a garment, but it is the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness. She is adorned with the graces of a meek and humble spirit, but they are the gifts of the Holy Ghost. She is fruitful in love and good works, but her precious Saviour has qualified her for labor, and it is all rendered unto the Lord. Far from her mind is the thought of merit or superiority to any of the children of the covenant. Could she occupy the humblest place at his footstool she would be content. For all that she is, and all that she has been enabled to render, Christ shall have all the praise and all the glory.

In presenting this portrait to your attention we have not been travelling in an ideal world. Desirable as this character is, and symmetrical in all its proportions, it is not only within the reach of the pious, but has actually been attained by many of our Lord's disciples. In every dispensation of Religion, God has raised up those who were "Mothers in Israel." From the Old Testament, the names of Sarah, Deborah and Hannah; and from the New, Mary, and Eunice and Priscilla, shall always be remembered. Oh these mothers of the church! sainted ones of Israel, how precious their names, how bright their characters. While we mourn their loss, we will cherish their virtues, and embalm their memories.
From the bosom of our own church, and from the midst of this community, God has been pleased very recently to remove a most estimable Christian woman. Yesterday affectionate children and sympathizing friends followed to our rural cemetery the remains of one who was justly entitled to the honor of "A Mother in Israel."

Eliza W. Voorhees was born at Shrewsbury, N. J., on the 25th of June 1787, and was united in marriage with Mr. Cornelius Shaddle about the year 1809, immediately after which they took up their residence in the city of New York. In her youth she was brought up in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and formed an early attachment for its principles and usages. Her husband was an attendant of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in Franklin Street, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Bork, to which church she immediately transferred her relation, and very shortly became a member in full communion by making a public confession of her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For twenty three years this relation continued, extending through the ministry of Dr. Bork and his successor Rev. George DuBois. About the year 1832 the family removed to the vicinity of Bound Brook, and connected themselves with the Presbyterian Church in that place, under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Rogers. That
connection continued until December 2, 1837, when having returned to the City of New York, they re-connected themselves with the Franklin Street church of which that eminently pious man Rev. Christopher Hunt was the minister.

After the death of her esteemed pastor they transferred their relation to the growing church of Rev. John Macauley in Murray Street. After some years the family returned to the country on the opposite side of the river from their former residence near Bound Brook, and for a short time worshipped with the Reformed Dutch Church of that place. On the resignation of Rev. Mr. Van Neste, they returned to their former religious home in the church of Dr. Rogers, in which connection they remained until the sudden death of her husband after the fiftieth year of their married life, when Mrs. Shaddle took up her residence in New Brunswick with her daughter Mrs. Johnson Letson, and by certificate united herself with the First Reformed Dutch Church of this city.

This is the record of her relation to the visible church of Christ. Wherever she removed her habitation she at once selected her religious home, and at once identified herself with all the interests of Christ's people. She was truly a Christian woman "a Mother in Israel," full of love and good works.

Some incidents in her history are richly instructive
and encouraging to the people of God. At the first dawn of the Foreign Missionary spirit in our church, she awakened with interest to the work, and was mainly instrumental, in connection with a few of similar faith, in providing an outfit for the Rev. John Scudder for his first voyage to India, the members of the Franklin Street Church undertaking the entire expense. And during her whole life she was a devoted friend of this great work.

At the establishment of the house for destitute widows in the City of New York, Mrs. Shaddle was among the first to feel an interest in this most worthy institution, giving to this object a large share of her attention and contributing liberally to its funds. Frequently she invited these aged widows, many of whom had seen better days, to her own dwelling, and there cheered them with her personal attention, brightened their paths with her sympathy, and encouraged them by the bestowment of such comforts as would cause them to forget that they were pensioners upon the public charities.

This “Mother in Israel” took a deep interest in the education of young men for the Gospel Ministry, often furnishing the entire amount needed for carrying on their studies, and stirring up others to engage in the same work of benevolence. To-day in our church there is more than one minister of Christ who
enjoys the blessed privilege of preaching Jesus and the Resurrection, through the instrumentality of Mrs. Shaddle.

During her whole life she was uniform in her christian benevolence, systematic and liberal in her charities, not only to her own particular church but to other branches of Zion, placing at the head of the list our noble national institution the American Bible Society. It was a pleasure for her to contribute to any good object, and she long enjoyed God's promised blessing upon the liberal soul.

Mrs. Shaddle was a warm friend of the Sabbath School, and identified herself with its interests at the earliest period of its history. In connection with her devoted husband soon after their removal to Bound Brook they organized a Sabbath School, appropriating a portion of their own house for this object, and also as a Lecture Room, and for several years all the religious services of the neighborhood were held in their dwelling. I have often heard this school spoken of as a rich fountain of spiritual influences, and the meetings for prayer and religious instruction under the direction of her pastor Dr. Rogers, was seed-sowing for all that region, the harvest of which is still being gathered.

This "Mother in Israel" was a woman of great powers of endurance, and was remarkably exempt
from sickness up to the time of her first attack by paralysis. She had great strength of faith and com-
posure of mind. The death of her husband was pecu-
liarly afflicting. He was on a visit to this city, and received the summons, come up higher, at the hour of midnight, passing away even before the in-
telligence could be conveyed to his life-long partner. Yet with great christian resignation she submitted to the will of her Heavenly Father in removing him with whom she had so pleasantly walked for the period of half a century, without the privilege of a farewell recognition and blessing.

Mrs. Shaddle was devoted in her attachment to the church, she loved the society of christian people, she was constant in her attendance upon all the services of the sanctuary, a great lover of the prayer meeting, and peculiarly spiritual on communion occasions. She loved the ministry, and in her ripened piety and advancing years she often encouraged her pastor, who early learned to appreciate her worth, and it would not be strange if that pastor cherished towards her, sentiments of profound veneration and even filial regard.

I need hardly add that her life of public usefull-
ness was fed by an inner life of communion with her Saviour. Her uniform practice of retiring early to her room that she might enjoy her private devotions
with an unwearied frame is deserving of all imitation. She has left children and children’s children to testify to her untiring solicitude for their welfare, and even to the third generation they rise up and call her blessed.

Deprived of the faculty of speech during a large portion of her sickness, there were intervals when the cloud would be parted, and she could talk of that Saviour whom she loved and delighted to honor. Frequently would she clasp her hands when speech failed her, as if appealing to her Heavenly Father for strength to endure her great bodily sufferings, or expecting to see her Saviour come down to receive her to that home which she felt sure was prepared for her. Occasionally would she repeat, in her broken accent, the beautiful lines

My willing soul would stay,
In such a frame as this;
And sing and bear herself away,
To everlasting bliss.

And when unusual pain would disturb her, she would look up to the Christian’s Home and say

There shall I bathe my weary soul,
In seas of heavenly rest;
And not a wave of trouble roll,
Across my peaceful breast.

A few weeks since she said to her Granddaughter,
“I long to go home and be at rest.” “You know Grandmother,” was the reply, “where to find that rest.” “Yes,” she answered with unusual composure, “with Jesus. There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God. In my Father’s House are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

At the ripe age of 79 years and 3 months she has fallen asleep in Jesus, her body rests by the side of her husband in Willow Grove Cemetery, and she has left the rich legacy of a Christian woman’s influence for the church of Christ. And now that she has left us for her home in Heaven, may God raise up many such friends of the Saviour and his cause, who by their lives of active piety and of faith shall justly win the distinction—“A Mother in Israel.”