

STACK
ANNEX

5

074

640

1. 7. 96 (1) etc
P5-copied

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

ON THE

DAY OF THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING,

NOVEMBER 15, 1849.

BY

WILLIAM WHEWELL, D.D.,

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

J. DEIGHTON, TRINITY STREET.

M.DCCC.XLIX.



University of California
Southern Regional
Library Facility

expressive of the pervading feeling may, under such circumstances, be willingly accepted.

I dedicate this Sermon to you, Mr Vice-Chancellor, as the Head of the University, with the sentiments of respect which belong to that high office, and with great personal regard :

And I am,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

W. WHEWELL.

A SERMON,

&c.

PSALM CIV. 29.

*Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled : thou takest away their breath,
they die, and return to their dust.*

WE are in many ways taught our dependance upon God. Perhaps there is in the heart of man a native and spontaneous sentiment of this dependance ; or at least a deep and pervading conviction of it among those who think of God at all. We know and feel that we did not make ourselves ; that we cannot preserve ourselves from day to day without using the means which are supplied to us by a higher power ; that our strength is feeble, limited and mastered by a greater strength ; our thoughts confused and narrow, seeking in vain to penetrate far into that full light of knowledge of which from time to time we obtain glimpses ; that our time is short, while the source out of which we and all things spring continues the same from age to age. We are as children, weak, ignorant, helpless ; but even by the light of nature we can see that we are *His* children ; ‘ so one of your own wise men has declared ’—said St Paul to the Athenians ; and doubtless the hearts of all the better natures among his hearers responded with reverent satisfaction, when he added, to this text of natural reason, his noble comment, ‘ In Him we live and move and have our being.’ They would recollect to have heard

expressions of the like import—utterances of similar feelings—floating among the groves of Academus and echoing along the columns of the Portico, though, in that former time, not given forth with the power and authority which belonged to him who then stood on the Areopagus. They could readily allow, and would agree in proclaiming, that there was one whose brightness was the light of the world, so that if He were to turn away his face all things would straightway be troubled: that there was one whose Spirit was the life of all that live, so that if He were to take away their breath they would die and return to their dust.

But though the heart of man naturally uttered or readily echoed this whisper of a universal Father, whose children we all are, a universal Spirit, by whose permission and protection we all breathe; God did not leave man to learn this lesson from his own heart alone. He also taught it to him more expressly and directly in the words which He, by His Holy Spirit, put into the mouths of His most favoured worshippers, and through them transmitted to all others, and finally, in the course of ages, to us. In the book which contains the teaching so vouchsafed to man, we have far more distinct and forcible representations of the mastery of God over all things, and the dependance of all things upon God, than we have even in the most sublime and felicitous expressions of natural piety which ever fell from the ancient poets and philosophers. The psalm from which our text is taken will at once rush into your memories, and you will see how vague and unsubstantial, how pale and colourless are all the images of pagan poets, compared with the description of the real spiritual constitution of the universe, given by the servant of God, speaking as it were, with a knowledge of the case, and with the

clearness of an eye-witness. We are there told, in no loose and doubtful manner, but with deep conviction, leading to devotional awe, of Him who has laid the foundations of the earth, and confined the sea within its boundaries;—who has poured forth His springs to give drink to every beast of the field, and provided habitations for the fowls of the air;—who brings forth corn and wine and oil for the use of man, and who calls forth man to the work of the morning, when the lions, which had been heard in the night as asking for *their* food, have laid them down in their dens. When he has thus reviewed the provision made for all kinds of creatures, the psalmist exclaims, in the fulness of reverence and awe which such a spectacle, naturally produces, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. All creatures wait upon thee that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. They gather that which thou givest them: thou openest thy hand and they are filled with good.” And then comes the thought of the opposite supposition;—of the contrast which would follow if this perpetual and universal sustaining power and protecting care were withdrawn, even for an hour. What would happen if God did not open His hand, if He did not pour His riches in this constant stream among the inhabitants of the earth? if He ceased to regard them with an eye of kindness and favour? The thought of the text is, that on this supposition, darkness and destruction would forthwith fall upon all. “Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.”

And this lesson of our dependance upon God, thus plainly and strongly inculcated, in this, as in many other parts of our bibles, when once taught, must surely be

constantly suggested to our minds. It must recur with every return of the night and of the morning of which the psalmist thus speaks : with the aspect of the mountains and the ocean, the springs of the valley and the trees of the forest, to which he appeals : it must be taught by the moon when she marks the appointed seasons, and the sun who knoweth his going down, and at that moment especially draws our thoughts to solemn contemplation. It must recur with every meal which is spread on our tables by his bounty ; with every evening that smoothes our bed and curtains our slumber under His protection ; with every morning that summons us to our labour, which, whatever it may be, is His appointment, and ought to be for His service. On all these occasions, God himself teaches us that we are entirely dependent upon Him, by making such a thought the natural accompaniment of all serious and solemn feeling ; and by giving us, in His word, the expression of this thought, confirmed, expanded, animated by the influence of His Holy Spirit.

But this lesson, of our dependance upon God, and constant need of His bounty and His support, is not only taught us by His works and by His word,—whispered to our secret thoughts and proclaimed with the tongues of men and of angels,—but it is also inculcated by all the ordinances of devotion, public and private ; for what act of worship is there of which this acknowledgment does not form the basis and the beginning,—of which every part does not involve the declaration that we are God's creatures,—His by creation and preservation, and without Him nothing ? This is what men declare in their sabbath assemblies, in their secret prayers, in their petitions for a blessing on what they do and on what they have. We in particular, who spend our days in this place,

under the sway of those rules of piety which our wise founders have laid down for us, can hardly forget that lesson of our dependance upon God which is contained in the course of daily life, and in the pages of the sacred volume. For in our courts and halls at least the voice of pious prayer and praise is not heard at distant intervals only, and locked in silence from sabbath to sabbath. In each of the houses which we inhabit, we are constantly reminded by our own ordinances, that we enjoy those, and all our other privileges by the Divine mercy. The Divine blessing is invoked upon the assembled meal, which by the Divine bounty we are about to partake; and when the meal is ended, we address the Father and the God who has so bountifully fed us, and pray that we may shew our gratitude in our lives. And the daily worship of God, to which we (in this as in so many other things, a favoured people) are called, puts in our mouths, and surely ought to put in our hearts, abundant sentiments of filial fear and love towards God, as they have been moulded into language by those excellent men of former times who have transmitted to us the forms of our prayers; and as they have been expressed by writers like the psalmist, elevated by the Spirit of God above the feeble and wandering utterance of unassisted man. Each one of the psalms in which God's power and goodness and providence are celebrated in strains so lofty and so tender is placed upon our lips in the course of our ordinary worship in the house of God; and the moon who is appointed for seasons, never makes her circuit of the skies without bringing to us the evening on which we have to join our voices in that noble effusion of devotion from which our text is taken. So frequently have we to utter these very words which contain the acknowledgment of the effects of God's presence

and of His absence; of His protection of His creatures and His desertion of them: "Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to dust."

So familiar and frequent, then, is the recognition of God's care and our dependance upon it, that it might seem impossible that we should forget it for a week or for a day. The course of nature and the course of worship, the thoughts of solitude and the voice of the congregation, alike remind us of it—alike press it upon us. But is it indeed so, that men do always bear in mind the thought of their Heavenly Father? Do they really and truly consider themselves as preserved from month to month and from day to day, by the care of the Great Governor of the World? Is He often present to their thoughts, as no less actually existing, no less operating upon their being, than the human creatures, their fellow-men, whom they see with their eyes and hear with their ears? Do they indeed see the working of God's hand in all the events which occur around them? Do they see the riches of His bounty in all the blessings which they enjoy? Is this an abiding, substantial, practical belief with the greater part of mankind? My brethren! we know that it is not so, we know that the greater part of mankind habitually forget God. God is not in all their thoughts. The events of the natural world, storm and sunshine, season succeeding to season, the earth, the air, the waters ministering to our life, call up in their breasts no thought of a Ruler of these elements,—of a Giver of these bounties. They accept them, as if they came from some Chance or Nature which has no will and no choice. Even if the name of God be on their lips with reference to such things, how faint and feeble is the thought which accompanies it in

their hearts! How often is the verbal acknowledgment of God's goodness and of our dependance on Him, a mere empty sound which signifies nothing really passing in the mind of him who uses it! The very frequency and regularity of the occurrences which should speak to us of God's providence produces upon us a contrary effect. One day telleth another, one night certifieth another, of their great Maker; but we become deaf to the voice which goes out into all lands exactly because it is constantly uttered. The returning seasons bring us their gifts in unfailing order and in ample measure, and we are led to look at the seasons as *our* servants rather than His. We live on from year to year inhaling health from the atmosphere, seeing little of disease except as the result of our vices, little of death except as the natural progress of human decay; and we think that health is the proper right of man, and that the extent of the conquests of death is limited by fixed boundaries. In ordinary and prosperous times we forget that our health, that of all who are near and dear to us, that of our neighbours among whom we live, that of the nation through all its numbers, is the gift of God: we forget that death is but a rod in the hand of the Most High, and that it is as easy for Him to mark out with it among the people of the land a larger as a smaller portion to be taken away from among us;—easy to encircle with its black line, not one in a hundred or one in fifty, but one tenth, one fourth, one half of the whole population.

This is easy for God; how easy it is, in ordinary times we constantly forget; and therefore it is most fit that He should, in His good Providence, remind us of this momentous truth, by extraordinary visitations. If we forget Him in times of plenty, is it not most

fit that He should send upon us times of scarceness? If we forget Him in times of health, is it not most fit that He should send upon us times of sickness? Is not this most suitable to His relation to us, to the reverence which is due to Him, to the discipline which we need? Is not such a mode of visitation an evidence of God's good providence—of His *best* providence;—that which provides for our spiritual improvement and brings us nearer to Him? Is it not evidence of His paternal love, that He thus chastises us, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth? Is it not for our benefit that He should thus trouble us by turning away His face from us, if this trouble be needed in order that we may so turn to Him that He may again turn upon us His forgiving eye and His fatherly smile?

And such visitations as we here speak of; such as that under which we have been suffering, which we would now fain trust is past, and which with humbled and thankful hearts we to-day look back upon,—such visitations do indeed give to men in general a sense of God's power and presence, such as, under the ordinary course of things, they are slow to entertain. When diseases come, not like familiar and motley visitors, undistinguishable in the ordinary crowd of life, but like an invading army, all wearing the same garb, and with their dense ranks trampling down the people, then we see that they are indeed God's army. When the pestilence walketh in darkness, we know that He has sent it on its mission: when the arrow which smites thousands flies by noon-day, we know from whose quiver it comes.

When we see our neighbours, our friends, the members of our family, snatched from us in rapid succession, in awful numbers, we are no longer satisfied

to deem ourselves under the sway of an abstract Mortality; we acknowledge that we are dealt with by a personal God. When the lament of bereaved households arises in our dwellings, when the frequent funeral darkens our streets, or the coffins, too numerous for complete rites, are piled in unwonted receptacles, then we turn in fear and trembling to Him in whose hand are the issues of life and death. Though our eyes have been blinded, though our thoughts of heavenly things have been torpid, though our hearts have been hardened like those of the Rulers of Egypt, yet like them, when a cry arises in the midst of the night, and we awake and find our first-born dead, then, like them, we are compelled to acknowledge the hand of the Lord, and are willing to lend ourselves to His service. The discipline of God's Providence is sharp, but it is not ineffectual: His rod is heavy, but He smites to purpose. Man, so chastised, turns to the hand which chastises him, in reverence and awe, in supplication and prayer. We know that such has been the effect of this visitation among ourselves. We know that we have been ready to throw ourselves at God's footstool, and to own that we received the infliction as His judgment. We know that men have eagerly crowded into the houses of prayer for this purpose:—have humbly listened while the preacher has spoken to them of God as seen in the pestilence. The lesson which, as we believe, God intends that we should gather from such events, has been, in some degree at least, accepted and studied. And now we are called upon to turn our thoughts again to the same subject, under its more cheerful aspect. We have had to contemplate the infliction; we are now allowed and invited to look at the relief. We have had to begin our lesson with the

arrival of this terrible visitor, let us try to complete the lesson on his departure. Let us endeavour to place before ourselves some of the instructions, some of the warnings, which such an occasion obviously offers. Let us consider what impressions of a religious and profitable kind are left upon us by the dark cloud of disease and death through which we have passed.

In the first place, and as the most obvious moral of what we have had to suffer and to fear, we may learn *Humility*. This moral is on the surface of the occasion, and surely it was not given to us till it was called for. For have not men of late been prone to a temper of self-gratulation and self-admiration, for which a lesson of humility was much needed? I speak not of men's sentiments with regard each to himself personally, but of their feeling with regard to the achievements of their age and generation. And on this subject have we not been accustomed to hear the most loud and frequent expressions of exultation and self-complacency? The inventions of our time, it was often said, had placed us at a vast elevation above all previous ages. We, it cannot be doubted, are wiser than our fathers were, and do familiarly what they deemed impossible. We pass across the waters though adverse winds oppose us; we rush along the earth more rapidly than the wind itself; the lightning is our minister, and conveys our thoughts from place to place with its own rapidity: there is an unheard-of activity of thought prevalent, in which all ranks and classes share. The culture of the mind is now no longer confined to a few, but is acknowledged as the right and promoted as the benefit of all. If our ancestors could see us, they would be filled with admiration; they would look with comparative contempt; or with humbled vanity, on the scanty inheritance of human

power and human knowledge which was allowed to their generation. Such sayings have been frequent among us. Perhaps, even in their first aspect, not wise sayings; for what can be wise which involves so much of pride and self-applause? Perhaps not wise sayings; for is not this thought,—How much others would admire us if they could see us,—rather the thought of a vain child, arrayed in some new and gaudy vestment, than that of a wise man, who knows that spectators do not so easily transfer their admiration from themselves to others; and to whom it may occur, that our ancestors may have thought as much of what they did in their time, as we think of what we have done in ours; and with equal reason:—to whom it may occur, also, that there have been ages in which the amount of manifest progress of man was far greater than it is in ours: for instance, the age of Columbus and Gutenberg, or the age of Luther and Galileo. But still more plainly is this exultation in our own age a mark of doubtful wisdom, when we see how little all the inventions of which we boast, all the wonders at which we marvel, have done to subdue human misery and vice;—have availed to make men happier and better. With all this diffusion of knowledge in the land, are there not thousands and millions who have no knowledge of God, and to whom it is supposed the country cannot afford the means of giving such knowledge? With all these modes of conveyance which bring to us the wealth of every land, food from the west, and spices from the east, are there not thousands and tens of thousands who lie shivering in squalid poverty and pining hunger, in dark and desolate dens, in the very middle of our luxurious palaces? Among all this regaling of our poorer brethren with intellectual food, are we not often compelled to pass a fellow-

creature, who, with a form as noble as ours, can find no food for the body? With all our material devices and improvements, have these moral and social evils diminished? Are there not as many poor, and the poor as miserable?—as many ignorant, and the ignorant as brutal?—as many destitute of the means of earning food, and those thus destitute, as desolate,—as in the age of our fathers? And if this be so, how poor is our pride, how misplaced our self-gratulation. The rich man can command the elements, can annihilate space and time, can cull the sweets of every climate, can gather about him those who can reveal to him the secrets of nature. Be it so: even *he* may be not a whit the wiser or better for all this. But how are we wise, if we rejoice and wonder at these achievements of our contemporaries, while poverty and vice and ungodliness grow and multiply around us till we cannot, for shame and fear, look them in the face, and, as was said of old by one who, while writing the story of a great empire, thought of its abject and gloomy decline, can neither bear our diseases, nor the remedies which they need?

Looking at such views as these of our condition, we might, it would seem, learn humility, rather than pride, even from the ordinary state of things about us. But if the ordinary state of things fails to impress upon us this lesson, God has other ways of making us feel it, by the means of extraordinary visitations, such as the pestilence which He sent among us for a time. This calamity, while sweeping away its thousands and tens of thousands, in spite of all the resources of modern skill and knowledge, was well fitted to dispel all our visions of our own strength and power, to bring down the high thoughts of our pride; to remind us that we are men, and to remind us how poor and helpless and blind, man,

at the best, is;—to teach us that pride was not made for man, and cannot be his sentiment, except so long as he shuts out of his thoughts God, and the service of God, and his relation to his brother men,—children along with him of God; bound to him by the tie of a common nature, a common Father, a common Redeemer, a common hope of immortality. Has he dealt with his brethren in this view? They have been passing away by thousands to the presence of God;—passing away to give an account of themselves; and also, my brethren, of *us!*—to tell how we have dealt with them;—how we have helped them in that common task of theirs and ours;—the task of living as God's servants and children in this world, and of preparing to meet our Judge—our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier—in a world beyond the grave. When we consider what the account will be which they who are gone will have to give of us who remain, may we not well lay aside all high thoughts? May we not well feel humbled in our own eyes: may we not eagerly put away from us all the conceit of the superiority of our own generation, which perhaps we have been entertaining? And if the late visitation has taught us *this* lesson, surely it has not been sent in vain. Surely it will be to those who thus turn it to account, not an evil but a good, not a curse but a blessing.

We may remark further, that this visitation was specially fitted to break down any conceit which we may entertain of the great skill of our time in matters which concern the health of the body. For now, after this pestilence has twice stalked through the land, the wisest of our physicians presume not to say that they know more of its nature and origin, or of the means of resisting its invasions and healing where it smites, than they knew when first it appeared among us. Of all

these things they are ignorant now as they were ignorant then. And thus, while men were loudly boasting of their knowledge of the human frame, and of the laws of life, and of the means of directing the vital powers so as to cast off disease and procrastinate death; the very first event which occurs, deviating from the common and familiar course of things, is utterly beyond the circuit of the field to which this knowledge extends, and puts to complete shame their self-complacent boasting. Is it, then, too much to say that the infliction which has fallen upon us, and which we, here assembled, acknowledge for a judgment of God, was fitted to teach us humility in our estimate of ourselves; and was the more fitted for this end in proportion as we had more need of the lesson?

But there is another lesson which this visitation is also fitted to teach us;—a lesson most common, and, it might seem, trite; yet one which it is profitable for us that we should have inculcated upon us again and again, in many and various ways, by ordinary and by extraordinary providences; and which nothing can more forcibly inculcate than the sight of many dying around us. Such events speak to us in language which we cannot mistake, and tell us that *we too must die*, and bid us live as those who must die. It might seem as if this lesson were so plain, so obvious, so trivial, so familiar that it could not need to be impressed upon us by any special occasion. “In the midst of life we are in death.” The words are so customary to our ears that we seem to have them always in our hearing. Yet though so familiar to our ears, they often touch our bosoms slightly or not at all. They glide over the surface of the mind and do not ruffle its calm. And this appears very plainly when any special event really points the arrow

which these words contain;—really gives weight and power to the familiar ejaculation. This has appeared on the occasion of this visitation of mortal disease. You may perhaps recollect that when the pestilence first came among us, many persons were smitten by a wild and frantic consternation, as if they had then only discovered that they were liable to death. You may have known persons so affected who rushed, in the speed of terror, this way and that, in order that they might get out of the path of the terrible visitor. And yet this same visitor, Death, is constantly among us. We hardly pass a day without hearing of his having laid his hand upon some well known head. We hardly ever go on a long time without having to carry about with us a badge of his presence. We all know that we must die. To *us* who are more advanced on the road of life the knowledge must needs be familiar; to *you* who are in an earlier stage of the journey, the dark gate at the end of the avenue may be less conspicuously visible. But you know it is there. Still you may look aside and forget it; and so may we, though it is so near. But when the thunder of God's judgment rolls, and the lightning flashes across our path, and the grim portal glares upon us, we can forget it no longer. And this has probably happened to many of us during the late frequency of death. Some of you may have learnt by the loss of dear friends, or near neighbours, or by the multitude of scenes of distemper and mortality in which you have been engaged, that Death is indeed a thing near at hand and certain. You may have learnt to feel, as well as to say, that in the midst of life we are in death. And if it be so, I do not exhort you to keep the thought before you as a mere terrible image;—as an end beyond which nothing can be seen;—as

a shadow which must make human doings seem vain and human enjoyments seem joyless. Far from it. The reflexion that Death is certain to each of us, and may be near, is fitted, when looked at with a Christian eye, to inspire far other resolutions,—to lead to a far different temper of mind and heart; and what that is, we will briefly endeavour to explain.

From the truth that death is certain, and may be near, then, we draw these two practical inferences;—that we ought to lose no time in making our peace with God; and that we ought to labour assiduously at the task which He has put before us, whatever that may be. These are the two great practical lessons which every death, and every thought of death, teaches to the Christian; which cannot be told too often, though pestilence should utter them with a thousand tongues in every street, and which, if we could truly learn and well apply, pestilence, with all its terrors, or death in any form, would have no power to daunt or shake us. Happy are they who can learn these lessons!

Happy are they, first, who learn from such events, to make their peace with God. Happy they, as Christ said, even weeping over those who rejected Him;—happy they who know the things which belong to their peace. Happy they to whom He makes good that sure word of promise, “My peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.” And from Him and through Him alone, can we acquire this peace. Through Him alone have we access to the Father: through Him alone relief from the burthen of our sins—freedom from the thralldom of sin;—that glorious liberty by which we become the sons of God. For these privileges—for this liberty, this purification and elevation of our nature, must we daily apply to Him: for these blessings we must con-

stantly pray, till the spirit of constant prayer makes us feel that we have laid hold upon them, and are allowed to draw them towards us more and more. And as these blessings become ours, we may be permitted to feel more and more that we are children of God, and that in His paternal regard, there is indeed peace;—peace for our souls here through all scenes of toil and trouble; a peaceful hope of life in His presence hereafter, when this working day of toil and solicitude is over.

For, in the next place, the peace with God, which I have mentioned as one of the great practical aims impressed upon Christians by such occasions as the present one, is not a peace in which men rest from their labours. *That* is a peace which belongs not to the living—it is the especial blessing of the dead that die in the Lord. The peace of which we speak, is one which is consistent with strenuous labour, and which gives to the Christian's labours their calm but unwearied character. The servant of God, who is at peace with his Master, labours the more assiduously on that account. His heart is in his work, because it is his Master's work. Whether it be to dig foundations, or to rear a lofty structure, he deems the task a great one, because it is a house in which he trusts that God's Spirit will dwell, which he is engaged in building. He labours without stint and without ceasing, without impatience and without slackness, hour by hour, and day by day: for he wishes that his Master, when He comes, should find him at his labour; and he knows not whether He will come in the second or the third watch;—in the darkness of the night, in the bright dawn of morning, or in the glimmering shades of evening. Happy is he whom his Lord shall find so doing! Happy, not only in the reward which awaits

him when he shall have entered into his rest, but happy also in the tranquillity of spirit with which he pursues his task here. He is not looking for the time when the Master's eye is no longer upon him that he may loiter and play: he is not seeking to join himself to those that make holiday in idleness. He knows that to toil in the service of his Master, as it is his lot, so is it his privilege: and that weariness belongs most to those who labour slackly and unwillingly.

And such thoughts as these belong to all of us. We have each of us our appointed task, each our allotted field of labour, assigned to us by our situation, our age, our circumstances, our prospects. Whether it be mainly to cultivate our own powers and character for future action, by the means which our position here supplies, or to aid our younger brethren in such a task, to teach or to hearken, to command or to obey, if it be done as unto God, which it may always be, it is God's work; and he best proves himself God's true servant who does it with all his heart. That we should do this, and patiently leave the result in His hands, is the lesson which God teaches us, when He speaks to us in the voice of the pestilence. And if we learn these two lessons,—to be at peace with God, and to labour steadfastly in His service;—to seek constantly to draw more and more near to Him by prayer through Him whom He has appointed, and to seek to draw others near to Him in all that we do; if we thus learn the two great Christian lessons, Christian contemplation and Christian action: if we ourselves exercise the ministry of obedience, and seek to profit by the ministry of reconciliation,—God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself;—we shall then receive the blessing which He has pro-

mised;—that we shall not be afraid though a thousand fall at our side and ten thousand at our right hand; that we shall not fear the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

Simple, common, familiar are the thoughts which have thus been presented to you. But how should they be otherwise? for what is more common than that which is the occasion of them, Death? Even when the pestilence is not walking among us, still *he* is constantly near us. In the midst of life his hand is close to us. Even while the preacher has been revolving in his mind the few imperfect words which he has addressed to you, one of the most highly valued and loved of our brethren and fellow labourers has suddenly been called away from among us. One clear intellectual light to which we familiarly looked for guidance, has been to our eyes extinguished. One tongue from which we were on all occasions accustomed to hear words of calmness and moderation, of experience and wisdom, is silenced for ever. He is called from the field of labour where he and we have so long been working together. Our thoughts reel and our hearts faint, under the weight and suddenness of the blow. And fit it is that it should so be; for he who is taken from us was one who had the qualities which conciliate and endear man to man, and had been closely bound to many of us by a long period of familiar intercourse. But while we thus feel the blow in natural grief and pain, we turn again to the lessons which we have been endeavouring to derive from the contemplation of mortality, when we knew not that it was so near us. And we recollect that he who is now



gone to his rest, had eminently learnt that lesson of which we have spoken; for in the labours which belonged to his station he was ever assiduous, and fainted not and flagged not to the last. Up to the moment when the mortal stroke fell upon him, he was diligently engaged in the work of improving, in the best modes which wisdom and piety could suggest, both the particular foundation of which he was the head, and this wider institution of which we all are members. It must be the work of time to heal, or to soothe, the deep wounds of this sudden and bitter sorrow, in the hearts of those his dearest and nearest friends; and may the loving-kindness of our Almighty Father support them in this their great affliction! And we too cannot as yet look calmly at the chasm which this loss has made in the circle of this our common life: but yet even now, we can recollect that God's dispensations to his true servants are always blessings; and we can say, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours!"