

S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH

OF

MRS. HARRIET CHAPIN.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALBANY,

On Sabbath afternoon, July 20, 1854.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. HARRIET CHAPIN,

WIFE OF LYMAN CHAPIN, Esq.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.,

MINISTER OF SAID CHURCH.

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This sermon has been somewhat modified and enlarged since the delivery

SERMON.

JOHN XIII. 7.

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.

The blessed Jesus had now delivered his last message to the world; but He had a few more gracious and monitory words to say to his disciples. The occasion on which He had met them was the last celebration of the Passover. Notwithstanding He had so often and so faithfully warned them against a worldly and ambitious spirit, even the solemn circumstances in which they were then placed had not been sufficient to repress it; for He had just seen it breaking out in a strife among them, *who* should be advanced to the highest honours of his kingdom. He, therefore, by a most significant act, gives them a fresh lesson of humility—a lesson rendered more impressive by the affecting associations and mysterious tendencies of the hour. “He rises from

supper," says the Evangelist, with inimitable simplicity, "and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." When He came round to Peter, that affectionate but impetuous disciple exclaimed with astonishment—"Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" The Saviour's answer we have in the words of our text—"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

The act to which our Lord here immediately refers, was one which required nothing but the ordinary faculties of humanity. But inasmuch as He is constituted the Head of the mediatorial economy, and has all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him, we may properly recognize his hand in the high and mysterious movements of providence. He says, therefore, to us, in reference to many past and passing events, to which no other than a divine power could be adequate, as truly as He did to Peter, in respect to the simple act of washing his disciples' feet—"What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Come

then, Christians, especially Christian mourners, and dwell for a few moments upon some of those events around which the thickest darkness now hangs; and then, with the eye of faith, behold all that darkness passing away, and leaving a region of unclouded glory.

I. Let me call your attention then, in the first place, to *some of the mysteries of God's providence*—"What I do, thou knowest not now."

What say you then, *of the introduction of moral evil into a system ordained and established by a Being of infinite perfection?* It is obvious, at a glance, that sin is an infringement of the great law of God's moral creation; that, while it is itself the greatest possible evil, it is the source of all other evil in the universe. It has put at least two races into the attitude of rebellion against their Almighty Sovereign. It has swept over this goodly world of ours like the Simoom of the desert, marring much that was fair and beautiful, and drying up innumerable fountains of joy. It has embittered the enjoyments of social life, often making man the enemy of his own flesh and blood. Here it has blazed forth in acts of oppression and rapacity, and there it has worked its engines of

death most effectively, but silently and in the dark. It has gone through the world as a murderer, changing the earth itself into a charnel house. It has caused to be built somewhere in the universe a prison of despair, where neither voice of mercy nor beam of joy ever penetrates. And it has entrenched itself in the very depths of the human spirit, mocking at every effort that man can make to cast it out. Contrast the world as it now is with what it would have been, if it had been nothing more than an expansion of Eden with its innocent inmates; or contrast it with what many believe it is destined to be, when it shall have passed through the purifying fires, and come out a perfectly renovated world, and be inhabited again by the loyal and the holy,—and this may help you to form some idea of the ruin which sin has brought upon our common humanity; though any idea of this would be vastly imperfect that should not include the retributive scenes of the eternal future.

Now consider the introduction of this mighty evil into the system in connexion with the character of God, and say whether there is not mystery here which challenges and baffles

all human scrutiny. God is a Being of infinite holiness, and cannot look upon sin. He is a Being of infinite power, to which all things are alike easy. He is a Being of infinite benevolence, delighting of course in the happiness of his creatures. He is a Being of infinite knowledge, and never at a loss for means to accomplish his purposes. And yet under the administration of this infinitely perfect Being, there exists an evil of which no finite mind can take the measure. Sin came not in as an accident—it came by divine permission—it came even as part of an infinitely perfect plan—the holiness of the divine character had suffered no eclipse, the arm of omnipotence was not palsied, nor the eye of omniscience closed, nor the heart of infinite benevolence chilled, when this monster first appeared in Heaven, and was afterwards reproduced on earth. Why is it that this wo-encircled object—this spoiler of angelic and human joy, has not been kept out of God's universe? Reason has tried for ages to grapple with the problem; but she has faltered always. "What I do thou knowest not now."

Equally mysterious is the fact that *the Gospel, which supplies the only remedy for man's moral disease, has hitherto prevailed to so very limited an extent.* This remedy, though it is the fruit of boundless grace, has involved a mighty amount of labour and sacrifice, and has been identified with all the grand movements of the Infinite mind from the foundation of the world. The dispensation of mercy dawned immediately after the fall of man, and it was gradually developing itself, first in the Patriarchal and then in the Mosaic economy, until, after the lapse of four thousand years, it reached its culminating point in the ministry, the death, and the subsequent triumph of the Son of God. It seems wonderful indeed, that so insignificant a being as man should have thus concentrated the divine regards, especially when another race, which had fallen from a yet loftier height, had been left to the stern exactions of unmitigated justice; but the wonder with which we are now concerned, is, that after the death of Christ had laid the foundation for a universal offer of mercy to the world, and even after Christ had left an express command that his Gospel

should be preached to every creature, there should be, at this hour, but a small portion of the earth's inhabitants that have ever heard of it ; while a large part even of nominal Christendom have received it in such a form that it amounts to little more than a cumbrous mass of superstitious observances. There are a few spots on the earth's surface where nothing seems to intercept or obscure the beams of the Sun of righteousness ; but can you tell me why there are such immense regions overhung by the darkness of spiritual death ? Is the soul of man more precious here than it is in the heart of Asia, or in the wilds of Africa ? Does not the disease of sin prevail with as much intensity and virulence there as here ; and if left to itself, is it not equally sure to terminate in a never dying death ? Is not the remedy which Heaven has provided, adapted to our entire fallen humanity ; and of course just as efficacious on one side of the globe as on the other, and in one state of society as another ? Why then, I ask again, is the remedy so restricted, when the disease is so universal ? Why are millions every year passing off into the world of retribution,

without even being permitted to know that there is balm in Gilead or a physician there? You may say indeed that it is on account of the culpable delinquency of the church in failing to obey the requisitions of her Head; but my inquiry goes further—I ask, why is it that He who orders all things according to the counsel of his own will, permits such a state of things—permits even the apathy of his own people to prevent Christianity from dispensing her blessings “far as the curse is found.”

The hostile and apparently disastrous influences that have been suffered to operate upon the church, form another mystery in divine providence.

It was while Christianity was yet as a new born babe, that Persecution began to gather her fagots, and brandish her sword, and construct her engines of torture, to drive that angel of love out of the world. The little company of our Lord's immediate disciples quickly became a mark for the shafts of malignant hate; and while they all accomplished their mission with the world in arms against them, some of them we know were finally crowned with martyr honours. And in the progress of years and centuries, Persecution,

always a monster, reached a gigantic size : she identified herself with the policy of cabinets and the power of tyrants ; the groans of dying Christians were music to her ear, and she actually became drunk upon their blood. When Pagan Rome dropped her bloody mantle, Papal Rome caught it ; and for centuries and centuries, with the name of Jesus imprinted on her forehead, she tasked her energies to the utmost to bring all who ventured to question her dogmas, to the rack or the fire. In later years, she has moved more silently, and doubtless has done a smaller work ; but if so, it has been only because her influence has been restrained by other agencies ; and very recent events have shown that she has the same adamantine heart, the same burning thirst for blood, as ever. Yes, I may say with confidence, the Christian church has been, from the beginning, a persecuted body ; thus verifying the Saviour's declaration that He came not to send peace on earth but a sword.

The corruption and perversion of God's truth is another of the great evils with which the church has had to contend. Not only is the truth the means of personal sanctification to all

her individual members, but it is the aggressive instrument by which she may expect to multiply her triumphs and spread her glory through the world. But then this wonderful result is not to be accomplished by a mere name—it is not error calling itself truth, nor dressed in the garb of truth, nor is it a mere system of negations, in which the divine power resides, but it is the simple teachings of the Bible. But who that knows any thing of the history of the church, does not know that, from the beginning, she has had her false teachers, who have handled the word of God deceitfully, putting darkness for light and light for darkness. This evil begun even in Apostolic times ; and it grew with the progress of centuries, until at length, the prevailing religious system scarcely retained a feature of genuine Christianity. And the consequence was, not merely the absence of the life-giving influence of the true Gospel, but an almost universal stagnation of the human faculties—a dead pause in the world's progress ; aye, and the opening of the flood gates of a thousand forms of positive evil. The Reformation indeed wrought a mighty change—restoring

to a portion of the world the Gospel in its simplicity and purity ; but even in those countries where the Reformation has scattered its blessings most profusely, there are systems of error almost innumerable, which claim to be the very spirit and letter of divine revelation. And these are all hostile to the interests of the church ; for they not only mar her purity, and disturb her harmony, but consume her energies in endless conflicts.

In like manner the church has always been subjected to great trials from the apostacy of her own members. This indeed is very often identified with the corruption of the truth ; and we have already seen how the spirit of error, like an incubus from the world below, rested upon her, until she became, with comparatively few exceptions, an apostate church. Apostacy from the truth is not uncommon in these days ; but there are many who apostatize from the spirit and the practice of Christianity, who do not profess to renounce its doctrines. Is it not a fact too lamentably familiar to require either proof or illustration, that men, from whose lips the voice of prayer used to be heard, do not scru-

ple now to use the language of imprecation and blasphemy ; that hands that once seemed ready to every good work, are now obedient only to the calls of evil ; aye, and that ministers of the Gospel who once stood erect in conscious integrity and honour, and were reckoned perhaps among the lights of their generation, are now living in the open violation of God's laws, or else are courting solitude for shame, and would bless the hand that would spread over them the pall of oblivion. Believe me, no one stabs the cause of Christ more vitally than an apostate. He strikes a note of opposition to Christianity, to which myriads of voices are already attuned ; and thousands are ready to come up with acclamation, as if to glory over a fallen enemy.

And I may add to this list of hostile agencies, Infidelity. The apostate indeed often becomes an infidel ; but probably the greater number who enlist under this banner, have never examined the evidences of Christianity—certainly have never openly and formally professed their faith in it. They turn skeptics, in the hope of being able to hush the clamours within ; never dreaming that

they are rushing into the arms of a monster whose embrace is the second death. But an infidel—especially an active, insinuating, clamorous infidel—*who* can tell the amount of evil that he accomplishes, in diminishing respect for divine institutions, in un-hinging the principles of the young, and in perplexing by his cavils the simple minded and unlettered Christian. Infidelity has often lifted her head high; but the epoch of her greatest insolence, of her most terrible achievements, was the French Revolution. Then, for a little while, she was left to have her own way; she presided in all high places, and profaned all sacred ones; the breathings of the pestilence were healthful and harmless, compared with her spirit; consternation and rage vented themselves in perpetual blasphemies; and the very fires of hell seemed bursting forth from the inmost heart of the nation. Thanks to the Ruler of the world, that scene has never been repeated; but the one exhibition will remain an eternal proof that Infidelity belongs to the family of fiends. What a foe has the church always had to contend with in Infidelity! How many struggles might she

have been spared—how much farther might she have travelled in her onward march, if Atheism and Deism and Pantheism had forborne their deadly attacks!

But the church, let it be remembered, is God's peculiar delight—she is graven on the palms of his hands—is dear to Him as the apple of his eye; and in her prosperity and final triumph Jesus is to see of the travail of his soul. Wherefore is it then, asks the inquiring mind of man, that God has thus suffered his church so often to be in the deep waters? Wherefore is it that He ordains or permits events in his providence, which seem adapted to retard, if they do not actually contradict, his declared purposes!

There is much of mystery also in *the ravages of death, and especially in the selection of his victims.*

The king of terrors always has his agents abroad, and they are always busy; but there are times when they seem to gather to themselves unwonted strength, and multiply their triumphs on a scale that spreads consternation almost through the world. The two which perhaps are most prominent at this hour, are

war and pestilence. Several of the most powerful nations on earth are now standing forth in a hostile attitude against a single nation; and while multitudes have already fallen in battle, the whole world is waiting in anxious apprehension of a far more extended and terrific slaughter. And the pestilence that walketh in darkness—how *it* seems to be travelling through the world; transforming almost in an hour, and by a process which no medical skill can analyze, the most healthful and vigorous body into a corpse; planting itself in some dark part of a city, and driving all the inhabitants before it, either into some more healthful region, or into the house appointed for all living. If you will know what the pestilence can do, there are times when you have only to look out of your window, or to listen in your dwelling, and the slow and solemn movement of the hearse will tell you what it is doing; and the repetition of the sight or the sound will be so frequent as well nigh to dismay you. But who can tell why God permits such a mighty waste of human life—why men press in such crowds into the invisible world, with scarcely a moment's warning—why God

does not either prevent these destroying angels from going forth, or recall them ere they have made such appalling desolation?

But death's doings are often enshrouded in mystery in respect to particular individuals. The upright and able magistrate—the pride and glory of a nation, has his countenance changed, and is carried away, at the very moment when his continuance seemed essential to mature and carry out some lofty purpose, or to conduct the vessel of state through the whirlpools of party strife. The beloved and useful minister, whose influence is genial as the breath of the morning, and who knows no offering too costly to be made to the best interests of those whom he serves, is summoned away from his work just when, through his persevering labours, the fields have become white already to harvest. The devoted Christian father, whose children are already motherless, and depend solely on him for support and instruction and guidance, finds himself at the entrance of the dark valley, with hardly time to commend them with his dying breath to the orphan's God. At the same time, other magistrates are suffered to live,

whose administration is only a career of infamy and a curse to the world; others in the sacred office are spared, who pervert their vocation to the ruin of their fellow men; and other parents are continued to their families, only to waste their substance, corrupt their minds, becloud their prospects, and destroy their souls.

And since we have followed death to the domestic circle, we may pause and see how he sports with other tender relations. There are the husband and the wife, united in bonds of closest affection, living in each other's smiles, and rejoicing in each other's joy, with no overshadowing cloud to remind them that there is any thing even dubious in their prospects of living. But into that scene of domestic quietude and comfort, death stealthily passes, and one or the other of that happy couple bows to his mandate, and turns into a clod. The heart of the survivor is wrung with anguish, because the object most dear to it, wakes no more to behold the light of the sun, or to return the warm greetings of conjugal tenderness. The question urges itself upon us, why this separation of those who delighted

to minister to each other's enjoyment and usefulness, when so many husbands and wives are suffered to live, to be the instruments of each other's degradation, and to give to one another's lives the complexion of a lingering death.

There is still another tie which death does not always spare—I mean that which binds the child to the fond parent's heart. Let the parent say—for none but a parent can—what joyous emotions and anticipations cluster about the moment when Heaven commits to his care and training a rational and immortal being. How impatiently he waits for the first gleam of intelligence, or the first loving smile; and how, as the faculties begin to open, and the tongue begins to act as the exponent of thought, does he watch every step of the process of development, with an all-absorbing interest. Thus far nothing is wanting to realize his fondest wishes; and as he looks upon this child, so lovely and virtuous and promising, he secretly comforts himself with the thought—“Here is the hope and staff of my declining years.” But wait a little, and see what a disastrous change will come. A sickly blast passes over this object of his affections; the

roses of health begin to fade; the playful vivacity of the spirits dies away; life quivers on the point of extinction; the cold damps of death settle upon the limbs, and this most endeared of objects is carried away to the grave. The heart of the fond parent refuses to be comforted. Over the door of the tomb where that loved one is laid, well may it be written—“What I do, thou knowest not now.”

Do you ask whether there is any consolation to be gathered from this branch of our subject? But you surely cannot ask such a question, unless it be in your haste, and because you have not considered from whom the declaration we have been contemplating, comes. It is Jesus Christ,—He who is exalted to be Head over all things to the church; who is before all things, and by whom all things consist; whose power nothing can withstand; whose vigilance nothing can elude; whose faithfulness nothing can move; whose goodness and grace are illimitable. What then though I may look in vain for one illuminating ray to fall upon this valley of affliction through which I am passing—should it not

suffice me to know that it is Jesus the Mediator, Jesus whose infinite perfection I have recognized by committing my soul into his hands,—who has ordained that this darkness should gather around me? Had it been an enemy or a doubtful friend, or a being who was even liable to err, who had said,—“What I do thou knowest not now,” they might, for aught I could tell, be words to awaken apprehension and terror; but coming as they do from Him in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and who has manifested his love for me by the shedding of his blood, I may afford to ponder them with cheerful trust, and may legitimately draw from them precious consolation.

II. But Jesus opens to his people another source of comfort, in the assurance He gives them that *this darkness is not to last always*: beneath those mysteries of providence which Reason, after her highest efforts, is obliged to leave as dark as ever, Revelation writes as with a sunbeam, “Thou shalt know hereafter.” This is the second division of our discourse.

This word *hereafter* may have reference to

the future of the present life. In the case of Simon Peter, it is probable that a few minutes were sufficient to put to flight all his doubts, and to enable him fully to comprehend the act to which they related. When Jacob's sons carried to their father that cruel lie that Joseph was dead, and showed him the bloody coat as evidence of it, the venerable man rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and exclaimed in the bitterness of his spirit, "All these things are against me." But when the intelligence was conveyed to him that Joseph was still alive, and held a distinguished post of honour in the land of Egypt; when he saw the provision that was made for removing him and his substance thither; and especially when he found himself in the embraces of that beloved son, whom he had reckoned among the dead; how very different must have been the good man's emotions! In that event in which he had supposed his fondest hopes to have been sacrificed, provision was making in the providence of God, for raising his son to a station of affluence and honour; for preserving himself and his family amidst the desolations of a wide

spread famine ; for brightening the evening of his days with scenes of exquisite endearment ; and for introducing a train of dispensations towards the church, the benign influence of which will reach to the end of the world.

And where was there ever a case of deeper despondency than that of our Lord's disciples, when they saw that He had actually suffered death at the hands of his enemies ? Until that time, their eyes had been holden in a great measure in respect to the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom ; and their hearts had been filled with joyful anticipations of the distinction to which their peculiar relations to Jesus would entitle them. What a scene of withered hopes and sad recollections then, must that have been, in which they saw their beloved Master hurried from one stage of suffering to another, till He finally bowed his head and gave up the ghost ! But a few days only had to pass away, before these men were permitted to see a flood of light poured upon this darkest of all dispensations : their views of the character of Christ's kingdom were corrected, and they understood the connection

which this mysterious event had with the redemption of the world. That which had seemed to them defeat, they now saw to be victory; and out of what they had regarded as the grave of their best earthly hopes, came streaming the light of an immortal life, in which myriads were to rejoice forever.

And who will say that these dispensations are not a fair sample of God's dealings with his church in all ages? How often have those events which, at the time of their occurrence, seemed wrapped in mystery that no human sagacity could penetrate, been explained, by subsequent developments, to be the richest of mercies in disguise! How often has the aged saint, as he has lingered at the gate of death, looked over his past life, and fixing his eye upon some melancholy bereavement, exclaimed with gratitude—"In that dark hour was sown the seed of all this precious consolation. Had a less bitter cup been mingled for me, I might have been closing my eyes now, only to open them in eternal darkness." Let any Christian scan his own experience, and it will be strange indeed, if something like this is not found in it. By carefully observing the connexions of

the divine dispensations, he will find one to be explanatory of another, and will be able at the end of his course to see light and harmony, where there once seemed nothing but darkness and discord.

But it must be acknowledged, after all, that we have at best only a partial clearing up of the mysteries of God's providence, in the present world—there are many events which must be thrown into a yet brighter light, before we can recognize their harmony with the wisdom and love of God—much more, view them as illustrative of these attributes. But that brighter light will blaze upon the Christian, the moment the veil is drawn aside. The great system of providence on which clouds and shadows had rested hitherto, now comes up, discovering the perfection of its parts and the grandeur of its proportions, just as the beautiful scenery of the valley which looked ragged and unseemly as seen through the mist, takes on a thousand forms of loveliness as it lights up under the orb of day. And as the general system of providence shall be wonderfully illustrated, so also particular dispensations, the meaning of which we had

here sought in vain to understand, shall receive a perfect explanation. Christian mother, thou shalt then know why it was that the child that once nestled in thy bosom, and greeted thee with its unconscious smile, has since grown into a monster of vice, and given thee a broken and bleeding heart, and finally died a spectacle of public ignominy. Christian wife, thou shalt then know why the sorrows of widowhood overtook thee so early, and a little group of fatherless children were left to keep thee ever mindful of thy loss. Christian philanthropist, thou shalt then know why thy cherished and well matured plans of benevolent effort did not succeed; and how their defeat was rendered instrumental of the greater good. Faithful disciple of Christ, who art ever awake to thy Master's honour, and ever on the watch-tower to descry the first approach of danger to his cause—thou shalt then know that that cause, even when it seemed to be retrograde, was still advancing; that the storms and convulsions which have agitated the church and sometimes threatened its extinction, have been the means of its purification and final triumph. Glorified im-

mortal, thou seest now that there is not a link in the chain of the divine dispensations that could be spared—that light of Heavenly glory into which thou hast entered, has shown thee that there was love and faithfulness as well as grandeur imprinted on all Jehovah's footsteps.

It must have already occurred to you that the subject on which we have been meditating, has had a most impressive illustration in the funeral solemnities that have occupied us to-day, in the interval of our accustomed public services.* Ask you why it was that the

* Mrs. Chapin left home on the 7th of June to visit her daughter, Mrs. Brown, at Chicago, and remained with her until Tuesday, the 18th of July, when she set out with her son-in-law and his wife, to return home. When they reached Buffalo on Wednesday evening, she was in her usual health, and in full expectation of being with her family in Albany the next day. A lady who had accompanied them from Chicago, was taken ill on their arrival at Buffalo, and Mrs. Chapin kindly volunteered to occupy the same chamber with her, and administer to her wants during the night. About five o'clock in the morning she found herself seriously ill; and it was quickly ascertained that her disease was the cholera. Medical aid was immediately called, but it soon became apparent that the case was hopeless. While the terrible malady was doing its work, she was composed and submissive, and occupied alternately in supplicating God's sustaining grace, and leaving affectionate messages for her friends. She died at seven o'clock, on Wednesday evening, before her husband or any of her absent friends were able to reach her.

Mrs. Chapin was the daughter of William and Hannah Sheldon, and was born in Providence, R. I., July, 1804. After her father's

affectionate wife, the devoted mother, the consistent and earnest Christian, the watchful friend and benefactor of the poor, was, as our ignorance might incline us to say, thus *prematurely* cut down, when, if she had been spared, she might still have diffused gladness through her circle, and rendered each of her relations a channel of both temporal and spiritual blessing? Ask you why she was not permitted to die in her own quiet dwelling; why she paused at a certain stage of her homeward journey, that she might be prepared to travel the rest of the way as a corpse; why there was so small a representation of her

death, and while she was quite a child, her widowed mother removed to this city, where the daughter spent the residue of her life. She was married, July, 1826, to Lyman Chapin, Esq., and has had three daughters, all of whom survive. For many years she was exercised with doubts in regard to the divine authority of the Scriptures; but she set herself at length to an earnest and diligent examination of the subject, the result of which was a full conviction that Christianity had a divine origin. This conviction gradually worked itself into the heart; and her views and affections from that time had evidently an upward tendency. She made a public profession of religion in May, 1840, but as she had scruples in regard to the mode of baptism, which did not yield to a somewhat protracted examination, the ordinance was administered to her by immersion. She had much more than ordinary strength of mind, and had thought and read much on theological subjects, but she was too quiet and unostentatious to make any display of either her talents or her knowledge. Her heart and hand were open to every good work.

own dear family to listen to her last words of love and trust and prayer? Ask you why she was overtaken by disease in one of its most terrible forms; why it was permitted to do its work so suddenly that no message could be quick enough to secure the presence of those who would have wished most to be there? Ask you why yonder house seems to its surviving inmates to be left to them desolate; why those hearts that were so hopeful and joyous at the beginning of the last week, are burdened and bleeding at the beginning of this? Take the gracious words of Jesus as the answer—"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." In respect to our departed friend herself, there is nothing difficult to be accounted for; for while it is the ordinance of God that all should die, it fully accords with all our ideas of God's loving kindness towards his children, that He should remove them in his own way from the sins and sorrows of this life, to the joys and glories of the world to come. And mourners, while ye are waiting for the fuller explanation of this event, as it respects yourselves, must it not be an alleviation to your sorrow,—nay, a

source of positive joy, to reflect that she whom you lament, is walking in an infinitely brighter light than ever shone on this side the dark valley,—that events which were once as mysterious to *her*, as her sudden departure now is to *you*, are at this moment contemplated by her as beautiful illustrations of God's paternal love. Follow in the footsteps of her faith—especially, heed the solemn teachings of her dying scene, if you would be ready to share with her the exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

And now, Christian friends, shall we not all learn from this subject and this occasion, lessons of serene submission, of humble trust, of steadfast hope, of cheerful obedience. Study the dispensations of God's providence as closely as you will, but study them reverently; and be willing to remain in ignorance where God is not pleased to explain. Thus will this hallowed employment form the appropriate discipline of your faculties for those higher investigations and clearer discoveries that will be incident to the glorified state. Mighty God, we would submissively wait the movements of thy providence, welcoming all the

light thou art granting us here, as a pledge of the brighter light which is to burst upon us hereafter! And yet may we not say, still remembering that our place is in the dust—fly away, months, years, ages, of darkness, and let this chequered scene of things that is now passing,—nay, let the whole course of God's dispensations toward our race, and toward his universal church, brighten into a field of glory, beneath that flood of illuminations that shall emanate directly from his throne.

