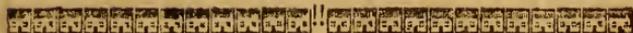
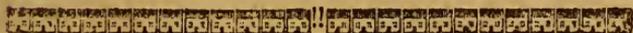


} 15.0.7
} 5646



A FUNERAL SERMON.



Ms. A. 1. 1. 1. 1.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A

FUNERAL SERMON,

DELIVERED

OCTOBER 25, 1796,

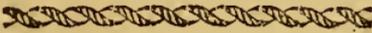
AT THE INTERMENT OF

Mrs. MARY GAY,

RELICT OF

The Reverend Doctor Gay,

Pastor of the first Church in Suffield.



BY JOSEPH LATHROP, D. D.

Pastor of the first Church in West-Springfield.



SUFFIELD :

FROM THE PRESS OF

H. & O. FARNSWORTH.

M, DCC, XCVII.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

OF THE

ARTS

AND

MANUFACTURES

IN GREAT BRITAIN

AND IRELAND

BY

JOHN BARROW, ESQ.

OF THE BARRISTERS AT LAW

IN GREAT BRITAIN

AND

IRELAND

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I



A SERMON, &c.

PSALM lxxxix. 48.

“WHAT man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?”

THE universal mortality of the human race, is what many disregard; but no man denies. There are some important doctrines of religion, which are subjects of controversy: But human mortality has never been brought into question. And the importance of it is as great, as the reality of it is certain. There are many things, which, if true, are of but trifling consequence; and it is little matter, whether we believe, or disbelieve them; think of, or forget them. But death is not one of those uninteresting matters. It is an event in which every one is deeply concerned. No serious, rational man professes to despise it: Besure, no such person can meet it with an indifferent mind, or a contemptuous air. No man thinks it a trifle

to be separated from his worldly interests and connections—to lay down this body, and leave it a prey to corruption and worms—to pass an unbodied spirit into a new and untried state—to exist among beings unknown, and in a manner unexperienced. But while mankind are so well agreed in believing the reality, and owning the solemnity of death, thousands and thousands live almost unmindful of it, and altogether unprepared for it.

“WHAT man is he that liveth and shall not see death?” Here is an intimation that many live, as if they *thought* they should not see it. Such is the folly—such the inconsistency of men, that they hardly regard what they own to be important, and scarcely realize what they know to be certain.

THE mortality of men is sometimes introduced into the colloquial circle, and allowed to take its turn with other topics. But perhaps it is called in rather to fill up the vacancies of discourse, than to awaken the conscience, or mend the heart. It is made rather a subject of philosophical amusement and speculation, than of moral instruction and improvement.

SOME curious, scientific men, look over all the bills of mortality, which they can find—they examine with accuracy what numbers die in infancy—what proportion arrive to maturity—how many reach to old age. They make nice calculations on the probabilities of living to a given period, and endeavor to

ascertain, with precision, the several rates at which lives, at different ages, may be ensured for a certain term. They treat the awful subject in much the same manner as they treat agriculture and commerce. They make it a kind of science, like insurances in trade, for the purpose of worldly gain. They think and speak much about death; and, all the while, are wholly inattentive to their own moral concern in the subject, and scarcely reflect that they belong to this dying race.

YEA, we sometimes talk about our own age, with as much indifference as we talk about our farms, or our shops. We tell how old we are—what changes there have been in families, in towns, and in the country—what progress has been made in population—what improvements in arts, since our recollection—what numbers have gone off the stage within the circle of our acquaintance—how few are left, who are older than we are—how swiftly time passes away—how much more rapid its seeming progress is now, than it was when we were young: And yet perhaps all this discourse only glides over the tongue, without touching the heart. We hardly call to mind what it is to die, how vast the change that death will make in our bodies and in our souls, and how immutably it will fix our future condition. We still live as regardless of futurity, and as inattentive to our duty, as if no such observations had occurred.

BUT whether we realize our death, or trifle with it; whether we bring the scene near to view, or cast it out of our thoughts—still it is certain; it is hastening toward us, and will be infinitely important when it comes.

“WHAT man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?” We look upon an aged man as a poor mortal creature. We observe his grey hairs and withered limbs, his bending body and tottering steps, his increasing infirmities and decaying powers; and we conclude this man must see death. When we behold one attacked with a disease, which usually has proved mortal in others, and which evidently mocks the power of medicine in him, we say, HE also must see death. We think such a man can have no great interest in this world, and ought not to concern himself much about it. For what can the world be to him, who, within a few weeks, or months, must leave it, and enter upon an eternal state?

BUT are none mortal, besides that aged and decrepit figure; or that sickly, emaciated form? Yes; the young, the healthful, are as mortal as they. Some of the latter may be as near to death as the former—none are far from it. ‘Our days are an handbreadth; our age is as nothing.’ ‘Our life is a vapor, which continueth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.’ ‘Who can deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?’ There are some evils, from which, however threat-

ning they appear, we may still be delivered. We are sometimes terrified with imaginary dangers, which are never realized in event. There are things which we dread in anticipation, but find to be very harmless when they come. Yea; what we deprecate as evils, often prove real and important blessings. There are some troubles, which by prudence and caution may be prevented; and there are some also, from which, by labor and activity, we may be extricated. But the power of death none can defeat—from the hand of the grave none can escape. It is appointed to men once to die. The decree is fixed, and none can disannul it. The sentence is passed on the whole human kind, ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;’ and it will not be recalled. No man can reverse the tendency of his frame to a dissolution. No man can extirpate the seeds of mortality, planted in his constitution. No man can controul the causes of death, which are every where around and within him. No man can resist the execution of that divine sentence, which has consigned all the children of Adam to the dust.

To prove by arguments the universal mortality of our race, would be needless. It will be more useful to attend to those moral and religious instructions, which so solemn a truth suggests.

I. If all men must see death, then we must conclude there is a future existence; otherwise we can discern no sufficient reason why such a race of beings was created.

THIS is a conclusion, which evidently arose in the Psalmist's mind, while he was contemplating human mortality. He says, concerning man,—‘ The days of his youth hast thou shortened; thou hast made his glory to cease; thou hast covered him with shame. Remember how short my time is. Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?’ ‘ What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?’ The existence of men in this world is so short, and their condition so unhappy, that, if there were no future state of being, one would naturally inquire, why the Creator should make all men in vain?

How manifold are the works of God! In wisdom he has made them all. In the creation of our race he certainly had some end worthy of his own wisdom, and suitable to the nature which he has given us. If this end cannot be answered in the present state, there must be another state before us, in which the great purposes of divine wisdom may be accomplished.

WE are rational and intelligent beings, capable of discerning between moral good and evil, and of making continual improvements in knowledge and virtue. There is a power within us, which evidently exists independently of flesh—a power which recollects things past, and anticipates things future—a power which, in thought, can ascend to the heavens, and fly to the remotest regions of the earth—a power always busy and active; always unsatisfied with the present, and reaching after something future—a power which, by proper

cultivation, is growing and expanding in this world, and yet never attains to its just perfection. How numerous is this race of intelligences! How many millions are now on our globe! And yet all these make but an inconsiderable part of the whole number, which in several thousands of years, have come into existence. And how many ages longer the succession will be continued, we cannot conjecture. A great proportion of these intelligences are removed in infancy, before their minds have opened into rational exercise. Many more retire before they have opportunity for useful action, or mental improvement. They who live the longest, do but begin to live.

Now can it be imagined, that the all-wise creator would bring into existence such inconceivable multitudes of rational creatures, and then strike out of being one third of them, before they perform one rational action; and all the rest, before they reach their proper maturity? Such an imagination contradicts all our ideas of divine wisdom. If we were made for no other purpose than to eat, drink, and sleep, provide a successor, and then retire, as well might we have been mere animals. Our rational nature surely was not given us in vain. We shall then exist in another world, after we withdraw from this. And if we shall exist, it will be in happiness or misery, according to the temper which we carry with us, when we go hence.

It is this existence after death, which gives the change its highest importance.

THERE is something solemn in death, considered only as a removal from this world. We should think it a great matter finally to depart from our home, and our native country—to relinquish all our property—all that we received from our ancestors, and acquired by our diligence—to be separated from our friends and acquaintance—from all whom we have known and loved on earth. To so great a change we should submit with painful reluctance. Now there is all this in death.—We leave our connections and interests, our country and our home, all that we ever esteemed dear and valuable in the world.—But what makes death still more solemn is the state which follows. It is a passage, which at once opens into a new scene—a state of existence very different from this which we have been acquainted with. Hence it is called a land of darkness. But the most interesting circumstance of all is, that the state, which follows, is a state of retribution, a state in which every man will receive according to the deeds done in the body: and that this state will be everlasting—will exclude any future probation, and deny us any opportunity to rectify the errors, and recall the follies of life.

IN this view, the importance of the change is great, beyond all conception.

II. IF all without exception must see death, then preparation for death should be every man's principle care.

WE think it prudent, in common life, to prepare for great events, if they are only

probable ; and for small events, if they are certain. A prudent man looks well to his goings. He foresees evil and hides himself. What infatuation is it then to live regardless and improvident of so mighty, and so certain a change as this—a change which concerns the whole of our future existence !

THERE are, in the course of a man's life, several important periods. The time, when a youth enters on an education for the business which he means to pursue—the time when he passes from minority to manhood, and becomes master of himself—the time when he commences the head of a family, and undertakes the government of a household ; are all important. But there is no moment of his existence productive of such mighty consequences, as death. This is a change vastly greater, and infinitely more interesting than all which he experienced before. For this every one should prepare with the greatest concern and diligence.

To prepare for death is to acquire that temper, which is a necessary qualification for heaven. The happiness of heaven consists in the enjoyment of the blessed God. To be happy in his presence, we must be conformed to his character. “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Heavenly happiness is of a spiritual nature. Sinners are unprepared for death, because they are incapable of this happiness. They must be renewed to repentance, cleansed from their corruption, and formed to the image and love of God, else they must be wretched in death.—

Repentance of sin is the first thing necessary in preparation for so great a change.

THE saints also have much to do, that they may be always ready. As they daily contract new guilt, they must seek the removal of it, by renewed exercises of repentance. They must implore divine grace, to purify them from remaining pollutions, & to perfect the good work begun in them. They must be sober and watch unto prayer. They must maintain a sense of futurity, cultivate a heavenly temper, examine their own hearts, give diligence to the full assurance of hope, and be always employed in doing their Lords will.

III. If none can deliver themselves from the hand of the grave, no great dependence is to be placed on earthly connections: Our hope must rest on the all sufficient God.

THIS is the instruction of scripture: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein; who executeth judgment for the oppressed, and giveth food to the hungry. The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, and raiseth up them that are bowed down. He preserveth the stranger, and relieveth the fatherless and the widow. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in him is everlasting strength."

WE feel our insufficiency to avert the evils which threaten us, to relieve the distresses which befall us, and to procure the goods which we need. We look around for help; but all men are weak and mortal like ourselves. Little can they do for us, while they are with us; and they who are near us to-day, may to-morrow be put far from us. They cannot deliver us, nor even defend themselves from the power of the grave.

To whom then, shall we go, and in whom shall we trust, but that almighty and eternal being, who made and sustains all things, who is present when friends forsake us, and can hear us when they are hidden in the grave? ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee?’ says the godly soul, ‘and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh faileth; but thou art my strength and my portion forever.’

IV. When we see all men dying, we are reminded of the awful demerit of sin, and of the gracious provision made by the saviour for our deliverance from its fatal effects.

MAN was created upright, and placed under hope of immortality. It was sin only that subjected him to death. It was the first man’s first transgression that has subjected all men to death. ‘By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passes upon all men, for that all have sinned.’ What a multitude of deaths has one transgression produced? Learn the evil of sin in the dreadful effects of it, which you behold, and which you read and hear. Wherever you open your

bible, this subject is brought to view. Every funeral you attend, every history you read, every newspaper you peruse, repeats to you the gloomy theme. Be afraid to indulge iniquity in your heart. It is pregnant of mischief. It has filled the world with deaths.

REJOICE in the great Redeemer. As by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead. Jesus has borne our sins in his own body. He has tasted death for us. He has died to expiate our guilt, and risen to confirm our faith. He was dead, and is alive ; and behold he lives forevermore. And because he lives, we may live also. He came, that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. The gift by grace, which is by Jesus Christ, abounds unto many.

V. How trifling are all worldly distinctions ! When we look around on mankind, we see a great diversity of conditions. Some are rich and others poor ; some are burdened with abundance ; others perplexed for want of competence : Some enjoy a glow of health ; others pine away with tedious sickness : Some are exalted to dominion over their fellow mortals ; others are subject to the will of imperious masters. The former look down with contempt on those below them ; the latter look up with envy to those above them.

BUT how soon will all these distinctions be lost in the grave ? There the beggar and the slave “ lie still and are quiet.” “ They sleep with kings and counsellors of the earth,

who built desolate places for themselves, and with princes who had gold, and filled their houses with silver. There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together, and they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master."

MEN exult in their power, and boast in the abundance of their wealth. But none of them can redeem a brother, or deliver himself from the hand of the grave.

WHEN you survey the generation on the stage, you see a great disparity of conditions. Some seem elevated too high; others depressed too low, for their intrinsic worth. You wonder why a wise providence permits such inequality. But remember, the case has been the same in all preceding generations.—Contemplate the generation, which last went off the stage. They are now all on a level. The only difference is that which results from their moral characters. This you cannot at present see; but it is real and important.—You complain, that, in this world, distinctions are not founded in virtue and worth. In the future world, there will be no room for this complaint. There you will discern between the righteous and the wicked.

WITH regard to this world, mankind are distinguished only by a few little circumstances, which last only for a few short days. In one grand thing, which absorbs all the rest,

they are on a level. This is mortality. Let no man, then, be insolent in prosperity, or impatient in adversity. Let no man despise those below him, or envy those above him. Let every man abide in his calling; be contented with his condition; do good as he has opportunity; be useful in his sphere, and believe that divine wisdom will order all things well.

VI. THE condition of mankind points out their obligation to mutual beneficence.

TRAVELLERS on the same road; pilgrims in the same strange land; persons under like afflictions, and exposed to like dangers, ought to regard, compassionate, and succor one another.

SUCH is our condition and relation.— We are all mortal; hastening to the dust, and daily subject to pains and sorrows. We are all under guilt, worthy of punishment and on trial for pardon. We are all soon to retire from the busy scenes of life, and make our long—long home in the grave.

IN such a similarity of condition, shall we envy, or despise one another? Shall we do any thing to embitter, or omit any thing which might relieve the sorrows of our fellow mortals? Shall we not afford mutual support in affliction, succor in temptation, and assistance in duty?

A MORTAL state must be a state of affliction. But this affliction would be much alleviated by mutual charity. “The end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober, and

watch unto prayer, and above all things have fervent charity among yourselves.”—“Remember them who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” You often visit the houses of mourning. When you see the sadness which covers the countenance of the afflicted, let your hearts be softened into sympathy with them, and awakened to intercession for them.

AGAIN we are called, my christian friends, to mingle tears, and unite in prayers with an afflicted and mourning family. But a few months have past, since we assembled in this place, to perform the funeral offices for the venerable pastor of this church, and to offer our prayers in behalf of the sorrowful relict and children. We are now convened to mourn, with the children, the death of their only parent. If we estimate their loss by the real worth of their departed friends, few could have sustained a greater. But if, in these afflictions, their consolation is equal to the charitable hope, which follows their parents to the unseen world, few, in such a loss, can enjoy consolation superior to theirs.

Mrs. GAY, whose remains now lie before us, was, not only respectable for her parentage,* natural abilities, and acquired accomplishments; but highly esteemed, among all her acquaintance, for her christian spirit and deportment—her easy and agreeable sociability—her hospitality to strangers, and courtesy to friends—her eminent prudence in

* Daughter of the late Honorable Judge CUSHING of Scituate.

the public situation and connection assigned her by providence—her fidelity and tenderness in the domestic relations—and her solicitude to render all happy, who were placed under the inspection of her eyes, or stood within the reach of her arms. She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness. She looked to the ways of her household; she despised not the cause of her servants; her children rose up and called her blessed.

A GREAT blessing has she been, not only in her family, but in this society. By her discreet and exemplary conversation, she has contributed, in her place, to the usefulness of her consort's ministry, and to peace and good order among the people of his charge. And, for them, she has trained up a son to succeed in the father's place, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd. In the son may you long behold, remember, and honor the father.

WHEN I look on this bereaved family, me thinks, I enter into their feelings. To them the world appears gloomy and desolate. They seem not to be at home. No parent, no head can they find there. In the parental mansion, they feel like strangers; for those who lately occupied the principal place, are gone, and will be seen no more.

STRANGERS, indeed, you are, as all your fathers were. Your days are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.

THE removal of your parents should weaken your attachment to this world, and direct your affections to another. In heaven

are your best friends. There is your God, and your Saviour; and there, we trust, are those parents, whom lately you saw and loved in the flesh. Taught in their death, your own mortality, you will more deeply feel your obligation to live above this world, to withdraw from it your confidence and hope, to have your conversation in heaven, and to stand in readiness for your own departure. Learn, my beloved friends, to walk circumspectly, and tread cautiously, as on the borders of another world. Seek the things which are above, and wait for the son of God from heaven.

In this day of sorrow, you will recollect with thankfulness, God's former loving kindnesses. The company, the prayers, and the counsels of your parents you enjoyed, until you had arrived to the age of maturity, and they had reached the period of infirmity. From them you have experienced, in your education, all the care and attention which they could bestow. You have seen their steady example of piety and virtue, domestic union, and parental wisdom. You have been witnesses how holily, and justly, and unblamably they behaved themselves before you.—From their examples and instructions, learn how you ought to walk, and to please God. May you, in your day, abundantly fill the places which your parents have left. May you, as they have been, be useful in the stations assigned you. May your days be prolonged, and the years of your life be many; and, having served God according to his will, may you finish your course with joy.

WE wish divine consolations to the brethren and sister of the deceased. Their number is become small ; and their age, and the death of this sister, admonish them, that soon it will be extinct. May they find themselves increasing in faith, hope, patience, and good works, as their years are multiplied ; and may they be gathered to the grave, as a shock of corn in its season, fully ripe.

THERE is present one only surviving sister. She feels this affliction with a peculiar sensibility. You are left alone. May your God be with you. In the multitude of your thoughts within you, may his comforts delight your soul. As earthly friends forsake you, may you feel a greater indifference to the world, a more ardent love to God, a more entire confidence in his care, a more earnest desire of heaven, and a more satisfying evidence of your sincerity in religion. Thus the afflictions, which for the present are grievous, will yield to you the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

MANY pleasant hours have you spent in company with this your departed sister.— These hours will return no more. You will often recollect them with a mournful pleasure. May you find an unmixed pleasure in communion with God, and the near hope of the full enjoyment of him. May this affliction contribute to render your converse with him more free and refreshing, until you are admitted to his presence in heaven, where are pleasures forevermore.

“WHAT man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?”

WE who are now at the head of our respective families, are soon to leave them, and pass into another world. Let us stand prepared for this mighty change, and train up our children in knowledge & piety, that they, in their turn, may preside with dignity over the families committed to them, and may transmit to those who shall be born, the religion which they receive from us.

YE who are now under the care of parents, realize that your head will soon be taken from you, and you must come forward into the vacant place. Seek unto God betimes; commit yourselves to him as your protector and guide; walk with him in the humble exercises of piety and devotion; serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. When you shall enter into a family state, let your houses immediately become houses of prayer. Let not the religion, taught by your fathers, be carelessly lost in your hands; but faithfully conveyed to those who come after you. And pray always, that God's spirit, which is upon you, and his word, which he hath put in your mouth, depart not from you, nor from your seed, nor from your seed's seed, even forever.

WE are all to see death; and new scenes shall we behold beyond it. Let us live under a solemn sense of this grand event, and be careful what manner of persons we are in all holy conversation. And the Lord make us to increase in faith, and in love, and in every good work, to the end he may establish our hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints. AMEN.

