

a thousand accidents may happen to that life which is possessed by as insecure a hold. How often does the healthy and robust man go out in the morning, and is carried home a corpse in the evening! The healthiest and strongest, smitten by disease, shew that they are not exempted from the common law of humanity, decay. Life is but a frail possession: it hangs by a fibre. The most trifling circumstance, the most contemptible agent, may snap the fibre in twain. But we need not dwell upon the analogy. Let us rather advert to the causes of our frailty, and the lessons to be learned from it.

Sin is the cause of human frailty and decay. It is the blight which has withered the stem or the leaf of human existence. It is the withering, the blighting influence. Were there no sin, there would be no decay—no death. We would not see pining sickness, and violent accident, and disease in its thousand forms. It has poisoned the vitals, affected the secret sources of life. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death has passed upon all men, because that all have sinned."—Death was threatened at first as the consequence of sin: and in carrying out the sentence God said to Adam, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."—So universal a fact must have as universal a cause. There is no explanation of human mortality otherwise. Death is a judicial thing: it is the punishment of sin. Try to explain it otherwise as some may—they fail. What is it that gives the body over to "dumb forgetfulness, a prey"—to corruption—to the grave? What is it that blights and mars the fair frame of man—that weakens his energies—wither his beauty—and constrains us to hide at last from our sight that which was once so lovely, perhaps, to our eye—and so dear to our hearts. It is sin. Sin is the worm at the root of this gourd. Sin is the autumn-blast to our frames—so that they do fade as a leaf. And then, our iniquities, like the winds, have taken us away. As the wind scatters the leaves in autumn—bears them away—so that they are unknown and undistinguishable among the mass of foliage that strews the forest—so, these bodies are borne away: they are carried out of sight: they become undistinguishable among the mass of corruption that covers our earth, or mingles with its dust. Sin does this.—Sin not only occasions our death: it buries us—not only blights it, but carries

the leaf away. And yet we will love our sin—we will cherish what is the very cause of death—which has smitten us with decay, and hurries us to the grave. Many love their sins so well that they will rather invite the death which they induce than part with them. They, as it were, court decay: they unnecessarily multiply its causes by multiplying their sins. They poison more and more the sources of life—they weaken more and more its energies: they taint its springs: they voluntarily make themselves the victims of disease and death. Ah! it is enough to be sinners, and to fade as a leaf, and to be carried away at last by our iniquities—Why should we unnecessarily increase those causes which will soon enough—we need not surely hasten their effect—bring us to the grave?

Let us realize the truth we have been illustrating—and while the body must fade as a leaf, and there is no reversing this law, let us see that our souls are safe—that these are not at last taken away by our iniquities, in the whirlwind of the divine wrath. Let us seek that these may live before God—and flourish eternally in the house of our God. Blessed be God, that so far the law of our mortality may be, if not reversed, compensated—and that our souls may live, aye, and live to better purpose than here, while the body may go down to the grave, and rot with the clods of the valley. Let us seek this by a union to the second Adam, as we have been united to the first. Let us be united to him who is the resurrection and the life—and in him we shall have life—we shall never die. "As in Adam all died,"—all who were included in Adam—"so in Christ all,"—all who are included in Christ—"shall be made alive." Let us believe in Christ—"whosoever believeth shall not come into condemnation, but hath already passed from death to life." He will confer upon us immortal life; and even these bodies, after they have mouldered for a while in the grave, will be raised incorruptible.

Let us see the necessity of preparing for our death. We all do fade as a leaf. Nothing can keep off death. But death but introduces the soul to its eternal state. What is to be that state? Are we to be happy forever—or miserable forever? Is heaven or hell to be our portion? Are we to be carried away in our iniquities—or are we to have hope in our death? We are not surely, like