

world kin.' It melted the humanity of Jesus, as He stood by that new grave; and it is with Him now that he has 'passed into the heavens,' and stands where Stephen saw him, a great 'High Priest,' "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The river which, at first, went out of Eden, is salt and bitter since the fall. It is the river now of tears, and waters still the world which man inhabits." May the plain words which I shall (please God) utter here to-day by His grace bear to you the warning of death, and win your souls through His grace to "holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." The object of sermons upon funeral occasions is not to praise the dead (what has been said could not be restrained), but to comfort the mourner, warn the sinner, and encourage the faithful. What comfort can I offer to the mourner? Job's comforters sat down upon the ground with him seven days and none spoke a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great. To abstain even from good words—the silent pressure of the hand is often all that nature at first can bear. To kneel beside him in the silence of mental prayer is all one sometimes dares to offer.

It is true we have that to offer which Job's comforters had not—we can offer a Christian consolation and a Christian sympathy. Those soothing words of our dear Redeemer, which you heard just now at the grave-yard gate, were unknown to those "miserable comforters." What sublime consolation is there in the words "I am

the resurrection and the life saith the Lord; he that believeth in me tho' he were dead yet shall he live," and in those of our text, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, even so saith the spirit for they rest from their labours." But Christian sympathy is not noisy, it is not largely demonstrative. Grief brings us down to our naked selves, and reduces all other earthly things to their just proportions, and so everything like formality in sympathy is repulsive. Forced tears and affected grief may be meant kindly, but they only wound. It requires great tenderness not to seem harsh to an afflicted spirit. We often have heard of the beautiful design for a monument in which patience is represented as smiling at grief. Would not *suffering*, yet active *love*, in patience's place, wear a brighter smile?

It is chiefly in act, true sympathy must show itself. Who has not felt the awkwardness of setting about the express work of offering words of sympathy to an afflicted person.

In this act, then, of attending to the grave the dear departed, let our warm sympathy be shown for the afflicted survivors—while for mere words of sympathy our lips may fail.

But the sight of the funeral procession should warn the sinner, and this warning should be enforced on these occasions. To such of you, my friends, as are living lives of carelessness, heedless of the time when you, too, must lie down in the dust,—I say that these proceedings—the heads bowed with