

And the subject is a suitable one for us to reflect on this morning. Suitable whether we are looking back upon the year which closed upon us last night, or look forward upon the year which opens before us to-day. Suitable also as we are called this morning to reflect upon the passing away from our midst of one of the members of the congregation, one whom we all looked up to, both on account of his venerable age and his honoured position in the church of Christ.

" EVERY LIFE A BATTLE."

This text then teaches what our own experience has taught us ; that this life in the case of every man who seeks to make a right use of it, is a battle, and very specially is to the Christian a scene of discipline and conflict. Any one who has not recognised this, and who has not learned to look at his life in this respect, has not yet had his eyes opened to the position in which God has placed him. Sometimes life is spoken of as a pilgrimage, sometimes as a race that is to be run, but in every true representation of it there enters the idea of conflict.

There are those who are unwilling to acknowledge this view. They think they should be permitted to glide through the years like the vessel on the smooth, untroubled sea, with no storm to hinder and terrify them, no tempest to beat them back. And because they do not find life to be of this character, they murmur at divine providence and become discouraged and discontented. And there are those who would avoid the discipline and conflict of life by yielding to their desires, and to the temptations which arise in their path, and who seek their own way without respect to conscience, or to the authority of God. Life to them is not a good fight. It is a time of self-indulgence and in which conflict, so far as in their power, has been escaped. The fight which they have engaged in is a fight against conscience and against God, and that is a conflict in which