

with the loss of life, without remarkable rescues and deliverances. This was the case in the great calamity referred to. Upwards of a thousand made their escape, and some of them in a wonderful manner—not to speak of those who, by strange hindrances thrown in the way, were prevented from going to the festival. Here is another aspect of the case equally worthy of our regard. What are we to understand by the providence of God in calamity? Is it that God suspends the operation of natural law, thus providing a way of escape? Is it that he restrains the fire from its action, or calms the storm, or turns aside the fatal shaft? Not at all. We must look back of these things if we would seek an intelligent account of the providence of God in calamity. The tower of Siloam fell doubtless according to the law of gravitation; the Sunday sailing party perished according to the law of storms, or from want of skill to manage their craft; and the church of Santiago was burnt according to the law of combustion. Providence does not interfere in the operation of these laws or any other law; but notwithstanding the inflexible action of natural law—the constant and invariable procedure of cause and effect—there is room for the higher operation of the divine hand.

There are two ways in which God can deliver me in time of calamity. He can avert the blow or the flying fragment so that it will not strike me; or he can, in his own mysterious way, move me from the point of danger, and in either case I shall be safe. Now, it is not the former but the latter of these methods that he adopts. God does not arrest the thunderbolt, or turn aside the arrow of death, but he touches a mental chord, inducing the man whom he would save for the present to take another seat in the doomed train—to occupy another position in the building

which proves a place of safety in the crash; or he may throw hindrances in your way so that you may be too late for the ill-fated vessel, or the splendid festival that is to end in flames. The thin column of soldiers, sent out as a forlorn hope to storm the breach, are thinned down still farther with

“Cannon to the right of them,
Cannon to the left of them.”

and the wonder is that any escape. But He whose eye is upon every beating heart, and upon every fatal shaft, can find a pathway of safety amidst the arrows of death for the man that He would save.—By turnings and windings—by reverses and restraints and ways past finding out, he makes his way in safety and returns in triumph. A thousand has fallen at his side and ten thousand at his right hand, but death did not come nigh unto him.—Such are said to be saved as by a miracle, and the impression is that God interposes in the working of natural laws, and so saves them. Now there is nothing miraculous in the case,—understanding by that term the suspension of cause and effect—but there is something far more precious. There is a providence over men, nearer and more spiritual than this. There is a hand unseen by mortal eye, but which touches every man's inner life, leading you and guiding you in all your outgoings and incomings. This brings God far nearer to us than the miraculous view. That brings him to the walls of the building, this into contact with the heart. That would prevent the flame from kindling upon you, but this would carry you away in spirit to a place of safety. Here, then, back of all peradventures, and calamities and casualties lies the special protecting providence of God. Not in interpositions, or marvels, or miracles, but in the hearts and lives of men does God work. Here, deep down in the hidden