

SERMON.

PSALM xc., v. 12.—“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

If we carefully consider the nature of the impression which is made upon our minds by the death of others, we shall, I think, be compelled to allow that it very frequently, if not universally, bears witness to the fact that we have not as yet learned the great lesson which in the text the Psalmist prays God to teach him. I do not mean—far from it—that if this lesson were duly learned, it would make us insensible to the bitter nature of that penalty which has been attached to man's transgression—of that death which entered into our world by sin. I do not mean that this lesson, laid to heart, would render us one whit the less disposed to weep with them that weep; but it surely would spare us that painful oppressive sense of surprise and insecurity which is often the *main* impression conveyed to us by the death of others; an appalling sense of danger resembling that which a man might feel, who, while walking with confidence by night on a path which he deemed secure, should discover, by a sudden gleam of light, a precipice yawning at his feet.

The truth is that the great majority of men, for a large portion of their lives at least, do not number their days at all, and they consequently feel—if they feel aught—a most painful shock when they behold the days of another thus sternly and irreversibly numbered. Men, for the most part, and for a very long time, do not lift up their eyes to the horizon which bounds their earthly future; they will think and speak of the morning—the noon—perhaps of the evening of their life, but they do not look on to the actual sunset—to the night which must surely come.