

I. Let us consider the text in connection with the facts which it proclaims. As a general principle it may be asserted that the plainest and most convincing exponent of a fact, is its own practical exhibition or development. Description may do much in the way of presenting it in idea to the mind ; argument may enforce the probabilities connected with it ; but it remains for the occurrence and illustration to set aside every cavil, and to furnish after all the most incontrovertible proof.

The most prominent fact to which the text refers, is thus situated :—the announcement was early made, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” It was the voice of God that uttered the solemn truth ; and it was thus stamped with certainty as an event that should actually happen. It was a fact, however, which, although thus attested, mankind were slow to believe ; and which, notwithstanding alike of its certainty and of its momentous consequences, has ever found in the human heart a disposition personally to disregard it. It is an event that needed the most solemn assurances ; and what assurance could be greater than its own actual occurrence ? What more affecting and convincing demonstration ? Death enters the circles which friendship had bound together by the most endearing ties ; it interrupts the happiness which filled the heart of each and beamed in the countenances of all. Heralded to its work of desolation by enfeebling sickness and racking pain—the premonitors of the frailty of our frame—it completes at last its triumph over earthly hopes, and over the regrets and sympathies of human hearts, by carrying away the successive generations of our race from the activities of life, and from the homes which affection hallowed.