

remind you, here, that it is not I, merely, that have been preaching to you, but that, during the last year and a half of my ministry, God Himself has been speaking to us in a very special manner by the events of His providence. What with the deaths that have occurred among ourselves, and the deaths of relatives at a distance, there are very few families among us that have not been called to mourn. Nor have these been occasioned chiefly by the visitation of pestilence,—in which case we might be disposed to think less of the mortality that has prevailed; but the greater part of them have occurred in the ordinary way, by natural death, or by some of those accidents that are continually happening. Now, my friends, we cannot suppose that all this has been purely accidental. The deaths and casualties have been too frequent, and of too striking a character, to lead us to imagine this. Undoubtedly God has been speaking to us in a very marked manner of late, seeking to arrest us in the midst of our carelessness and worldliness, and to urge us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

What, my friends, has been the result of God's dealings with us? What has been the fruit of our six years' connection as minister and people?

I fear we have not laid to heart, as we ought, God's gracious intentions towards us, in the frequent visitations we have had, of late. We have not sought, as we should have done, to bring these home to ourselves, as individuals, so as to lead us to apply our hearts unto wisdom, but rather, it is to be feared, becoming familiarized with death by the very frequency of its presence among us, our hearts have become hardened. If, my friends, we are really to derive benefit from such painful events as those which have been happening among us of late—and God designs they should benefit us—we must not attend the funerals of those who are carried from our midst, in the perfunctory manner which is so common; but we must sit down and calmly ask ourselves, what are the lessons which God designs to teach us, individually, by such sad visitations? Are we too careless? are we too worldly? are we living little heedful of our latter end? are we living in the neglect of any known duty, or in the practice of any known sin? are we, in fact, not in a fit state to die? Then, by all such events does God urge on us to be up and doing.

Still, I can hardly believe that our six years' connection together has been wholly without good results. I can hardly believe that the Gospel has been regularly preached among you, even in the imperfect manner in which this has been done—I can hardly believe that your duty has been regularly laid before you, and that you have been warned and expostulated with, and that this has been all to no purpose. I can hardly doubt but the Gospel has been felt, in many cases, to

be the savour of life unto life—that there has been with many the sincere desire to pursue the narrow way which the Gospel prescribes, and the firm determination, with God's help, and in spite of their own felt imperfection, to prosecute that way to the last; and I trust that our connection together has, at least, not lowered the tone of society, but that it has aided, in some small measure, towards the formation of that staidness and solidity—that quiet, peaceable behaviour—that industry, uprightness, courtesy, and sobriety, which it is so desirable should distinguish any community. I am well aware that it is not always where most good seems to be doing that most good is really done. The seed of the kingdom is, in general, slow in its growth, springing up noiselessly and unperceived. When the temple was being built, we are told that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any iron tool heard. When the Almighty appeared unto Elijah, he came, not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in a still small voice; and so, we are told, the kingdom of heaven cometh not by observation. It will not, however, be known, till the great day, what is the good that has been effected, though, doubtless, it comes infinitely short of what might have been done.

But be it yours, at least, my hearers, to inquire, each for yourselves, what is the benefit which you have received from the connection which is so soon to terminate. Are you conscious of having been roused in any measure to a sense of the duties you owe your immortal soul? Have you been led to attend to these with increasing earnestness? Are you sensible of having acquired sounder and more enlightened views of the way of salvation? Have you become more established in your resolutions to fear and serve God? If you have been, in any measure, quickened, enlightened, encouraged, strengthened, so that, with God's help, you are likely to persevere, undeviatingly, amid temptations within and trials without, in the narrow way that leadeth unto life,—then, for you, at least, my Christian friends, it has not been in vain that the ordinances of God's house have been regularly dispensed among you for the last six years.

But there are some, I fear, who have received no good whatever—some whose hearts have only become more hardened—some, it is to be feared, who, though they may have been at times moved, and have made many fair promises and resolutions, have returned, like the dog to its vomit, or like the sow to its wallowing in the mire. A time like the present is well fitted to lead such to serious reflection. A precious term of improvement has indeed been squandered, but it is still possible to retrieve the past. Now, then, ere any more time has been lost, and with the consciousness of misspent time still fresh in their minds, let them return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon them, and