

to deal with his Church in a similar manner. How mysterious the arrangement by which an Edward VI. is removed, leading to the arresting of the work of Reformation in England and the subjecting the Church to the cruelties of "Bloody Mary." And in modern times how untimely seemed the removal of a Spencer, a Summerfield or a McCheyne.

And yet we know that all these things are the doing of the Lord. "Our times are in his hands, the number of our months is with him, he hath appointed our bounds that we cannot pass." "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Heavenly Father," and much less can we suppose that the termination of the life of one of his intelligent creatures is left in uncertainty. Especially we know that all the circumstances as to the time and mode in which his servants terminate their earthly services are directed in infinite wisdom. In reality the death of the righteous can never be untimely. As far as they are personally concerned we all acknowledge this. "Death cannot come untimely to him who is prepared to die." But we should have the same confidence that the removal of none of God's servants is untimely as far as their work on earth is concerned. No Christian dies *in the midst* of his usefulness, as we often improperly say. He cannot be removed till the work assigned him has been finished. Whatever then we might have wished, or whatever we might have considered best, we may be assured regarding our dear friend that all was determined in infinite wisdom. He had finished the work given him to do, his course was fulfilled, his warfare was accomplished.

But still human reason asks why was his course so short. It were enough to reply, that such was the will of God, and that our duty is to manifest submission to his will, and to have faith in his wisdom, even when we cannot understand. Still we can see important ends to be served by such a dispensation. How loudly does it proclaim the *divine sovereignty*—that "he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth—that none can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou." With equal clearness does it teach us God's *independence and all sufficiency*. We are apt to imagine that the cause of God is dependant upon this or that human agent. But by such removals God teaches us that no man is necessary for his cause—that he can work with or without human agency—that if he removes one he can raise up others with equal or better qualifications, and even make the death of his servants to conduce to the promotion of his cause. Thus, while the Church is daily losing the fairest of her children and the most devoted of her labourers, the cause of God still goes on. "All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever;" thus illustrating the all sufficiency of him, whose is the work, and who will bear the glory. We know too that their removal *is in kindness* to them, and we might hear them saying, "If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I go with my Father." True, their course was short, but their reward will be none the less brilliant. We know who has said, "It was well that it was in thine heart," and he has taught us that in his judgment those servants who were ready to labour and willing to sacrifice in his cause, but who had not the opportunity afforded them of so doing, shall, though they should have laboured but one hour, be rewarded even as those who have borne the burden and heat of the day (Mat. xx. 1-16). We know too that none of their powers are lost—that they have gone to a scene, not of idle self-indulgence, but of *nobler employment*, where they shall find a higher and perfectly holy sphere for the exercise of every capacity for serving God. We know too that such dispen-