

Once more. Thank God for the wide-spread sympathy evinced on behalf of the widows and orphans,—sympathy assuming to so great an extent a practical form,—sympathy manifested by those in the business pursuits of life, large, liberal, spontaneous. In this way, also, if the Lord does evil, he evokes good out of the evil. Along with the heroism already referred to, this constitutes one of the strongest proofs, in my belief, that God lives and reigns,—that he has not forsaken the world,—that his spirit is operating, mightily, in unexpected ways, in unexpected quarters. Perhaps so to touch our hearts is one of the main reasons why evil, in such forms as that referred to, is permitted.

Till we think of it, we can hardly estimate how much of our nature would lack cultivation—would become barren and unfruitful, were it not ploughed and harrowed by the tales of distress that ever and anon come to our ears. If all went well with us, and all around us, if there were no calamities, no poor, no bereaved, no sufferers, how would the good that is in us be kept alive? We should sink down into hardness, selfishness, be the victims of “pride, and fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness,” be wrapped up in sloth and sensuality, till, like Dives, we should die, and like him “in hell open our eyes.” But God sends one Lazarus or another to our gates,—reminders that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Do we accept them? The blessing is ours. We are linked in bonds of living sympathy with Christ. God asks us to “look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” Do we “let this mind be in us?” Honour to those in places near and remote whose liberality has been evinced on behalf of the fatherless, the widow, the bereaved. “God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love.”

And now, finally, God has spoken loudly, terribly. Let