

sight" one writes, "the placid moon looked down upon! Close-packed crowds of cal-cined, distorted forms, wearing the fearful expression of the last pang—the ghastly phalanxes of black statues twisted in every variety of agony, stretching out their arms as if imploring mercy. And then of the heap that had choked up the door, multitudes were found with the lower parts untouched, and some a shapeless mass, but with one arm or foot unscathed."

Now in view of this calamity there will be many to say that it was a judgment because of great sin, just as in the case of those referred to in the text. And there will be others in that city—the city of Santiago, where the catastrophe took place—who escaped the fire, congratulating themselves upon their safety. They were prevented from going by some untoward circumstance of which they thought hard at the time; or, having gone, they were rescued from the devouring flames in a wonderful manner—because of having been led to take a seat near the door—or because of strong help which they did not expect—or presence of mind, or in some way which they cannot explain. This melancholy event then has two aspects—destruction in the one case, preservation in the other. Why did so many perish and suffer such a death? Because they were greater sinners than others? Nay, says Christ, but unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Those did not perish because of their sins exceeding their fellows; but they perished that others might live—be benefited and instructed—that error might be exposed and God's truth revealed in a clearer light. "Master, who sinned?" said the disciples of old to the Saviour; "this man or his parents that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents, but that the works of God should be manifest in him?" Then, why were there any saved? how are we to account for the

strange escapes and deliverances upon such occasions? We answer by the special providence of God—a providence not suspending or interfering with the laws of matter, but working above it and independent of it altogether.

First, then, with regard to those calamities and those that perish in this way. Why, under the providence of a merciful God, should the tower of Sileam fall to the destruction of eighteen persons at its base? Why should such a bloody tyrant as Pilate be permitted to slay a number of deluded worshippers, and to mingle their blood with their sacrifices? Or why should those two thousand persons referred to perish in the flames and meet with such a death, in the very act of doing homage to the Virgin whom they had been taught from childhood to revere? The answer is, that such calamities are permitted, not so much on account of those that die as those that live. God has in view, not so much the sin of those that perish, as the good, the well-being, the very salvation of those upon whom the ends of the world will come. Such calamities are God's great lessons to men, which they can never forget—monuments to which they turn their eyes for ages and learn instruction. There are sins indeed which are visited with God's wrath, upon which the divine judgments come with sure and certain steps—such as intemperance, uncleanness, imprudence, falsehood, and folly in all its forms; so that just as sure as you find the penalty, you can predicate the foregoing sin. When you see the drunkard's pale-faced children walking barefoot through the snow, holding out their skinny hands for bread, or enter his house and see its sadness and desolation, you conclude at once with the ancient Jew that this man as well as his parents have sinned. Or if you see a man who once occupied a good position in the world, losing caste—his word lightly