

between man and man. Death is known as the all-leveller. The powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the old and the young, the good and the bad, are all there side by side. This man's greatness, or wealth, or wisdom, or age, or virtue, has not warded off the stroke. And another's weakness or poverty, or ignorance, or youth, has not exempted him from it either. None are so mighty and none so weak as to escape the Reaper's scythe. Different as the lives are, there is always the same end at last. This is the universality of death; and the universality of judgment is exactly similar. Death and judgment are bracketed together as equally inevitable. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Hope of escape there is none. A man may as well expect never to die, as to be never judged. And he will be judged moreover at the same bar and on the same footing as the rest. If death knows no distinctions neither will the judgment. Earthly justice is at best but faulty. How often it has been perverted—its stroke stayed by the display of power, the influence of wealth, the exercise of intellectual skill. But just as those means fail in the face of death, so must they fail before the judgment that is to follow. If a million of money cannot purchase a moment of time, neither will it or ought else purchase a hair's breadth difference of judgment in the great assize. None will be too great; but also none will be too small. If the judgment is universal, it will be also *individual*. The appointed death reaches every one, and so will the appointed judgment. There will be no being lost in the crowd. Each of us must die at last as if death singled us out alone in the whole wide world. And each of us will have to be judged afterwards, as if the whole judgment were for no other purpose than our own individual trial.

There is a certain relief to be found now in a partnership in misfortune. But that feeling will be wholly lost hereafter. The rich man in the parable found evidently no relief in the presence of his wretched fellow-sufferers. His one cry was that others might be saved from joining him. So as we stand before the great white throne it will be for an individual trial. If we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, it is that "every one"—every one separately and individually—"may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

What an awful thought for weak human nature, to have to stand alone before the great tribunal, and to meet the searching glance of God laying bare one's inmost thoughts and secret deeds, without a soul to stand by as our supporter or our advocate. Except, indeed, we find such a supporter and advocate in the Judge Himself, except we can recognise in the Judge a Saviour whom we have already trusted, loved and served.

To-day, thank God, the Judge still tarries at the door, tarries still to act the Saviour's part. But who knows how long He will tarry there? To-day there is a cry outside your heart—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Before another week comes round

death may reverse that altogether. As the soul passes into the outer darkness there may come the cry, "Lord, Lord, open to me!" And there may come the answer then, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." And after this—the judgment!

*Rev. John Robertson.*

## THE WIND'S VOICES.

"MAMMA, what makes your face so sad?  
The sound of the wind makes me feel glad;  
But whenever it blows, as grave you look,  
As if you were reading a sorrowful book."

"A sorrowful book I am reading, dear,  
A book of weeping and pain and fear,  
A book deep printed on my heart,  
Which I cannot read but the tears will start.

That breeze to my ear was soft and mild,  
Just so, when I was a little child;  
But now I hear in its freshening breath  
The voices of those that sleep in death."

"Mamma," said the child with shaded brow,  
"What is this book you are reading now?  
And why do you read what makes you cry?"  
"My child, it comes up before my eye.

'Tis the memory, love, of a far-off day,  
When my life's best friend was taken away;  
Of the weeks and months that my eyes were dim  
Watching for tidings—watching for him.

Many a year has come and passed,  
Since a ship sailed over the ocean fast,  
Bound for a port on England's shore;  
She sailed—but was never heard of more."

"Mamma," and she closer pressed her side,  
"Was that the time when my father died?  
Is it his ship you think you see?  
Dearest mamma, won't you speak to me?"

The lady paused, but then calmly said,  
"Yes, Lucy—the sea was his dying bed.  
And now, whenever I hear the blast,  
I think again of that storm long past.

The wind's fierce howlings hurt not me;  
But I think how they beat on the pathless sea,  
Of the breaking mast, of the parting rope,  
Of the anxious strife and the falling hope."

"Mamma," said the child with streaming eyes,  
"My father has gone above the skies,  
And you tell me this world is mean and base  
Compared with heaven—that blessed place."

"My daughter, I know, I believe it all—  
I would not his spirit to earth recall.  
The blest one he—his storm was brief—  
Mine, a long tempest of tears and grief.

I have you, my darling, I should not sigh.  
I have one star more in my cloudy sky—  
The hope that we both shall join him there,  
In that perfect rest from weeping and care."