

its own proper work, such as prolonged life could not have effected. Do we not feel this in the instance of one, who, having served God with all the fresh, generous vigour of youth, is early called away? How blest and sacred is his memory: who shall weigh its value, as compared with that of longer years of service, which we fondly hoped might have been fulfilled? God knows best. God loves best, and chooses best. And so, in the case of those of riper years. Their death, also, is "to the Lord." It has its own proper work, which belongs not to the life. Hearts are softened towards those who are taken from us; we look back upon their past history through a more tender—a more chastening medium; the wondrous separation which death effects is not without its fruit; we learn to think more charitably, and so more justly, of our past relations to them, now broken off for ever; and words of kindly warning, or encouragement, or consolation—yes, even words of sorrowful reproof—return with new force to our memories, and seem to us as if they were spoken from another world. For they who spoke them are now in that other world, and our inmost heart assures us that they *now* know the profound importance of the truths which they once uttered, and that they would now repeat them with yet more solemn emphasis. "No man dieth unto himself." The very fact that the dead can plead with us no longer clothes their past pleadings with a tenfold power; those natural affections, which are so deeply rooted within us, unite to invest every sincere and loving admonition which they have