

house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The words of the text contain three principal ideas, on which, by the help of the Holy Spirit, I intend this day to enlarge.

I. The frailty of the body: it is compared to a house or tabernacle.

II. The glorious object of the Christian, and that is heaven, here compared to a house not made with hands. *And

III. I shall notice the firm persuasion which the Apostle has of being admitted into heaven, or into this "house not made with hands."

I. Let us observe the frailty of our frames, set forth to us in the figure of a house or tabernacle. The body is here compared to a house; first, because of its proportion of parts, its symmetry, and the wise adaptation of means to ends which it displays.

In all the departments of the Divine workmanship, I think there is nothing that displays greater wisdom and adaptation of means to ends, than the structure of the human body. Examine, and analyze the structure of the eye itself, with its lenses and humors so fitly adjusted, so mechanically constructed, and you cannot fail to admire the wisdom and design which it manifests. "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works: that my soul knoweth right well."

But a house is erected not merely that it may display taste and architectural skill, but that it may protect and shelter what it contains. So the intention of setting forth the human body under the figure of a house was not so much to denote the wise contrivance which all its parts manifest, but to show its relation to the immortal principle within, the human soul. The body is the house, so to speak, or the tenement in which the soul for a time dwells. How many seem to lose sight of this! How many seem to act as if their sole profession and creed was materialism and not Christianity; as if they considered the body the whole man, the sum and substance of the whole being? Is not the feeding and dressing of the body the almost exclusive aim of many, yea, even of many professing Christians? Is this not very evident from the widely diffused worldly mindedness which is so characteristic of our times! In looking over the face of society, do we not see men so extensively, so shrewdly, and so diligently engaged in their several avocations, but they devote but very little consideration, and alas! in the case of many, no consideration at all to the welfare of their immortal souls. They have no faith in, and hence no concern about, eternal things. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" but having no belief in "things not seen," and hence no joyous evidence, they confine their attention to the things that are seen, but seem daily to change and to perish.

How many of the accidents of life are entirely beyond the power of man to anticipate. Is there not some one in my hearing who has perhaps, on more than one occasion met with an accident of which he had never dreamed, and which had almost terminated his life? If there is such an one, to him I would say: Never in your life forget your providential deliverance. That accident has not come in the way as the result of mere chance. It had a cause, for nothing happens without a cause. It was over-ruled by an invisible hand, which directeth all events. Neither doth it come in thy way without a reason,—without having a solemn and impressive lesson to teach thee. The Apostle says in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh." Now God speaks in various ways, and through different channels; but He speaks in no way more direct and more impressive than by accidents. There are some who are practically indifferent about hearing sermons, and hence they are seldom seen within the walls of the sanctuary; but some of these at times are compelled to listen to sermons whether they are willing or not. If they do not hear them with willing hearts and listening ears from the pulpit, they often hear them in the field, in the high way, against their wills. Oh! my friends, every accident which befalls you is a sermon to you, and ought ever to be remembered. Every unlooked for and harassing occurrence in your history is virtually a short but impressive sermon on the first clause of the text from which I speak to-day. Every accident that befalls us, and oh! do not forget this my hearers, is a sermon on the frailty of human life; it is a hint, an impressive premonition of the approach of the king of terrors; it is an earnest of that solemn hour when "the house of this tabernacle must be dissolved."

If God is at any time speaking to us thro' the voice of accidents, let us not turn a deaf ear, or He may continue speaking in louder and yet louder strains. The thunders on Sinai waxed louder and louder, and the lightning flashed in increasing sheets, and the darkness became more appalling, and the ground shook with more convulsive throes, to the terror of the affrighted, conscience-stricken Israelites. So does God often speak in his providential dealings with men. If they turn a deaf ear to one severe accident with which He may seem to chastise them, He frequently sends another and a still more appalling affliction. There is generally a manifest gradation observable in God's teaching of men; yes, and if you observe it, a gradation of severity in His dealings with guilty men. First the conscience speaks, and often very pungently, or to speak more properly, God speaks through the conscience. If the conscience is stifled; if its silent voice is disregarded, the sinner is often brought to his senses for a time through the instrumen-