

had finished his course with joy; he was ready to be offered up. In the course of nature, though his eye was undimmed, and his heart unchilled by age, and his strength of intellect scarcely abated, we could not reasonably expect he would be with us many years, or even many months longer. And if longer life had been given, it would probably have brought infirmities which would have suspended his activity, and sufferings which would have filled us with distress. The days of his years were three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they had been fourscore years, their strength would have been labour and sorrow. He lived not long enough to satisfy our love, and yet long enough for us to feel that there was a singular and marvellous completeness in his life. It was rounded off to a rare perfection. It had a symmetry which awakens astonishment as well as gratitude. Most men die with their hands on unfinished purposes, with designs which are far off completion, with what seems half their true mission unaccomplished. How many poets have left their sweetest songs unsung! How many statesmen have been swept away just before their cherished policy could achieve success! How many reformers have been stayed in their enterprise before half their task was done! How many Christian ministers have been silenced just as they were beginning to see the desires of their hearts accomplished, and just as their disciplined holiness and their maturer wisdom gave them larger means of usefulness and promised nobler success! But our beloved friend lived for many years after his wisdom had ripened and his strength had risen to heroic vigour. He lived long enough to use through many years an almost unparalleled influence, an influence which can only be acquired by a prolonged period of honourable activity, and which the few who come to possess are removed from almost as soon as it is theirs. Even his literary labours were singularly complete. The glorious company of the royal graces of the Christian character did not miss one of them the homage of his pen. Having directed in his earlier life "the anxious inquirer" to the Cross, he was permitted more recently to point the believer along the path of Christian progress, and to exhort him to add to his faith virtue and all Christian perfections. But now he has gone elsewhere to do a work even brighter and more perfect than he could accomplish here. John Howe warns us against supposing that all those heavens are empty solitudes—uninhabited, though glorious deserts; and we confidently believe that those whose strength has been perfected by earthly suffering shall find yonder heavenly duty—that not merely in personal delight and individual rapture shall they spend their immortality of blessedness, but that called to manifold forms of service which our thoughts cannot at present imagine, they still are working for the dearest purpose that ruled their hearts on earth, and that the imperial passion of their soul below is their imperial passion still. And yet we cannot but sorrow over our loss. We cannot rebuke the bitter grief and the overwhelming desolation of his family and nearer friends. If Christ were here this morning He would weep with you, although He knows the glory in which he whom you have lost is reigning. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, though Lazarus was just about to answer to His speech, and to be filled with conscious life again by His power. Those who have lost one who was to them the bright type of the Divine Fatherhood may now cling to that other Father whose love is the reality of all that was symbolised in the inferior affection, with the full assurance and confidence that He will comfort them in their distresses and pity them in all their woe. And as for us, who shall continue to meet Sabbath after Sabbath within these walls and around this sepulchre, though the tides of our grief will rise again week by week as we enter this sanctuary, yet we too will comfort our hearts and we will be strong in our God. We shall still be blessed by the heritage of his example and of his prayers. Very often we shall find ourselves suddenly lifted up into the lofty and serene atmosphere of a sublime devotion—often suddenly kindling with an ardent zeal for the glory of Christ—often filled with an unspeakable awe by a sense of the nearness of eternal things; and we shall find presently that thoughts we have not watched in their progress had been passing across our spirits of him who has departed, and that the old spell that hung about his presence, and spoke in his voice, and that beamed from his eye, is lingering here still, an imperishable and most precious possession. In this town the nobleness, the magnanimity, the meekness of his char-