

Providence, and admire the hand of him who "keeps all our bones, not one of them is broken."

This call for gratitude is increased when we look through the vista of years through which many of us have passed:—

When in this vale of years, I backward look,
And miss such numbers, numbers too of such
Firmer in health, and greener in their age
And strictest on their guard, and fitter far
To play life's subtle game, I scarce believe
I still survive.

But more especially have we reason for gratitude, when we remember how unprofitable we are, yea how vile in his sight. Some have not even yet begun to love or honour him, and their whole past lives have been spent in dishonouring him. The best of us have to mourn over wasted opportunities—over many shortcomings—and over long continued unfruitfulness. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, and because his compassions fail not."

But *for what purpose are we alive this day*. Some are alive this day, that they may fill up the measure of the iniquities. This was the reason why the Canaanites were so long permitted to occupy the land. So God waits for sinners to reach the utmost depths of depravity, before destruction overtakes him. The Jews we are told filled up their sins alway. Therefore wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. It is when the harvest of the earth is ripe, that the angel will "thrust in his sickle, and gather the vine of the earth, and cast it into the wine-press of the wrath of God."

Every impenitent sinner is constantly filling up the measure of his iniquity. Every day and every moment he is adding to the amount of his guilt. Every opportunity for repentance neglected, every means of spiritual good misimproved, and every delay of doom is rendering him worse and fitting him for destruction. Every unconverted sinner has thus the most solemn reason immediately to flee from the wrath to come, lest hardening his heart when he hears God's voice, He swears in his wrath, that he shall not enter into his rest.

But many are alive this day because God wishes to give them space for repentance. Nay, with all their sins their lives are spared

for this purpose, unless their own obstinacy prevents. Should they indeed continue rebellious, the delay will only be the filling up the measure of their iniquity. But it is in love and mercy that God grants delay. He is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. "He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth but rather that he should turn from his ways and live." He therefore prolongs their time of mercy. During the antediluvian age the long-suffering of God waited while the ark was preparing, one hundred and twenty years. Three years the keeper of the vineyard comes seeking fruit on the fig tree, and yet at intercession it is spared longer. So unconverted readers, God is sparing you. It may be at the intercession of some christian friend or of the great Intercessor before the throne, that your life is prolonged, but it is that you may turn to him, while the day of grace lasts. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." If it bear fruit, well, if not, after that thou shalt cut it down." (I do not "after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up wrath against the day of wrath." What reason have you to be thankful that God has not already cut you down, and left you to cry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." How many of your companions in folly and shame have been removed, but you are spared, though God has seen all your sin. Will you continue to provoke him, and thus ultimately sink yourself in the utmost depths of remediless woe.

But some of us are alive this day, *to glorify God*. This is the object for which Christians live. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." They shall be trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." "Glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are his." Glorious privilege! Ennobling blessing! Who among us is thus employed? "Now therefore our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name."

It is a mercy that any of us has not lived entirely to himself. But must not the best acknowledge, that he has lamentably come