

up thy bosom, man; tear off these buskings and bandages—the maniac-like strait-waist-coating of worldliness, and let the Gospel in to warm thee with its love—its love of God, and its love of thy brother men. Not till then shalt thou know what it is to live.

[The above is from a second volume of sermons published by the Rev. Dr. W. Anderson, of the U. P. Church, Glasgow. The extract has been sent us by a friend who has a high and just admiration for the author. Dr. A. is well known as a man of genius and piety, and we should be glad that his writings were extensively circulated in this Province.]

THE BENEFITS OF SICKNESS.

If man had never sinned, I should have been at a loss to discern the benefits of sickness. But since sin is in the world, I can see that sickness is a good. It is a blessing quite as much as a curse. It is a rough schoolmaster, I grant. But it is a real friend to man's soul.

Sickness helps to *remind men of death*. The most live as if they were never going to die. They follow business, or pleasure, or politics, or science, as if earth were their eternal home. They plan and scheme for the future, like the rich fool in the parable, as if they had a long lease of life, and were not tenants-at-will. A heavy illness sometimes goes far to dispel these delusions. It awakes men from their day-dreams, and reminds them that they have to die as well as to live. Now this I say emphatically is a mighty good.

Sickness helps to *make men think seriously of God*, and their souls, and the world to come. The most in their days of health can find no time for such thoughts. They dislike them. They put them away. They count them troublesome and disagreeable. Now a severe disease has sometimes a wonderful power of mustering and rallying these thoughts, and bringing them up before the eyes of a man's soul. Even a wicked king like Benhadad, when sick, could think of Elisha. (2 Kings, viii. 8.) Even heathen sailors, when death was in sight, were afraid, and "cried every man to his god." (Jonah, i. 5.) Surely anything that helps to make men think is a good.

Sickness helps to *soften men's hearts*, and teach them wisdom. The natural heart is as hard as a stone. It can see no good in anything which is not of this life, and no happiness excepting in this world. A long illness sometimes goes far to correct these ideas. It exposes the emptiness and hollowness of what the world calls "good" things, and teaches us to hold them with a loose hand. The man of business finds that money alone is not everything the heart requires. The woman of the world finds that costly apparel, and novel reading, and the reports of balls and operas, are miserable comforters in a sick room. Surely anything that obliges us to alter our weights and measures of earthly things is a real good.

Sickness helps to *level and humble us*. We are all naturally proud and high-minded. Few, even of the poorest, are free from the infection. Few are to be found who do not look down on somebody else, and secretly flatter themselves that they are "not as other men." A sick bed is a mighty tamer of such thoughts as these. It forces on us the mighty truth that we are all poor worms, that we "dwell in houses of clay," and are "crushed before the moth," and that kings and subjects, masters and servants, rich and poor, are all dying creatures, and will soon stand side by side at the bar of God. In the sight of the coffin and the grave, it is not easy to be proud. Surely anything that teaches that lesson is good.

I leave this branch of my subject here. It needs no further remark. If sickness can do the things of which I have been speaking, (and who will gainsay it?) if sickness in a wicked world can help to make men think of God and their souls, then sickness confers benefits on mankind.

We have no right to murmur at sickness, and repine at its presence in the world. We ought rather to thank God for it. It is God's witness. It is the soul's adviser. It is an awakener to the conscience. It is a purifier to the heart. Surely I have a right to tell you that sickness is a blessing and not a curse,—a help and not an injury,—a gain and not a loss,—a friend and not a foe to mankind. So long as we have a world wherein there is sin, it is a mercy that it is a world wherein there is sickness. — Ryle.