

FUNERAL SERMONS.

SERMON I.

[Preached July 7th, 1693, at the Funeral of Elizabeth Young, after an illness of fourteen weeks.]

ISAIAH xxxviii. 12.

He will cut me off with pining sickness.

HEZEKIAH having recovered his health, is here reflecting upon his sick-bed thoughts. It is good to do so when God has delivered us *from our fears*, Ps. xxxiv. 4. to make us so much the more thankful.

1. Observe in general, that that which Hezekiah expected when he sickened, was to die of this sickness. It is good for us to take all occasions to think and speak of death approaching, not for frightening, but for quickening, us. We are apt to put far from us the evil day. We must be dying daily, 1 Cor. xiii. 31. but every fit of sickness is a warning, and it is good to be ready for the worst. We are apt in such a case to flatter ourselves.

2. That it is particularly expressed by God's cutting of him off with pining sickness: Cut me off, as the cloth, when the web is finished, is cut off from the loom. Our life is weaving, our days pass like the shuttle, Job vii. 6. every day brings us so much nearer our end, and then death comes and cuts off the thread. While we live we are weaving; the question is, what kind of web it is, whether it be not the spider's web, Isa. lix. 5, 6. It must all be looked over again. Think, how will this look in the piece when I must give up the account?—We read it, Cut me off with pining sickness.

DOCTRINE I. That death when it comes, cuts us off, as a flower or branch is cut off when it is in the midst of its flourishing, Job xiv. 2. as a thread is cut off, or as a criminal is cut off by the sword of justice.

1. It cuts off our days, v. 10. puts an end to them,

a full period,—time shall be no more. Whether they have been pleasant or unpleasant days, busy days or idle days, death cuts them off; there is an end of them, often in the midst of them, Job xxi. 21. when we were counting upon many years to come.

2. It cuts off our opportunities. Sabbath days and sacrament days close; harvest days for our souls are no more. It is good to improve them while we have them, for we know not how soon they may be gone.

3. It cuts off our work. It puts a period to the wickedness of the wicked, and makes them cease. Job iii. 17. It also closes the good works of the godly. Many are cut off in the beginning or midst of their usefulness, as we think; yet none of God's witnesses die till they have finished their testimony. There is no working in the grave, Eccl. ix. 10.

4. It cuts off our purposes. In that very day the thoughts perish. We are laying our projects, and death comes and overturns them all, Ps. cxlvi. 4.—his thoughts perish. It is thus with good thoughts, and also bad thoughts. We must therefore make all our purposes with a submission to God's providence, Jam. iv. 14, 15.

5. It cuts off our relations, and puts an end to them. It separates the wife from the husband, and the child from the parent. It parts those that nothing else would part; the place and family that knew us will then know us no more. It separates us from the living.

6. It cuts off all our creature comforts. Though the stream of sensitive delights run never so plentifully, death dries it up, and puts a full stop to it. What pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst, Job xxi. 21.

Use I. It concerns us all to sit loose to that from which death will remove us. Die to the world, and to every thing that is in it, 1 Cor. vii. 29. It will be hard cutting off when the affections have been ce-

tred in these things, We must not live as those that are to live here always. Expect and prepare for a cutting off. Work as those whose work must shortly cease.

2. It concerns us all to secure to ourselves something from which death will not cut us off. Death cannot cut off an interest in Christ, Rom. viii. 38, 39. It cannot deprive us of our communion with God, but will perfect and complete that. Especially secure a hope that death will not cut off, even a hope that enters into that within the veil.

DOCTRINE II. That when we or our friends are cut off by death, it is God that doth it, *He will cut me off*. Death is his servant, and acts by warrant from him. Our times are in his hand, Ps. xxxi. 15. He kills and makes alive. We are apt to impute it to this or that second cause, but it is the Lord's doing. Christ has the keys of death and the grave, Rev. i. 18. Those that cut off themselves, snatch those keys out of his hand. We must not go before we are called.

1. This should satisfy us as to our own death, that we shall not die till God cuts us off, and if he be our friend, he will be sure to order it in the best way and time; therefore if God be ours, death is ours. Our time is an appointed time. Those that belong to God, shall be cut off as the corn in its season, Job v. 26. It is not in man's power to cut off till he shall receive permission.

2. As to the death of our friends, see Job xi. 10. it is the Lord, and to murmur at it is to strive with our Maker. David was not like himself, when he was displeased because the Lord had made a breach. This quieted Job when all his children were cut off, Job i. 21.

DOCTRINE III. That some are cut off with pining sickness. Many are cut off suddenly by accidents or distempers, there are no bands in their death, Ps. lxxiii. 4. but others die by lingering diseases. There are many ways out of the world; see Job xxi. 23, 26.

1. Death by pining sickness has in it something of advantage, as it not only gives warning, but time and space to set the house and heart in order. We are commonly so unready,—even those that are habitually ready, yet actually unready,—they need time to get the loins girt, and the lamps trimmed. We cannot promise ourselves this opportunity, therefore we had need be always ready.

2. It has in it a great deal of trouble. It is a sore trial to the faith and patience, gives advantage to Satan, and weakness to the spirits. It is well we have to do with a good master in such a case, else we were undone.

3. However it be, it is of God's ordering; for not only the death itself, but all the circumstance of it, come within his counsel. It is he that *brings us* to death, Job xxx. 23, and he appoints the messenger

that shall fetch us. Diseases are his servants, Matt. viii. 8, 9.

Use 1. Were I now to speak to those that are under pining sicknesses, I should desire them to observe,—that it is no strange thing,—that it has been the lot of the best;—to set the house and heart in order,—to be patient, and let patience have its perfect work, Jam. i. 4. But one great inconvenience attending pining sickness is, that it restrains from public ordinances; this troubled Hezekiah when he was sick, Isa. xxxviii. 11, 12.

2. Do I speak to any that have been graciously recovered from pining sickness, as Hezekiah; not *cut off*, though the sentence of death was received, 2 Cor. i. 9. You have special reason to say, It is of the Lord's mercy. You were brought very low, and yet helped. Others were cut off by the like sickness, and yet you were spared. It is to try you, what you will do to get ready for the next encounter. Let not such recoveries make you secure.

3. I speak to those that are in health.

(1.) Pity and pray for those that are under pining sickness. We should weep with those that weep; thus we may do something towards the easing of their burthen. Christ had a particular concern for one that he knew had been long ill, John v. 6. Look with great compassion upon those whose afflictions have been long continued, and carefully shun all impatience.

(2.) Prepare for pining sickness, and to be cut off by it. The same afflictions abide us. Lay in a stock of evidences, of experiences, and of promises; such as Isa. xxxiii. 24. Ps. lxxiii. 26; xli. 3. 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. Take heed of doing any thing which will make a sick bed uneasy. Make sure a place in your Father's house; and then the matter is not great though the way be tedious. Heaven will make amends for all.

SERMON II.

[*Preached at the funeral of William Bolland, September 2nd, 1698.*]

Job xiv. 10.

But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

HOLY Job, now a sick man, looks upon himself as a dying man. Thoughts of death are not unseasonable when we are in health, but it is an inexcusable thoughtlessness when we are sick, to put far from us the arrests of death; and it is a blessed thing to be in such a condition, that the thoughts of death may not be a terror to us when we are sick, nor make a sick-bed uneasy to us. Our deceased friend in

his illness, fixed upon this scripture as the subject of his thoughts, and which he desired might be the subject of mine and yours this day. The text excellently illustrates a plain truth.

DOCTRINE. That man is a dying creature.

1. It is spoken of *man* twice in the text. In the original two different words are used, one meaning the strong man, and the other the weak man; for the grave is one of the places in which the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, meet together.

(1.) Man dies *though* he be (*Geber*) a mighty man. All his might will not secure him: death reaches the highest, conquers the strongest, and humbles the proudest. No man's honour is a discharge from that war, no man's strength is victory in that combat, Eccl. viii. 8. Ps. xlix. 6, &c.

(2.) Man dies *because* he is (*Adam*) a man of the earth, Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19. his original from the earth, his constitution earthy—his foundation in the dust. That which is earthy, is mouldering and crumbling. Man dies because he is the son of Adam, sinful fallen man. By Adam death came into the world, Rom. v. 12.

2. That which is here said of man is, that he is a dying creature. *Man dieth*, dies daily, some or other going off every day. Man is dying: think much of this.—Our Creator lives for ever, and cannot die; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; not subject to any change, much less to that great change. This is matter of comfort in reference to man's mortality, that God is immortal, Ps. xc. 2, 3; cii. 26. Angels die not.—Now the mortality of man is here elegantly described—*Man dieth*; that is the truth descanted upon, and is described by what happens to man.

(1.) Before death, he *wasteth away*, he is weakened, so the word is; this is the harbinger of death, to tell it is coming; nay, it helps it forward.

Even in health we are wasting away. Life is like a candle, as long as it burns it wastes away, and is hastening down to its socket. The oil of natural life is still wasting, so that man dies daily, *i. e.* he is daily going down to death, 1 Cor. xv. 31. the natural heat is still declining, so that as soon as we are born we begin to die, and in the midst of life we are in death. God has graciously provided recruits by food, but we still are wasting, our time lessening.

In old age especially we are wasting away. The strength then wastes so fast that it is no better than labour and sorrow, Ps. xc. 10. The nearer life comes to its period, the quicker is its motion. The decay in old age is very sensible; the strength wastes, the senses waste, and grow less able to perform their functions: see a description of this waste, Eccl. xii. Defer not repentance to old age.

In sickness we waste away. The waste by distempers is sometimes quicker, sometimes slower, but all diseases tend to the destruction of the frame,

they waste the beauty, waste the strength, Ps. xxxix. 11. weaken it in the way, Ps. cii. 23. How soon doth a fever or other acute distemper waste man away, and by degrees a consumption doth it.

Inference 1. See how vain man is: every man, at his best estate, wasting away from time to time.—What little reason have we to be proud, or to be confident of any thing for the future, while we are in a constant decay!

2. See how foolish they are who waste any part of that upon their lusts, which wastes so fast of itself: who hasten these decays by their intemperance, and sacrifice their lives to their lusts.

(2.) In death, *man giveth up the ghost*. It is but one word in the original—*man expires* by a sudden stroke. Some indeed are long in dying, others die suddenly, but both dying, or having wasted away, at length give up the ghost, or spirit.

At death the soul leaves the body. Man then expires, *i. e.* breathes out his last. His breath goes forth, and returns not again. Think what these bodies are, when the breath, the spirit, the soul, are gone; clods of clay. What an immediate change there is in them! how the countenance alters, the strength and motion gone! There is no way of retaining the spirit, Eccl. viii. 8.

At death, the soul returns to God who gave it.—We must then give up the spirit, *i. e.* resign it to the Father of spirits. The soul will then be required, Luke xii. 20. and whether we will or no, we must yield. We see the deserted body; but we know not the way of the departing soul. It is given up as a trust.

Inference. Give up your spirits to God now, to be sanctified, that you may with comfort give them up to him at death, Ps. xxxi. 5.

(3.) After death, *where is he?* Zech. i. 5.

1. He is not where he was; there he is seen no more; his place knows him no more, Job vii. 10. compare v. 21. Thou shalt seek me, but I shall not be. Where is he? Go into his house, and he is not there,—into his shop, and into the solemn assemblies. While he lived he was here, but now where is he? He is not where, perhaps, he was busy, and made a figure; he is not where he was useful, and could ill have been spared. Think of this in reference to the place where you now are, and let it engage you to fill it up with duty. Yet a little while, and you shall be here no more—your place will be empty.

2. He is somewhere, so some read it. *Is he not?* Yes, he is. When we die, there is not an end of us; when we cease to be here, we do not cease to be. Death is the separation of soul and body, but not the annihilation of either. Those that live like brutes surely expect to die like brutes.

3. It is a very awful consideration, to think where they are that have given up the ghost, and where we shall be when we give it up.

Think where the body is. It lies in the cold, and

ark, and silent grave—the house appointed for all, Job xxx. 23. Where is it? Why, it is with the worms, Job xvii. 13, 14. It is buried out of our sight. It is in the land of darkness. That body that was pampered, and provided for with so much care, is now a neglected carcass. Let me look into the grave, and think it will be my bed shortly.

Think where the soul is,—*where is that?*

It is gone into that world of spirits to which we are so much strangers. It is a mystery to us where it is. Destruction and death have a covering which we cannot see through. Death is an awful change, a way that we have not gone heretofore.

It is gone into an unchangeable state; it is gone into eternity. Its state of trial and probation is at an end, and it is fixed immovably in a state of recompence. After death the judgment takes place, Heb. ix. 27.

If it were a wicked, unsanctified soul, it is gone down to the congregation of the dead and damned: if a gracious, sanctified soul, it is gone into the regions of light and bliss. As Christ has showed this distribution at the last day, in the parable, Matt. xxiv. 31. so the same at death, in the parable, Luke xvi. 19, &c. Sinners' souls are required: the souls of saints are received into the bosom of Abraham, Phil. i. 23. Consider what has been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

SERMON III.

[Preached February 2nd, 1702, at the Funeral of my cousin Madocks, aged about 53.]

GENESIS xlix. 18.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

THESE dying words of aged Israel are very expressive of the dying thoughts of many an honest Israelite indeed, and may be of use to us both for our direction and comfort, that whether we live or die, we may live and die waiting for the salvation of the Lord. Good old Jacob is here making his will, leaving to his children his dying charge, and dying blessing; and in the midst of all, these words come on a little before he gathered up his feet into the bed, and gave up the ghost.

1. Some interpreters undertake to find out a connexion between these words, and what goes before. The text follows upon the blessing of *Dan*, which is double, v. 16, 17. He foresaw, and foretold, that here should be a famous judge of that tribe, viz. Samson, who should be a scourge to the enemies of Israel, and this salvation David waited for; yet looking through this to Christ, of whom Samson was a type, and to the complete salvation wrought

out by him; for Joshua did but *begin* the deliverance, Judg. xiii. 5.

2. I rather think it has no dependence upon the context. I suppose Jacob spent with speaking, and ready to faint, and die away, and with these words he recovers himself; or, if he must break off here, with these words he pours out his soul into the bosom of his God. This was like taking a cordial; this puts new life into him. A pious breathing after God is never impertinent. That may be uttered very affectionately, which doth not come in methodically. But what is the salvation dying Jacob waits for?

1. Christ, whom he had spoken of, v. 10. He saw his day at a distance, as Abraham did. The Old-Testament saints were expectants of the promised seed, waited for the dawning of that day, more than they that wait for the morning.

2. The better country, that is, the heavenly. Jacob had confessed himself a pilgrim, *ch.* xlvii. 9. and see what construction the apostle makes of that confession, Heb. xi. 13, 14.—the salvation of the soul. Though Jacob dies in a strange place, to which he was but lately removed, yet he comforts himself with the end of his faith, 1 Pet. i. 9. compare v. 10. When he is going to enjoy the salvation, he comforts himself with this, *I have waited*. This occurred to my thoughts on this occasion, when we have parted with one whom I have long known to be a humble, quiet, cheerful Christian, who bore with great evenness the affliction of her pilgrimage; the loss of a loving husband, twenty years ago; and all the cares of a sorrowful widowhood ever since; and at last the fatigues of a long weakness, quieting herself with this, *God is all-sufficient for me and mine*. Unless this had been her delight, she would have perished in her affliction, Ps. cxix. 92. She was one that waited for the salvation of the Lord.

DOCTRINE I. It is the character of a living saint to wait for the salvation of the Lord, Lam. iii. 26.

1. Christ as our way to heaven is to be waited on. Faith in him, is a waiting on him, confiding in him, relying on him, with a resolution to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. The great salvation which multitudes neglect, we must regard, being led by the conduct of the Captain of our salvation, Ps. xxvii. 14. All our expectation must be from Christ; see Ps. lxxii. 1, 5. neither is there salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. We must wait for his law: we must attend Christ as our physician, to save us from our disease; and as our advocate, to save us from the sentence of the law.

2. Heaven as our rest in Christ, is to be waited for. Eternal salvation has Christ for its author, nay, Christ himself is the matter of that happiness, John xvii. 24. Phil. i. 21, 23. It is the salvation of the Lord, Ps. l. 23; xci. 16. Heaven is salvation completed, when the saved of the Lord shall return with songs. To wait for this salvation, is,

(1.) To believe it as a real thing. Though we wait for that we see not, Rom. viii. 24. yet we believe it, Heb. xi. 1.—that God doth not deceive us in what he proposes to us: that it is a thing attainable in the way which Christianity prescribes: see 1 John v. 10. It is a great thing to believe that an immortal soul should be for ever happy in the vision and fruition of the eternal God, and that the body should rise again. We must resolve these things into the Scriptures, and the power of God.

(2.) To desire it as a valuable thing. To have the affections of the heart towards it, as that which will be a perfect freedom from all misery, and a perfect fruition of all good. Waiting supposes longing, Ps. cxxx. 6. to desire this more than any thing in this world; *loving this salvation*, Ps. lxx. 4. loving heaven better than earth, not only better than hell. This is the great evidence of grace in the soul. The Christian desires the great salvation as a deliverance from sin, and from the world. Know wherein it consists, and desire it as such. Wilt thou be made whole? thus made whole? in this way, and upon these terms?

(3.) To depend upon it as a recompence; as the husbandman depends upon the harvest for a recompence of his seed and labour, Jam. v. 7. as the servant depends upon his wages, having respect to it, Heb. xi. 26. It is worth while to do and suffer, to lose and lay out, in hope of this. Lord, this is that which I depend upon as a felicity, not upon the world, its smiles or promises, but upon heaven. In thee do I hope is a good plea, and often used, Ps. xxxi. 1. It is that upon which we are caused to hope, and that to which we would ever resort.

(4.) To tarry for it as a reversion. Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust, for a happiness in reserve and out of sight. All the time of a Christian's stay in this world is a time of expectation. He has not what he aims at, what he would have. We live by faith, 2 Cor. v. 7. The world would come in with its offers in the meanwhile: No, saith the believer, I reserve myself for something that is reserved for me; therefore I will do nothing which can lessen spiritual good in my esteem.

Use 1. Choose this salvation as your portion, fix upon it this day. Let others choose as they please, this I choose; here is Christianity begun.

2. Eye this salvation; let your affections be ever towards it. This is Christianity in the progress of it; affection in heaven, and conversation in heaven.

DOCTRINE II. It is the comfort of a dying saint thus to have hoped for the salvation of the Lord. Holy Jacob fastens upon this. Dying circumstances are usually melancholy ones, but this alters the property of them. If I have the testimony of my conscience that I have waited for the salvation of the Lord,

Then doubts of my sincerity are hereby resolved.

I have had many infirmities, but I have not taken up with the world for my portion, as I have waited for superior good. When we are to seek for evidences, this may stand us in good stead. Now, Lord, remember, (2 Kings xx. 3.) is a good appeal. I have waited for thy salvation; thou knowest my uprightness.

Distempers of body are hereby eased. Sick people are expecting what will be the issue; but if the salvation of the Lord be the great thing waited for, nothing can come amiss. They may look up to God to undertake their cause. God can help when none else can, Ps. xxvii. 13.

Disappointments in the world are hereby balanced. This I hoped, and the other I waited for, but my purposes are broken off, Job xvii. 11. but I have waited for a salvation which will not disappoint me. It will come, and it will make me amends when it comes. Heaven will more than equal present satisfactions and make up for present disappointments.

Death itself has hereby the property of it altered. The fear of death may very well be swallowed up in the hope of heaven. What hurt can death do to one that knows it is his passage to heaven?

Use 1. Be diligent to prepare for death. Make sure your title to *this salvation*; depend upon it, and lay up your treasure in it.

2. Then be desirous of it, *patiently desirous*; not to anticipate it, or complain of life, but—O that I were at rest, that I were in heaven, my home, my Father's house.

SERMON IV.

[*Preached January 13th, 1704, at the Funeral of Mr. Benjamin Club, who died the day he was twenty years old.*]

PSALM xc. 6.

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

HERE is a short account of a short life; and life at the longest is but short compared with eternity: but some lives are shorter than others, witness the grave into which we have now been looking: to such a life the text is especially applicable, though true of life in general. Man's life is measured by days even Methuselah's is so, though his years were hundreds, Gen. v. 27. and Jacob's, whose years were scores, Gen. xlvii. 9. but here it is measured but by *one day*. Such is our life; a shadow, a vapour, and here like *grass*, v. 5.—birth and death but the morning and evening of the same day.

1. Here is a hopeful morning, it *flourisheth*, looks green and pleasant, grateful to the eye, and promising to the expectation; yet still it is but the flourish-

ing of grass, which rises out of the earth, and rises into it.

2. Here is a mournful evening, *It is cut down*, set it alone, and it will quickly wither of itself, he will wither it and spoil its beauty; but here it doth not stay for that, it is *cut down*, and so *withered*.

DOCTRINE. That many are removed out of the world, when just entering into it, presently after they were settled in it. Many a life is withered by death, just when it is growing up and beginning to flourish. The distance of time between their growing up and withering, is but like that between morning and evening, Job iv. 20; vii. 21.

1. Some wither before they grow up, are crushed and plucked like a rose in the bud; they are hurried out of the world before it was taken notice of that they were in it. This might have been our case, but God has spared us.

2. Others grow long before they wither; like the rose, whose leaves are left to hang on till they drop off of themselves; whose thread is not cut off, but breaks with the weight of its own years, years in which they own they have no pleasure. The longer we grow, the longer account we shall have to make, and we must wither at last.

3. But there are some that *grow up* and *flourish*, and then wither presently; but a few hours, as it were, between their bloom and their fall.

(1.) Let us view the bright side of the cloud, and see this grass *flourishing* and *growing up*; see man in his *best estate*; suppose him to flourish, not only like the weak and tender grass, but like the green bay-tree; looking forth *as* the morning, *in* the morning.

Let us see man in the fulness of his sufficiency, grown up to bodily strength, and flourishing in that; past the common diseases of childhood, and arrived to maturity, in the full strength, Job xxi. 23. Man that in a course of nature has many years to live, that seems to have a large stock of oil in the vessel for the lamp of life to burn upon, vigorous, strong, healthful, lively, and yet withered; for death goes not either by seniority or probability.

Let us view man grown up to a settlement in the world, having formed standing relations for life, and settled in the business and employments of life. A man may have just entered into a flourishing trade, and yet be unsettled by death in a short time. The candle may be put out of a sudden, and the sun may go down at noon.

Or see man grown up to a place in Christian communion, and flourishing in it; numbered among adult believers, and bearing up the name of Christ in the world. This makes the morning hopeful more than any thing: the face set Sion-ward, and the way thither—asked with care. Those flourish most that flourish in the *courts of our God*, Ps. xcii. 13.—branches of righteousness, and plants of renown;

as none are more grievous than the degenerate plants of a strange vine.

(2.) Let us view the dark side of the cloud—this grass withering; a consideration very proper to prepare the way of the Lord, Isa. xl. 6, 7. When we are convinced of the vanity of the world, we are prepared to entertain the doctrine of the reality of unseen things, and the grace of Christ. Yet a little while and that which grew up and flourished is *cut down*, and *withered*, Ps. ciii. 15, 16.

See a flourishing life *withered* and gone, death in the midst of life; unsuspected diseases arrest the body that was healthful. We know not what seeds of sickness we carry about with us, nor how death is working in us, digging our grave like a mole unseen; a fire not blown consuming; like some that have seemed wealthy men, yet break of a sudden. Who would be proud of such bodies, or fond of them.

See flourishing comforts in such a life removed. Parents, yoke-fellows, friends, sitting down under the shadow of this flourishing life, with delight, exceeding glad of the gourd, but it perishes in a night, Jonah iv. 6, 7. We said, The same shall comfort us, Gen. v. 29. but it proves otherwise, our hopes disappointed; providence making those the grief of the middle age, that it was expected would have been the comfort of the old age. Many such things are with him; we see them daily.

Use. This is very improvable,

1. As to our relations and friends, that are near and dear.

If they flourish and grow up, let us *sit loose* to them, and to the comfort we have in them. Let us remember they do but *flourish as the grass*; and let us moderate our delight in them and lower our expectations from them, accordingly. Let them not have that share of our love, and joy, and trust, that Christ should have. Look upon them all as withering comforts at the best. That perhaps may prove least safe which is most dear, and that may grieve us most in which we promise ourselves most comfort. We are unapt scholars, if we are yet to learn the fading nature of these things.

If when they are flourishing and growing up, they be suddenly withered, we must not think it strange, as though some strange thing happened to us. See then that we be not losers in soul by our impatience under the affliction, but gainers in soul by our improvement of the affliction. Think how we have withered spiritually, and how justly God withers our comforts. It is a time to bring to remembrance, 1 Kings xvii. 18, improvable as a help to keep conscience tender, Job x. 2. I was not enough humbled under former convictions, and former rebukes. The Lord is righteous.

2. As to ourselves. If we have been long *growing*, and not yet withered, we have reason to admire God's patience, that we are not cut down. Many

are taken away in the midst of their days, and we yet spared. O despise not the riches of this forbearance, but improve it. If now flourishing and growing up, let us consult our true interests. It is morning with you, *you are strong*; learn some good lessons from this funeral. If this be so,

(1.) Be not *vain*. Let thoughts of dying make you serious now, and then death itself when it comes will not be so apt to make you melancholy. It is a serious thing to die; be serious in your thoughts of it. Let this give check to the laughter of the fool, Eccl. xi. 9. Use yourselves to serious work, and serious company, and learn to be serious.

(2.) Be not *proud*. This is a humbling consideration: You know not how soon death may come, and

change your countenances, and lay your honour in the dust. Where is thy beauty, and where thy ornaments, in the grave?

(3.) Be not *secure*. Flatter not yourselves with the expectation of a long continuance here, when you see so many withered in the midst of their growing up. Often think and speak of changes. Say not, To-morrow shall be as this day, or that your mountain stands strong, Prov. xxvii. 1. Jam. iv. 13.

(4.) Be not *dilatory* in the great business of religion. Put not off the great work, but do it now, lest death come and find it undone. This young man said to those about him on his death-bed, I have found praying hours the sweetest hours, and so will you.