

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, 5TH JANUARY, 1862,

IN

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
MONTREAL,

AFTER THE DEATH

OF

H. R. H. THE PRINCE CONSORT.

BY FRANCIS FULFORD, D.D.,
LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL, AND METROPOLITAN OF CANADA.

Montreal:

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
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In that lorn hour and desolate,
Who could endure a crown? but He,
Who singly bore the world's sad weight,
Is near to whisper, "Lean on Me :
"Thy days of toil, thy nights of care,
"Sad lonely dreams in crowded hall
"Darkest within, while pageants glare
"Around—the cross supports them all."

Christian Year.

S E R M O N .

1 Peter, 1 ch. 24, 25.—For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

These words of the Apostle are almost an exact quotation from the 40th chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet, at the command of the Lord, describes the promulgation of the Gospel and the voice of its forerunner: "All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Such is the judgment—the description given in the Scriptures. In the Wisdom of Solomon we have the same declaration respecting the fleeting nature of all that appertaineth to man in this world: and how vain it is to place any confidence in them: "What hath pride profited us, (he asks) or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by (and having further compared them to the swift passage of a ship over the waters, a bird or an arrow through the air, the traces of which are lost as soon as made) even so we in like manner (he continues) as soon as we were born began to draw to our end." * And when that comes, what have we to show?

That time passes onward is a truth we all acknowledge: and

* Ch. v. 8-13.

during the last few days, we have entered upon a fresh year of this world's account. But to realize the fulness of the important truths contained in the text, and to which I have alluded, to act as if we did believe them, to use this world as if it was indeed but a thing of time, and to receive God's word, as if obedience to it were the only lasting possession, is a lesson we are all too slow to learn—and for the attainment of which we often require to be subjected to stern and severe discipline. There are some works of men that seem, when compared with others which we see around us, and when judged after the judgment of this world, to possess so grand and enduring a character, that we are apt to claim for them, in our imagination at least, some exemption from this universal law, which the Almighty has attached to all created matter: some achievements there are, which so transcend the ordinary doings of mortal men, that we can scarcely credit the glory of them to be so frail and perishable. But, except as bearing upon human character either for good or for evil, and advancing the kingdom of Christ, and forming the will of man to the obedience of Christ, it is most true, that there is no other imperishable reality, in all we see or learn or do or suffer. They all perish with the using. It is the word of God alone, and what has been done in obedience to that word that abideth for ever. Bishop Horne (so well known from his beautiful Commentary on the book of Psalms) in a sermon preached by him nearly 100 years ago, 'On the death of the old year,' says, "That day draws on apace. For not only friends die, and years expire, and we ourselves shall do the same, but the world itself approaches to its end. It likewise must die. Once already it has suffered a watery death: it is to be destroyed a second time by fire. A celebrated author, having in his writings followed it through all its changes from the creation to the consummation, describes the eruption of this fire and the progress it is to make, with the final and utter devastation to be effected by it, when all sublunary nature shall be overwhelmed and sunk into a molten deluge. In this situation of things he stands (in imagination) over the world, as if he had been the only survivor, and pronounces its funeral oration in a strain of sublimity scarce ever equalled by mere man:—

“ Let us reflect upon this occasion, on the vanity and transient
 “ glory of this habitable world. How, by the force of one element
 “ breaking loose upon the rest, all the varieties of nature, all the
 “ works of art, all the labours of men, are reduced to nothing !
 “ All that we admired and adored before, as great and magnifi-
 “ cent, is obliterated, or vanished ; and another form and face of
 “ things, plain, simple, and everywhere the same, overspreads
 “ the whole earth. Where are now the great empires of the
 “ world, and their imperial cities ; their pillars, trophies, and
 “ monuments of glory ? Show me where they stood, read the
 “ inscription, tell me the conqueror’s name. What remains, what
 “ impressions, what difference or distinction do you discern in
 “ the mass of fire ? Rome itself, eternal Rome, the great city,
 “ the empress of the world, whose domination and superstition
 “ ancient and modern, make a large part of the history of this
 “ earth ; what is become of her now ? She laid her foundations
 “ deep, and her palaces were strong and sumptuous ; *she glorified*
 “ *herself, and lived deliciously, and said in her heart, I sit as a*
 “ *queen, and shall see no sorrow.* But her hour is come, she is
 “ wiped away from the face of the earth, and buried in everlasting
 “ oblivion. But not cities only, and the works of men’s hands—
 “ the everlasting hills, the mountains and rocks are melted as wax
 “ before the sun, and their place is nowhere to be found. Here
 “ stood the Alps, the load of the earth, that covered many coun-
 “ tries, and reached their arms from the Ocean to the Black Sea ;
 “ this huge mass of stone is softened and dissolved, as a tender
 “ cloud into rain. Here stood the African mountains, and
 “ Atlas with his top above the clouds ; there was frozen Caucasus,
 “ and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Asia ; and
 “ yonder, towards the north, stood the Riphæan hills, clothed
 “ in ice and snow. All these are vanished, dropped away as the
 “ snow upon their heads !—Great and marvellous are thy works,
 “ Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of
 “ saints !”

But, however accurate this eloquent description may be of what
 shall take place hereafter, yet when man looks around on the
 world’s surface, and sees all the earth abiding year after year in

the same stable majesty and beauty, the ready answer may be given now, as it was in the days of St. Peter, "where is the promise of His coming to judgment—for all things still continue as they were from the beginning of creation?"

And if it be so, it is because God is waiting in mercy, long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, in the sudden destruction of an ungodly world, but that all should come to repentance. He does not, however, leave himself without witness; and we may yet be taught in time the truth contained in the text, by many lessons written and proclaimed everywhere around us.

With respect to national greatness and prosperity we need not trace back the pages of history to learn, that it has no assurance of perpetuity: the passing events of each day teach us the melancholy truth, how quickly peace and prosperity may wither away. And, however mighty may be the power of any existing empires in the world, there is not any one that can venture to claim a security from the universal law: save *that* kingdom which, according to the words of the prophet Daniel, the God of heaven has set up, amidst the ruins of the monarchies that once ruled the earth, which shall never be destroyed, but shall stand for ever. (a) Let us not then be high-minded but fear.

And with respect to individuals, that *of them* it is most true, that "all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away,"—Bishop Taylor in his excellent work on "Holy Dying," tells us that in the same most sumptuous palace, 'the Escorial, where the Spanish Princes live in greatness and power, and decree war and peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery, where their ashes and their glory shall sleep till time shall be no more: and in the same place (Westminster Abbey) where our own sovereigns have been crowned, their ancestors lie interred; and they must walk over the buried dust of their forefathers to take their crown. There is a spot sown with Royal seed, the copy of the greatest change, from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to die like men.'

(a) Daniel ii. 44.

But, at the present time, we surely have no need to be taught this lesson by memorials of departed greatness in the cemetery of the Escorial, or beneath the venerable roof of Westminster Abbey. The whole empire of England is now mourning for the loss of one, who, so lately in possession of all the accidents of worldly greatness, and in the full exercise of all the high talent, with which he was endowed, has thus afforded us a most striking commentary on these words of Scripture: "All flesh is as grass: and all the glory of man as the flower of grass: The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." The husband of our Queen, the late Prince Consort, just in the prime of life, full of active energy, nobly fulfilling all the various duties of his station, has suddenly (so suddenly that we in Canada, knew not of any the least ailment till we heard of his death; and even in England it was only anticipated for less than a couple of days) has suddenly been hurried out of this world: when we might have been naturally calculating upon a long course of usefulness before him, and imagined that his allotted task, the work of his life on earth, was only just culminating to its meridian. "So inscrutable are the judgments of God; and his ways past finding out."

I shall not now attempt any detailed description of the character of the departed Prince. Called as he was at an early age to fill in England so high and responsible a position, as the husband of our Queen, it may be sufficient to say that in every way he proved himself equal to the occasion; and by his whole demeanour and life, and talents, added dignity and grace to the exalted rank which he held. The loss of so wise and prudent a statesman, so judicious an adviser of the Sovereign, one who, himself keeping aloof from all party political strife, had free access to the royal ear at all times, and who was always at hand ready to assist with his manly wisdom, and support with his vigorous aid, that imperial Crown, the reflected lustre of which rested on his own ennobled brow, this loss can scarcely yet be appreciated by the empire at large; because, devoid of all low and vulgar ambition, he never obtruded his actions on the notice of the public; but was contented, if only wise counsels prevailed, that his influence should unperceived affect the mainsprings of power; conscious

that he himself must ever be identified, in closest union, with England's glory and her greatness.

But there is another aspect in which to look upon this sad visitation: it strikes another chord, which draws forth at once a full response from the throbbing heart of every subject of the empire. Whatever might be the disturbing cares necessarily attendant upon royalty; whatever the weight with which the imperial diadem pressed upon the fair brow of our beloved Queen, it was ever the joy and the pride of all her people¹ of every creed, race or degree, that whether she was wandering with freedom among the wild glens and mountains of Scotland, enjoying the quiet seclusion of Osborne, holding her high court amid the stately halls of her ancient Palace at Windsor, or mingling in the crowded and busy scenes of her capital, yet that always and everywhere, in the inner circle of her home, her cup overflowed with the fulness of domestic love and peace. Yes, much as we may hereafter, on public and political grounds, have to lament the loss we have sustained as a nation, yet the first spontaneous outburst of grief has everywhere been called forth, by deep and true sympathy with the *widowed* Queen. In every public newspaper the same feeling is manifested; and also in every private letter, of which I have received several from different parts of England, one from the wife of a clergyman in a little country village, who says, "Nothing can be more striking, than the deep sorrow everywhere felt, and the sympathy for the Queen, even here in this remote village; all the people into whose houses I happened to go yesterday were talking of nothing else." (b)

(b) Another friend writes word, "we are all so unhappy at the Prince's death—for the poor Queen especially; they were so happy and domestic together, like private people; and he was of so much use to her in all her business. It is most deplorable; it seems to excite the same feeling in every one, as was demonstrated on the death of the Princess Charlotte. The Dean told us he was about to preach on Sunday, the 15th, at the Cathedral, on the uncertainty of life: not knowing what had occurred at Windsor the night before; when just as he was going up to the pulpit, he had a paper put into his hand from the Mayor, telling him of it. At the conclusion of his sermon he informed the con-

It is the deep prevailing love for the Queen, and the full appreciation of the magnitude of her loss, which have elicited such a universal manifestation. Most truly, she has thus had brought home to her, in her own severe trial, the vanity of all created things; and as far as we can yet learn, she has submitted to the visitation in no weak or repining spirit. To one who spoke to her of resignation, we are informed, that her Majesty replied through her tears, "I suppose I must not fret too much; many poor women have to go through the same trials." She felt then that she had no reason to expect that she should have any immunity assured to her: or that sovereigns were exempt from the sorrows and sufferings incident to human nature. For death can find an entrance as easily into the palace of the king, as into the cottage of the peasant. The sentence is passed upon all alike: "All flesh is as grass." Her noble husband, however, had been spared to her, till, by God's mercy, he had accomplished no trivial or unimportant work. He had not been merely the sharer in the pleasures or the pageants of the royal court; he had carefully employed his strong good sense and practical wisdom, in training up and forming the minds and characters of those children, with which God had blessed their marriage, and from whose future conduct so much of good or evil must result to this great empire: and in this sacred labour of love the Queen was no ineffective assistant. And one noble minded daughter, at least, was with her during all that trying time, who was old enough, and able and ready to be the ministering spirit to the dying father, and the stay and support of the weeping mother. *c* And it must have been a most deeply touching and instructive, but heroic act, when, in the first moments of her widowhood, the Sovereign of the British

gregation that the Prince was dead; and he said he never saw anything like the effect produced; some jumped up, others cried, and it had some striking effect on all."

c The London *Morning Post* tells us that "previous to the closing of the coffin containing the remains of the Prince Consort, a wreath of flowers made by the Princess Alice was placed over the corpse, and a miniature of the Queen placed by the hands."

Empire, and the mother of the deceased Prince's children, strong in the conviction of past parental duties piously fulfilled, pressing back for the time the feelings of the wife and the woman into the depths of her bereaved heart, called, as we have been told she did, "her children around her at that trying and awful moment, and, invoking a blessing on their heads, prayed that they might obtain strength and wisdom to assist her in doing her duty to them and the country over which it had pleased PROVIDENCE to place her as supreme ruler. The burden of that solemn ejaculation and counsel must have fallen on the heart of the youthful Prince, whom we so lately were rejoicing to see amongst us, and on whom, in the course of nature, will devolve the government of the kingdom, when his Royal mother's reign shall have drawn to a close. He now stands in the place of a husband to his widowed parent." But not only he—will not the whole empire, with one heart, yearn to do its best to supply her mighty loss? And shall we not all, with more earnestness and sincerity than ever, commend her in our prayers to our Heavenly Father, "the King of kings and Lord of lords, that He will be pleased to rule her heart in His faith, fear, and love; and be her defender and keeper, giving her the victory over all her enemies?" Yes! never, I believe, in the annals of her history, was there a time when the people of England were more satisfied with their political system; and never could it be said with more truth, that in affection and love, and all the finest and deepest feelings of our nature, the Queen of England may rely with confidence on her people, as her husband. They have ever been ready to rejoice with her in her joys; they are now one with her in this her deep sorrow; and will ever be one with her, whatever burden or heat of the day she may be called to bear. And happy is it for any people when such is the case! Happy is it for us here in Canada, where the country has so thriven and prospered under her beneficent rule; happy is it, in these days of perplexity, when we hear such rumours of war, and men's minds are so filled with many an anxious thought, that on this question of loyalty to our Queen and love for her person, and sympathy with her in her sorrow, there is no uncertain sound. God grant that we may never become subjected to all the stern realities of war. In itself,

war must ever involve many consequences which cannot but be contrary to the principles of humanity and the spirit of the Gospel; and will embitter, for years to come, all future relations between ourselves, and those with whom we ought to live in amity and close alliance. But the only war which now threatens to disturb us, will be on our part a war of defence, defence of our country, our altars and our homes. No war of aggression has ever for a moment been contemplated by those in authority over us. Unjust wars—wars prompted by ambition, or for the purpose of spoliation, are amongst the greatest of iniquities: “but a just and defensive war is the last and greatest appeal to the God of truth.” If this shall unhappily, from any circumstances, be ever forced upon us, I trust that there will be no craven or recreant hearts amongst us; but, that Canada will nobly respond to the call of our Queen in her hour of necessity—and commit the issue of the battle in all confidence to the Great Ruler of the World. But of this we may be certain, that if we desire peace, the best assurance that we shall be able to preserve it, is to be ever ready and prepared for the terrible alternative of war.

But does not the very mention of such events, as a possible contingency, suggest another most apposite commentary on the words of the text? Who can presume to foretell what shall be the issues of the morrow; and what assurance have we of any fixity of tenure in anything we now enjoy, whether as a nation or as individuals? Even

“The smile of home; the mutual look,
When hearts are of each other sure,”—

how soon may all be changed—as our beloved Queen has now been so painfully and unexpectedly taught—the Word of the Lord, that alone endureth for ever.

And now I will close what I have wished to say this evening, with another short passage from Bishop Taylor’s “Holy Dying,” which will perhaps furnish us with some good thoughts to carry away with us for our quiet meditation at home:

“Since we stay not here, being people but of a day’s abode, and our age is like that of a fly, and contemporary with a gourd;

we must look somewhere else for our abiding city, a place in another country to fix our mansion, whose walls and foundation is God, where we must find rest, or else be restless for ever. For whatsoever ease we can have or fancy here, is shortly to be changed into sadness or tediousness ; it goes away too soon, like the periods of our life ; or, stays too long like the sorrows of a sinner ; its own weariness, or a contrary disturbance is its load ; or it is eased by its revolution into vanity and forgetfulness ; and where either there is sorrow or an end of joy, there can be no true felicity, which because it must be had by some instrument, and in some period of our duration, we must carry up our affections to the mansions prepared for us above, where eternity is the measure, and felicity is the state, angels are the company, the Lamb is the light, and God is the portion and inheritance."

NOTE.

The following Despatch was published by command of His Excellency the Governor General for public information.

(COPY.)

Circular.

DOWNING STREET,

16th December, 1861.

MY LORD,—It is with the deepest regret that I have to communicate to you the melancholy intelligence of the death of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort.

His Royal Highness expired at Windsor Castle on the night of the 14th instant, at 10 minutes before 11 o'clock, to the inexpressible grief of Her Majesty, the Royal Family, and the Nation.

I have, &c.,

(Signed,)

NEWCASTLE.

Governor,

THE VISCOUNT MONCK,

&c., &c., &c.

Upon the melancholy occasion of the death of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, His Excellency the Governor General expects all persons will put themselves into decent mourning.

By Command,

DENIS GODLEY,
Civil Secretary.

The Cathedral and the other Anglican Churches were all hung with black, as were most of the others in the city, on Sunday 5th January, and reference was generally made in the sermons to the sad bereavement which has so suddenly afflicted Her Majesty and the empire at large.