

**A MEMORIAL ADDRESS READ AT THE
FUNERAL OF JOHN ANGIER SHAW,
IN THE MEETING HOUSE OF THE FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN
BRIDGEWATER, OCTOBER 8, 1873**

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A Memorial Address Read at the Funeral of John Angier Shaw, in the Meeting House of the First Congregational Society in Bridgewater, October 8, 1873 by Richard M. Hodges

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RICHARD M. HODGES

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Commemorative

OF

JOHN ANGIER SHAW.

*Stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus
Omnibus est vita; sed famam extendere factis,
Hoc virtutis opus.*

VIRGIL.



A

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

READ AT THE FUNERAL OF

JOHN ANGIER SHAW,

IN THE MEETING HOUSE OF THE

First Congregational Society in Bridgewater,

OCTOBER 8, 1873.

BY

Hannino
RICHARD M. HODGES.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

z CAMBRIDGE:

PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

1874.

FUNERAL ADDRESS.

IN the circumstances under which we are now assembled, Christian friends, it is not in my heart to solicit your indulgence. Ah! it is not I who speak. It is God; it is Providence; it is the gentle Spirit of grace, — your own best affections, if you will but listen to their most tender accents, — each and all of them have a distinct and emphatic voice, here and now, in the presence of these emblems of death and the grave.

“While Thee I seek, protecting Power,
Be my vain wishes stilled;
And may this consecrated hour
With better hopes be filled.”

It is no new occasion that excites our

deepest sympathies. Often have they been greatly moved before. Life is in the appointment of God. Death is in the appointment of God. The presence of a wise Providence is seen in them both. But in proportion to the purity and culture of our affections is the effect of them more or less forcibly felt by us. The blossom of infant life, that is just expanding and creating hopes of growth and maturity, gives to the mind and heart of a thoughtful and true parent emotions of a grateful nature, such as are only experienced by those who sustain a similar relationship. And when the grave is opened to receive the venerable form of one who was entitled to our love and rightly deserved our respect, it is impossible but that our sensibilities should be tenderly touched, for so we are graciously constituted. Jesus, our great Exemplar, wept at the grave of Lazarus. Still, life and death

are alike in charge and at the disposal of the Supreme Arbiter of all events. God is equally wise and good in giving and in taking away. He is unchangeable in all his attributes, and perfect in his administration. On this thought alone can the prayer of resignation rest, "Thy will be done."

Sudden death, viewed in the light of divine Providence, is certainly not to be deprecated. Death, when it cuts down in a moment the thoughtless, the worldly-minded, the undutiful child of mortality, may well, and does indeed, in accordance with the admonitions of both natural and revealed religion, excite emotions directly opposite to those that we experience at the unlooked-for departure of the true, the faithful, the God-loving, and the man-loving friend of our hearts and brother of our humanity.

Were it to be left to our choice, however, — might we be permitted reverently to in-

dulge such a thought, — there are reasons, seemingly meeting with the sanction of our limited apprehension, which would cause us to prefer that a season of calm and submissive sensibility should be granted us previous to the moment of dissolution. How many the words of warning and of counsel, of encouragement and of hope, that have proceeded from the lips of dying loved ones, and which are treasured up in fond hearts! These precious words, it cannot be doubted, in the interposition of the Holy Spirit, are blessed to the elevation, the purification, the sanctification of many a soul in the kingdom of heaven. It is this experience in the dim light of the death-chamber that makes sacred the memory of many a Christian parent, and illumines recollections that might otherwise, in the weakness of human nature, be enveloped in darkness, and attended with oppressive influences sadly impeding the onward