

**SERMON PREACHED IN
THE WHITEFIELD
CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT,
AND OTHER PAPERS**

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Sermon Preached in the Whitefield Church, Newburyport, and other papers by S. J. Spalding

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S. J. SPALDING

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FRANCIS DANE.



Francis Dane

SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE WHITEFIELD CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT, *Mass.*

BY

REV. S^r J. SPALDING, D. D.,

AUGUST 8, 1875.

AND OTHER PAPERS,

IN MEMORY OF FRANCIS DANE.

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SERMON.

"Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."— James 1, 10.

We are admonished daily of the great uncertainty of everything pertaining to our outward material life. Life itself is uncertain, our health is uncertain, our physical comforts, our opportunities for the enjoyment of friends and associates are uncertain, our property is uncertain, — in fine, all that belongs to us and constitutes the surroundings of our spiritual being is changeable and transient.

My own mind was deeply impressed with this fact the past week while attending the funeral services of a merchant of Boston, whose birth and early business life were in this county, and whose summer residence of late years has been in his native town. Among merchants he was accounted a very successful man, and he had accumulated a large

property. Having a great love for rural life, he purchased, some years since, the old homestead of his family, to which, from time to time, he had made important additions. This constituted his farm, which, under his wise care and direction, ranked among the best cultivated farms in Essex County. His dwelling-house was capacious and substantial, but his barns and other buildings were the special objects of his interest and satisfaction. His herds of cattle, his flocks of sheep, his horses, and all his domestic animals were selected from the most improved breeds, and cared for with faithful attention. His implements of husbandry were of the most thorough construction, and of the latest invention. The walls enclosing his fields were evidently built to last for generations. The road which passed his farm was a model of road-making, and indicated, like everything else about his place, the thoroughness of his character.

A few days since the owner of this splendid estate was suddenly struck down by paralysis, and after a brief period of unconsciousness, he passed from earth.

At his burial his house and grounds were thronged by friends and acquaintances. They came not only from his native town and from his place of business,

but from all parts of the county and from many miles away. And it was no formal service which this crowd rendered, nor was it called together by any promise of novelty or display. It was only a quiet country funeral, and in its details just such as the deceased himself would have chosen, marked only by its subdued stillness and the universal expression of deep sorrow.

A sudden death is always impressive; but it was not this fact which drew together that large and sympathetic multitude. So we may well inquire what there was in the life and character of the man who was so much respected by his acquaintances, and so sincerely mourned by his friends. Archbishop Tiltonson has said, "To commend those excellent persons the virtues of whose lives have been bright and exemplary is not only a piece of justice due the dead, but an act of great charity to the living, setting a pattern of well-doing before our eyes, very apt and powerful to incite and encourage us to go and do likewise."

Francis Dane was born in Hamilton, Mass., Aug. 6, 1819, and was the son of John and Fanny (Quarles) Dane. His father died June 6, 1829, leaving a family of ten children, — six boys and four girls. The estate of his father, which was a

farm of about eighty-five or a hundred acres, when divided, after paying all demands, gave to each of the children \$429.00. Mrs. Dane bought out the heirs and retained the farm, with which, and the income of a small store, she brought up her large family. She was a woman of much more than ordinary executive ability and thrift, and it was from her Francis inherited some of those special qualities which fitted him for the successful merchant.

He tried various kinds of labor; he worked for one or two seasons on a farm, he tried the trade of a mason, but nothing which he attempted seemed to furnish the proper opening for his abilities. At last his mother, about the year 1834, gave him four five-dollar bills with which he was to go to Danvers, now Peabody, and purchase leather to be made into shoes and sold. This was the beginning of his career as a shoe manufacturer and merchant, and was the narrow gate through which he was to pass on to success. The results of his first venture were sold in New Hampshire for cash or notes, which his mother, who it seems was his banker, kindly discounted for him, and thus he went on in the business.

It was at this time that he met with John Osborn, Esq., who, in some remarks before the New England