

approaches to every one of us. But O how dreadful to have no shelter then! He that has lived without God, without Christ, without hope in the world, will be in a situation more deplorable than language can express, in that day of trouble and consternation. What will you, O thoughtless sinner, do in the day of visitation? where will you flee? where will you leave your glory? But the Lord to his people is a strong hold, even in this extremity of nature. An Old Testament saint could say, 'My heart and my strength faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Need we then to wonder at the holy composure and confidence with which a Christian is enabled to contemplate the same scenes, in the believing views of that Jesus who is the resurrection and the life, and who, having abolished death, hath brought life and immortality by the Gospel:

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide—
O receive my soul at last."

The triumphant language of an Apostle expressive of his own sentiments, and those of his fellow-Christians, is the best comment and illustration of this part of our text: 'The Lord is a strong hold in the day of trouble.' He says, with holy confidence, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God—an house not made with hands.' 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'—'Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Finally, The *day of judgment* will be a day of

trouble; such a day as was never yet known. The Lord Jesus himself will descend from heaven in flaming fire; 'the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat.' Every eye shall see him, and all nations shall wail because of him.' The great day of wrath will then be come, and who shall be able to stand? Who but he who has been enabled to flee to the Lord as his strong hold. Mountains, rocks, and hills, will then afford no shelter. But they who love and wait for the appearance of Christ, will be screened, protected, owned, acquitted.—They will have the smile of approbation from the great Judge: 'Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'

Such are the days of trouble, which God's people know, and such is the protection which they shall experience.

But we must not forget to notice, in a more particular manner, the figurative, metaphorical language of the text, which is very striking: a strong hold is a *place of defence and safety in danger*. Here they who fly for protection are furnished with armour; here they have stores of provisions; they have every advantage against an assailing enemy; here they encourage and comfort one another; for till the strong hold be demolished, none can hurt those who are within—they are safe as long as that stands. Now all these particulars may be applied here. The Lord is the rock and refuge of his people. 'Salvation is appointed to them for walls and bulwarks;' their place of defence is the munition of rocks; they have a fulness of provision—'bread shall

be given them, their water shall be sure;’ here they are furnished with armour of proof, the whole armour of God: the helmet of hope, the breastplate of righteousness, the girdle of truth, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and, above all, the shield of faith, whereby they may quench the fiery darts of the enemy. Here they have great advantage against the enemy. The saints are safe so long as this refuge stands. He that would overcome THEM must first break down the strong hold. While that stands they are safe, being kept by the *power of God*, through faith, unto salvation.

III. *The Lord knoweth them that trust in him.*

The former idea of God’s being our *strong tower* implies a *betaking* ourselves to him: and an important observation here presents itself, namely, that a strong tower is nothing to us, unless we fly to it for safety. It affords protection to none but those who are in it.—This is highly necessary to be attended to. Hence the Apostle speaks of ‘*flying for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.*’—So of old the manslayer was not safe from the avenger of blood till he got within the city of refuge.—He who is safe through our Lord Jesus Christ must be *personally interested* in him. This clause of the text therefore is very important. ‘He knoweth them that trust in him.’ Two things are here observable.

1. Their *trust* in the Lord, a term very often used in the Holy Scriptures. This trust is so intimately connected with faith in the Divine Word, that it seems inseparable from it. Hence the Apostle Paul says, ‘In whom ye also trusted after that ye believed.’ *Trust in the Lord* denotes a clear discovery of the insufficiency of every other defence; they who trust in

him no longer go about to establish their own righteousness. It has *cost* them much to be brought off from every legal ground of hope; but they now 'willingly suffer the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that they may win Christ, and be found in him.' This *trust in Christ* arises from a spiritual and Scriptural knowledge of him.

2. He *knows* them that trust in him. He knows them so as to distinguish them from all others, and so as to *approve* of them. 'The Lord knows them that are his.' 'Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again.' He takes care of them in all times of danger, trouble, and distress; he *knows* them in adversity, as well as in prosperity, in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment. 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord, when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' Thus we see the truth of what is here asserted confirmed by every part of Scripture. 'The Lord *knoweth* them that *trust* in him.' Let us close with a word or two by way of use.

1st. How deplorable is their case who have not the Lord for their refuge! They are exposed to the greatest danger, from sin, from the curse of God, and his law, and from their being exposed to his eternal displeasure, without any refuge to fly to. O sinners! that you did but know your danger: 'How shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation?'

2dly. Let us learn to betake ourselves to the 'strong hold;' security is only to be found there. This refuge should be particularly fled to in the time of trouble.

We are encouraged to trust in the Lord *at all times*; and happy, thrice happy, they who are enabled to devote their youth, and the vigour of their days, to the service of God; he will not forsake them when old and grey headed; in public trouble, domestic calamities, soul troubles, and all the disquietudes they may feel from *outward* temptation, and the power of *indwelling* sin; in the day of personal affliction, and in the hour of death, he will not leave them destitute, 'he will be a wall of fire about them, and the glory in the midst of them.'

3dly. How safe then are they who are in that strong hold referred to in the text: 'The Lord is good, he is a strong hold in the day of trouble, he knoweth them that trust in him.' 'Who shall separate them from the love of Christ—shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or peril, or sword? nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.'

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, 'be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

THE
IMPORTANT JOURNEY
FROM
THIS WORLD TO THE NEXT;
CONSIDERED IN
A SERMON

Delivered at an Association at Bradford, in Yorkshire,

JUNE 13, 1810,

BY JOHN FAWCETT, D.D.

When a few years are come, I shall go the way whence
I shall not return.—Jon.

THE
IMPORTANT JOURNEY

FROM

THIS WORLD TO THE NEXT.

JOSHUA XXIII. 14:

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth.

JOSHUA was now an old man; and as he felt in himself the decays of nature, he reminded the people of his charge concerning it, and took his leave of them in a farewell address, assuring them that he could not be much longer with them as their teacher and governor. The Apostle Peter speaks much in the same manner, 2 Pet. i. 13, 14: 'I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.' As if he had said, I must soon be dismissed from my present state of service, and therefore I would stir up your minds by way of remembrance, that you may be quickened in preparation to quit this world, and to enter into the joy of your Lord. We have another instance somewhat similar in the Apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6: 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of

my departure is at hand.' Death is dreaded by many as a most terrible event; but these holy men were enabled to contemplate it with tranquillity and composure. They all considered it in the same point of light, as the finishing of their course of activity here, and as taking a journey into the other world,—the heavenly country. And, my honoured friends, since you will not excuse me from addressing you at this time, I now stand up before you, though it is not with the full approbation of my own mind; because I am conscious of my many infirmities, and find my spirits very much broken, by the loss of one who has long been dear to me. I have chosen a subject somewhat congenial to my own circumstances and feelings, and through Divine assistance, would suggest a few hints unto you as a dying man. 'I am this day going the way of all the earth.' This plain observation arises from the words, that *to die is to go a journey to the other world*. We shall endeavour to consider the subject in this light.

1. When a good man contemplates death as a journey, several pleasing ideas present themselves to his mind.

We often think of a journey with pleasure, and anticipate the enjoyment long beforehand. So a man of elevated piety, and a heavenly temper, at some seasons rejoices in hope of the glory of God, or in expectation of being brought into his presence.

Perhaps there is nothing more pleasing in the prospect of a journey than the hope of having an interview with those valuable friends to whom our hearts are united, and from whom we have been long separated. This is applicable to the journey of which we are now going to speak. Many are now gone to the celestial

country, whose departure from life we have deeply and sincerely lamented. But the hope of meeting them again to part no more, affords peculiar pleasure. On earth we lived with them in harmony and love; but this was but a shadow of what we shall then enjoy, in the regions of immortality and unfading felicity. We were enabled to live together as heirs of the grace of life, but then we shall be advanced to the summit of celestial glory. We prayed, we wept, we rejoiced with one another upon earth. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God as friends. We loved one another sincerely; but then our affection will be refined and exalted to the highest degree. Our mutual prayers will be answered, and our felicity will be complete, in the everlasting enjoyment of God, and of one another. The parting stroke was painful, but we shall then be happily united again, where there will be no more death, and where the fear of separation can have no place.

There we shall see a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Men of all ranks and degrees; from the east and the west, the north and the south; from the populous city, and from the solitary desert. The heavenly country already abounds with inhabitants, and innumerable multitudes more are still hastening to it. Nor will this blessed assembly ever break up, but continue through everlasting ages. The children of God who have lived in different periods of time, are there assembled together, and without doubt, have that knowledge of one another which will be productive of mutual satisfaction and delight. How must the Christian rejoice in the prospect of being introduced into the society

of the best and holiest of men that ever existed since the world began ! He will there hold familiar converse with the first parents of mankind ; with Enoch who walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death ; with Noah, the founder of a new world, who was an upright man, and perfect in his generation ; with Abraham the Father of the faithful ; with Jacob, who as a prince had power with God, and prevailed ; with Joseph, more glorious than when he shone in all the splendour of the Egyptian court. He will there see Moses, the Jewish law-giver, the meekest of men, who, while on earth, conversed with God face to face ; and Aaron, the saint of the Lord. He will be introduced into the company of Job, renowned for his patience in tribulation ; of Elijah, who was zealous for the Lord of hosts, and was caught up to heaven in a fiery chariot ; of the seraphic prophet Isaiah, who saw the Redeemer's glory, and spake of him with so much clearness and energy, many hundred years before he made his appearance on earth. He will be the companion of David, the man after God's own heart, the sweet psalmist of Israel, whose compositions have often elevated his soul to heaven. He will be in the society of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, and hear from them a full explanation of those sublime passages in their writings which he could hardly understand on earth. John, who leaned on the Saviour's bosom, will clearly unfold his mysterious visions ; and blessed Paul lay open more at large the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is surely worth while to go a long journey to be introduced into such society as this.

The believer will see those saints above in their own glorious forms, see them made perfect in knowledge and

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holiness, and fully refined from all the dregs of impurity, and disorderly passions. He will see them in no more danger of giving and taking offence. He will see Paul and Barnabas perfectly satisfied with each other. Discord will have no place there, nor any resentment ever rise. No jarring string will ever interrupt the melody of the celestial regions. Calvin and Luther, Melancthon and Zuinglius, Whitefield and Wesley, Conformists and Non-conformists, will there entirely accord. They will then see eye to eye; they will, in the fullest sense of the words, 'all speak the same things, and be perfectly joined together, of the same mind, and of the same judgment.'

The believer will there see that minister whose labours, through grace, have been savingly beneficial to his soul; and he will have the happiness of seeing and of thanking those excellent men whose writings have contributed so much to his instruction and edification in this world.*

But after all that can be said about the pleasures which the Christian expects from society, at the end of his journey, it is necessary to observe, that it is the presence of the Lord of glory that makes this society so delightful. We talk of being introduced into the company of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles, martyrs,

* I beg leave to say, that I do not know of any individual to whom the church of Christ in modern times is more indebted, under God, than to the excellent Dr. Watts, whose Psalms and Hymns are so wonderfully calculated to aid our devotions, both in public and private. Christians of various denominations, and thousands of religious assemblies, make melody in their hearts to the Lord, in singing his divine compositions. They never tire us in the perusal; but the more they are known the more they are admired. What an honour has God conferred upon the author!

and confessors, with all the glorious angels of light; but to be with Jesus is more than all the rest. Many have languished to behold him, and been willing to die for the sight; languished to see the King in his beauty, and to be in his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand where there are pleasures for evermore. The Apostle Paul longed to go the journey we speak of, for this very end. 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better' than any thing else that can be mentioned: Phil. i. 23. The words in the original are so very emphatical, that it is difficult to translate them literally. The Apostle seems to labour for expression here, as much as in any part of his writings. 'It is better beyond all comparison.' The sight of him is indeed well worth dying for. David's language resembles that of Paul: 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' Psal. xlii. 2. But farther,

When we have a journey in view, we please ourselves with the hope of seeing the beautiful face of nature. At some seasons of the year, especially in the spring, every part of creation is decorated with attractive charms. Fruitful meadows, covered with flocks and herds, flowery lawns, majestic woods and forests, spacious valleys, lofty hills and mountains, rocks and precipices, purling streams, flowing brooks and spacious rivers, charm the eye, and inspire the heart with vernal delight and joy. It might seem as if the bountiful Creator had adorned the surface of the earth with this profusion of beauties, on purpose to give us pleasure in beholding them, and to excite in us the sentiments and sensations of wonder, gratitude, and love. The prospect of a journey is highly pleasing, because we hope to have our senses

gratified with the sight of these objects. There are other scenes with the view of which we hope to be indulged in a journey. Peaceful cottages, splendid villas, flourishing towns, and wealthy cities, afford a rich variety of entertainment to him that travels. But none of these things will bear any comparison with the beauties and glories of that celestial country to which the Christian is journeying. It was typically represented by the land flowing with milk and honey, of which Moses had a pleasing view before his death.

“ Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dress’d in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood
While Jordan roll’d between.”

Who can attempt to describe that garden of delights, the Paradise of God, in which our first parents were placed before the fall? All the beauties and blessings of creation were united there. It was a type of heaven, that blessed place to which the Christian is journeying. This is often called Paradise ; but no doubt it excels the earthly one as far as heaven is higher than the earth. Do we talk of being pleased with the sight of villas, towns, and cities.—What are these in comparison with those heavenly mansions of which God himself is the architect? What is the finest and fairest city in the world, when compared with the heavenly Jerusalem? Its gates are pearls, its foundations precious stones, and its streets are paved with gold ; the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. “ Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God ! ”

Thus when a good man contemplates death as a

journey, many pleasing ideas present themselves to his mind.

2. This is a journey which may be near at hand. 'I am *this day* going the way of all the earth.' For any thing we know, the journey may be just before us; there may be but a step between us and death. We have perpetual admonitions respecting the shortness and uncertainty of life. The Word and the ministers of God unitedly call our attention to those subjects, and we ought earnestly to pray that the Lord would teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. 'Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days what it is, that I may know how frail I am.' Our days are but a span, a hand-breadth, an inch or two of time. Life is but a vapour that appears for a little season, and vanisheth away. It is but like a flower of the field, which quickly fades, withers, and dies away. Our breath is in our nostrils, ever ready to depart, and any motion of our lungs may be the last. What numbers do we hear of who are cut off by sudden death! Many are called to set out on this journey at a moment's warning. The messenger comes, and they must go, whether they be prepared or not. Ready or unready, the summons must be obeyed. Whether they be busy or indolent, active or negligent, they must immediately set out on this important journey. The call is often given at an unexpected moment. While the man is vainly dreaming of years of felicity on earth, God says unto him, 'Thou infatuated mortal, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.' Thus the words of inspiration are verified: 'In an hour when ye think not the Son of man cometh.' The living know that they must die. All men are sensible that they

must go this journey sooner or later; but the general part of mankind consider it as at a considerable distance. This is a fatal source of security, forgetfulness of God, and neglect of the great salvation. When the Holy Spirit awakens you to a sense of your sinful and miserable condition, he will set death, judgment, and eternity, before your eyes. He will remind you, that you should not boast of to-morrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth. Hence he is said to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. O that every one in this assembly may leave the house of God under a deep conviction, that the journey he has to go may be very near. Then he will begin to be seriously attentive to everlasting things, and will no longer sit idle in the market-place, no longer trifle with God, and with the eternal interests of his own soul.

3. This is a journey which we cannot avoid. It is the 'way of all the earth.' Those who forget God, and live wickedly, must go this journey. If they are unwilling to set out in it, they must be driven away. 'The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.' Some journeys may be put off to a future time. They may be deferred for a day, a week, or even a year. But this is not the case with the journey to the other world. Thousands could wish to defer it, at least for a little while, if it were in their power. Could they bribe the messenger who is sent to call them away, by the largest gifts they have it in their power to bestow, it would be done. They are eagerly attached to present objects, and unwilling to leave them. They have their portion in this life; they have looked for nothing better than that which this world can give. It is no wonder, there-

fore, that they are unwilling to relinquish all that which they have loved, desired, and sought above every thing else. 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' Hence they are so earnestly and eagerly desirous of living a little longer. But their wishes are vain and unprofitable. They are conscious that they are unready for the journey, and they dread the consequences. Hence death is to them the king of terrors, more to be feared than any thing else. But he is a messenger that will not be denied, an enemy that cannot be resisted. All the earth must yield to him. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the prince on the throne, and the beggar on the dunghill; all must go the journey of death; whether willing or unwilling; whether full of hope or sunk in despair; whether elevated with the joy of faith, or distracted with the terrors of approaching destruction. In some journeys a man may engage a servant or a friend to go in his room; but this is a case inadmissible here; for no one can engage another to go the journey for him. It is so absolutely impossible, that no one ever thinks of proposing it to his servant, his friend, or relation. Nor can any one in this respect 'redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him, that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption:' Psalm xlix. 7, 9. The veracity of the Divine Word is demonstrated in millions of instances: 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' You cannot say that proper warning has not been given you; since every instance of mortality with which you are acquainted has this voice in it: 'Prepare to meet thy God.' This warning is felt in the ties of friendship when broken; it may be seen in the widow's tears, and heard in the cries of orphans. Graves are

opened around us to devour their prey, and multitudes are lodged in them, of every age, rank, and degree. 'Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.' You cannot avoid the journey.

4. It is of great importance to be prepared for this journey.

When a journey of consequence is before us, a great deal of thought and care are employed, and much time spent in making preparation for it. But though to be properly meetened and prepared for the journey of death is the greatest of all concerns, few, alas! are attentive to it as they ought to be. The Redeemer of our souls most solemnly addresses us all upon this subject, Luke xii. 40: 'Be ye therefore ready also, for in an hour when ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.' The Colossians were made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And the Apostle gave thanks to God for this blessing, on their account, Col. i. 12. They were ready for the journey, whenever the signal was given. The Corinthians were in the like happy state, and he that 'had wrought them to the self-same thing was God:' 2 Cor. v. 5. A very weighty question hence arises: What is the true, the best preparation for the journey of death? I answer in a few words; a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The voice of the gospel every where is, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.' The complete atonement of Christ, received and trusted in, is that which disarms death of his sting, which silences the thunders of the law, and brings us to the enjoyment of peace and reconciliation with God. Hence the apostle Paul tells us what was the prevailing desire of his heart, Phil. ii. 8: 'That I

may win Christ, and be found in him; not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Jesus Christ; the righteousness of God by faith.' I would meet death at my Saviour's side, who has abolished it, and brought life and immortality to light. Or, like Simeon, I would meet death with the Saviour in my arms, the arms of faith. Then I would say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' I dare thus venture on the awful journey. The valley of the shadow of death is dark and gloomy; there are a thousand terrors there; but I would say, 'Lord, I fear no evil here, for thou art with me.' Psalm xxiii. 4. Hence said the apostle Paul, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day.' 2 Tim. i. 12. Being interested in Jesus Christ by faith, death is ours, it is a part of our patrimony; so that to die is gain. Whatever makes this journey an object of terror and dread, a lively faith in Jesus Christ removes it, and takes it away.

"Death's terror is the mountain faith removes;

'Tis faith disarms destruction;

Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb."

Sin is the sting of death; it is that which gives it all its destroying power; it is that which makes us afraid to go this journey; it raises a thousand terrors in the mind. But he that believes in Jesus, beholds him as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, or puts it away by the sacrifice of himself. Hence the believer triumphantly cries, 'O death, where is thy sting?' It is drawn, it is gone, and thou art become harmless. 'Thanks be to God, which

giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ : ' 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57. A sense of the want of a proper righteousness wherein to appear before the bar of God will make us fear to die. But the believer can say, ' Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' ' He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' A consciousness of impurity makes death formidable ; since ' without holiness no man shall see the Lord : ' but the heart is purified by faith in that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin. A lively faith sanctifies the mind, by leading it to the fountain set open for sin and uncleanness.—A prospect of the judgment to come makes a man dread to enter on the journey of death ; since after death comes the judgment. But the believer in Jesus knows that the Judge is his friend and Saviour, and as such he loves and longs for his appearing. For ' there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' The Judge will say to them, ' Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'—The fear of the Divine displeasure makes men shudder at the thoughts of death. But the believer beholds his reconciled face in Christ ; and says, ' Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' The gloominess of the grave makes some men afraid to die. It is indeed a dwelling of darkness and corruption. But he that has said, ' O death, I will be thy plagues,' has also said, ' O grave, I will be thy destruction.' Let his own precious and animating words never be forgotten, John xi. 25, 26 : ' I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never

die: believest thou this?' Yea, Lord, we believe it: 'Thou shalt change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto thy own glorious body, according to the working whereby thou art able to subdue all things unto thyself.' In short, faith is connected with that love to God, without which no man is prepared to die, or fit to go to heaven. Can you suppose that any man will be admitted into the regions of immortal love and purity, whose mind is alienated from God, and full of enmity against him? To imagine this would be to dream of impossibilities; the kingdom was prepared for them that love God, and for none else: Jam. i. 12. But then, love to him is the certain attendant of faith in his name; for 'faith worketh by love.' Faith is also productive of that deadness to the world which is necessary as a meetness for heaven. 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' My brethren, you cannot go this journey safely, unless you are thus prepared. Above all things be attentive to this, for nothing can be of equal importance with it.

Let me then address every individual in this large assembly, and beseech you to be seriously attentive to the things which belong to your peace. You know that you must go this journey, but are you prepared for it? The message of God to Hezekiah was, 'Set thine house in order, for thou must die, and not live.' You must soon leave all the pleasures, endearments, and advantages of your present state, and launch forth into an unknown eternity. Let it be the uppermost concern of your minds to be found in a state of happy preparation for the journey.

5. This journey is to be taken but once. 'It is ap-

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pointed unto men once to die.' The body indeed will be raised again, at the resurrection of the just it will return to life. But then, he that goes the journey of death never returns to this world again: his place shall know him no more. He returns not to the same condition, to the same work, to the same sufferings, the same weaknesses and sorrows: Job. x. 20: 'Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return.' This holy man kept in mind the idea of the journey which we are now representing, and profited by it: Job xvi. 22: 'When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.' Thousands are going this journey every day, of all ages, of all ranks, and of all conditions; but no one of them returns again to tell us what he has met with, or where he has been. Brethren, we ourselves must soon visit that undiscovered country, from the confines of which no traveller returns. For,

6. This journey is to an everlasting dwelling. It is a journey to heaven, if we be the children of God, to the regions of immortal light and felicity; to 'an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' But if we are the children of the wicked one, it is a journey to hell; to the abodes of darkness, horror, and black despair, 'prepared for the devil and his angels.' The broad way of self-indulgence, folly, and wickedness, most certainly leadeth to destruction. At death our state is unalterably fixed, fixed for ever. There is no repentance in the grave, nor are pardons dispensed to the dead. 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' Matt. xxv. 46. This will be the sentence of the great Judge of quick and dead; a sen-

tence which we must all shortly hear. Can we conceive any thing more dreadful than the doom of a dying sinner? To be driven from the presence of Christ as accursed, and to be consigned over to everlasting misery, who can, for one moment, bear the thought! If a man knows himself to be in danger of this, in danger every hour, every moment, should he not eagerly and earnestly cry out, 'What must I do to be saved?' O Lord, make speed to save me; make haste to help me; lest I be like them that go down into the pit.

O, what an awful journey is that which we have before us! A journey to eternity! A journey which will bring us where we must be, not for an age only, but for millions of ages; more millions of ages than there are sands on the sea shore; more millions of ages than there are piles of grass on the surface of the earth; more millions of ages than there are atoms in the universe! If we are uncertain what the end of this journey will be, with respect to ourselves, how can we be at rest about it? Let the negligent professor bestir himself without delay, and 'give diligence to make his calling and election sure.' Since the journey is of such importance, and for so long a stay, surely it is needful to know where you are going: especially since the knowledge of this is an attainable privilege. 'We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: ' 2 Cor. v. 1. O remember, remember, my dear fellow-creatures, the journey you have to take, is a journey to eternity. No journey can bear any comparison with this, in respect to importance. It ends in eternal joy or everlasting woe; in consummate felicity, or in unutterable and unceasing an-

guish. ‘O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!’ Hear, that your souls may live.

7. The expectation of this journey should loosen our hearts from earthly things.

What is this world to us, or all that it contains? We are going a journey to another world, and the time of our departure is at hand. Why should we cleave to that which we are just going to leave, and to leave for ever? ‘Arise, and depart; this is not your rest,’ your abiding place, ‘because it is polluted,’ and will shortly fall a sacrifice to devouring flames. ‘You have here no continuing city,’ and therefore should be seeking one that is to come; ‘a city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.’ This is not your home; you should consider yourselves as strangers and pilgrims, travelling towards the heavenly country. On due reflection, it must appear a great impropriety to be eagerly attached to the vain objects around us, in the present world. Naked we came into it, and naked we must depart out of it, without the possibility of taking any thing along with us, when we go our journey. “We brought nothing in this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out; therefore, having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” Whatever we have in this world, be it more or less, it will presently be no longer ours. Be it silver, or gold, house or land, pleasant gardens, or growing plantations, they will presently be left to successors.—We have acquired them, but we scarcely know who shall gather or possess them: much less do we know what use shall be made of them when we are gone. The consideration of the journey which is before us, should check our eager pursuit of such uncertain enjoyments, and prevent us from

setting our hearts upon them. We have concerns upon hand of infinitely greater importance. We have possessions in prospect, as far surpassing what this world can afford, as heaven is higher than the earth. Be dead our hearts to all below, and may our affection be set on things above, and our conversation be in heaven, that better country to which we are going, and where we hope to dwell for ever.

“At thought of this, each sublunary wish

Lets go her eager grasp, and quits the world.”

So it certainly ought to be.

8. Lastly, the prospect of this journey should moderate our sorrow under present afflictions.

What though we have many and severe trials in the course of our pilgrimage here, we are going to leave them all, and to give our enemies the slip for ever. ‘And our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ We have just reason to ‘reckon, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed’ in us, if we are the disciples of Jesus.

Are we deprived of our dear pious relatives and friends? Let us remember, that we too are ‘going the way of all the earth.’ We shall so soon follow them, that it is scarcely worth while to take our leave, or to bid them farewell. Yet we feel the parting stroke to be a severe trial. The death-bed of those whom we dearly and tenderly love is the most interesting scene with which we are acquainted in this world. All that was excellent and amiable in the departing character,

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rises to the recollection with thrilling energy. The solemnity of that point of time which closes mortal life, and opens upon an untried eternity; and that point once passed, the consideration of the sure and eternal blessedness of those that die in the Lord, for ever released from all pains of body and mind, is affecting beyond what language can describe. We seem then indeed to feel that this world is a land of shadows. That

"All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond is substance;
How solid all where change shall be no more!"

A few more intervening days, and we also shall stand on the verge of time. May Divine grace enable us to cast the anchor of faith and hope firm on the Rock of ages, and though the storm may be severe, we shall get safe to land, and our landing will be triumphant. And how soothing is the reflection, that those whom we have deposited in the tomb are sleeping in Jesus! The breathless clay is in his custody, waiting for the final manifestation of the sons of God. Could we but more frequently and more fully realize the great subject of the Christian salvation, we should be perfectly convinced that the grievous sufferings which sometimes attend our dying friends and relatives, are, comparatively, as nothing, when considered as introductory to a state of eternal glory and blessedness. A period is approaching, 'when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.' Then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory,' completely, entirely, and eternally overcome. We see our beloved relatives, and our dear friends in Christ, 'going