

6. Engage in no duty, but in his strength. Flee on borrowed wings. The fire that was put to the incense, on the altar of incense, was brought from the altar of burnt-offering; teaching us, that from Christ the influences of grace must come into our souls freely.

7. Draw motives and helps for duty, from Christ's sufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Zech. xii. 10. The law may break and bruise, and so may be useful in its own place to lead us to Christ; but surely it is the gospel alone that kindly melts the soul. The Christian's labour is a labour of love; because where the labour is right, love predominates.

*Lastly*, Lay the weight of the acceptance of all your duties, and all the good you do, only upon Jesus Christ. God is only pleased in him. Venture not to look on God, but through the veil of his flesh. Alas! many, if they attain to any good frame in duties, they are apt to lay the weight upon it, and say, now I know God will bless me. As if a beggar would assure himself of his alms, because he hath a tongue to cry, and a hand open to receive them. But remember a good frame is not Christ, and cursed "be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Calves offered on the altar of Bethel were rejected, when turtle doves offered on the altar at Jerusalem were accepted. Amen.

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*Ettrick, June 1, 1707.*

BELIEVERS SEEKING A CONTINUING CITY.

SERMON XXVII.

HEBREWS xiii. 14,

*For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

HEAVEN ever moves, yet is that the place of our rest; earth ever rests, yet is that the place of our travel, where we rest not. Time runs with a rapid course, and carries all men swiftly down the stream. It admits of no delay, and whether we sleep or wake, we are carried forward, to be sent forth within a little into the vast ocean of eternity, and to land us either in heaven or hell. Whether

we will or not, we must ere long bid farewell to the world; and were it with man as it is with the beasts, who when they are dead are done, we might sit at ease, suffering ourselves to be carried away with the stream at all adventures. But then man begins to live, when he is dead and gone; and, therefore, having here no continuing city, what remains but that we direct our course to one that is to come, and which is the great thing our text aims at. In which consider:

1. A supposition. The apostle plainly supposeth our absolute need of a continuing city, that is, a place of true happiness and rest; for so it must be understood, for, otherwise, hell is of the same continuance with heaven. Man is capable of happiness, the desire of it is interwoven with his nature. No man is insensible that he labours under some great defects, and every man sees the need he hath of something to give him perfect rest and satisfaction; and therefore the soul, like an hungry infant, sucks wherever it comes, and finding no rest in one thing, goes to another; and never can attain true rest, till it be perfectly carried to God himself, to take up its everlasting rest in him.

We have next a position consisting of two parts: 1. That the continuing city is not to be found in this world; our rest is not here. Here we do but sojourn for a time, and no sooner we come into it, but as soon we begin our journey to go out of it again; and, like the rising sun, haste forward to the going down. We begin then to die, when we begin to live; and death follows our life, as the shadow does the body, till it at length overturns us. Then the tale is told, and the fable of life in the world is ended. 2. That the continuing city is to come. There is a place of perfect happiness and rest for the children of men, though not here. The present world affords many fine cities, but the world to come has only that "continuing city." Heaven is that continuing city, Heb. xii. 28, in which there are many mansions for the heirs of glory, when come home from their travels.

We have also in the text, the practice of the godly, most important to both parts of the position. They admit the conviction of this world's emptiness, and live under the sense of it. They look upon the world as it is in itself, as indeed affording no continuing city to them. They say, "we have here no continuing city," we see none, we seek none, we expect none in it; but they seek that which is to come. The Greek word is emphatical, and signifies to seek with all our might; to seek with great care and solicitude. They do not sit down, and faintly wish for it, but set themselves earnestly by all means to obtain it. Their former question, "Who will shew

us any good?" is turned to that, "What shall I do to be saved?" While others are taken up about present things, they are labouring to procure to themselves a blessed immortality.

*Lastly*, The connection. These words are given as a reason or motive to stir up to the duty proposed, ver. 13, namely, that we ought to be denied to the world, take up Christ's cross, and patiently bear all reproaches for him. For why? says the apostle, "we have no continuing city here;" and ere long we shall be out of the reach of enemies; and even at this time we are seeking other things than the world can afford.

DOCTRINE. We have no continuing city in this world; but it is the duty of all, and the practice of the godly, earnestly to seek after the continuing city above. We shall,

I. Shew that we have no continuing city here.

II. In what respects heaven is a continuing city.

III. I shall open at large the seeking of this continuing city.

IV. The reasonableness of the point. We are then,

I. To shew that we have no continuing city here. This is evident,

1. Because the dissolution of this world is approaching, Psal. cii. 6; 2 Pet. iii. 7—12. It had a beginning, and it shall have an end. The day will come, when the earth, and all things therein, shall be burnt up. It was a dreadful day when Sodom was burned, but it will be much more dreadful when all the cities of the world shall be consumed. Sodom destined to the flames, was no city for Lot to continue in; and seeing this world must also be burnt up, may we not conclude we have no continuing city in it.

2. Because we must all remove from it by death. Death is settled by a fixed decree. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." One generation passeth away to give place to another. Every birth and every death is an argument to persuade us that we have no continuing city here. Every child that is born, comes into the world with a warning away in its hand. Every dying person lets us see the way which we are to follow. There is room enough on the earth, notwithstanding all the vast numbers that have been before us. We must all answer the summons of death. It will not pity the poor, be bribed by the rich, nor boasted away by men of might.

6. Because of the uncertainty of all things here below, though we should last, and the world also. All worldly things stand on two lame legs, uncertainty and insufficiency, and therefore are not to be depended upon. There is nothing here that can satisfy the

soul. He spoke like a fool, who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Though these things were sufficient, yet are they uncertain. They perish with the using; like the apples of Sodom, fair and fresh without; within full of sulphur, and, being handled, fall to ashes.

4. Because the Lord never designed it for a continuing city. The Lord made it as a stage to serve for a time, to be taken down when men had acted their parts upon it. It was the place for the trial of the children of men. Heaven was the place prepared for the godly before the foundation of the world; and hell was prepared of old, for others. This earth was only a narrow neck of land, to be swallowed up of eternity. We proceed,

II. To shew in what respects heaven is a continuing city.

1. The city itself is continuing. "It is a building of God; an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is a kingdom which cannot be moved." Though the footstool may be set aside, the throne must continue. That city prepared before the foundations of the world were laid, must endure when the foundations of the world are overturned. It is a sure purchase that is made in the city above; for when the cities below shall be laid in ashes, this shall stand and flourish.

2. The Lord of the city is a continuing Lord, even Jesus Christ. He died once, but shall die no more. He has fought the battle for his people, and has reached the crown, and is set down on the throne. He sends his people such news as Joseph sent to his father: "God hath made me lord of all Egypt, come down unto me, tarry not." Jesus continues for evermore.

In respect of his natures, Rev. i. 17, 18. The human nature which he took on, he never did, and never will put off. Death made a separation betwixt his soul and body, but not betwixt his natures. The saints shall for ever see the human nature united to the divine nature; the man Christ at the right hand of God.

In respect of his offices. He will be the prophet of that city for ever. He that gave them the light of grace, shall give them the light of glory. He is an everlasting priest, even a priest for ever. It is true, he will offer no more sacrifice, "for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." But he will eternally exhibit that sacrifice, and intercede for his people, Heb. vii. 26; this is the everlasting security of the saints. He will be king there for ever, for of his kingdom there shall be no end.

3. The citizens of that city are continuing. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." There is no death there.

The garments of glory shall never be put off. Death entered paradise, but cannot enter this city, where the Lord of life reigns in his glory, 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54.

4. The abode of the citizens in this city is continuing. Adam was cast out of the earthly paradise, the Jews out of Canaan. But every saint "shall be made a pillar in this temple of God, and he shall go no more out." Heaven is the rest that remains for the people of God. They may have many a weary step in the wilderness, but when once come home they shall go no more abroad.

5. The privileges of it are continuing; they shall never be re-trenched. Who can count the privileges which the citizens enjoy there! The people of God in this world are high privileged with the favour of God, and peace with him, pardon of sin, adoption, sanctification. They shall have all these in their utmost perfection, to be continued for ever. Their peculiar privileges in heaven are such as these: none of the miserable effects of sin are there. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." No bodily pain, no soul distemper, no desertion there. The Zion above will not complain that the Lord has forgotten her, or that God covers himself with a cloud, for there shall be no night there.

There shall be no sinning there, for there the spirits of just men are made perfect. The body of sin and death dies with the death of the body. The most holy person on earth sinneth, but the least star in heaven shall be without spot. Lamps of hell shall then wonder to see themselves shining lamps of glory. There shall not be even the possibility of sinning there. Adam when created had no sin, but the saints in the city above shall not be capable of sinning. They shall be for ever confirmed in a sinless and happy state. We have told what is not in it, but to tell you what is in it is more difficult. We may, by attempting it, darken counsel by words without knowledge. Take only these two words: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And so shall we ever be with the Lord." These are words which the inhabitants of heaven only are fit to explain.

6. The work of that city is continuing work. They rest not night nor day, singing praises to him that sits upon the throne. The harps of the people of God are not always in their hands now; sometimes they are hanged upon the willows. Their work there will be eternal recreation and perfect pleasure. This teaches us

that we must be made meet for heaven, and serve our apprenticeship here in the ways of holiness, before we can be admitted into that continuing city.

*Lastly*, The rest, quiet, and safety of that city are continuing. "It is a kingdom that cannot be moved." There are four things that put a city in hazard, but none of them are here. Enemies laying siege to it without. This puts the church in hazard here, and therefore there are watchmen set on the walls; but no enemy can approach to the city above. The devil and his army cannot come near it. Want of provision within, occasions hazard; but there shall be no lack there, for rivers of pleasures that never run dry, abound there, Rev. vii. 16, 17. The inhabitants of a city disagreeing among themselves is very hazardous. This was as hurtful to the earthly Jerusalem as the Roman army. But there can be no mutiny in this city. Then shall that be perfectly accomplished, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." The sad divisions amongst the Lord's people strike at the root of Christianity, by muttering as much as that Christ is not come, Isa. xi. 6—8. Therefore our Lord prays, that his people "all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." *Finally*, mismanagement of the governor may bring danger. Wisdom will save a city, and folly ruin it. Here is infinite wisdom at the helm, and how can they miscarry. We proceed,

III. To open up at large, the seeking of this continuing city. Here we shall shew what it supposeth; wherein it consists. What do they seek that are rightly seeking? and *Finally*, the properties of this seeking.

1. What this seeking supposeth. 1. It supposeth the want of a continuing city. None will seek what they do not want. When man sinned he lost God, and so a right to heaven; this all men, by nature, are under. And he that is thus seeking is sensible of his loss, and is under conviction that the world can afford none such; unless it were so, he would never seek it. Every serious seeker of heaven looks on the world as a wilderness, and himself as a pilgrim and stranger on the earth, Heb. xi. 13, 14. But alas! few are under this impression concerning the world.

2. The faith of a continuing city; that there is a place of happiness and rest. They believe "that there remaineth a rest for the people of God." They see that there is a land afar off, and that it is attainable by mortals. The faith of this is more rare than most men imagine. Were there a place in the world where men might live in all manner of prosperity, free from all evil, and all welcome

to it that would go; would not men flock thither, if they really believed it?

3. A sense of the need of it. Wise men will not seek that of which they have no need. The seeker of heaven sees the need he hath of it. He is one of a more noble spirit than to be satisfied with the husks which the earth affords. The earth may serve the body during this mortal life; but he knows he hath a soul that must live eternally, and a body that must be raised up again; and that this world can do him no service in these things.

4. The soul turning its back upon the world. The person who seeks heaven, with Paul, "forgets the things that are behind." "He is coming out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke;" and answers that call, "come with me, from Lebanon, my spouse." We cannot seek both, more than serve two contrary masters. Our arms are too short to grasp both heaven and earth at once. If ye seek heaven, let earth go.

2. Wherein doth this seeking consist? It consists in these two things:

1. In earnest desires after it. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." The soul desires to be there in due time. Their heart is there, for their treasure is there. Their souls are reconciled to heaven by the power of grace. They have seen the beauty of the holy land, and heavenly city; though not with their bodily eyes, yet with the eyes of faith. They have been captivated with the map of it in the word of God. They desire it, because Christ is there; and there glory dwells, and holiness reigns for ever. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Most men have no such desires. They would quit their part in paradise, if God would let them stay on this side of Jordan.

2. In suitable endeavours for it. The want of this holds many out of heaven. "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour." If wishes would carry men to heaven, who would go to hell? But there are difficulties in the way to it which they cannot digest, and therefore they intermeddle not with it. But they who seek it aright, turn the face of their souls that way, and labour for it. "Let us labour, therefore," says Paul, "to enter into that rest, lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief." Strivers only, are right seekers. "Strive," says our Lord, "to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

3. What do they seek, that are rightly seeking?

1. They seek the Lord of the city. The command is, "seek the Lord while he is to be found, call upon him while he is near." Jesus the Lord of it is himself "the way, and the door;" none can enter but by him, John xiv. 6. Jesus is to the true seeker the greatest beauty of the upper house, Psal. lxxiii. 25. The name of the city is, "the Lord is there;" and this draws the soul of the believer hither. And if Christ were not there, heaven would not be heaven to the believer. "Being risen with Christ, they seek the things which are above, where he sitteth at the right hand of God."

2. A right and title to it. By Adam's sin, we forfeited our right to it, so we have our title to seek. We are commanded to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The soul sees itself miserable, whatever it have, if it have no right to that city. Hence Christ is precious. A match with the heir of all things is very desirable, seeing by him we are made citizens there. "For through him, we have access by one Spirit unto the Father; and are made fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

3. A conformity to it; even the kingdom of God to be within us. As every man labours to conform himself to the manners of the court where he desires to be, so the Christian "has his conversation in heaven," and desires to be more and more changed into the image of the Saviour. Heaven must come down into us, before we can get up to it. If our Father be in heaven, we will strive to be like him. Can we look on these to be seeking heaven, who mind nothing but the world and their lusts; in whose thoughts, words, and actions, there is nothing of heaven.

4. Evidences for the city. The soul will not only seek a right to it; but to know his right. Hence they will be crying, "shew me a token for good." When their interest is darkened, their hearts are filled with sadness; and when they behold it, their souls rejoice, when they can say, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." A man that is seeking to buy houses or lands, will labour to get good evidences of his right to them.

*Lastly,* The possession of it in due time. "Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest." One time or another, you will be at Paul's wish, "a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Christ gives it as an encouragement to his people, "I go," says he, "to prepare a place for you;" and therefore they seek and wait till their minority be past, that they may enter heirs to that glory. "Desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."



I shall close with a word of use of what has been said. Bestir yourselves, then, to seek after the continuing city. Are there not many among us, who have neither right to, nor evidence for heaven; who live here as if this were their rest, as if they were never to remove; who, if death were to seize them this day, know not where they would lodge through the long night of eternity.

Consider the motive in the text: "we have no continuing city here." We must continue for ever, but not here. Were we to die like the beasts, we might live as they do; but we have never-dying souls. O consider well, that you must remove, that you may seek in time a continuing city. Death is posting on. Our life is but a vapour, a shadow, a nothing. The grave we must visit, there is no continuance here.

4. The properties of this seeking. How must we seek, if we would succeed? This is a necessary question, for our Lord tells us, "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" and Paul tells us, "that a man is not crowned unless he strive lawfully." There may be much seeking to little purpose.

1. They that rightly seek the continuing city, seek it laboriously. "They labour to enter into that rest." They must not only open their mouths as beggars, but ply their hands as workmen seeking their daily bread, who earn it with the sweat of their brow. "We must seek it as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures." Many would be fed like the fowls, who neither sow nor gather into barns; and be clothed like the lilies, who neither toil nor spin. They would receive heaven if it would fall down into their mouths, but cannot think of working for it. They have something else to do. It is true, our labour and pains will not bring us there; but there is no getting there without it, Prov. xxi. 25. For consider, the several notions of the way to heaven, all importing true labour. We must work; yea, "work out our own salvation," or otherwise we lose what we have done. It is as the work of the husbandman, which is not easy. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." It is the running of a race that requires patience and much eagerness, "for we must press toward the mark, and so run that we may obtain." We must wrestle and fight for it, for heaven hath a strait gate, and cannot be entered with ease. We must strive to enter, yea press into it, and take it by violence. We must put forth our utmost strength, as those who are agonising, Luke xiii. 24, and at last overcome, Rev. iii. 12. These are the metaphors by which the Christian's exercises are described, and they certainly denote real labour.

Consider also the types of the way to heaven. Many a weary step, and many a bloody battle had the Israelites, ere they could settle themselves in Canaan. Jerusalem stood on a hill, and was surrounded with hills; many a weary step had some of them to take ere they won it, 2 Sam. v. 6; and when they came there, they had the hill of God to ascend, even Mount Moriah, where the temple stood, hence that Psal. xxiv. 3—6.

Besides, slothfulness is the pathway to hell, Prov. xiii. 14, and xx. 4. The sluggard is an unprofitable servant to himself and his master. For an idler to get heaven, is a sort of contradiction. Heaven is a reward, and therefore supposeth working. Heaven is rest, a keeping of a sabbath, and therefore supposeth previous toil.

2. Voluntarily. "The Lord meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." When men do nothing in religion but by compulsion, they cannot succeed. God's people are a willing people, and he cares not for compelled prayers, or forced endeavours, when the hands go without the heart. Men naturally are enemies to heaven; and till heaven be in their heart instead of the world, they will never seek it to purpose.

3. Diligently. "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." We will lose it, if we seek it not diligently. "By much slothfulness the building decayeth." Men are busy for the world; the devil is busy to keep us out of heaven, and shall not we seek it diligently. But most men are of Pharaoh's principle, that religion is only a work for them that have nothing else to do, hence no diligence among them.

4. Vigorously. We are commanded to ask, to seek, to knock. It is not easily got. Faint attacks will not break open the gates of this city. It is requisite we summon together all the powers of our souls, "and whatsoever our hand findeth to do, do it with all our might." The iron is blunt, therefore we must exert the more force. Fervency in seeking, is necessary to make it effectual. It is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth much.

5. Resolutely, as Jacob for the blessing. We seek what we cannot want, and therefore must steel our foreheads, and run through difficulties. "Skin for skin, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." The people that hearing of the Anakims, their hearts failed, were obliged to turn back into the wilderness. They that mind for this city, "must have their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," that they may go forward through the rugged way.

6. Constantly. "We must be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." We must not seek only by

fits and starts ; that makes our seeking uneasy. Hot and cold fits are signs of a distempered body. This work is for term of life ; “no man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” “The just shall live by faith : but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Deserters are shamefully punished, while prisoners of war are treated with respect.

7. Seek it quickly, without delay, for we know not how soon our sun may go down. “We must work the works of him that sent us, while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work.” Your glass is running. If your time be done, before your interest in heaven be secured, it will be a heavy case. Hell is replenished with those that resolved to be better afterwards.

*Lastly*, Seek evangelically, that is, in a gospel way. This comprehends seeking, *first*, from a principle of new life, called the life of Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 10. *Secondly*, from a sweet motive of love to God, even the love of Christ constraining us ; and *thirdly*, from a noble end, the glory of God, the honour of the Redeemer, and glory of his grace, and our own salvation. *Finally*, doing all in borrowed strength ; travelling “through the wilderness leaning on our beloved, denying ourselves, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.” We shall now,

IV. Shew the reasonableness of the point. And,

1. Why it is the duty of all thus to seek after the continuing city.

1. Because none of us have a continuing city here. Our old tabernacle is ready to fall down about our ears, what then should we be doing, but seeking that building of God. Hence we must remove, is it not then highly reasonable we should seek where we may take up our eternal lodging.

2. It is the command of God, whose commands we are not to dispute, but to obey, “for a son honoureth his father, and a servant his master.” Now what is his command ? It is, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” What a cord of love is such a command, where duty and interest are so linked together.

3. Because perfect happiness is only to be found there. That is the place where the soul-satisfying treasure only is to be found. “Lay up for yourselves, then, treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” You will never be able, by any means, to extract happiness from earthly enjoyments. Solomon had run round the world and viewed all, and what is his report, even “vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” The very nature of the soul is such, that

nothing under the sun can satisfy it; yea, the very erect form of the body teacheth us to seek heaven.

4. It is a dreadful contempt of heaven, not to seek it. It was the sin of the Israelites, "that they despised the pleasant land." It is God's mansion house, the land where glory dwells. Not then to be at pains to attain it, is a sin near akin to the sin of the devils, "who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation." Yea, it is a contempt of the blood of Christ, the price by which heaven was purchased. O sirs, prefer not, in your practice, the world to the glory of heaven. Observe Heb. xii. 14—16. Will men say that they prize heaven, when they will not be at pains to secure their title to it?

*Lastly*, There is no getting there, without seeking it thus. There is no reaching the treasure of glory without digging for it. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If men must have yet a little sleep and a little slumber, outer darkness will be their waking-place, Luke xiii. 24.

2. Let us shew why it is the practice of the godly. They seek this city,

1. Because they have been convinced that they have no continuing city here. By the Spirit of the Lord, the gracious soul "has seen an end of all perfection;" has got a sight of the vanity and emptiness of created things, and this has turned the soul back again from the broken cisterns, to the fountain of living water. They have seen that excellency in Christ, which has darkened the glory of created things.

2. Because their treasure is in heaven, Matth. vi. 21. If a man's treasure be in his coffers or in his barns, his heart will be there also; if in heaven, his heart will be there. Christ is the believer's treasure, and he is there; an eternal weight of glory is his treasure, and it is also in heaven.

3. Because heaven is the only rest for the godly. The world is the place of their toil and pilgrimage. They have trouble from without and from within, while here; but their rest is remaining for them above, Heb. iv. 9. They say to one another, as Naomi did to her daughters-in-law, "the Lord grant you, that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." Rest is sought by every one, and seeing the godly look not for it here, they must needs be looking for it there.

4. Because this seeking is the native product of a new nature. The old nature carries the man downward, the new nature upwards, toward heaven. Grace is an active principle come from

above into the heart, and carrying the soul up to its own source. Every thing desires its own preservation and perfection, now glory is the best preservative and perfection of grace. It is a fountain that will not be stopped, but will cast up its waters. "It is in them a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life."

APPLICATION. Is it so, that here we have no continuing city? Then we may be

1. Informed and convinced of several particulars.

1. Then we must all die, and be as water spilt on the ground. Here our tent is set down, but not to continue here. The pins of the tent must be loosed, and man must go to his long home. Ere long you shall be arrested within the four posts of a bed, not to come forth, till you be carried to the grave. Death will settle down on your eyelids. The fairest face shall be pale, and the breath shall go, and the body crumble to ashes, for here we have no continuing city.

2. Life in this world is but a short preface to eternity, an inconsiderable point between two vast terms. The world lasted some thousands of years before we were born in it; and how long after we are gone, who knows; but then there is an eternity to succeed. O! that we could so tell our handbreadth of days as to apply our hearts to wisdom.

3. It is well with them who are gone to heaven. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours." Rest is desirable, they had it not here; they have got it now. Their weary days and nights are now at an end. Sickness and trouble shall be to them no more. Weep not for them, but for yourselves that are yet on the troublesome sea; we are abroad, they are at home.

4. Behold here the vanity of all things below, and the folly of valuing ourselves on account of them. When death comes, we must bid them an eternal farewell, and leave what we have to others; and they to others again, till the fire at the last day consume all. Some have a beautiful tent, others a black and uncomely one; but against night, all are taken down.

5. Their case is to be pitied and not envied, who have their portion in this life. What good did the rich man's treasure do him in hell? Though a man act the part of a king on a stage, if he have nothing when the curtain is drawn and the play ended, he is in a pitiful case. Alas! the world does with many, as with the young man, it brings an eternal eclipse on their souls.

*Lastly*, See the folly of men who are neglecting to secure their title to heaven. O sirs! we are quickly carried down the stream,

ere long we will be in eternity. Why then are you not making it your business to seek a continuing city, seeing here we have none?

USE 2. Of trial. Hereby you may try yourselves, whether you be truly religious or not. How does the pulse of your affections beat? What is it that you are seeking, is it heaven or the world? I told you in what this seeking consists, and upon this I would propose two questions:

1. What desires have you after heaven? Are your souls yet reconciled to it? Could you get an abode here for ever, would you desire to remove? I fear there are many would even be content to settle down on this side of Jordan. They desire heaven, but not for contempt of the world, but fear of hell. But a gracious soul cannot be content with this their sinful condition in the world, to want uninterrupted communion with God, which is only to be enjoyed above.

2. What endeavours are you using to get it? Simple wishes for heaven will never come speed. Many wish for heaven but work for hell. If this be not your main work to seek the continuing city, you will never get there. But alas! what little pains do most men take to get heaven? If coming to the church, giving the compliment of a morning and evening prayer to God—coldrife and dead suits—will bring them to heaven, they will be sure of it; but they will never see it, if they cannot reach it without cutting off right hands, mortifying their lusts, and taking it by violence.

USE 3. Of exhortation. From this I may press several duties upon you. And,

1. Be content with such things as you have. Nature is content with little, grace with less; but corruption enlarges the soul as hell, that it never says it hath enough. Though a stranger get but bad accommodation on a journey, it pleases him to think that he is going homewards, he is not to stay with it. You are on your way to eternity. It is of little consequence whether a traveller have a cane in his hand, or a rough stick; either of them may serve, and both are laid aside at the journey's end.

2. Do not sit down upon the world's smiles. If the world court you, do not give it your heart, but tell it you are not to stay. O! it is hard to keep the heart from falling in love with a smiling world; hard to carry a full cup even; to take a large draught of carnal comforts, and not to fall asleep. Ere long, the richest shall be on a level with the poorest; and when the fool, who sets his heart on his wealth, comes to die, he cannot answer the question, Whose shall these things be, which he hath provided?

3. Bear afflictions patiently. You are posting out of the place of afflictions. If you be not in Christ, ere long the cross will be

turned into an unmixed curse. If you be in Christ, ere long all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes.

4. What you do, do quickly. Beware of delays, they are very dangerous. Our great work is to do good, and to get good. Ply your work with all speed and diligence. Parents do good to your children; ere long they may be taken from you, or you from them.

*Lastly*, Seek the continuing city that is to come, O! set yourselves to this work in good earnest; apply to it with all diligence. Young and old, rich and poor, you must all go out of this world. O! strive to secure your lodging in heaven.

MOTIVE 1. Consider you are all seeking something. Man is a restless creature, always crying give, give. The river runs as fast when it is overflowing its banks, as when it is going in its proper channel. The watch moves as fast when it is going wrong, as when it is going right. The spider is at pains as well as the bee. Alas! many men are like the spider; it consumes its bowels to make its web. They exert themselves wholly for their bodies, and neglect their souls. O what folly is this!

2. The devil is seeking to keep you out of heaven. He is constantly seeking whom he may devour. He wants not skill to contrive means for your ruin. He hath had experience for several thousand years in that trade. He wants not malice nor cunning. And will not you be at pains for your own salvation?

3. You have loud calls to this work. You have the call of the word. Wherefore hath the Lord instituted ordinances among you, but for this end? A master doth not light a candle for his servants to play themselves at it. You are not shut up in the dark, muffled up in clouds of ignorance. The night is over, the day shines. Go forth then to your work and to your labour, until the evening. The voice of providence calls loudly to you. God seems to be on his way against these lands, for their contempt of the gospel. And, I dare say, men under the gospel cannot but sometimes have their convictions.

4. Our abode here will be very short. Ere long, all of us shall be in an unalterable state. Some are at the borders of the grave; all are going forward. Our life is a vapour, and our days a shadow that passeth away. Let us then work the works of him that sent us, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. Amen.