

Sermon on Heb. 11:13-14, "The Christian Pilgrim;
or The True Christian Life, a Journey Towards Heaven"¹

Jonathan Edwards

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.

The apostle is here setting forth the excellencies of the grace of faith, by the glorious effects and happy issue of it in the saints of the Old Testament. He had spoken in the preceding part of the chapter particularly of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. Having enumerated those instances, he takes notice that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers," &c.

In these words the apostle seems to have a more particular respect to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred that came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, by the 15th verse, where the apostle says, "and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." It was they that upon God's call left their own country.

Two things may be observed in the text.

1. What these saints confessed of themselves, viz., "that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Thus we have a particular account concerning Abraham: "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you," Gen. xxiii. 4. And it seems to have been the general sense of the patriarchs, by what Jacob says to Pharaoh: "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage,'" Gen. xlvii. 9. "I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were," Psal. xxxix. 12.

2. The inference that the apostle draws from hence, viz., that they sought another country as their home: "For they that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country." In confessing that they were strangers, they plainly declared, that this is not their country; that this is not the country where they are at home. And in confessing themselves to be pilgrims, they declared plainly, that this is not their settled abode; but that they have respect to some other country, that they seek and are traveling to as their home.

Doctrine: This life ought so to be spent by us, as to be only a journey towards heaven.

Observations Concerning the Doctrine

I. *That we ought not to rest in the world and its enjoyments, but should desire heaven.*

This our hearts should be chiefly upon and engaged about. We should seek first the kingdom of God, Matt. vi. 33. He that is on a journey, seeks the place that he is journeying to. We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness: to go to heaven, and there be with God, and dwell with Jesus Christ. If we are surrounded with many outward enjoyments, and things that are very comfortable to us; if we are settled in families, and have those good friends and relations that are very desirable; if we have companions whose society is delightful to us; if we have children that are pleasant and hopeful, and in whom we see many promising qualifications;

¹ *WJE* (Banner), II:243-246.

if we live by good neighbors; have much of the respect of others; have a good name; are generally beloved where we are known; and have comfortable and pleasant accommodations; yet we ought not to take our rest in these things. We should not be willing to have these things for our portion, but should seek a higher happiness in another world. We should not merely seek something else in addition to these things, but should be so far from resting in them, that we should choose and desire to leave these things for heaven; to go to God and Christ there. We should not be willing to live here always, if we could, in the same strength and vigor of body and mind as when in youth, or in the midst of our days; and always enjoy the same pleasure, and dear friends, and other earthly comforts. We should choose and desire to leave them all in God's due time, that we might go to heaven, and there have the enjoyment of God. We ought to possess them, enjoy and make use of them, with no other view or aim, but readily to quit them whenever we are called to it, and to change them for heaven. And when we are called away from them, we should go cheerfully and willingly.

He that is going a journey, is not wont to rest in what he meets with that is comfortable and pleasing on the road. If he passes along through pleasant places, flowery meadows, or shady groves; he does not take up his content in these things. He is content only to take a transient view of these pleasant objects as he goes along. He is not enticed by these fine appearances to put an end to his journey, and leave off the thought of proceeding: no; but his journey's end is in his mind; that is the great thing that he aims at. So if he meets with comfortable and pleasant accommodations on the road at an inn, yet he does not rest there; he entertains no thoughts of settling there. He considers that these things are not his own, and that he is but a stranger; that that is not allotted for his home. And when he has refreshed himself, or tarried but for a night, he is for leaving these accommodations, and going forward, and getting onward towards his journey's end. And the thoughts of coming to his journey's end, are not at all grievous to him. He does not desire to be traveling always and never come to his journey's end; the thoughts of that would be discouraging to him. But it is pleasant to him to think, that so much of the way is gone, that he is now nearer home; and that he shall presently be there; and the toil and fatigue of his journey will be over.

So should we thus desire heaven so much more than the comforts and enjoyments of this life, that we should long to change these things for heaven. We should wait with earnest desire for the time when we shall arrive at our journey's end. The apostle mentions it as an encouraging, comfortable consideration to Christians, when they draw nigh their happiness.—“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”²

Our hearts ought to be loose to these things, as it is with a man that is on a journey. However comfortable enjoyments are, yet we ought to keep our hearts so loose from them, as cheerfully to part with them, whenever God calls. “But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away,” 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31.

We ought to look upon these things as only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present turn; but we should set our hearts on heaven as our inheritance forever.

II. *We ought to seek heaven, by traveling in the way that leads thither.*

The way that leads to heaven is the way of holiness. We should choose and desire to travel thither in this way and in no other. We should part with all those sins, those carnal appetites that are as weights, that will tend to hinder us in our traveling towards heaven. “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set

before us,” Heb. xii. 1. However pleasant any practice, or the gratification of any appetite may be, we must lay it aside, cast it away; if it be any hinderance, and stumbling-block in the way to heaven.

We should travel on in a way of obedience to all God’s commands, even the difficult as well as the easy commands. We should travel on in a way of self-denial; denying all our sinful inclinations and interests. The way to heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel up hill, though it be hard and tiresome, though it be contrary to the natural tendency and bias of our flesh that tends downward to the earth. We should follow Christ in the path that he has gone in. The way that he traveled in was the right way to heaven. We should take up our cross and follow him. We should travel along in the same way of meekness and lowliness of heart; in the same way of obedience and charity, and diligence to do good; and patience under afflictions. The way to heaven is a heavenly life; we must be traveling towards heaven in a way of imitation of those that are in heaven. In imitation of the saints and angels there, in their holy employment, in their way of spending their time, in loving, adoring, serving, and praising God and the Lamb. This is the path that we ought to prefer before all others, if we could have any other that we might choose. If we could go to heaven in a way of carnal living, in the way of the enjoyment and gratification of our lusts, we should rather prefer a way of holiness and conformity to the spiritual self-denying rules of the gospel.

III. *We should travel on in this way in a laborious manner.*

The going of long journeys is attended with toil and fatigue; especially if the journey be through a wilderness. Persons, in such a case, expect no other than to suffer hardships and weariness in traveling over mountains and through bad places.

So we should travel in this way of holiness, in a laborious manner, improving our time and strength to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way. The land that we have to travel through is a wilderness; there are many mountains, rocks, and rough places that we must go over in the way; and there is a necessity that we should lay out our strength.

IV. *Our whole lives ought to be spent in traveling this road.*

1. *We ought to begin early.*

This should be the first concern and business that persons engage in when they come to be capable of acting in the world in doing any business. When they first set out in the world, they should set out on this journey. And,

2. *We ought to travel on in this way with assiduity.*³

It ought to be the work of every day to travel on towards heaven. We should often be thinking of our journey’s end; and not only be thinking of it, but it should be our daily work to travel on in the way that leads to it.

As he that is on a journey is often thinking on the place that he is going to and it is his care and business every day to get along; to improve his time, to get towards his journey’s end. He spends the day in it; it is the work of the day, whilst the sun serves him. And when he has rested in the night, he gets up in the morning, and sets out again on his journey; and so from day to day, till he has got to his journey’s end. Thus should heaven be continually in our thought; and the immediate entrance or passage to it, viz., death, should be present with us. And it should be a thing that we familiarize to ourselves; and so it should be our work every day, to be preparing for death, and traveling heavenward.

3. *We ought to preserve in this way as long as we live: we should hold out in it to the end.*

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,” Heb. xii. 1. Though the road be difficult, and it be a toilsome thing to travel it, we must hold out with patience, and be content to endure the hardships of it. If the journey be long, yet we must not stop short; we should not give out in discouragement, but hold on till we are arrived at the place we seek. We ought not to be discouraged with the length and difficulties of the way, as the children of Israel were, and be for turning back again. All our thought and design should be to get along. We should be engaged and resolved to press forward till we arrive.

V. We ought to be continually growing in holiness; and in that respect coming nearer and nearer to heaven.

He that is traveling towards a place comes nearer and nearer to it continually. So we should be endeavoring to come nearer to heaven, in being more heavenly; becoming more and more like the inhabitants of heaven, and more and more as we shall be when we have arrived there, if ever that be.

We should endeavor continually to be more and more, as we hope to be in heaven, in respect of holiness and conformity to God. And with respect to light and knowledge, we should labor to be growing continually in the knowledge of God and Christ, and clear views of the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of divine things, as come nearer and nearer to the beatific vision.

We should labor to be continually growing in divine love; that this may be an increasing flame in our hearts, till our hearts ascend wholly in this flame. We should be growing in obedience, and in heavenly conversation; that we may do the will of God on earth as the angels do in heaven.

We ought to be continually growing in comfort and spiritual joy; in sensible communion with God and Jesus Christ. Our path should be as “the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day,” Prov. iv. 18.

We ought to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness; after an increase in righteousness. “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,” 1 Pet. ii. 2. And we should make the perfection of heaven our mark. We should rest in nothing short of this, but be pressing towards this mark, and laboring continually to be coming nearer and nearer to it. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” Phil. iii. 13, 14.

VI. All other concerns of life ought to be entirely subordinate to this.

As when a man is on a journey, all the steps that he takes are in order to further him on his journey; and subordinate to that aim of getting to his journey’s end. And if he carries money or provision with him, it is to supply him in his journey. So we ought wholly to subordinate all our other business, and all our temporal enjoyments to this affair of traveling to heaven. Journeying towards heaven, ought to be our only work and business, so that all we have and do, should be in order to that. When we have worldly enjoyments we should be ready to part with them, whenever they are in the way of our going toward heaven. We should sell all this world for heaven. When once any thing we have becomes a clog and hinderance to us, in the way heavenward, we should quit it immediately. When we use our worldly enjoyments and possessions, it should be with such a view and in such a manner as to further us in our way heavenward. Thus we should eat, and drink, and clothe ourselves. And thus should we improve the conversation and enjoyment of friends.

And whatever business we are setting about; whatever design we are engaged in, we should inquire with ourselves, whether this business or undertaking will forward us in our way to heaven? And if not, we should quit our design.

We ought to make use of worldly enjoyments, and pursue worldly business in such a degree and manner as shall have the best tendency to forward our journey heavenward, and no otherwise.

Reasons for the Doctrine

I. This world is not our abiding place.

Our continuance in this world is but very short. Man's days on the earth are as a shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home. We were not born into this world for that end. Neither did God give us these temporal things that we are accommodated with for that end. If God has given us good estates; if we are settled in families, and God has given us children, or other friends that are very pleasant to us; it is with no such view or design, that we should be furnished and provided for here, as for a settled abode; but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them again in a very little time.

If we are called to any secular business; or if we are charged with the care of a family; with the instruction and education of children, we are called to these things with a design that we shall be called from them again, and not to be our everlasting employment. So that if we improve our lives to any other purpose, than as a journey towards heaven, all our labor will be lost. If we spend our lives in the pursuit of a temporal happiness: if we set our hearts on riches, and seek happiness in them; if we seek to be happy in sensual pleasures; if we spend our lives in seeking the credit and esteem of men; the good-will and respect of others; if we set our hearts on our children, and look to be happy in the enjoyment of them, in seeing them well brought up, and well settled, &c. All these things will be of little significancy to us. Death will blow up all our hopes and expectations, and will put an end to our enjoyment of these things. The places that have known us will know us no more: and the eye that has seen us shall see us no more. We must be taken away forever from all these things; and it is uncertain when; it may be soon after we have received them, and are put into the possession of them. It may be in the midst of our days and from the midst of our enjoyments. And then where will be all our worldly employments and enjoyments, when we are laid in the silent grave! "So man lieth down and riseth not again, till the heavens be no more," Job xiv. 12.

II. The future world was designed to be our settled and everlasting abode.

Here it was intended that we should be fixed; and here alone is a lasting habitation, and a lasting inheritance and enjoyment to be had. We are designed for this future world. We are to be in two states; the one in this world, which is an imperfect state; the other, in the world to come. The present state is short and transitory; but our state in the other world is everlasting. When we go into another world, there we must be to all eternity. And as we are here at first, so we must be without change.

Our state in the future world, therefore, being eternal, is of so exceedingly greater importance than our state in this world, that it is worthy that our state here, and all our concerns in this world, should be wholly subordinate to it.

III. Heaven is that place alone where our highest end and highest good is to be obtained.

God hath made us for himself. Of God, and through God, and to God are all things.⁴ Therefore then do we attain to our highest end when we are brought to God: but that is by being brought to heaven; for that is God's throne; that is the place of his special presence, and of his

residence. There is but a very imperfect union with God to be had in this world; a very imperfect knowledge of God in the midst of abundance of darkness; a very imperfect conformity to God, mingled with abundance of enmity and estrangement. Here we can serve and glorify God, but in an exceeding imperfect manner; our service being mingled with much sin and dishonor to God.

But when we get to heaven (if ever that be), there we shall be brought to a perfect union with God. There we shall have clear views of God. We shall see face to face, and know as we are known.⁵ There we shall be fully conformed to God, without any remainder of sin. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.⁶ There we shall serve God perfectly. We shall glorify him in an exalted manner, and to the utmost of the powers and capacity of our nature. Then we shall perfectly give up ourselves to God. Then will our hearts be pure and holy offerings to God; offered all in a flame of divine love.

In heaven alone is the attainment of our highest good. God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper happiness; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.

To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean.

Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives; and we should subordinate all other concerns of life to it. Why should we labor for any thing else; or set our hearts on any thing else but that which is our proper end and true happiness?

IV. Our present state, and all that belongs to it, are designed by him that made all things, to be wholly in order to another world.

This world was made for a place of preparation for another world. Man's mortal life was given him only here, that he might be prepared for his fixed state. And all that God has here given us, is given to this purpose. The sun shines upon us; the rain falls upon us; the earth yields her increase to us; civil and ecclesiastical affairs, family affairs, and all our personal concerns are designed and ordered in a subordination to a future world, by the maker and disposer of all things. They ought, therefore, to be subordinate to this by us.

Application

I. In the use of instruction.

1. This doctrine may teach us moderation in our mourning for the loss of dear friends, who, while they lived, improved their lives to right purposes.

If they lived a holy life, then their lives were a journey towards heaven. And why should we be immoderate in mourning when they are got to their journey's end? Death to them, though it appears to us with a frightful aspect, is a great blessing. Their end is happy, and better than their beginning: "The day of their death is better to them than the day of their birth," Eccl. vii. 1. While they lived they desired heaven, and chose it above this world, or any of the enjoyments of it. They earnestly sought and longed for heaven; and why should we grieve that they have obtained it?

Now they have got to heaven, they have got home. They never were at home before. They have got to their Father's house. They find more comfort a thousand times, now they are got home, than they did in their journey. While they were on their journey, they underwent much labor and toil. It was a wilderness that they passed through; a difficult road. There were abundance of difficulties in the way; mountains and rough places. It was a laborious, fatiguing thing

to travel the road. They were forced to lay out themselves to get along; and had many wearisome days and nights: but now they have got through; they have got to the place they sought; they are got home; got to their everlasting rest. They need to travel no more; nor labor any more; nor endure any more toil and difficulty; but enjoy perfect rest and peace; and will enjoy them forever. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. They do not mourn that they are got home, but greatly rejoice. They look back upon the difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers of life, rejoicing that they have got through them all.

We are ready to look upon death as though it were a calamity to them; we are ready to mourn over them with tears of pity; to think that those that were so dear to us, should be in the dark, rotting grave; that they should there turn to corruption and worms; that they should be taken away from their dear children, and other pleasant enjoyments; and that they never should have any part more in any thing under the sun. Our bowels are ready to yearn over them, and we are ready to look upon it, as though some sorrowful thing had befallen them; and as though they were in awful circumstances. But this is owing to our infirmity that we are ready thus to look upon it. They are in a happy condition. They are inconceivably blessed. They do not mourn, but rejoice with exceeding joy. Their mouths are filled with joyful songs; they drink at rivers of pleasure. They find no mixture of grief at all, that they have changed their earthly houses and enjoyments, and their earthly friends and the company of mortal mankind, for heaven. They think of it without any degree of regret.

This is an evil world in comparison to that they are now in. Their life here if attended with the best circumstances that any earthly life ever was, was attended with abundance that was adverse and afflictive; but now there is an end to all adversity. "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 16, 17.

It is true we shall see them no more while here in this world, yet we ought not immoderately to mourn for that; though it used to be pleasant to us to see them; and though their company was sweet; for we should consider ourselves as but on a journey too; we should be traveling towards the same place that they are gone to; and why should we break our hearts with that, that they have got there before us; when we are following after them as fast as we can; and hope, as soon as ever we get to our journey's end, to be with them again; to be with them in better circumstances, than ever we were with them while here? A degree of mourning for near relations when departed, is not inconsistent with Christianity, but very agreeable to it: for, as long as we are flesh and blood, no other can be expected, than that we shall have animal propensities and affections. But we have not just reason to be overborne and sunk in spirit, when the death of near friends is attended with these circumstances; we should be glad they are got to heaven, our mourning should be mingled with joy. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope," 1 Thess. iv. 13; i.e., that they should not sorrow as the heathen, that had no knowledge of a future happiness, nor any certain hope of any thing for themselves or their friends, after they were dead. This appears by the following verse: "For if we believe that Jesus died and arose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him."

2. If it be so, that our lives ought to be only a journey towards heaven; how ill do they improve their lives, that spend them in traveling towards hell?

Some men spend their whole lives, from their infancy to their dying day, in going down the broad way to destruction.⁷ They do not only draw nearer to hell in length of time, but they every day grow more ripe for destruction; they are more assimilated to the inhabitants of the infernal world. While others press forward in the strait and narrow way to life, and laboriously travel up the hill towards Zion, against the inclinations and tendency of the flesh; these run with a swift career down towards the valley of eternal death; towards the lake of fire; towards the bottomless pit. This is the employment of every day, with all wicked men; the whole day is spent in it. As soon as ever they awake in the morning, they set out anew towards hell, and spend every waking moment in it. They begin in early days before they begin to speak: "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies," Psalm xlviii. 4. They hold on in it with perseverance. Many of them that live to be old, are never weary in it; if they live to be a hundred years old, they will not give over traveling in the way to hell till they arrive there. And all the concerns of life are subordinated to this employment. A wicked man is a servant of sin;⁸ his powers and faculties are all employed in the service of sin, and in fitting for hell. And all his possessions are so used by him, as to be subservient to the same purpose. Some men spend their time in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.⁹ Thus do all unclean persons, that live in lascivious practices in secret. Thus do all malicious persons. Thus do all profane persons, that neglect duties of religion. Thus do all unjust persons; and those that are fraudulent and oppressive in their dealings. Thus do all backbiters and revilers. Thus do all covetous persons, that set their hearts chiefly on the riches of this world. Thus do tavern-haunters, and frequenters of evil company; and many other kinds of persons that might be mentioned. Thus do far the greater part of men; the bulk of mankind are hastening onward in the broad way to destruction. The way, as broad as it is, is, as it were, filled up with the multitude that are going with one accord this way. And they are every day going into hell out of this broad way by thousands. Multitudes are continually flowing down into the great lake of fire and brimstone, out of this broad way, as some mighty river constantly disembogues¹⁰ its water into the ocean.

3. Hence when persons are converted, they do but begin their work, and set out in the way they have to go.

They never till then do any thing at that work which their whole lives ought to be spent in; which we have now shown to be traveling towards heaven. Persons, before conversion, never take a step that way. Then does a man first set out on his journey, when he is brought home to Christ; and he is but just set out in it. So far is he from having done his work, that he then only begins to set his face towards heaven. His journey is not finished; he is then only first brought to be willing to go to it, and begins to look that way; so that his care and labor, in his Christian work and business, is then but begun, which he must spend the remaining part of his life in.

Those persons do ill, who, when they are converted, and have obtained a hope of their being in a good condition, do not strive as earnestly as they did before, while they were under awakenings. They ought, henceforward, as long as they live, to be as earnest and laborious as ever; as watchful and careful as ever; yea, they should increase more and more. It is no just objection or excuse from this, that now they have not the same to strive for as before; before they strove that they might be converted, but that they have obtained. Is there nothing else that persons have as much reason to strive, and lay out their strength for, as their own safety? Should we not be as willing to be diligent that we may serve and glorify God, as that we ourselves may be happy? And if we have obtained grace, yet there is not all obtained that may be. It is but a very little grace that we have obtained; we ought to strive that we may obtain more. We ought to strive as much that we may obtain the other degrees that are before, as we did to obtain that small

degree that is behind. The apostle tells us, that he forgot what was behind, and reached forth towards what was before, Phil. iii. 13.

Yea, those that are converted, have now a further reason to strive for grace than they had before; for now they have tasted and seen something of the sweetness and excellency of it. A man that has once tasted the blessings of Canaan, has more reason to press forward towards it than he had before. And, then, they that are converted, should strive that they may make their calling and election sure.¹¹ All those that are converted, are not sure of it; and those that are sure of it, do not know that they shall be always so; and still seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, is the way to have assurance, and to have it maintained.

II. Use may be of exhortation; so to spend the present life that it may only be a journey towards heaven.

Labor to be sanctified, and to obtain such a disposition of mind, that you may be willing and desirous to change this world, and all the enjoyments of it for heaven. Labor to have your heart taken up so much about heaven and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice at any time when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends, and those things that are most comfortable to you here, to go to heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven, viz., in a way of holiness, self-denial and mortification, in a way of obedience to all the commands of God, in a way of following Christ's example, in a way of heavenly life, or imitation of the saints and angels that live in heaven. Be content to travel on in this way, in a laborious manner, to endure all the fatigues of it. Begin to travel it without delay, if you have not already begun it; and travel in it with assiduity. Let it be your daily work from morning to night, and hold out in it to the end; let there be nothing that shall stop or discourage you, or turn you aside from this road. Labor to be growing in holiness, to be coming nearer and nearer to heaven, in that you are more and more as you shall be when you get there, (if ever that be). And let all other concerns be subordinated to this great concern of getting forward toward heaven. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should thus spend your life. Consider that the world is not your abiding place, and was never so intended by God. Consider how little a while you are to be here, and how little worth your while it is to spend your life to any other purpose. Consider that the future world is to be your everlasting abode; and that the enjoyments and concerns of this world, have their being only and entirely in order to another world. And consider further for motive,

1. How worthy is heaven that your life should be wholly spent as a journey towards it.

To what better purpose can you spend your life, whether you respect your duty or your interest? What better end can you propose to your journey than to obtain heaven? Here you are placed in this world, in this wilderness, and have your choice given you, that you may travel which way you please. And there is one way that leads to heaven. Now, can you direct your course better than this way? What can you choose better for your journey's end? All men have some aim or other in living. Some mainly seek worldly things; they spend their days in the pursuit of these things. But is not heaven, where is fulness of joy forever and ever, much more worthy to be sought by you? How can you better employ your strength and use your means, and spend your days, than in traveling the road that leads to the everlasting enjoyment of God; to his glorious presence; to the city of the New Jerusalem; to the heavenly mount Zion: where all your desires will be filled, and no danger of ever losing your happiness?

No man is at home in this world, whether he choose heaven or not; here he is but a transient person. Where can you choose your home better than in heaven? The rest and glory of heaven is so great, that it is worthy we should desire it above riches; above our fathers' houses, or our

own; above husband or wife, or children, or all earthly friends. It is worthy that we should subordinate these things to it, and that we should be ready, cheerfully, to part with them for heaven, whenever God calls.

2. This is the way to have death comfortable to us.

If we spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, this will be the way to have death, that is the end of the journey, and entrance into heaven, not terrible but comfortable.

This is the way to be free from bondage, through the fear of death, and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable. Does the traveler think of his journey's end with fear and terror, especially when he has been many days traveling, and it be a long and tiresome journey? Is it terrible to him to think that he has almost got to his journey's end? Are not men rather wont to rejoice at it? Were the children of Israel sorry, after forty years travel in the wilderness, when they had almost got to Canaan? This is the way to have death not terrible when it comes. It is the way to be able to part with the world without grief. Does it grieve the traveler when he has got home, to quit his staff and load of provision that he had to sustain him by the way?

3. No more of your life will be pleasant to think of when you come to die, than has been spent after this manner.

All of your past life that has been spent as a journey towards heaven, will be comfortable to think of on a death-bed, and no more. If you have spent none of your life this way, your whole life will be terrible to you to think of, unless you die under some great delusion. You will see then, how that all of your life that has been spent otherwise is lost. You will then see the vanity of other aims, that you may have proposed to yourself. The thought of what you here possessed and enjoyed in the world, will not be pleasant to you, unless you can think withal, that you have subordinated them to this purpose.

4. Consider that those that are willing thus to spend their lives as a journey towards heaven, may have heaven.

Heaven as high as it is, and glorious as it is, is attainable for such poor worthless creatures as we are. We, even such worms, may attain to have for our home, that glorious region that is the habitation of the glorious angels; yea, the dwelling-place of the glorious Son of God; and where is the glorious presence of the great Jehovah. And we may have it freely; there is no high price that is demanded of us for this privilege. We may have it without money and without price;¹² if we are but willing to set out and go on towards it; are but willing to travel the road that leads to it, and bend our course that way as long as we live; we may and shall have heaven for our eternal resting place.

5. Let it be considered, that if our lives be not a journey towards heaven, they will be a journey to hell.

We cannot continue here always, but we must go somewhere else. All mankind after they have been in this world a little while, go out of it, and there are but two places that they go to; the two great receptacles of all that depart out of this world; the one is heaven; whither a few, a small number in comparison, travel; the way that leads hither, is but thinly occupied with travelers. And the other is hell, whither the bulk of mankind do throng. And one or the other of these must be our journey's end; the issue of our course in this world.

IV. I shall conclude by giving some directions.

1. *Labor to get a sense of the vanity of this world, or the vanity of it on account of the little satisfaction that is to be enjoyed here; and on account of its short continuance, and unserviceableness when we most stand in need of help, viz., on a deathbed.*

All men, that live any considerable time in the world, see abundance that might convince them of the vanity of the world, if they would but consider.

Be persuaded to exercise consideration, when you see and hear, from time to time, of the death of others. Labor to turn your thoughts this way. See if you can see the vanity of this world in such a glass. If you were sensible how vain a thing this world is, you would see that it is not worthy that your life should be spent to the purposes thereof; and all is lost that is not some way aimed at heaven.

2. *Labor to be much acquainted with heaven.*

If you are not acquainted with it, you will not be likely to spend your life as a journey thither. You will not be sensible of the worth of it; nor will you long for it. Unless you are much conversant in your mind with a better good, it will be exceeding difficult to you to have your hearts loose from these things, and to use them only in subordination to something else, and to be ready to part with them for the sake of that better good.

Labor therefore to obtain a realizing sense of a heavenly world, to get a firm belief of the reality of it, and to be very much conversant with it in your thoughts.

3. *Seek heaven only by Jesus Christ.*

Christ tells us that he is the way, and the truth, and the life, John xiv. 6. He tells us that he is the door of the sheep: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and go in and out, and find pasture," John x. 9. If we, therefore, would improve our lives as a journey towards heaven, we must seek it by him, and not by our own righteousness; as expecting to obtain only for his sake, looking to him, having our dependence on him only for the purchase of heaven, and procuring it for us by his merit. And expect strength to walk in a way of holiness, the way that leads to heaven, only from him.

4. *Let Christians help one another in going this journey.*

There are many ways that Christians might greatly help and forward one another in their way to heaven, by religious conference, and otherwise. And persons greatly need help in this way, which is, as I have observed, a difficult way.

Let Christians be exhorted to go this journey, as it were in company, conversing together while their journey shall end, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as in this.

Let Christians go united, and not fall out by the way, which would be the way to hinder one another; but use all means they can to help one another up the hill.

This is the way to be more successful in traveling, and to have the more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory.