

ly: "As for me," I do not hesitate what course to pursue. It is, alas! too frequently the case, to find men apparently zealous in impressing on others duties and obligations to which they themselves are not much inclined to attend. It is undoubtedly too true, that even from the pulpit, which should ever be the seat of honesty and truth, advices are frequently given, and admonitions are urged, which, from the life and conversation, it is but too evident the speaker himself never experienced in their constraining power. Such appeals may be conveyed in the most choice and appropriate language, the reasoning may be forcible, and the arguments conclusive, and the eloquence of the man may excite the admiration and move the feelings, but, if there is wanting the honest and sincere sympathy of his own heart-felt experience, there is a defect which no charms of language, nor any apparent earnestness, can possibly supply. To reach the hearts of our fellow-men, God has made known the law, by following which alone we can hope to succeed. That law is—"From the heart to the heart;" and, like all the rest of God's established laws, it will not be set aside—it must not be ignored. Very foolish would be thought the individual who would put himself to much exertion and trouble and expense, under the idea of being able to overlook the law which determines that the stream shall not rise above the level of the source from which it flows. With as little reason can we expect, from the exhortations which proceed from the lips merely, the power required effectually to reach and influence the heart. It is true, God can bless even such exhortations as these. He can suspend His own laws, and effect His purposes, in ways contrary to the order established. At His command, the swollen torrents of the Jordan were turned backwards. But this manner of working we are not permitted to look for. We can hope for the blessing of God only in pursuance of the order and the means He has been pleased to reveal as His. And when men are directed to advise and persuade their fellow-men, if they would succeed it must be by spirit speaking to spirit. In other words, there must be sincere and living earnestness. If this be not so, while God may bless the effort, we have no promise to warrant us in expecting the blessing. There is a mysterious power connected with real earnestness of heart, which has often astonished the world. The most indifferent and thoughtless have frequently been constrained to observe this. When a man is truly in earnest, and known to be so, it is impossible to treat his admonitions with indifference. You may differ from his views; you may reject; you may be displeased: but, while listening to the appeals of the man who really believes and feels what he utters, you cannot make light of it. The most hardened scoffer will scarcely scoff at such a time. Would to God this truth were impressed on every heart, and that every teacher and every parent would earnestly seek to be thus prepared to exhort and counsel. How can we expect others to do, at our bidding, what we ourselves neglect, while the voice of God, enforced by all the eternal weight of promises and threatenings, commands our obedience. Changed, indeed, would soon be the whole aspect of the Christian world, were every professed Ambassador of Christ animated with those overpowering feelings of earnestness which having seen and felt the truth he utters would invariably produce, and thus be enabled honestly to say, "Knowing the terrors of the law, we persuade men." And need we say how different would be the state and character of the domestic circle, were the training given imbued with the deep, earnest anxiety for the salvation of the undying soul, that would render it daily more evident to the child that the parent knew what he spoke of, and felt its terrible solemnity. Thus was the distinguished servant of God, who speaks in our text, prepared to address the multitudes who stood around. He had seen and felt, and largely experienced, the wisdom and excellence of the choice he would persuade them to make. He would lead them in a path he had himself travelled. He knew the way. He found it a way of pleasantness and peace, and he was resolved to pursue it to the end. And while he could assure them of his present intentions, he could also point to the evidence of his past life, that his heart was decided in the service of God. Though exalted so highly, he never forgot, amid the triumphs of conquest and the plenitude of power, that he had an immortal soul to be saved. The multitude of his followers could not assist him in this. Alone he must labor in this work. Alone he must repair to the God of mercy for pardon, for grace, and for strength to overcome his spiritual enemies. Whatever others might do, he must not trifle with the interests of a coming world, nor relax his purpose, should he stand alone. He had seriously counted the cost, and his resolution was determined that no inducement would turn him aside. He would cleave to the Lord, not only while the multitudes of Israel worshipped with him, but, should they all unite and agree to forsake their God, he would, with the same confidence, pursue his way, and, with the same determination, adhere to the choice he had made. This is the language which religion, when truly embraced, must always speak. Every individual who has experienced the saving influence of the grace of God, is joined with Joshua in the holy resolution here avowed. He has felt that religion must be a personal matter in which he is concerned, and must engage and labor as if he alone were the object intended to be impressed and influenced by the truths revealed. We need scarcely say that when religion is really viewed in this light, the thoughts are turned away