

THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY.

[The following beautiful picture of a Christian's journey to his home is from the pen of one who has himself travelled the way he so affectingly describes. He shed a mild and heavenly lustre as he passed. The grace of God enabled him in a high station in Society to bear an honest and honourable testimony to the doctrines of the Cross, and to exhibit in his life the loveliness of Christian virtue, and the consolations of Christian truth.]

"The Christian is travelling on business through a strange country, in which he is commanded to execute his work with diligence, and pursue his course homeward with alacrity. The fruits which he sees by the wayside he gathers with caution; he drinks of the streams with moderation; he is thankful when the sun shines, and his way is pleasant; but if it be rough and rainy, he cares not much, he is but a traveller. He is prepared for vicissitudes; he knows that he must expect to meet with them in the stormy and uncertain climate of this world. But he is travelling to a 'better country,' a country of unclouded light and undisturbed serenity. He finds also by experience, that when he has had the least of external comforts, he has always been least disposed to loiter; and if for the time it be a little disagreeable, he can solace himself with the idea of his being thereby forwarded in his course. In a less unfavorable season he looks round with an eye of observation: he admires what is beautiful; he examines what is curious; he receives with complacency the refreshments set before him, and enjoys them with thankfulness. Nor does he churlishly refuse to associate with the inhabitants of the country through which he is passing. But he neither suffers pleasure, nor curiosity, nor society, to take up his time; and is still intent on transacting the business he has to

execute, and on prosecuting the journey he is ordered to pursue. He knows that to the very end of life, his journey will be through a country in which he has many enemies; that his way is beset with snares; that temptations throng around him, to seduce him from his course, or check his advancement in it; that the very air disposes to drowsiness, and that therefore to the very last it will be requisite for him to be circumspect and collected. Often, therefore, he examines whereabouts he is, how he has got forward, and whether or not he is travelling in the right direction. Sometimes he seems to himself to make considerable progress, sometimes he advances but slowly, too often he finds reason to fear that he has fallen backward in his course. Now he is cheered with hope, and gladdened by success; now he is disquieted with doubts, and damped by disappointments. Thus, while to nominal Christians religion is a dull uniform thing, and they have no conception of the desires and disappointments, the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, which it is calculated to bring into exercise; in the true Christian all is life and motion, and his great work calls forth the various passions of the soul. Let it not therefore be imagined that his is a state of unenlivened toil and hardship. His very labours are 'the labours of love;' if 'he has need of patience,' it is 'the patience of hope;' and he is cheered in his work by the constant assurance of present support and of final victory. Let it not be forgotten that this is the very idea given us of happiness by one of the ablest examiners of the human mind; 'a constant employment for a desired end, with the consciousness of continual progress.' So true is the Scripture declaration, that 'godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.'" — *Wilberforce*.