

the Jordan and triumphed over the many powerful nations that were leagued to oppose their possession of the Promised Land. Through one unbroken career of conquest he led their march, until now they and their families were rejoicing in their rich inheritance. But, not only as their great and valiant chief did they look up to him with the strong feelings of long-trying attachment and confidence; they knew him also as the man of God. With sincere affection, mingled with deep reverence, they recognized his divine commission as the distinguished servant of their Great King. Never could they forget that memorable day, when, in the holy attitude of prayer, they saw him raise his eyes to heaven, and, in the full confidence of faith, command the sun to stop in his course until the enemies of his God were destroyed. Far too deep and too strong for utterance must have been the emotions that filled every heart. They stood, for the last time, face to face with that aged and mighty warrior—that holy and honored man of God. He called them together to give them his parting counsel. He did much for them. They knew and felt it. For their welfare he labored. In their prosperity he rejoiced. But he can labor for them no longer. His days of service are ended; and all that remains is to leave them his solemn and dying charge.

Never was a multitude of people gathered in circumstances better fitted to dispose them seriously to listen; and we find these circumstances had the effect we would anticipate. Joshua, having reminded them of what the Lord had done for themselves and for their fathers, puts the solemn question, Were they willing and resolved to cleave to His worship, and serve Him as their own God? The effect of this earnest appeal was, that all the multitude exclaimed, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods." They would express their horror at the very thought of the guilt, the ingratitude and the impiety of forsaking the God of their fathers, who showed, in their behalf, so many proofs and wonders of His might and love. They were ready to make any promises, and take the most solemn vows, to continue steadfast and true. But the aged servant of God knew them better than they knew themselves. He had reason to fear that many in that vast multitude spoke from the mere influence of excited feelings, and that, trusting in these feelings, they were liable to be deceived. He therefore admonishes them to be honest and faithful in this matter of life and death. They must count the cost. The service of the living God had its difficulties from which nature would shrink back, and its self-denials and hardships too, which would put their strength to many a painful trial. "The Lord is a jealous God." He would not overlook their transgressions. The least countenance given to other gods would incur His terrible displeasure. The emotions and the feelings

which the solemn occasion and the solemn address just delivered had called into exercise, prepared them, as they themselves imagined, to do and to endure whatever might be encountered; but, alas! while these emotions were, at the moment, very strong, they did not expel from the heart that leaning towards false gods with which, it seems, many of them were chargeable. We hear no grief expressed; we see no sorrow and anguish of spirit for the grievous sin of which they were already guilty, in rendering at least partial worship to other gods. All their resolutions, and all their zeal, point to services in the future. The present time and present duty are lost sight of. Ah! how fairly, in this, did they represent the conduct of multitudes of professing Christians. When the feelings are moved, and the thoughts of death overshadow the mind, promises and resolutions and vows are abundant, but the state of the heart is overlooked. The love of sin remains unmolested. Present duty—surrendering the heart now to God—is neglected, and, instead of being found, feebly, it may be, but yet sincerely, laboring to do the work of God, the whole strength of these religious feelings exhausts itself in giving utterance to the fair sounding, but generally deceptive and fatal words, "We will serve the Lord." We are going to do so. To the apparently sincere and earnest declaration of the assembled tribes, Joshua replied: "Ye cannot serve the Lord." Our surprise to hear language so discouraging from him, on so solemn an occasion, is removed when we discover that already many of them were serving another master. It was impossible to serve both. If desirous to engage acceptably in the service of the living God, the very first step required was to put away the strange gods that were among them. Otherwise, their profession and their promises would but aggravate their guilt. They must look this solemn fact in the face, and, in view of it, make up their minds. Divided affections are, in reality, always on the side of the world, and opposed to God. Joshua cannot command their decision. The movements and decisions of the heart are beyond the reach of human authority. He can only reason with and persuade, and give the testimony of his own life-long experience, and the conclusion to which that experience led him, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." During his long and arduous labors, he found, in the living God, a place of refuge in every danger, and solace to his anxious soul in every trouble. He found His service reasonable and just and good.

In further speaking from these words, we will confine our remarks to two or three particulars to be noticed in the resolution here referred to; and

First, you will observe that this resolution has reference, especially, to himself personal.