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"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON,

By the Rev. Alexander McLean, Belfast,
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"But as for me and my house, we will serve
the Lord."—JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

THERE is scarcely any man so reckless and hardened as not to feel, to some extent, serious and solemnized while listening to the last words and the parting counsels of the dying. There is something in the position of the man who is standing on the confines of the eternal world, that is fitted to impress, with solemn awe, those who then stand near him. The dark clouds of death are thickening around his couch, and in their sable and dreary folds he will soon be hidden for ever from our view. We behold that countenance and we hear that voice for the last time. We cannot but attend. We cannot forget the feeble words which express the last thoughts and wishes of our dying brother. Such are the feelings with which we approach any of our neighbors, when the hand of death is visible; but these feelings must surely be strengthened in proportion to the love we cherish towards the individual thus about to be removed, the benefits we received at his hands, and the respect and reverence with which we have been long accustomed to regard him. Solemn, indeed, is the hour—it is one that shall never be forgotten—when the affectionate child stands by the dying couch of his beloved parent, and receives the parting advice and blessing. The words then spoken will retain their hold, and no length of time, nor recklessness of indulgence, can

entirely efface them. With feelings not unlike the emotions of the affectionate child, will the aged and tried veteran enter the chamber and hear the last words of his dying chief. The past is all vividly present to his thoughts. The renowned exploits, the many daring achievements, and the fatherly interest he felt in the safety and welfare of his followers, are all passing in review as the eye is fixed on that once stalwart and noble form, but now breaking down under the strokes of death. When the tried veterans are summoned to take one last look, and to hear, for the last time, the well-known voice that so often cheered them on as the foe advanced, O, what are the emotions which heave in every breast! Every ear is strained to catch the feeble utterances which convey the undying affection of the departing spirit. There is but one feeling:—sooner encounter the enemy on the bloodiest field, than miss one broken sentence, scarcely audible, from the dying lips. Apart from the feelings which the dearest ties of nature inspire, there are, perhaps, none stronger than those existing on the part of the old veteran soldier towards his valiant and victorious chief, excepting the feelings which subsist between the aged minister of God and those whom he has been the instrument of leading to Christ, and to the victories and triumphs of Faith. Place these two relations together, and then you have some idea of the solemn scene to be witnessed on the occasion to which the words of our text refer. The tribes of Israel were now summoned to hear the last counsels of Joshua, their divinely-appointed and great chief, under whose banner they crossed