

it would clothe its members in the habiliments of mourning. I was afraid to tell this for a long time, but finally I was enabled to warn them of the danger of so doing, lest in a moment I would be snapped from among them, or if not I, some one else. But the day is far spent, and the night is at hand.

Prov. iv. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

The heart of man is his worst part before it be regenerate, and the best afterwards: it is the seat of principles and fountain of actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it. The greatest difficulty in conversion is to win the heart to God, and the greatest difficulty after conversion is to keep the heart with God. Here lies the stress of religion; this makes the way to life a narrow way, and the gate of heaven a straight gate. Direction and help in this great work is the scope and sum of this text, wherein we have,

1. An exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence."
2. The reason or motive enforcing it, "For out of it are the issues of life."

In the exhortation I shall consider,

1. The matter of the duty.
2. The manner of performing it.
 1. The matter of the duty, "Keep thy heart." Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body, "the first that lives, and the last that dies; but, by heart in a metaphor, the scripture sometimes means some particular noble faculty of the soul. Here we are to take it more generally for the whole soul, or inner man; for look what the heart is to the body, that the soul is to the man; and what health is to the heart, that holiness is to the soul. The state of the whole body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the heart, and the everlasting state of the whole man upon the good or ill condition of the soul. And,