

ness or the gain, if the soul were asleep. Assuredly the blessedness of the righteous after death, consists in their having entered heaven ; in being with the Lord ; beholding the King in his beauty. Look across the flood of Jordan, and see the happy soul plant its foot on the heavenly shore ; the land of ceaseless joy and of deathless love. Are they blessed ? Then the death-path may be dark, the vestibule long and dreary, but it leads into the temple of heaven. Are they blessed ? Then the shadows of death flee away, and the music of heaven fills the soul.

All the dead are not blessed. The state of those who lived without God is sad and solemn. The portion of the wicked is endless ruin, deep despair. We warn those who are yet living out of Christ ; trusting not their soul's salvation to him whose arm is strong to save. Perhaps aroused to some degree of feeling, you say, let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. Remember you must live the life of the righteous in order to die his death. It is truth alone that can bear up the soul amid the swellings of Jordan : the truth in Jesus. This sun shines in beauty all through the day of grace, and does not cease till it sets behind the dark mountains of eternal despair. Put not off considering what the gospel makes known,—the way to live, the way to die. The longer you delay the danger increases. Hasten then to live, by accepting the offer of salvation. Believe on Jesus.

It is not by any mere man, that we can be made ready to die. The hand of a priest cannot put a passport to heaven into our hands, we must have truth in our hearts. Christ, as our redeeming priest, and all prevailing mediator we trust, and then we are in the Lord, and so are blessed in life, in death, and through eternity. Observe,

II.—The state of peace and reward to which they have gone : “That they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” The passage gives us a view of the future, and shows the influence which the present bears on it. There is a state of peace and reward to which the beloved of the Lord have departed. We get a glimpse of glory, in the expression, “they rest from their labors.” Earth is the scene of toil ; heaven, of peace and rest. “There is a rest that remaineth for the people of God.” We gather thus what earth is, and what heaven shall prove to the faithful soul. To the heart that is a stranger here, the cares, perplexities, hardships, sins, sufferings and sorrows of earth are toil ; but there is a rest from all those in the home above. The beggar at the rich man's gate is carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Life's light afflictions past, the far more exceeding, even the eternal weight of glory is enjoyed. The source of mourning is dried up ; suffering now is unfelt, the throne is possessed, for if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. Sorrow is unknown. “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Victory is theirs ! they rest from the fatigues of war, and wear an immortal crown. To the high estate for which they struggled, they have risen ; the height of satisfaction is gained ; they bloom in the celestial paradise. Shall we then, who may be left behind, mourn for them as if they had exchanged happiness for pain, satisfaction for disquietude, rest for toil ?

“Would ye weep for the bird that hath found its nest ?  
 Would ye weep for the child on its mother's breast ?  
 Would ye weep for the flower from its calyx burst ?  
 For the fevered lip that hath quenched its thirst,  
 For the mariner snatched from the stormy billow,  
 And reposing in peace on his sweet home pillow.”

From all the sorrows and pains of time, the righteous have departed, let us therefore look up since their redemption hath come ; safely arrived at home, they dwell in the midst of all conceivable enjoyment, encircled by the arms of everlasting love.