Sermon.

"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."—JOSHUA XXIII. 14.

ND, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth:" and while this is the case with me, so is it with the aged before me: "It is appointed unto men once to die." "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." As soon as we drew our infant breath we began to die; we all are tending toward the earth; like our first parents we are "of the earth, earthy:" therefore it is said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." We are just like men in a ship at sea; whether we sit or lie down, walking or standing, waking or sleeping, whatever we may be about, we still move on to the destined point; time stays not, tarries not, but carries us on her wings to the end of our race; nothing can stay its hand or impede its progress, but onward we move. The longer we live the fewer days we have to live: as to how long, that is

uncertain: one thing is certain, death is on the road. As

certain as we draw the first breath, as we step into this wilderness world, so death sets out in pursuit of us; there is no escaping him; with unwearied and never-faltering steps he follows on until he takes us by the throat, and we become his victim. If we turn to the days of old we find some lived to be three, five, eight hundred and more years of age; but death never failed in his pursuit of them; on, on he followed, until at last he threw them into the dust from which they first came forth: their faith could not deliver them from dying; their love and holiness did not exempt them from death. Abraham, the father of the faithful. yielded to death; and David, "the man after God's own heart," gathers up his feet in his bed and dies. Joshua, the leader of the people, who led them through the wilderness into Canaan, who stood so fast for his God while others turned back and spake disrespectfully of himself and the promises, we find even Joshua died, "And they buried him in his inheritance in Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim." Moses, who had so much to do with God that in descending from the Mount his face shone so that the people could not look upon him, for the glory of his countenance, of him we read (Deuteronomy xxxiv.): "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, and God buried him in the land of Moab: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre

unto this day." Noah, who saw the old world perish in the waters, while he rode safely in his boat, which neither rocks could split, nor could it founder, of him we read (Genesis ix.): "And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years: and all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died." Samson, the strong one, who with the jaw-bone of an ass slew a thousand men, fell into the hands of death, and crumbled to dust. Solomon, the wisest man, finds he must lay down his pen, stop his tongue, and become silent in death. Thus we find the truth of my text, and how applicable it is to you and me; the steps we have trod we shall tread no more; the days, weeks, months, and years that have passed away have each and all drawn us nearer to the end of time, and we prove that "we are going this day the way of all the earth." Now let me ask, Where are we going? We are all bound somewhere. "Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it, while broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." Which way are we travelling? where are we? Where death leaves us there judgment finds us: these are truths, divine realities; stubborn facts: Atheists cannot deny it; nor can Deists refute it: "We are going the way of all the earth this day." "The spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth, but the spirit of man goeth

upward." Now, will it be said to you, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"? or will you have to say to the rocks and the mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb"? Are you destined to everlasting bliss, or are you hurrying on to eternal destruction with the devil and his angels?

Death is coming to each of us; however young you may be it has spoken to you; you have heard its voice. "Nay," say you; but, Yes, I say; you have heard its voice. Have you never felt a pain? a pain in the head, it may be: or a momentary shooting through your body? that is the voice of death, saying, "I am in pursuit of you; there's a warning for you." O, then, to be able to say,

"I feel this mud-walled cottage shake,
And long to see it fall:
That I my willing flight may take
To Thee," my God, my all."

Paul says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," and what more brittle than an earthen vessel? Let it fall from your hands, and to pieces it goes in a minute, however costly it may be. Although we may have the grace of God, the love of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ, in our hearts, all these things together will not secure our clay tabernacle from falling to pieces and going to dust: God may re-model it

and make it "like unto His glorious body," to shine in eternity with ineffable light, to His honour and glory; but as it comes from our fallen parents it is nevertheless an earthen vessel.

"A fever or a blow may shake

Our reason's boasted rule;
And of the wisest genius make
A madman or a fool."

Then "what is our life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth but a little while, then vanishes away." Death is saying to each and every one of us, "Quit it, quit it." While we are going the way of all the earth, and the Son of God shall come by His servant Death, saying, "Behold, I come"; O, to be able to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." To be like servants waiting for their Lord, with our lamps trimmed, and our shoes upon our feet, having nothing to do but to die. Seeing then that none can dispute, or dare for a moment question, neither would you attempt to deny the truth of these things, O, to realize what the great Apostle writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Now, did God ever give you any satisfaction, persuasion, or assurance that you have a building of God, eternal in the heavens? I think I hear some say, "Ah, if I did but know that:"

"If I could say this God is mine:

"If I could say this God is mine;
If I could feel His glory shine:
I'd tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that earth calls good or great."

Hearken to what the Apostle says again: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love His appearing." While, then, you are "going this day the way of all the earth," are you looking out for Him? do you love His appearing? Is "the desire of your soul toward Him, and to the remembrance of His name"? Can you say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee"? Then while you are going the way of all the earth, you are going the way of all His saints, that is, walking in the way of His steps: you are going in the way of prayer; that is the way to go. If a man were to tell us he was going to Brighton, and started on his journey by going north, we should say that was the wrong way. Which way are you going? who do you expect to find at the journey's end? If you are going the way to heaven, then, it is declared that "In keeping His commandments there is great reward:" "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." You have fewer days to live than at first, seeing that you have lived so many already: they are all gone, and cannot be recalled, and some of us are not sorry for it; we do not want to live them over again. I have had a good God, a loving and faithful God; I only wish I had loved and served Him better, but I hope I shall be with Him at

last, and praise and love Him to my soul's desire, with an untiring tongue. He has far exceeded and outdone all I could ever ask or think in this world: I would say to His honour a hundred times more than I could ever have hoped, looked for, or expected; but I have no desire to go back five, two, or even one year; the time past of my life suffices me; those years are gone, nor do I regret it; no, not in the least. How is it with you, my friends? Do you know that you are going God's way? (that is the way you must go if going to heaven) and do you know, at times, what it is for God to come and meet you in the way? Sometimes He meets us in one way, sometimes in another. He often disappoints His people when they come to His house, hoping to meet Him; this makes them hang down the head; it weakens their knees; their hands droop; but they often find when He does not meet them in His house during the day, He meets with them at night when on their knees in prayer. Again: sometimes He will not meet with them when they call upon Him in prayer day by day; they try to get near Him, but cannot; but then He will meet with them in His house under the preached Word. At other times they may not find Him, either while at prayer, or in His house, but He will meet with them in communing with His saints. Now while the tabernacle of your flesh is decaying, do you know

what it is for God to meet with you in any of these ways? if so, as sure as God liveth, and His Word is true, He will meet with you at the last and say, "Come thou blessed of the Lord, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." "I will see you again"—said the Son of God, and He is as good as His Word; He means what He says—"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Therefore, we may indeed say, in the larguage of one who not very long ago stood up in this pulpit (dear Mr. Philpot, I mean), "It is better to die than to live," and to enter into the joy of the Lord, as saith the Scripture; "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

So, as we said before, however long our forefathers lived they all came to this finale; "And they died"; so that we may indeed say, "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" They were of the dust, and are gone to dust; while their spirits immortal live in heaven, their bodies sleep in the dust of the earth till the archangel's trump shall sound, when their sleeping dust, which at first was called out of and made from nothing, shall be united with their soul, and soul and body shall sing of that grace that called and preserved them here, took their

souls to heaven, took care of their bodies while slumbering in the dust, and now, soul and body being the purchase of Christ's blood, shall live to all eternity, to sing and praise. His name. What a mercy to feel as we come to the end that we do not regret we have got there, to feel that we have a home to go to, a God to receive us, Christ to live and reign with, heaven to enjoy, a crown to wear, eternal life to enjoy it, and shall have an immortal tongue and lungs to praise Him for it for ever. As I noticed before, "This day we are going the way of all the earth." Where are we going to? We are nearer our end than we were yesterday; the hour-glass of our life is fast running out. In what path are we walking? How do we stand before God? Will death be to us a kind porter to lead us into the heavenly city, or will it be a terror to our souls? Will it be

"Released from sin and sorrow here,
The conflict now is o'er,
And feasted well with heavenly cheer,
We live to die no more"?

Or will our poor soul fear to launch away, trembling at the fearful eternity before it, while the body fears and trembles at the cold grave to which it is shortly to be consigned?

"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth."
How joyfully Joshua looked at it, how he smiled at it, how he could rejoice in the prospect, and bless God he was so.

near the end. How do you feel? Is there anything in your soul that is looking to that end? Have you any hope to encourage you? Does your heart throb with desire, with anxiety, with earnest longings, and fervent cries to be landed safely where sin will no more trouble, where pain is unknown, and death is never heard of? Does the thought at times encourage your heart, cheer you as you travel along, that what is past is for ever gone, and there are fewer trials, sins, temptations, and disappointments yet to meet? Is there anything pleasant to you in the hope before you? Is there a feeling in your heart of love and affection? O, to see Him that was crowned with thorns, to gaze upon His beauty, swim in His love, and be like Him, and never more sin against Him; O, that I was there; O, that I was that happy man that shall behold His face in righteousness, and never grieve or offend Him, or bring guilt and trouble on my soul on account of indwelling sin, or outward walking in evil! Have you a place for Christ here? Is He the one thing that you desire to find? Is He the Pearl that you are in search of? Is He the one thing needful, and is this what you are in the pursuit of, what you desire to find, and pray to realize, though it may seem far too good, too great, and too far off for such a worthless, unworthy, sinful creature as you to hope and expect you will ever attain to, which brings

you to put your "mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope"? While your days keep fleeting away, and you feel there are less to come, does this feeling work in your heart,

"Prepare me, gracious God,
To stand before Thy face;
Thy Spirit must the work perform,
For it is all of grace"?

Does the substance of that prayer ever move up and down in your soul? While you see and feel your days are running out, and may soon come to an end, does this exercise your spirit, work in your mind, and bring this out of your heart, "Lord, make me right wherein I am wrong; do set me right if deceived; good God, open mine eyes, make me wise to salvation; whatever it may cost, let me realize and feel what it is to be saved"? Do these feelings run up and down in your soul, bring you on your knees before God, crying, "Guide me by Thy counsel, save my soul, and say to my heart, 'I am thy salvation,' ere death closes mine eyes in this life; that I may feel I have a God to go to, and a heaven to enjoy"? If this is the earnest desire of your heart, the prayer of your soul, that you may be found right at last, and have God's approbation and testimony that He has set you in the way of His steps; if you desire the pardon of your sins above all that can be named, a token for good above a monarch's crown; though weak may be your faith,

though vour hope may be dashed again and again by. fear and doubt, though but little love may possess your soul at times, as sure as God liveth, before whom I stand, "There is a good thing in your heart towards the Lord God of Israel," and your end will be peace. It will be the best day of your life when the Son of God comes with death, and says, "Behold, I come quickly"; for you "to die will be gain." You will indeed realize it is a good thing to seek after God, a blessed thing to be made partaker of His grace. When you come to die, you will find a grainof that grace to be worth more than mountains of gold, to enable you to meet death with joy. By nature, my friends, there is no desiring death. By nature, we do not want God, Christ, grace, or any heavenly things. If there is something in your heart that desires this, seeks after, longs and prays for it, it is grace in your heart crying for grace.

> "Fools never raise their thoughts so high— Like brutes they live, like brutes they die."

Therefore God hath made you to differ; you may say in the words of the good man before us, "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, I am going to find that which I have sought, to realize that which I have longed for, and to enjoy that which I shall never lose." You will find that my text will stand firm on your side for your comfort, profit, and real

good, when at times you cannot believe it, and question the whole of it. And at death, though you may not have power to speak or faith to lay hold of the comfort of it, God will stand fast and true.

Therefore Joshua tells us, "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls." What a mercy to be at a point! He does not say, "Ye have heard about it, Ye have seen it, Ye acquiesce in it," but he says, "Ye know it." As Job said, "You may call me a hypocrite if you like, you may say I am a deceived man; you may say I have been a secret sinner and God has exposed me to the world as a wicked man, but I know that my Redeemer liveth." What a mercy to be well persuaded about the matter. There are many that hover about the palaces of Her Majesty the Queen, and that are engaged in her establishments, that she never speaks to, that she has no converse with, nor does she ever condescend to take them by the hand. So, my friends, how many attend the house of God, hover round His tabernacles, so to speak, and come into His courts, that know nothing savingly of Him, that have no sweet fellowship with Him, nor can they say with the great Apostle, "I know in whom I have believed"; "Our conversation is in heaven"; or, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." Although

those I before mentioned are on the establishment of Her Majesty, they are not exalted to any place, or cared for in any particular sense: they have their wages, their food and raiment, and that is all. But there are others she has converse with, would appear for in their trials, and again and again promotes to places of dignity and trust, because . they are near to her, and have to do with her personally and individually. Now what a great thing it is to have to do with the living God, unlike Ahimaaz, who when he ran with tidings to David, and the king said to him, "How goes the matter, is the young man Absalom safe?" replied, "When Joab sent thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not whence it was." So how many, my friends, when they come to die, may say, "We have heard talk of Jesus, His blood and righteousness, of the Father's boundless love and mercy, and of a blessed Spirit that witnesses, but we know not what it is." God grant that you may not be found among those, but that you may be able to say in the words of the great Apostle, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

"Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed." O, what a Master to serve, what a God to have to do with! What a loving, gracious, bountiful,

faithful Lord God, "that not one thing has failed of all that God promised, but all has come to pass unto you." I will speak for His honour and glory with my dying breath, and as a witness before Him at this time. When He tried me sorely, pushed me close and hard as far as regards the things of this life, I was willing to sacrifice and lose everything for the good of His name, His cause, and His people; though He tried my faith and love sharply, I never repented of serving Him, nor regretted having such a Master. I was willing, and He knew it, to serve Him, though nothing came of it; that I might tell of that grace that saved me from the burning pit, and of that Jesus that could save ungodly wretches from hell; of grace that would work in them, of the Father's boundless love, and the sweet Spirit that would perform God's good pleasure towards them. Also that I might lift up God's dear Son in this wicked and dark town. that He might get a revenue of praise to Himself, and crowns to His dear Son, whatever He might make me pass through. I never repented of His wages, or was sorry I ever enlisted in His cause. Thanks to His grace that kept me from running away ashamed of my Master, and a rebel to His cause and truth. Therefore I can speak as a witness for God. You will never find another such Master, such a good God, nor one so loving as He. What pleasure I have

felt it to serve Him, thousands of times. What an honour I have felt it, hundreds of times, that He would take such a poor earthen vessel as I, and put His treasure in it, and say, "Go, and speak unto the people all the words of this life." How I bless Him that He should use my mouth to show forth His praise. I never looked for such wages as He has given me, I never expected to have such honour put upon me. He knew I was willing to serve Him if He gave me but bread to eat and water to drink, nor should I ever have repented of that service, though my flesh disliked it, would have opposed it, and the pride of my heart would have quailed at it; yet in my inmost spirit I felt I was willing to serve Him in any way He might be pleased to use me. So what do we find? The truth of what my text says. "Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you."

Now what has He promised? He says, "Your bread shall be certain." What a good thing that is. Then, "Your water shall be sure." What a good thing that is. How many have died of hunger or thirst. "I will never leave nor forsake you." What thousands have been forsaken of their friends when poverty stared them in the face, or when affliction has surrounded them. How they have been forsaken at death, when the things of this life could not keep

off his cold hand; but we have proved that God will never leave nor forsake. He has guarded us by day, watched over us by night, and has not forsaken us in sickness. How often I have felt, let God be your Refuge and Strength in the days of your prosperity and health; if He is your confidence and hope then, He will never forsake you in adversity. He will stand by, own, and honour you then, though father and mother forsake, and all other friends look shy. Many will acknowledge us in prosperity, that will pass by us with scorn in adversity, and may say, "They should not have acted so foolishly; they should have been more careful in their prosperity, and laid up like the ant for the winter; therefore, it has justly come upon them; who can feel for such people, who, when they had an opportunity, did not care for themselves"? God does not forsake us. If you make Him your Friend in prosperity, and have an interest in His dear Son, then what a Friend you will find Him in adversity; how closely He will stick to you, how fast He will abide by you, while you will prove that He will preserve you by His power, pardon your sins by His mercy and goodness, and direct you by His wisdom; you will find Him allsufficient in the time of your trouble. What does God say? "Ye are My witnesses." Therefore I stand forth as a witness for God. So says my text, "Ye know"—it is no

vain thing, no fiction, no trumped-up lie, no deception; we hold out no ignis fatuus of our minds, no delusion, no trick of the devil. "Ye know in all your hearts," not in your brains, not in your imaginations; you have tasted and know the things in your hearts, you are living witnesses, it is part of yourselves, you stand or fall by the truth of it, "that not one thing has failed." Here is a Master to serve! We cannot say of any other, they have never deceived us; we cannot say of the world, it has never deceived us; we cannot say of all our friends, they have never deceived us; we cannot say that we ever trusted ourselves, and were not deceived. But whoever trusted in God, and was confounded? Whoever trusted in Him, and was deceived? "Not one thing has failed." God came with a solemn appeal to Israel at one time, "Have I been a wilderness unto you? have any of you opened My doors for naught? testify against Me." "O, My people, remember what Balak, king of Moab, consulted; and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord." What did Balaam do? He tried by all the craft of hell, by all the ingenuity of his mind, and by the sacrifices he offered, to move God's heart from that people. He tried with all his enchantments to move the mind of God and prevent one blessing from coming on that rebellious people; but he declared after all, "God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent; He hath blessed the people, and I cannot reverse it; God stands fast to them, base as they are; He stands close to them in their adversity, against all the craft of hell and men, and I cannot reverse it." Therefore say the words of my text, "Not one thing has failed." What did God promise that has not failed? The loving-kindness and oneness of Hismind to His people.

"Not one thing has failed of all the good things." Another good thing is affliction and trial at times; not to flesh and blood, but some of us have proved with the Psalmist, "It is good that I have been afflicted." What has it done? It has let out the life-blood of our carnality and worldly-mindedness, and brought us to consider our latter end. Therefore it is said, "O, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." By affliction we have come to consider our ways. "What is it for? Where are we? What have we been about? What have we got to die with? How do matters stand before God?" At times it has made us search our spirits more: it has been like a lump of ice to our proud and carnal hearts to keep down that fire; it has deadened us to the world, and brought God and our consciences together.

Therefore we have found that to be a good thing which we have tried to avoid, but God loves us too well to allow us to avoid it: what have we found, therefore? "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." "Though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Then it is a "good thing." To tell you of all the "good things" I should have to live another seventy years; and although I should not be tired, so far as regards that, to tell you of the good things that God has laid up for them that fear Him, yet I do not desire to live another seventy years to do so. I have something greater in expectation; there is that which my spirit longs to enjoy, that I am pressing forward in hope and expectation to receive, which often brings me to cry out, "Hold out, faith and patience."

Therefore says my text, "There has not one good thing failed." It is a good thing to be humbled by sin. You may depend upon this, if God has humbled you for your sins. He will "lift you out of the dust and from the dunghill,

and lift you up." "When there is a casting down, then men! shall say, There is litting up, and He shall save the humble person." Now to have your heart broken and humbled in the dust for sin, what a good thing that is indeed, because God "heals the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Where the heart is broken for sin, it makes a dwelling-place for the Most High. "To this man will I look and with him will I dwell, even with him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." It is a "good thing," for it brings us to need the balmy blood of the Son of God, the healing plaster of His grace, and the skilfulness of His hands to bind up the wounds. However you may smart, lament, grieve, and cry, it is a good thing that brings you to seek the face of God in prayer, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great; save me, and I shall be saved." What can be a better thing than anything that draws sinners to God? Necessity on account of what we feel driving us. and His mercy and kindness opening the way and drawing us to Him, brings us to His footstool. It is a "good thing." How many thousands have been there, and have had to bless God for bringing them there.

Now what a "good thing" is a hope in God's mercy. As a good man was reading to me a fortnight or three weeks ago from one of the old divines, "A whisper from heaven.

heard in hell would be a heaven to them indeed." "They that go down to the pit cannot hope for God's truth."

"In vain to heaven they lift their eyes,
For guilt, a heavy chain
Still drags them downwards through the skies,
To darkness, fire, and pain."

Not a whisper from heaven of any hope or deliverance from that pit of anguish ever breathes over that dismal place; under the distress of it they "gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven." What a good thing, then, is a hope in God's mercy. Has God ever encouraged you to hope? Has no word of comfort ever lighted on your soul? Has no light ever shone on your dark path? Have your fears and doubts never been removed for a minute? "Yes," say you, "sometimes it is with me as with Bunyan's pilgrim, 'I think I see.' Something springs up when hearing, reading, or praying. 'Hope thou in God.' Who can tell? It may be that He will save me." It is a "good thing"; God will never fail you; you will find that "good thing" is grace in your heart, it is glory begun in your soul; it is worth millions of worlds. You will find this to be true: as God has given you grace, He will crown it with glory. He will not fail thee. If you look into His blessed Word, you will see small beginnings in the hearts of many, but He never failed. When you pass through the waters of

trials and difficulties, He will never fail nor forsake you; He will carry on the work in your heart amidst all the opposition within, and the power of the devil and the world. The "good thing" He has promised is this, "Having given you grace, I will give you glory; I will fulfil the desire of them that seek Me." The "good thing" He has promised is this, "They shall praise the Lord that seek Him." But I must give it up, for seventy years more would fail to tell it all. For nearly six thousand years men have been trying to tell the good things God has promised, but they have never got to the height, depth, breadth, or length; they can only say, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." What He promised the Israelites, notwithstanding their unbelief and proneness to wander, He never failed in, but He stood fast and true. "Testify against Me," said He, if you can. "All has come to pass," said Joshua, "not one thing hath failed thereof." Then we may say, "Faithful is He that has promised, who also will do it." O, that He would work faith in our hearts to trust Him, love to cleave to Him, and patience to wait upon Him, and He will perform the "good things" He has promised concerning us. - Amen.