

COMMUNION SERMONS,

PREACHED AT SEVERAL PLACES.

SERMON I.

PROV. x. 4.—*But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

THERE be four beasts which Solomon commends in the thirtieth chap. of the Prov. from the 25th verse to the 29th. And though they be exceeding little, yet they are exceeding wise: each one of which beasts doth teach us a spiritual and heavenly lesson. And the *first* beast that he commends to us, is the ant, and it may teach Christians that excellent lesson of Christian diligence, that though they be little and not strong, ‘yet they provide their meat in the summer;’ therefore Solomon presseth the sluggard to consider the ant, to provoke him to diligence. And there is that *second* beast he commends, which is the conies; that may teach Christians that excellent exercise of humility and dependence; which though they be not strong, but feeble creatures, ‘yet make they their house in the rocks.’ And there is that *third* beast, and that is the locust; which may teach Christians that excellent lesson of unity; ‘which, though they have no king, yet they go forth by bands.’ There is a *fourth* beast that he commends, which is the spider; which may teach Christians that excellent lesson of heavenly-mindedness, though a despicable thing, ‘yet taketh hold with her hands, and is in king’s palaces.

Now, I think there is nothing so needful to be pressed, as that excellent doctrine of Christian diligence. It was an ancient and excellent observation of that master in experience, in the eighteenth of the Proverbs, 7th verse. ‘He also that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster.’

I may give the Christians of this time, that reproof which Pharaoh unjustly gave to the Israelites, ‘Nay, but ye are idle, ye are idle, and do nothing.’ O expectants of the crown! do you think to win to heaven, doing so little as you do? Do ye think to win the crown sleeping, without wrestling? It is the diligent Christian that gets Benjamin’s portion. It is he that is like the merchant’s ship, that brings his goods from afar.

Now, to come to the words; we have Solomon in this, pointing out to us as on a board, slothfulness and diligence; the one in its deformity, and the other in its beauty and excellency: that taking a view of both, we may hate the one; and pursue after the other.

Now in speaking to this soul-enriching duty, I shall not stand to shew, that it is the Christian's duty to be exceeding diligent. Is it not commanded, in Eccles. ix. 10. That 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might?' and in Heb. vi. 11, 12. 'And we desire, that every one of you do show the same diligence, that ye be not slothful.' And likewise it is pressed many times in order to some particular duties. As also we perceive, not only are there commands, but practices of saints in scripture, that do press this home. Was not Anna a diligent Christian, who continued eighty-four years in the temple, serving God with fasting and prayers, night and day? I doubt much if there be such a women in Edinburgh * as she: yea, I doubt much if it be the practice of any to come up that length. Was not David a diligent Christian, Psalm lv. 17. 'Evening and morning, and at noon, will I call upon God?' Neither shall I stand to point out, what the duty of Christian diligence is. We conceive, in short, that it comprehends these four things in it: *First*, For a Christian to obey all known commands, that there be not a duty he knows, but he should endeavour to give obedience to it. *Secondly*, It comprehends this, that a Christian should lay hold on every opportunity for doing of this duty, that where there is an opportunity presented to pray, it should not be slighted, but embraced, knowing 'that every thing is beautiful in its time.' And know you not, that oftentimes God calls to prayer when our own hearts call us away from it? *Thirdly*, That a Christian should not only embrace opportunities when they are offered, but we should seek after an opportunity, when there is none presented to us: some will not embrace opportunities presented, but if we were diligent, we would pursue them when they are not presented to us. And there is that, *lastly*, comprehended in Christian diligence, for a Christian to over-go all impediments that lie in the way of doing duty. Some of us are glad of a diversion to hinder us from our duties, as of a hire; but the diligent Christian will not easily take an impediment, he will 'leap over a wall, and break through a troop,' to set about that duty God calls for. And in speaking to this duty in the text, I shall lay down these six or seven propositions: *First*, I shall propose some considerations to press home that excellent and soul-enriching duty of Christian diligence; and the first consideration is taken from the text.

Diligence is a duty that makes rich; therefore be much about this duty: take Solomon's verdict of it, in Prov. xiii. 4. 'The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.' Would you know why the Christians of this time are so much put to it, to cry, 'Their

* This Sermon was preached in Edinburgh.

leanness, their leanness?" Would you know why the Christians are so much in sighing and going backward, and counting that their life is spent here in vain, they are not ascending as pillars of smoke? Even this, they are not diligent. O Christians! when was it that you rose up in the silent watches of the night, to pursue after an absent Christ? It is this would make you rich, with the increase of your diligence. Diligence would make a Christian rich in experience; diligence would make a Christian rich in love; diligence would make a Christian rich in humility; yea, it would make him rich in all the spiritual things in heaven. I may compare diligence 'to Joseph, it is fruitful by a well, whose branches hang over the wall.' Nay, if you were diligent, I know not what you might not win to.

The *second* consideration to press you to Christian diligence, is this, O Christians! 'the night is coming, therefore be diligent, wherein none will see to work.' And in pressing this, I shall amplify those considerations, by adding these three. And, *first*, our time to remain in this valley of misery is but short; therefore be diligent. O Christians! what know ye, but this may be the eleventh hour of the day with you, and but one hour to be spent? When saw thou thy hour-glass last? Therefore be diligent. And upon the improvement of this, much time as thou hast, depends thy everlasting estate. *Secondly*, And, moreover, if thou mispend it, it is impossible to recover thy loss again, Eccles. ix. 10. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.' So if once thou pass the line of time, it is impossible to recover thy estate: Therefore while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts, but hearken to his voice.' Ay, there are some hearing me, that when they shall be standing on the utmost line betwixt time and eternity, that shall remember that which that man spake, and shall be constrained to cry out, 'O call time again! O call time again!' But it shall be a needless request: therefore be diligent. *Thirdly*, There is this amplification, and it is, that our night is approaching. And believe it, by all appearance this is Scotland's evening; yea, by all appearance and probability, it is Edinburgh's evening; I mean, it is the evening of the gospel, and of the great and excellent offers of grace to us. O! but, I think, there are great and infallible tokens of Christ's departure from us. And I shall give you these eight or nine evidences, that it is likely Scotland's or Edinburgh's evening is at hand. *First*, Are not the shadows waxing long? And do you not know, that when the sun is near setting, the shadows wax long? And is not our religion of this generation, vanished to shows and shadows, we

loving Christ in our tongues, but entertaining idols in our hearts? O! if we were no more in profession than in reality, I doubt much if we should then be known to be Christians. We have Christ's coat among us, and cast lots for it, but we want the excellent graces of the Spirit; now, I pose you on it, are not the shadows waxing long? O! where is all the ancient substance of godliness, that pure religion, and undefiled, that religion of the Christians of old times? I may say this, 'Deep waters pass away without great noise, but shallow brooks make great din;' more noise in the profession of religion, than piety in the practice. Alas! we have confined our religion of this defecting generation into our tongues. A *second* evidence of our evening approaching, is, Is not the heat of our day past? Is not this the cool of Scotland's evening? O! where is that zeal, that love? Where is that tenderness? Where is that moving of bowels in preaching and prayer, that was formerly in Scotland? Is not the heat of our day gone, and we partakers of the evening? O! believe it, much of our ancient zeal, love, tenderness and moving of bowels is gone, and evidences that Christ is going to depart. A *third* evidence, of our evening approaching is, are not persons ceasing from their labours and works? Then the night is coming. Now, I say, are not the Christians of this time idle, and cease much from their work? Which speaks our evening is stretched out upon us. O! where is that ancient diligence, that labour of love, that patience of hope, that sobriety of faith? O! do you think to win to heaven idly? Does not our ceasing from our work and labour, speak that our evening is stretched out upon us? A *fourth* evidence of our evening approaching is, the great inclination to sleep that is among us; do you not know, when folk have a great inclination to sleep, that the night is approaching? O Christians! you must detain Christ to-day. And I will say, O Christians! is there not a dreadful desire and inclination to sleep amongst us? And has not a dreadful deep sleep of security overtaken us? I think, we have drunken of the tree-roots, which Adam but eat the fruit of, and hereby we have forgotten our country. O Christians, does not your proneness to sleep, speak that your night is coming? A *fifth* evidence of our night approaching, is, doth not the creeping forth of wild beasts, the abounding of heresies, of unmortified corruptions, speak that our night is approaching? We may allude to that in Psalm civ. 20. 'Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. And there is a *sixth* evidence that our night is approaching, and that the long shadows of the evening are like to be stretched over us, and that is, the long continuance that the day of the precious gospel hath

had amongst us: when the sun has shined twelve hours amongst us, then it is near the setting, I am afraid this be our twelfth hour, and our sun is near to go down. And there is that *seventh* evidence that speaketh the night is approaching, and that is, the great contempt done to the Son of God, and the great undervaluing of the precious and excellent offers of the Son of God; we have no employment to give him, and must he not then be gone? I think, few would rend their clothes, if he should take his leave of us, and depart and be gone. I fear there be many that say in their hearts, 'We will have none of him.' And is not this a great dishonour and indignity done to the Prince of Life, that we should all despise his offer before we have life; and by so doing, afford to ourselves everlasting destruction, and continual separation from the blessed presence of God, without sudden and cordial remorse? It is my great fear, that it is a long time since a bill of divorcement was written in this place with many of us; I will not say so of all; but O! does not the contempt done to the Son of God, and the great slighting and undervaluing of his precious offers, speak that our night is approaching. And, *lastly*, there is this speaking evidence; Christ is on his way to depart, and that the shadows are stretched out, and that is, there is such a terrible darkness over the spirits of his own, and that darkness and confusion that has overtaken all, does not that proclaim, that our night is approaching. O! what dreadful ignorance of God is there in this place? O! what dreadful misapprehensions of God? O! the most part of our language, is it not the language of Sodom? Believe it, I think you pray for Christ's departure in your streets; and I am afraid your prayers shall be granted. If a tender Christian in a tender frame were coming among you, he would cry out, 'O sirs! where is the God of judgment, that takes not vengeance upon such folks inventions?' Now, I have not one word so much to be a door of hope, as that in Zech. xiv. 7. 'At evening time it shall be light.' May we not pray that prayer, if we may allude to that in Joshua x. 12. 'O sun, stand thou still in the mount Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon;' now, do not all these press home diligence upon us, that the long shadows of the everlasting evening is like to be stretched out over us?

A *third* consideration to press you to diligence, is, O Christians! you have a great work; therefore be diligent. Is not mortification a great work? Is not self-denial a great work? Is not a patient bearing of the cross a great work? Have you not a long journey to go? The way between nature and heaven is more than seven days journey; therefore be diligent. O Christians! will ye be frequently asking that question every day at

Christ, "shall I be benighted; shall I be benighted?" O where will ye take up your lodging, if Christ take it not up for you? I think, we propone that question to Christ, in Isa. xxi. 11. 'Watchman, what of the night is past, and what of it is to come? And they answered, morning cometh.'

A *fourth* consideration to press you to this excellent grace of diligence, and it is this, even from the great diligence and pains that the men of this world take to pursue their idols. O Christians! will you blush and be ashamed, when you see one compassing sea and land to gain a petty inheritance; and shall not you be as diligent in compassing an everlasting crown? O! shall the men of this world not only be wiser, but even more diligent in their generation than Christians. O that this holy contest were once begun. Shall those rise before day to purchase a vanity; and thou not prevent the dawning to obtain a crown. O! blessed is that Christian, that can, through diligence, stand on the top of Pisgah, and behold the promised land afar off.

A *fifth* consideration is, the diligent Christian is the overcomer. Would ye know what will help you to overcome your lusts and idols, even this, *be diligent*, Prov. xii. 24. 'The hand of the diligent shall bear rule.' Why are ye under tribute? Even because ye are not diligent, but slothful. Would ye know the reason why you are put to it day by day to cry out, 'O return my captivity as the rivers of the south?' even this, you are not diligent. I shall answer all your objections almost that you can make, by these three words, *be diligent, be diligent, be diligent.* There be some that are apt to question whether the devil's temptations, or his victories be most? O! what is the reason, that he never sooner assaults than he proves victorious: I shall give you this answer of it in your name, you are not diligent, you are not diligent.

A *sixth* consideration to press it, is the exceeding great advantage that attend it, and the disadvantages that attend the slothful. Slothfulness kills five; *first*, It kills convictions; we will go home from precious conviction sometimes convicted, but what do we with them; they die without any kind of blessed fruit, and slothfulness kills them all. *Secondly*, It kills many precious resolutions, vows, and covenants at preachings. Now will Christians go away with some good purposes, and holy resolutions: but we sleep them over, and slothfulness slays them all: it is the slothful Christian that is deceitful, and sweareth falsely. *Thirdly*, Slothfulness kills many precious desires after God, and the excellent things of heaven. Yea, *fourthly*, It kills many excellent motions of the Spirit. When Christ comes and knocks, and sends his messengers before him, why do we slight him?

That of the spouse, 'I have put off my coat, how can I put it on again: and I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' and so Christ goes away. And, *fifthly*, slothfulness kills many excellent enjoyments of God. When a Christian has win near God, would you know what it is that spreads a veil over the face of comely Christ? It is slothfulness. We fall asleep upon the bed of love, and let Christ depart without observation.

A *second* disadvantage of slothfulness is, it is the mother of all security: therefore Solomon says, in Prov. xix. 15. 'Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.' O! why are we like those 'who sleep upon the top of a ship's mast, in the midst of all the waves? We are slothful. It is the diligent Christian 'that giveth no rest to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids.'

A *third* disadvantage of slothfulness is, it is the mother of conceit and presumption: therefore be diligent; as is clear in Prov. xxvi. 16, "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason." It is the sluggard that is wise in his own estimation: would ye know the humble Christian? He is the diligent Christian, and the diligent Christian is the humble Christian.

A *fourth* disadvantage of slothfulness is, it clothes you with rags; therefore be diligent. That is an excellent word in Prov. xxiii. 21. "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." What makes that change of raiment? What rents that party-coloured garment? What makes you unsuitable to king's children? Even slothfulness. O! if you were diligent; whereas now you look forth as the moon, you should look forth as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun, as that of seven days.

A *fifth* disadvantage of slothfulness is, it is the mother of decay, Eccles. x. 18. 'By much slothfulness the building becometh decayeth. O Christians! what is the reason your spiritual building advances not but slowly, that you are put to debate that question so oft, 'shall ever the cape-stone be put on my building, that I may cry, grace, grace, to it?' It is even that slothfulness.

A *sixth* disadvantage of slothfulness is, it makes all duties unpleasant to a Christian; therefore be diligent. Would you know what makes prayers, preaching, communions, unheartsome; even slothfulness; that is 'a dead fly in the ointment of the apothecary.' Prov. xv. 19. 'The way of a slothful man, is as an hedge of thorns.' That is a most unpleasant gate. I say, praying, preaching, communicating, shall never be sweet to you till you be diligent.

A *seventh* disadvantage of slothfulness is, it interrupts many precious manifestations of Christ. Would you know what is the

reason, why Christians have so many complaints about the absence of Christ? It is even their slothfulness, Prov. xiii. 4 'The soul of the diligent shall be made fat; that is, he shall taste of the excellent dainties of heaven; and the holy flesh shall not depart from him.

The *seventh* consideration to press diligence home, is, I beseech you, be diligent; for many have come short of heaven for want of diligence, Luke. xiii. 24. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate;' Why? 'Because many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Know we not that dreadful salutation, 'depart from me thou slothful person, and wicked servant, I know you not?' I add the *last* consideration, I intreat you be diligent, because Christ has commanded it; and I counsel thee to obey the King's command, and that because of the oath of God.

The *second* thing I shall propose, I shall speak to these six or seven things a Christian would take notice of concerning diligence, as, *first*, the Christian oftentimes vents more of his diligence in attaining to a thing, than in managing and keeping of it when obtained. Some folks will be at the pains to get communion with Christ, and after they have obtained him, care little to let him depart away; Song iv. compare it with chap. v. 2. verse 1. there she calls for her well beloved to come in into her garden, and there she suffers him to depart. *Secondly*, Oftentimes we vent more of our diligence in pursuing after righteousness than holiness; we seek more peace with God, than conformity to God: and if folk would examine themselves, their desire is rather to be at peace with their own consciences, than with God. There is this, *thirdly*, that oftentimes a Christian vents more of his diligence in pursuit after sense, than after assurance. Christians will weep whole nights for the want of sense but few take that time to weep for the want of assurance. *Fourthly*, Christians vent more diligence in pursuing after light, than after life; but, O! that excellent ornament of life, which is not sought after. There is this, *fifthly*, that a Christian oftentimes vents more of his diligence in public duties, than in private duties. O Christians, are you not more Christians abroad, than at home! That is an evidence of little sincerity. There is this, *sixthly*, oftentimes a Christian has more diligence in afflictions, than in prosperity. When we are under afflictions, we have some fits of diligence; but when prosperity comes, then we grow secure; we do not endeavour diligence in the whole tract of our conversation. *Lastly*, A Christian oftentimes endeavours more to multiply his duties, than to rectify them. Many Christians choose rather to make their prayers many, as right.

Now, in speaking to this, I would shew you, that there are

six times a hypocrite puts on fits of diligence, and yet may be destitute of true Christian diligence. And the *first* time a hypocrite puts on fits of diligence, is, when he is under the cross; then starts he out of his bed; as is clear from Psalm lxxviii. 34. 'When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God:' but it is like Jonah's gourd, up in one night, and down in another. A *second* time is, when Christ is in court, and religion in fashion, then the hypocrite will put on such fits of diligence. O! what will not a hypocritical Jehu do, when there is a crown to be had for following Christ and religion, 'O come then, and see my religion, and zeal for the Lord of hosts?' But bring Christ to Caiaphas's hall, then will we soon quit him, and scatter our religion. O! but it is much to love a persecuted Christ. Ay, a searching time would make, I fear, Christ to go with a thinner backing in Scotland than he doth. A *third* time, when a hypocrite puts on some fits of diligence, is, when he is under some strong convictions; as in Acts ii. 37. where 'they were pricked in their hearts,' so that they cried out, 'men and brethren, what shall we do?' There is a *fourth* time when hypocrites put on such fits of diligence, and that is, when they are under some apprehensions of wrath: as Simon Magus, when Peter threatened him, in Acts viii. 24. 'Pray to the Lord for me,' saith he, 'that none of these things befall me.' There is a *fifth* time when a hypocrite puts on some fits of diligence, and that is, when death and he begins to yoke, then the stoutest heart begins to grow diligent. There is a *sixth* time when a hypocrite puts on some fits of diligence, and that is, when he is under some ordinary and common flashes of the Spirit, but behold he is not constant. I may call the hypocrite, Reuben, when unstedfast as water.

Now, I shall close, only adding these four things, wherein a Christian ought especially to vent his diligence in: as, *first*, in making his peace with God, and being married and reconciled to him; as is clear in Luke xii. 53, "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him." Now it being a part of the exercise of the day, to groan under the contempt of Christ, and slighting and undervaluing of the precious plant of renown. I would therefore press this upon you, 'to be diligent to get your peace with God made sure, before we go hence and be no more.' And that upon these considerations, *First*, Be married to Christ, because there was never a person in your offer like him: does he not excell all the courtiers of thy heart? Does he not outbid them all in offers? I say, you that are married to any other than Christ. O strangers to Christ! what do your

idols offer you, but he offers you more? Therefore, O sinners! come and be married to Christ. *Secondly*, Does not Christ outbid them all in beauty. O! is there never a person here, that will be content to marry him? I say, O young women! will you marry him? I have a noble husband to present to you. Widows, will you be married to him! Then I offer this excellent husband unto you. Will you have him? *Thirdly*, He excels them all in right; there is none that has such a right to you as Christ. *Fourthly*, He excels all thy lovers and heart courtiers, in reality and love; therefore, O sinners! come and be married to the Son of God, to the Branch of righteousness, and Plant of pleasant and precious renown.

The *second* consideration to press home diligence upon you, and to come and be married to him, is, Christ is the four articles of the contract. I shall read them, and judge ye of the marriage. The *first* article is in 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23, read that excellent contract, 'all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Now, is not that a complete article of the contract? You are infest in all things, and what would you have more? I shall read the second article of the contract, in Rev. xxi. 7. 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things,' &c. Now that answereth to a Christian all objections he can put against the first, 'All may be mine to-day, but I may lose them to-morrow;' nay, saith the text, they shall be your everlasting possession. A third article of the contract is in Psalm lxxxiv. 11, 'He will give grace,' &c. Is not that a brave dowry? Ay, but which is more, 'he gives glory.' But will he give no more? Ay, 'No good thing will he withhold from you that fear him.' Now, what want you, that may completely satisfy you? I shall read the fourth article of the contract, 1 Kings iii. 5, 'Ask what you will, and it shall be given you.' Christ has left a blank, is there any article you will fill up? Now, I intreat you be diligent; and seeing there is such an excellent well contrived contract, come therefore and be married to this excellent husband.'

A *third* consideration to press it is, there is not a person within the doors, but their dissent shall be so marked in heaven to-night. O! consider then, what shall be reported of you in heaven to-night. I tell you, there is a fourfold report we can make for you? *First*, We must make a blank report; that is to say, we know not what this people will say of the bargain; shall this be our report of Edinburgh? Or, *secondly*, shall this be our report? And shall it be declared in heaven to-night, that Christ came to such a congregation in Edinburgh, and not one person would be content to marry him? Or, *thirdly*, shall this be the report that shall be made in heaven, 'that this people shall be

made a willing people in the day of thy power?" O! shall we make this report, that they have taken it to advisement? I intreat you, speak your minds presently; for I defy all the ministers in the world to give you the offer of this bargain to-morrow. If ye will not give us to report, then report it yourselves. Is this the first person here to-day, that is content to put to his hand and subscribe the excellent contract? Of all, not one person being gained. I say, heaven is waiting for our report, and heaven is waiting for your answer; therefore be married to Christ.

There is a *fourth* consideration to press you to come, and be married to him, and that is, if you will come, he will pay all your debts; ay, he will communicate his secrets to you: yea, he will give you much of his love; and much of his care, and much of his riches.

And then there is this *fifth* consideration to press you to come, and be married to Christ, and that is, the refusal of this blessed offer, and excellent bargain, will constrain Christ to take his leave of you and be gone: therefore, as you will not give Christ a free pass to go his way, and take his everlasting farewell, refuse it not: for this it shall be known who the person was, that was content that Christ should stay, or go his way: ay, by this it shall be known, who is content to marry him, and who is not.

A *sixth* thing to press this home on you, to come and be married to Christ, is, that if I should speak of him till the break of the day, I would be constrained to conclude with one of these four words: *first*, With that word in Heb. xi. 32. 'What shall I more say? Yea, what could angels say more? For time would fail; yea, eternity would fail.' Or, *secondly*, I would be forced to conclude with that, in Job xxvi. 14. 'These are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him?' Or, *thirdly*, I would conclude with that word, which Philip spake to Nathanael, in John i. 46. 'Come and see.' Or, *fourthly*, I would be forced to close with that, 'O precious Christ! praise thyself, for we cannot praise thee. O precious Christ! commend thyself, for we cannot commend thee. Now, is he not excellent? And therefore be married unto him, yea, or not. O! shall it be declared in heaven, that there are so many dissenters in this place? O! believe it, sirs, Christ will put to your *No* with great grief of heart: but he will put your *Yes* with great pleasure and delight. Now what say you to this excellent bargain?

Now, I suppose there are nine frames of spirit here in this place; and cursed be the person that is under any of these nine frames: I suppose there are some of Felix's frame here, that will say, 'go away, and at a more convenient time I will hear thee.'

Let such go away with the curse of the living God upon them. *Secondly*, I suppose there be some of Pilate's frame here, that say, we have nothing to say, 'and yet crucify him.' Is there any such here? Let them go away with the broad everlasting curse of the gospel. *Thirdly*, Is there any here of the Jews' frame, that cries, 'away with him, crucify him, and release unto us Barabbas;' there are many merchants that will say, 'away with Christ, and give us the world.' Yea, *fourthly*, there may be some of Judas' frame here, 'that will sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver.' O! shall he, who is above all price, be thus undervalued, and sold at so low a rate. *Fifthly*, I suppose there will be some of Esau's frame here, 'that will sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage.' Esau, you are condemned and cursed for that fearful sin of slighting this excellent match. There is, I suppose, a *sixth* frame, which is better than any of them; and O that many were come that length. Perhaps there are some of Agrippa's frame here, 'who was almost persuaded to become a Christian,' take away that word *almost*, and put to that sweet word, *altogether*. *Seventhly*, I suppose there be some of Cain's frame here, when they are charged with this offer, will go and enter to the vain and idle speculations of the world. *Eighthly*, I suppose there be some of that frame here, in Matth. xxii. 4. when 'they were invited to the marriage, they let lightly of the offer of God.' Now, will any undervalue the offer? O venture not to go forth at these doors, 'till you have made your peace with God.' *Ninthly*, I suppose there be some of Balaam's frame here, 'O that I may die the death of the righteous!' O that I may be a Christian in my death; but they never desire to be so in their life: but you shall not obtain it.

Now will you ask at yourselves, gentlemen, and gentlewomen, will ye ask, if ye be content to take Christ? For I take heaven to be my witness; I take the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity, I take Jesus Christ, the second; I take the Holy Ghost, the third; I take angels; I take all the glorious saints about the throne, I take the stones of this house; I take yourselves to witness; and I myself shall be a witness; ay, though I should not embrace this offer, I shall be forced to accuse you. O! shall I excuse you, if you despise this excellent offer? No, I shall accuse you; therefore delay not, make the bargain sure before ye go away. Now, what is your last answer? I intreat you, ask, what will be the last return you will give to Christ? Believe it, Christ is serious, if ye be content. O blessed is that Christian, with whom Christ has bound up that excellent knot of union! O blessed is the soul that is married to Christ!

There are five things that break the knot of marriage

and union among men, that will not break the union betwixt Christ and the soul: *first*, Sin will do it; but no sin betwixt Christ and the soul. And, *secondly*, Adultery will do it; it will break the knot of marriage with men, but not with Christ, 'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord.' Christ will keep fast the grip though we lose it, I will tell you how precious Christ guides the poor sinner to heaven, it is by a cord of love, the one end of it is in heaven in his own hand, and the other end of it about our hearts, and he heaves us all along to himself: and O, but it be in a sure hand. *Thirdly*, Anger separates friends: but no passion will break this knot. O! precious Christ will never be so angry, as to break that knot, tho' sometimes he will overload and spread a vail over their enjoyments for a while, but he is not angry for ever. *Fourthly*, There is this will break the knot among men, and that is ingratitude; but ingratitude will never break the knot betwixt Christ and us. Though we prove never so ungrateful, he remains steadfast. There is that, *fifthly*, that breaks the knot of friendship betwixt men, that is, mistakes and prejudices; but, O blessed are we in this, no mistake will break this knot, no prejudice will dissolve this union. Ay, he that is once in Christ, shall be always so. Now what is your report? I beseech you speak your minds; for such an offer was never heard in Israel. Alas, I fear there are many dreadful dissenters within the doors of his house; and how many shall be marked so in heaven this day?

Now to him that is able to persuade you to embrace this excellent offer, be everlasting praise and glory for evermore. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

PROV. x. 4.—*But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

PSALM xix. 2.—*Day unto day uttereth speech, &c.*

I Hope I may say with Ehud to Eglon, Judges iii. 20. 'I have a message from God unto you,' and it is this in short, that you would no longer cry; 'A little sleep, a little slumber;' that seeing you have your precious souls at the stake, you would set to work.

O expectants of heaven! what are you doing! I am sure much of your day is past; and I am sure much of your work is before your hands.

There are six sorts of diligence that Christ will not accept of you: *First*, Half-diligence. Our diligence is oftentimes like Jonah's gourd, and the morning cloud; and that diligence shall surely be cast off by Christ. But we must endeavour an equal and uniform way of seeking of God. *Secondly*, There is Jehu's di-