

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

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WITH A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND DEATH.

JUDE 21.

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

HAD I been left at liberty to choose my subject on this sad and solemn occasion, I should certainly have pitched upon some text or other that would have led me to show what a great man (I might say, a prince and a great man, for such men as he, who have wrestled and prevailed in prayer, are Israel's *princes with God*) is fallen this day in our tribe, and what a great loss we have of him; some text that would have been proper to affect us with sorrow for the breach made upon us, which cannot but touch us the more sensibly, because we have been so lately wounded again and again in the same tender part. Though we have a great deal of reason with thankfulness to acknowledge the benignity of Providence, in continuing such a great blessing as his life was so long to us, yet his capacity for further usefulness being also wonderfully prolonged, we ought to look upon his removal as a further token of God's displeasure against us, and to lament it with a holy fear. Jacob's family so greatly lamented the death of Rebekah's nurse, who could not but be very old, that the place where they buried her was called *Allonbachuth—The Oak of weeping*, Gen. xxxv. 8. What a large debt of grateful and honourable tears is owing then to one who has been so long a spiritual father and nurse in Christ's family! The longer we enjoy good men, the more we should love and honour what we see of Christ in them, and the greater loss we should account their removal from us. I should certainly raise up your mourning, could I but be instrumental to stir up your graces; your love to God and his image, your zeal for Christ and his

kingdom: these would engage your mourning for the death of one who bore so much of God's image, and did so much good service to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men in his day.

The notice God took of the death of Moses, *Moses my servant is dead*, Josh. i. 2. might probably have been my subject; and the rather, because, like Moses, in his advanced years, his eyes scarce waxed dim; and at length, like him, he died at the mouth of the Lord, Deut. xxxiv. 5. Or, Elisha's lamentation for Elijah's departure, which, for my own part, I have reason to take up, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*. Or Christ's character of John Baptist might well have suited the occasion, *He was a burning and a shining light*. Nay, age being a crown of glory; the old age of such a one, who continued in his usefulness to the last, being a diadem of beauty to all his friends, one whose days spoke so well, and the multitude of whose years taught so much wisdom; it had been no solecism, to have applied to ourselves the lamenting prophet's words, *The crown is fallen from our heads; woe unto us, for we have sinned*.

But our reverend father, seeking your edification, and not his own honour, has appointed the text now read to you to be the subject of my thoughts and yours at this time. He mentioned it to me a year or two ago, as that which he desired might be preached upon at his funeral, laying the emphasis upon the word *mercy*: *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*. For (said he) all my hopes of eternal life are built purely upon the mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ. I have nothing else to trust to. So that by this text, he being dead, yet speaketh. Hear, and your soul shall live.

Many and many a good word he has spoken to you in God's name, as feelingly and affectionately,

as much from the heart, and discovering as much of a natural care for your estate, as most men I ever heard ; now take this as his dying word ; and dying words should make living and lasting impressions : take it as his last farewell ; his legacy (I may call it) to this congregation, and a valuable legacy it is. After he had been 56 or 57 years labouring among you in the word and doctrine, as opportunity favoured, with this word he breathes his last ; this text he lives and dies by, it is his *Consummatum est*, and finishing his course, with it he finishes his testimony. Would you have the conclusion of the whole matter, and whatever you forget, will you be sure to remember that it is this, *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life*. O that you and I might hear attentively the instructions of it, might hear them from the grave, though it be a land of silence ; might hear them from heaven, not as the word of dying men, but of the living God, who has directed us not only what we must do, but what we may expect. Let the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be always before our eyes, and let the believing expectation of it fill our souls, be inlaid there : let these words be written on the tables of our hearts, as with a pen of iron, and with a point of a diamond, *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*.

I took it for granted that our deceased father, in the choice of this text, designed these two things ;

I. To express the workings of his own heart, his own sentiments and devout affections, and to let you know that he for his part was a believing expectant of eternal life, and a believing dependant on Christ and his mercy for it, and continued so to the last, and had not changed his mind.

II. To impress the like on your hearts, and to engage and encourage you with the same things with which he found himself encouraged and engaged : he would have you also stirred up to seek for eternal life in Christ's mercy, and to seek till you find. He seemed desirous with the last blaze of his expiring lamp, if it might be, by the grace of God, (that blessed heavenly fire,) to kindle the same pious affections in you that his own heart was inflamed with. O that I had more of his spirit ! then I could the better lay before you his thoughts that took rise from these words. I have looked upon it as none of the least of the blessings of my life, that ever since I was capable of it, I have been more or less at times made happy with his conversation, and many an hour have spent, abundantly to my satisfaction, in fellowship with him ; and as it was his condescension, so it was my advantage, that he was very communicative of his observations and experiences, in all his discourses full of Christ, and another world ; so that I never parted from him, but I might have been the wiser and better for my being with him, and as much from him as perhaps from any friend

I ever had, might have learned both discretion and devotion, that is, how to converse both with God and man. But if the countenance has for a while been sharpened by such a friend, as iron is with iron, alas, it grows dull again, and we want that liveliness when we have occasion for it. O that the blessed Spirit of God would bring this word home to my heart and yours, would open our understandings, and make our hearts to burn within us, so that from this precious line of sacred writ we may gather now, and lay up for a time of need, that honey which I believe this blessed-servant of God did in his own meditations suck from it, and may experience the same relish and power of it which we have reason to think he had the pleasure of. The Scripture is a full fountain, out of which we may draw as much water, and with as much joy, as others who have gone before us, who have recommended it to us to be our guide and stay, as it has been theirs. Streams from this rock followed them through this wilderness to Canaan, where the water will be turned into wine ; and they will not fail us, nor be to us as the brooks in summer, if we be not wanting to ourselves.

I. then, Let us consider this text, as recommended to us with the design, to express this good man's believing hope and expectation of eternal life, through the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Having lived in faith, thus he died in faith, seeing the promised land afar off, but embracing the promise of it as faithful, and worthy of all acceptance, very sure, and very precious ; dying with the promise in his arms, and the life promised in his eye. This reason, this account he gives of the hope that was in him, with meekness and fear ; that he hoped *for* eternal life, and hoped *in* the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring him to it ; and that this hope was to him as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering before into that within the veil, whither he himself is now entered.

It is the privilege and happiness of dying Christians, that they can look with ease and satisfaction on the other side death and the grave ; can see firm land, and a good land, beyond that rough and stormy sea, and this enables them to look death in the face, and to look down into the chambers of darkness, without change of countenance. They know not only whence death's commission comes, from their Father's hand, but whither it will bring them, to their Father's house, where they long to be. Dying is not to them as it is to atheists and infidels, "a great leap in the dark." No marvel, if from one who knows not, or receives not, divine revelation, we hear sad complaints of uncertainty, and how much the departing soul is at a loss : *Dubius vixi, anxius morior, quo vadam nescio—I have lived in doubt, I die in anxiety, whither I am going I know not*, said one ; *Animula vagula blandula, quæ nunc abibis in loca*

—*O my poor soul, whither art thou now going*, said another. And we have been lately told, that Mr. Hobbes, (that, Leviathan, that crooked serpent,) when, notwithstanding the vain hopes he had flattered himself with, that though old he should yet live a while, he was told, that he could not continue long, wished, “O that I could now find a hole at which to creep out of this world!”* But they who by faith build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and are united to Christ, the chief cornerstone, have a holy humble confidence towards God in a dying hour, and having put themselves under a divine conduct, can easily leave the land of their nativity, in prospect of the better country, that is, the heavenly; and though, like their father Abraham, they go out not knowing whither they go, yet, like him, they go out with cheerfulness, knowing whom they follow, and being assured that he will show them the path of life. And though they cannot particularly describethe future bliss, which is a glory to be revealed, yet they are sure that it is enough to make them perfectly and eternally happy. And knowing whom they have trusted with all the concerns of their felicity, even the same whom the Father has trusted with all the concerns of his glory, they know very well *he is able to keep what they have committed to him unto that day*, when it shall be called for; and be ready to receive that spirit, which they then resign to him, and trust him with. In the assurance of this, they can walk with a holy security through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil after death, and therefore fearing none in death.

Let this be observed to the honour of the Christian religion, and the everlasting gospel, on which it is founded, that thence are fetched such substantial powerful antidotes against the fear of death, as the best of the heathen moralists could never offer. The Platonists sometimes called their philosophy *Meditatio mortis—Meditation on death*, and taught their disciples to think of death; but they could not teach them to triumph over it, as our religion teaches us, *O death, where is thy sting?* Let it also be observed for our encouragement to diligence and constancy in the work of God, that so we shall have not only an entrance, but an *abundant entrance, into the everlasting kingdom*. What is there in death to be dreaded, when it is only our passage to that eternal life, which through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ we are looking and longing for.

And as it is the happiness of dying Christians, that they have the hope of eternal life to stay themselves upon in that darksome valley, so it will be for the glory of God, and the edification of others, if they tell what God has done for their souls, and leave behind them a testimony to the sufficiency of

the divine promise and grace from their own experience. Some, perhaps, may be invited into the ways of religion, many, however, will be encouraged therein, when they see and hear with what ease and cheerfulness those who have been long walking in these good ways leave the world in expectation of the blessed hope. Some have thought it no less than a debt which at least the old disciples of Christ owe to those about them, to communicate to them the comforts wherewith they are comforted of God, in the believing prospects of the glory to be revealed. *I believed, therefore have I spoken*. Our deceased father has thus encouraged us to go on in the way of God, by intimating to us, that he found abundant comfort and support under the apprehensions of death approaching, in depending upon the mercy of Christ, and looking for eternal life through him.

When he intimated his mind that I should preach his funeral sermon, he added, that he would not have me to praise him; but,

I hope it will be no violation of that part of his charge, to take notice even of that prohibition to his honour, his great honour; the very mention of it (and I am obliged to mention it, because otherwise it might justly be expected, that I should have spoken largely concerning his character) turns to his praise; and my silence so restrained speaks aloud, that he was one of those humble in spirit whom honour will uphold; one who sought not his own glory, nor cared to have a trumpet sounded after him, any more than before him, *Digito monstrari, et dicier hic est—pointing him out with the finger, and saying, This is the man*; but would rather do what was praiseworthy than be praised for it. By this it appeared, that he endeavoured to approve himself to God, and was therefore dead to, and looked with contempt upon, the applause and commendation of men; and that he lived a life of sincere repentance and self-judging, as the best Christians do; and was far from being like Saul, who, even when he owned his guilt to Samuel, saying, *I have sinned*, added in the next breath, *yet honour me now before the elders of my people*, 1 Sam. xv. 30. And that he was one of those Christians inwardly, whose praise is not of men, not courted or desired of men, but of God, and who make sure a witness in heaven, and a record on high, and then reckons it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. Herein let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ: let us not search our own glory, for it is vain glory, nay, it is not glory. It is glory that will be turned into shame; but let us with a single eye aim at God's glory, and then that will reflect true glory upon us, and everlasting.

He who does but act a part in religion, may conclude as that heathen emperor did, with *Valete et plaudite—Prosper and applaud*, the language of the

* Dr. Kennet's account of the D. of Devon's family.

stage ; but he whose heart is upright with God, though he reckons a good name better than precious ointment, especially that at the day of one's death, yet he is so intent upon his acceptance with God, that the other is as nothing to him ; well knowing, that true honour after death arises not from men's eulogiums, but from Christ's *Euge—commendation* : if our Master say, *Well done*, the matter is not great what our fellow-servants say.

Nor will it (I hope) be any violation of his charge to leave it to his own works to praise him in the gates ; they do it, they will do it, further and longer than any thing I can say will. Generations to come will mention him with honour, for his *View of Universal History*, that copious comprehensive work, which takes in all the generals, and in a manner touches most of the particulars, that have swelled the numerous volumes of historians ; sure never was so much learning, so much reading, crowded into so little a compass ; never was one page in two columns so well filled : it is a work confessedly exact and elaborate, and of general and of lasting use. Let that vast performance praise him for his knowledge, judgment, and great industry.

Let his *Sure and Large Foundations*, his *History of Schism*, and the *Defence of it*, praise him for his catholic charity and moderation, and that healing temper which, as far as it prevails and has the ascendancy, will extinguish heats, accommodate differences among Christians, and bring and keep good people together in love ; conformable to the design of our blessed Redeemer, who died that he might gather together in one the children of God, who under several denominations were scattered abroad.

But besides these works of his, I hope the good success of his ministry in this place will praise him, and the remaining fruit of it will be his honour, as well as your comfort and advantage. Recollect what you have heard from him, and live it over. You have fully known his doctrine, manner of life, faith, charity, patience ; continue therefore in those things which you have learned, and have been assured of, knowing that you have learned them of one who well understood them himself, and with a very tender concern for your souls pressed them upon you. Abound therefore in the fruits of righteousness, and so commend your keeping ; make it appear you have been well fed with the bread of life, and nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine, by your holy heavenly conversations, your sobriety, justice, charity, meekness, humility, and exemplary walking in every thing, which will be an ornament to your profession, and the standing praise of your ministers who are gone ; whose good preaching will best survive them, and be best attested, in your good living. If at any time you are tempted to do an ill thing, remember you have not so learned

Christ, but have been better taught the truth as it is in Jesus. If I may not praise him who is gone, thus you may, and others, who thus see your light shine before men, will glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Though I may not praise him, yet I hope I may put you upon praising God for him. Men, the greatest and best of men, are but what the grace of God makes them ; all their light they borrow from the Father of lights, all their oil from the good olive. They are ready to own it themselves, *By the grace of God, I am what I am ; I live, yet not I ; I laboured, yet not I* : now, if we give the glory of that grace to him from whom it is derived, and to whom the praise of it belongs, whatever honour that reflects at second-hand on the chosen instruments of that grace, we do but our duty. St. Paul never flattered his friends, yet we often find him thanking God for their faith and hope, their love and patience, nor did he court their applauses of him, he was far from it ; yet he desired that thanks might be given by many in his behalf, for what God enabled him to do and suffer in his cause. That just praise of men turns to a good account, which makes God its centre, and runs up all the streams to the fountain. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*

You of this congregation have reason to bless God for your ministers, for their gifts, and graces, and serviceableness to you. *Glorify the God of Israel*, who has given such power unto men, and gave men of such power to you. When you reflect with a melancholy thought, upon those dark providences which have of late removed from your head two faithful ministers in the midst of their days, and great usefulness, take occasion thence to bless God for that kind and gracious providence which continued one among you to a good old age, and continued him in his usefulness to the last. Thus God has tried you with a variety of instruments ; you have at the same time been blessed with the gravity and authority of a Paul, *the aged*, and with the vigour and liveliness of a Timothy, who, *as a son with the father, served with him in the gospel*. Each age has its advantage ; if both have been advantageous to you, you have a great deal to be thankful for ; if neither, you have a great deal to answer for. But whether they who piped unto you, or they who mourned, have gained their point, or no, *Wisdom will be justified of her children*.

The sons of the prophets have reason to bless God, that ever they had such a father, such a guide, such a counsellor, such an example : I am sure I have, who am less than the least of them. May the mantle of this Elijah clothe those who are left behind, that we may walk in the same spirit, walk in the same steps ; and that we may show forth the thankfulness of our hearts by the conformity of our

lives to that holy religion, wherein we have been instructed by those who were the guides of our youth, and by our steady and constant adherence to the gospel of the grace, the free grace, of God, which they lived and died by.

I am sure, it is no transgression of his charge, (for it must be what he chiefly intended in the choice of this text,) to observe the testimony which, I think, he bore to some of the most precious and peculiar principles of our holy religion, in making these words his own; for this will be for your edifying, if it be not your own fault.

Christ and heaven are the peculiarities of the gospel; there, and there only, do we find the doctrine of a Mediator between God and man, and of eternal life; it is by that light only, that these great things are discovered, which were hid from ages and generations; it is on the truth of that word, that our belief of these does entirely depend. Much of God, and his glorious attributes and perfections, may be learned by the light of nature; and many excellent truths concerning him may easily be spelled out of the book of the creatures; many who learnt no higher than that book, said great things concerning the Creator. Much, likewise, of the present pleasure and advantages of virtue, may be learned from the dictates of natural conscience, and the universal experience of mankind: but it is only by the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that crown and centre of all divine revelation, that life and immortality are brought to light; by it only we come to be acquainted with Christ and heaven, heaven as our end, and Christ as our way. The knowledge of these is that true wisdom, of which the *depth saith, It is not in me; the sea saith, It is not in me; and which the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal.* These are the things of the Spirit of God which the mere animal man receiveth not. It is only by the New Testament, that blessed character of divine grace, that we come to be interested in Christ, and entitled through him to eternal life, which makes the Christian merchandise better than the merchandise of silver.

These are the two things which the faith of a Christian in a special manner fastens upon, the great Saviour, and the great salvation wrought out by him; these the eye of faith looks upon; these the hand of faith lays hold on. What is the faith we live by, but the faith of the Son of God, and that faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. What else is true Christianity but a believing dependence upon the mediation of Christ, with a devotedness to his conduct and government in every thing; and a believing expectation of the glory to be revealed, with a careful and diligent preparation of ourselves for that glory.

O what a holy fire of love to Christ and desire toward heaven, was kindled by this faith in the breast of this good man; how did he himself feel it

glow; how did those who conversed with him see it flame; how did he breathe Christ, and breathe toward heaven, even to the last breath. Let us submit to the power of the same faith, and we shall experience the fruits of it. There was another Scripture which his heart was much upon, when he saw the day approaching; and that included Christ and heaven too, it was that close of the apostle's triumph over death and the grave, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory* (that is, brings us to heaven, for till we come thither, we have not quite overcome) *through our Lord Jesus Christ*: but in this he chose to express to you the faith in which he died, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Give me leave to improve the dying testimony of this great scholar and Christian, for the honour of pure Christianity, and the first principles of it. In many causes one aged witness is worth twenty young ones. We have here an aged witness to produce on religion's side, who has affirmed it upon his death, *that the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life is what may be looked for with the greatest assurance and desire by all the faithful servants of Jesus Christ. Ask thy father then, and he will show thee, thine elders, and they will tell thee,* that they have found, and so wilt thou, no righteousness and strength to be depended upon but in Christ; no happiness and life, but in heaven. Those who plead religion's cause have antiquity on their side, and the wisdom and experience of the ancients, and may boast as Eliphaz does, *With us are the grey-headed, and very aged men.* The longer men live in the world, the more experience they have of its vanity, and insufficiency to make them happy, and that drives them to set their hearts more on heaven; and the more experience they have of their own weakness and inability to help themselves, and that drives them to rest more upon Jesus Christ, and his mercy and grace. Let this recommend religion to us, that those speak well of it who have had a long acquaintance with it. Polycarp, that blessed martyr, who in the first ages of the church sealed the truth with his blood at Smyrna, being vehemently urged by the proconsul to renounce his religion, and as an evidence of it to speak ill of Christ, replied to this purpose: "Fourscore and six years I have served Christ, and have always found him a good Master, how then can I speak ill of him now?" Here was one who somewhat longer, even to his 89th year, had been drawing in Christ's yoke, and witnessed from his own experience that it was an easy yoke; and that in the service of Christ he was borne up and comforted, living and dying with the expectation of his mercy, even to eternal life.

There are six great truths contained in this text, at least by implication, which he did in effect bear his testimony to in the choice of it, and they are not

matters of nice and curious speculation, which exercise the wits of the learned, nor matters of doubtful disputation, or strifes of words, which too often engage the passions of the litigious; no, he was none of those who troubled the minds of the disciples with such things, but was himself filled, and desired to fill others, with the great things of God, the weighty matters of the law and gospel, which are all our salvation, and therefore should be all our desire; nor did he spend his zeal upon any thing but what all good Christians are agreed in, whatever different sentiments they may have, and govern themselves by, in lesser things. *Call therefore, if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the saints will you turn?* Turn to which you will, of whatever denomination, (for, far be it, far be it from us to think, that those of our own are the only ones,) and you will find they all agree in these principles of the oracles of God, which I gather from this text, which he who is gone bore his dying testimony to, and which, if we that survive were but more governed by, we should be every way better both in heart and life, and more loving and charitable to those we differ from in lesser matters, since the things wherein we differ are so few and small in comparison with the many and great things wherein we are agreed.

1. That there is another life after this. This is plainly implied in the mention which the text makes of eternal life. For we are sure that this present life is not eternal; it is short, and transient, and hastening away; and they who say, they look for eternal life, declare plainly that they believe there is another country to which they must remove, and in which they must reside, besides this through which they are now passing. And I the rather lay this down first, because our deceased father particularly appointed, that the motto engraven in the rings to be given at his funeral, should be this, "There is a life after this." God by his Spirit engrave it in all our hearts. With this word he comforted himself while he lived, and designed to instruct and admonish us, who for a little while are left behind. The plainest truths are the most precious, and carrying with them the most convincing evidence, should be the most powerful, and have the most commanding influence upon us; such a one as this, worthy indeed to be written in gold, and to be to us as the signet on our right hand, ever with us, and continually before us.

And do we indeed believe, that there is a future state, a life after this? that besides this world of sense we are conversant with, there is a world of spirits we are allied to, and must have our everlasting abode in? that when we have passed through this world of work and probation, we must certainly go to another world of recompence and retribution, and must receive *according to the things done in the body*? We say, we believe the life of the world to come; but we think of it so seldom, so slightly,

though sure, though near, though just at the door, we consider it so little, and are so little influenced by it in the management of ourselves, that it may well be asked, do we indeed believe it? *Show me thy faith by thy works.*

Do we believe there is another world, that we must all be shortly lodged in for eternity? What! and yet so fond of this world, as if we were to be here always? and so mindless of that, as if we had nothing to do in preparation for it? What! and yet do so much every day to unfit us for that life, and so little to acquaint ourselves with the employments and enjoyments of it? What! and yet think so little of death, which will very certainly, and may very suddenly, remove us to that world? O that we were all more confirmed in our belief of another world! and were so wise as to consider our *latter end*; or, as it may be read, our *future state*. Then should we pass more safely and comfortably through this world, and at length out of it.

It is sad to see many, even when they are under the sensible symptoms of their approaching change, and already taken in the custody of death's messengers, still full of this life, solicitous about it, in love with it, and very loth to think of parting with it, or to hear talk of another. Our deceased father has set us a better example, and by his weanedness from this life, showed how much his eye and heart were upon another. Often has he charged his friends, those at a distance by letter, and those about him by word of mouth, not to pray for the continuance of his life; though it was as far as any man's of his age, from being made either uneasy to himself or unprofitable to others: by which it appears he was *satur dierum—full of days*; according to that promise made to them, who set their love on God, with long life was he satisfied. And what was the language of Job's corruptions concerning his present state, was the language of his graces; *I loathe it, I would not live always in this world, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

2. That in the other life, there is a state of perfect and perpetual bliss, prepared for and secured to all good Christians, who live and die in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ. The eternal life the text speaks of, is not only an immortal being; the damned in hell shall have that for the perpetuating of their misery, their worm dies not, therefore they die not; but an immortal blessedness, adequate to the enlarged capacities, and commensurate to the never-failing duration, of that immortal being.

We may firmly believe, upon the credit of eternal truth, which all the saints in all ages have set their seals to, and ventured their souls upon, that all those who, *by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall obtain eternal life.* There is an everlasting perfection of joy and satisfaction, which all those that are duly

prepared for it in this world, shall certainly be put in the possession of in the other world; consisting in the immediate vision, and complete fruition, of God, as their God; a crown of immortal glory that will never wither; a kingdom that cannot be moved; an inheritance such as never was on earth, no, not in Canaan, no, not in *Eden* itself; *incorruptible, unde-filed, and that fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven for all obedient believers; the prospect of which is now a sufficient balance, and the enjoyment of which will then be an abundant recompence, of all their services, sufferings, and self-denials; all their toils, all their griefs, all their losses, heaven will make amends for all.

And do we indeed believe this? Why then are we so careless to make sure our title to this happiness? Why do we take so little pains to work out our salvation? Why do we so eagerly pursue the good things of this world, as if they were the best things, and rest in them as if they were our portion and our heritage for ever? Have we any good hope, through grace, of his happiness, why then do we go mourning from day to day under the burthen of worldly crosses, as if the glory to be revealed had not enough in it to countervail the sufferings of this present time? Let the experiences of the saints, who have not only been kept from fainting, by believing that they shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, but in the prospect of it, have been enabled to rejoice in tribulation, direct and encourage us to build our hope on the same foundation, and draw our joy from the same fountain.

3. That our present state is a state of expectation; even the greatest and best saints in this world are still looking for something yet to come, which will make them greater and better. It is certainly true, we are not yet entered into rest, we are not at home. How well soever it is with us in this world, and how easy soever, and well pleased, we are in our present state, there is still something we are to look for, and wait for; something above this world, something beyond it: the best are not so holy as they would be, nor reckon themselves to have attained, or to be already perfect; but they are still pressing forward toward the mark: the most comforted are not so happy as they would be, and expect to be, when that which is perfect is come. They who deal with God, deal upon trust, for something out of sight and in reversion, after one life; and must wait till the harvest for the return of their seed, and till the evening for the reward of their work, not of *debt* but of *free grace*.

With what a generous contempt should we look down upon the body and the world, if this truth were duly considered? What have we here, and whom have we here, that we should call this our rest? Though the human soul is conscious to itself of an innate inclination to its body, yet the sancti-

fied soul, being touched with the loadstone of divine love, is conscious to itself of a predominant inclination to its God, and its kindred in the upper world; and therefore, even in the body, when it acts like itself, and agreeable to the principles of its new nature, it complains it is not in its centre, in its element; it is not what it would be, nor where it would be. Instead of reposing itself and being pleased, it groans, being burthened, longing to be absent from the body, as well as it loves it, that it may be present with the Lord. The delights of sense, and all the amusements and entertainments this earth can afford, are the despised crowds through which the soul, thus big with expectation, presses forward in pursuit of everlasting joys. Even holy ordinances, though a day in them is better than a thousand elsewhere on earth, yet they are but the highways through which we pass along to this eternal life, and go from strength to strength, till we appear before God in the heavenly Jerusalem: they are but means in order to a further end, in the use of which we are still looking, still waiting for the consolation of Israel.

This faithful servant of God was much in this expecting frame. That text on which he preached at my father's funeral almost twelve years ago, he seemed to have much upon his heart, and often repeated it, *We which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption*. And the last sermon he preached, the day before he sickened, and not twenty days before his death, was to the same purpose, on those words of the lamenting prophet, *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord*. I perceive by the notes of it, it was newly meditated. He intimates towards the close, that he had been upheld many years by that hoping, and quiet waiting for divine salvation, and had found peace and holy security in that way; and his notes conclude with Hab. ii. 3, 4. *The vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry*. Thus did he encourage his own faith and patience to hold out yet a little while; and his last breath here concurred with that of the dying patriarch, when he was blessing his sons, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*, Gen. xlix. 18.

4. That we have all need of divine mercy, are for ever undone without it, and must depend upon that for all the good we hope for, here or hereafter. We must never expect life, much less eternal life, but through mercy, infinite mercy. We all lie at God's mercy; he has all the advantages both of law and strength against us; our destruction would be no wrong or injustice to us, no difficulty or loss to him. We are sinners, miserable sinners; are charged with guilt, and cannot deny the charge, cannot confess and

ustify, cannot give security to answer the law; nor have we any arts to evade either its cognizance or its sentence; we have no plea to put in that will stand us in any stead. Though we thought ourselves righteous, yet durst we not answer; for God knows that ill by us which we know not by ourselves, and therefore we must make supplication to our Judge,^a and cast ourselves entirely upon his mercy; which we need not be afraid to do, for he has proclaimed his name *Gracious and Merciful*, and is particularly pleased with those who hope in his mercy,^b and in obedience to his will humbly refer themselves to it.

All our comfort and happiness we must look for from the mercy of God, that mercy which is so often said to endure for ever, because the fruits of it are everlasting. The chosen vessels are said to be *vessels of mercy*;^c and the people who are taken into covenant with God, are said to *obtain mercy*.^d It is according to his mercy that he hath saved us,^e and hath begotten us again to a lively hope.^f Blessed Paul himself attributes both his fidelity and his constancy to divine mercy; *I obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*;^g and as we have received mercy we faint not.^h Thus even the New Testament, which brings in the everlasting righteousness, yet teaches us still to have an eye to everlasting mercy, for pardon and peace, for grace and glory. The poor publican's prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner*,ⁱ is what the best saints have set their heartiest Amen to, and have blessed God, that we find it upon record in the gospels as an answered prayer; and that he who prayed it with a humble, broken, penitent, and obedient heart, went to his house justified.

Thus this good man finished his course, under a deep sense of his need of the mercy of God. I shall not forget with what solemnity he said to me, when I was with him a few days before he died, and he was so weak, that he could say but little; "Here I lie, endeavouring to renew my repentance for all my sins, from my beginning to this day, and I would not think, that my weakness and illness should excuse me from the exercise of repentance." And when I was praying by him, that God would support and strengthen him, he softly put me in mind to pray, that his sins might be forgiven him. It is related both of St. Austin and of Archbishop Usher, those two great men in their day, that on their death-beds they lamented their sins of omission. Those who thus humble themselves shall be exalted.

5. That it is only from Christ, and through Christ, and in Christ, that we poor sinners can hope to find mercy. The mercy we must be saved by, if we be saved, is the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is that we must have an eye to, it is that we must depend upon for eternal life: mercy put into the hand of a Mediator, procured by him for us, conferred by

him upon us; he received the gifts of mercy for men, he gave the gifts of mercy to men,^a even the rebellious. The Father has set him at his right hand; for by him he reaches forth his mercy to the children of men, and he is so entirely intrusted with the disposal, that it is called his mercy.

The mercy of Christ appears very illustrious in his whole undertaking, from first to last; it was in his love, and in his pity, that he redeemed us, that he took this ruin under his hand. He assumed our nature, that he might be touched with a compassionate feeling of our infirmities. All his miracles were acts of mercy as well as acts of power, and instances of his kindness and good-will toward men. All the invitations he gave to poor sinners to come to him, and the promises he has made for their encouragement, are the breathings of his mercy. In all his offices his mercy shines. Is he a prophet? He can have compassion on the ignorant;^b and they who learn of him, will find him meek and lowly. Is he a priest? He is a merciful as well as faithful High Priest.^c Is he a king? He comes to us meek, and having salvation.^d It is the mercy of the Redeemer that runs through the whole work of redemption, and is the support and joy of the redeemed. The apostle speaks of the meekness and gentleness of Christ,^e as one of the most precious and powerful considerations with all good Christians, by which they ought to be influenced as much as by any thing.

The great design of the gospel is to exalt Christ, by showing, that all the favours we are now to expect from God pass through his hands, and we are beholden to him for them. It is through his blood that we receive forgiveness of sins; he is our peace, and from his fulness we receive grace for grace. The Father has committed not only *all judgment*, but *all mercy*, to the Son, that all men might honour the Son, by applying themselves to him, and resting on him; to whom the Father has given power over all flesh, on purpose that he might give eternal life, and all the preparatives for it, and earnest of it, to as many as were given him. Would we receive mercy, we must go to Christ for it; for he is *all in all*. All our springs are in him, and we must acknowledge our obligations, not only to his merit, but to his mercy, and that great love wherewith he loved us; for it is owing to his rich mercy that we have interest in his merit, and benefit by it; and this we ought to be made more and more sensible of, that we may find ourselves for ever engaged to love him, and live to him, and to cast all our crowns at his feet. Thus is boasting effectually excluded, and all flesh forbidden to glory in his presence. *It is of the Lord's mercies*, the Lord Christ's mercies, *that we are not consumed*, that we are not fire brands in hell; and it is *because his compassions fail not*, and are

^a Job ix. 15. ^b Pa. iii. 18. ^c Rom. ix. 23. ^d 1 Pet. ii. 10.

^e Tit. iii. 5.

^f 1 Pet. i. 3.

^g 1 Cor. vii. 25.

^h 2 Cor. iv. 1. ⁱ Luke xviii. 13. ^k Pa. lxviii. 18. ^l Heb. v. 2.

^m Heb. ii. 17.

ⁿ Zech. ix. 9.

^o 2 Cor. x. 1.

new every morning, that we continue hitherto, that we are supported under our burthens, comforted in our sorrows, have our daily infirmities pardoned, and the willingness of the spirit accepted, notwithstanding the weakness of the flesh : and if ever we get to heaven, that must be called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which will eternally remind the glorified saints how miserable they had been if Christ had not stood their friend. The best man in the world, when he comes to have his everlasting state determined, will certainly be undone if Christ be not merciful to him. And therefore St. Paul prays for Onesiphorus, who by his charity had lent to the Lord, not that he might have justice done him, but that he might find mercy of the Lord in that day.^p If the merciful be blessed, it is not because they are men of merit, but because they obtain mercy^q with the Lord Jesus. *Son of David, have mercy on us ; Jesus, Master, have mercy on us ;* must be the breathings of our souls, even to the last ; living, dying, and in the judgment.

This was it that our deceased father was full of. To him to live was Christ ; the mercy of Christ, and the merit of Christ. It was but a few weeks before he died, that he gave this thesis to a candidate for the ministry, to be maintained at his trial for his ordination, *Justitia qua coram Deo sistimus est justitia Christi Mediatoris—That we cannot appear before God in any righteousness of our own, but Christ's merit is our only righteousness*, and for that we are ever indebted to his mercy. "None but Christ, none but Christ."

6. That the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is as necessary to the finishing of the work of our salvation, as it was to the beginning of it. We not only receive the mercy of Christ in our justification, sanctification, and present comforts, but we look for it still, even unto eternal life ; we depend upon that to bring us to heaven, to preserve us to that kingdom, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Christ's mercy may be looked for even to eternal life ; for whom he loves, he loves to the end, loves them into heaven, that world of everlasting love ; for his gifts and callings are without repentance. The vessels of mercy shall be vessels of honour ; and though they commit iniquity, they shall be brought to repentance, so that mercy shall not depart from them. Grace in the soul is the work of God's own hands, which he will not forsake, because his mercy endures for ever, and he will perfect that which concerns us. As for God his work is perfect ; it began in mere mercy, rescuing a malefactor from death ; but that mercy will proceed till it crowns a friend and favourite with endless glory. *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*

Let this mercy, therefore, be depended upon to the last, and let us have our eye ever towards it ; let not the strongest and most experienced Christians think their own hands sufficient for them, or imagine that if Christ's mercy will but help them *so far*, they can then shift for themselves ; no, if that mercy be not drawn out to eternal life, we are undone. If the same who is the author be not the finisher of our faith and hope, they will never be perfected in vision and fruition. If goodness and mercy do not follow us *all* our days, even to the last, we shall never reach to dwell in the house of the Lord. To it, therefore, let us commit the great trust against that day, and depend upon the same kind and mighty hand that laid the foundation of this great work, and fastened the corner-stone of it, at length to bring forth the top-stone with shoutings, and eternity itself will be short enough to be spent in crying, *Grace, grace* to it.

And thus I have briefly touched upon those great truths, to which it should seem this faithful witness designed to bear his dying testimony in choosing this text ; and we know that his witness is true, and I hope we believe, not for his saying only, but that we have heard them ourselves, tasted the sweetness, and felt the power of them in our own hearts ; which is the most convincing evidence to us of the truth of them.

But if indeed we receive these truths in the light and love of them,

(1.) Let us bless God that they are so clearly revealed to us in the Scripture. Blessed are our eyes, for they see the joyful light, our ears, for they hear the joyful sound, of Christ and heaven ; things not only hid from the wise and prudent, who despised them, but from prophets and kings, that *desired* to see them, and might not. Bless God that we see eternal life set before us, and not set out of our reach, while we see Christ undertaking for us, able to save to the uttermost, and as willing as he is able.

Let us, therefore, give diligence to get the knowledge of these great things, and grow in our acquaintance with them ; let us more firmly believe the gospel doctrines concerning Christ and heaven, for they are faithful sayings, and more familiarly converse with them, for they are worthy of all acceptation. Let men of learning learn Christ ; let men of business understand this business ; for without this, the most learned men at their end will be fools, and the richest men at their end will be beggars—beggars in vain. The gospel of Christ is the same to the wise and the unwise, to the Greek and the barbarian. The greatest wits and statesmen are not above the knowledge of Christ and heaven, and that knowledge is not above the capacity of the meanest who seek it faithfully. Set your hearts therefore unto all the words which *are* testified among you this day, Deut. xxxii. 46. for believe it, they are matters of life and death.

(2.) Let us bless God that they are so well attested by the experiences of wise and good men. Though our faith stands not upon any human testimony, yet it is an encouragement to us to venture our souls upon the same foundation that so many have, to their unspeakable satisfaction, ventured theirs.—Some who have traversed the vast region of human learning, have owned with Solomon, that the increase of it has been but the increase of sorrow, and they have found no true joy but in the doctrine of Christ. Mr. Selden was confessedly one of the greatest scholars of his age, and on his death-bed expressed himself to this purpose to archbishop Usher—That he had in his time taken a great deal of pains in searching after knowledge, had surveyed most parts of the learning of the sons of men; but in all the books and manuscripts he was master of, he found nothing wherein he could rest his soul, save the Holy Scripture, and that passage was especially comfortable to him, *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope*, Tit. ii. 11—13. We have now parted with one who was as well acquainted with books and men, and had improved as much by that acquaintance, as perhaps any man I ever knew; yet he counts all but loss, that he may know Christ, and win Christ, and be found in him; and that which you see gave him the greatest satisfaction in his dying moments, was an expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Look upon it as the testimony of a minister, who has often in Christ's name called upon you to lay hold on eternal life, and to make that sure. Now you see he urged you to nothing else but what he did himself; he directed you to Christ and his mercy, and there he reposed himself. Therefore the ministry is committed to men like ourselves, because they having souls to save as well as we, we may hope they will deal for our souls as for their own, and direct us to build upon no other foundation than what they themselves build upon, and will speak what they themselves have seen, and testify what they have themselves known. Your ministers who are gone, embarked for another world in the same vessel which they have often persuaded you to embark in, and have thereby showed they were in earnest with you.

But if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; men may be deceived, but God cannot: by faith receive his testimony, and so set to your seal that he is true: *and this is the record*, it is the sum total which all I have said amounts to, *that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*.

II. I come now to consider this text as recommended to us, with design not only to express the

workings of his heart towards Christ and heaven, but to impress the like workings on our hearts. And so the words come in here as an exhortation to this duty of looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The former is in order to this. They who have themselves tasted of the mercy and grace of Christ, cannot but desire that others also may taste of it. True grace hates monopolies, and desires not to eat its morsels alone. Sinners entice you to cast in your lot among them, and tell you, you shall find all precious substance, and fill your houses with spoil; but they lay wait for their own blood, and their end will certainly be bitter as wormwood; hearken to the invitations of the sons and heirs of heaven, and be persuaded to cast in your lot among them, for *yet there is room*; in Christ and eternal life, there is enough for all, enough for each, enough for you, and you will all be welcome. Your deceased pastor was himself so fully convinced of the reality and certainty of unseen things, that he earnestly desired you also might be convinced of them, and that none of you might perish in ignorance and unbelief concerning them. He had such pleasure in looking for this eternal life, and such satisfaction in relying on Christ for it, that he wished you the same pleasure, the same satisfaction. It yielded him solid substantial comfort on his death-bed, which renewed the inward man, even then when the outward man was decaying. Then he said with thankfulness, that through the grace of God, he had abundance of peace; and that his heart was as full of joy as it could hold. Let this encourage you to follow him and others, who are now through faith and patience inheriting the promises. He had hope in his death, and you have reason to think he is now happy; be you holy, and you shall be happy too. Heaven is not intended only for good ministers, but for all good Christians who now have their conversation in heaven. The crown of righteousness shall be given, not only to such great men as St. Paul was, but to all those who love Christ's appearing; who love his first appearing, and are thankful for it; his second appearing, and long for it. Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and excluded none who do not exclude themselves; put in for it therefore, and resolve not to take up short of it. Would you die the death of the righteous? live their life. Would you have your last end like theirs? let your present way be like theirs. Follow their faith, who made Christ the end of their conversation, who, what he was to them yesterday, will be the same to us to-day, and to them and us for ever. Whatever you heard or saw in your aged minister that was instructive and exemplary, transcribe it into your own hearts and lives, and thus let him still live among you; and then death, which has parted him from you a while, to make you amends, will shortly fetch you to him.

When he ordered that this text should be preached upon at his funeral, he withal gave direction, that I should take some notice of the foregoing words, and observe something from them for your instruction. And, I think, this will be the most proper place to do it, in order to your attaining a well-grounded hope of eternal life. The context is this, (v. 20, 21.) *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God; and then continue looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* From all which I shall now in the close, give you some directions, and I beseech you, suffer the word of exhortation, and submit to it. Now though Providence has prepared the ground, (and those hearts are hard indeed, that will not be softened by the death of two such ministers so near together,) I would hope, the seed of the word might take root, and bring forth fruit.

1. Lay a good foundation in holy faith, and the love of God. This is supposed in those exhortations to *build up ourselves on our most holy faith*, and to *keep ourselves in the love of God*. See that you be well principled, that the root of the matter be found in you, else you cannot be fruitful in the fruits of righteousness. Let our holy faith in Christ lead us to the love of God, as reconciled to us through him.

Firmly believe the doctrine of Christ, embrace it, rely upon it, be delivered into it as into a mould, receive the impressions of it, and submit to the commanding constraining power of it. Let your faith particularly receive Christ, and rest upon him, as your Prophet, Priest, and King, and resign yourselves to him to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. Let it be a faith unfeigned, and not a bare profession, a faith that purifies the heart, then it is a holy faith. The doctrine we believe is holy, let us be sanctified by it. It is faith that overcomes the world, quenches the fiery darts of Satan, realizes unseen things, establishes the heart, and keeps us from fainting; neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but this holy faith is all in all. We have no benefit by divine revelation, that great blessing of the world, without faith, no more than we have by the light of the sun without eyes. The word preached will not profit, if it be not mixed with faith.

Let this faith work by love, such a reigning love of God in your hearts, as will eat out all sinful self-love, and the love of the world, and will kindle in you a holy fire of devotion to God, and zeal for his honour in every thing; such a love as will make the keeping of all his commandments easy to you, and particularly that of brotherly love; get this love shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, and do all you do in religion from that principle.

2. Build upon this foundation, else in vain was the foundation laid. Ye beloved, who have escaped the snares of the scorners, he is speaking of in the

verses before, and are contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, Jude 3. think it not enough that you have and hold the true religion, but be still building up yourselves on your most holy faith.

Proceed upon the good principles that through grace are laid, and act in conformity to them, as those who in all you say and do are governed by conscience, and the fear and love of God. Proceed in the good practices you have begun, and never grow weary of well doing. You have still need of helps for your souls, bless God there are such to be had, who will build, and will help you to build up yourselves, upon the good foundations of faith and love, which your ministers who are gone have laid among you.

Go forth, therefore, and go on in the strength of Christ, in the work and warfare of your Christianity. Be daily improving in knowledge, in wisdom, in every grace, and reckon not yourselves to have apprehended. You have daily lessons to learn, be getting forward in your learning; daily work to do, be still doing it, and rid ground in your journey heaven-wards. Have you begun well? Let nothing hinder you. Have you gone on well hitherto? Lose not the things which you have wrought, the things which you have gained. We are clogged with so many corruptions, and surrounded with so many temptations, that if we do not get ground, we certainly lose ground; like a boat on the river, if it be not rowed up the stream, it will of itself go down the stream. *Non progredi est regredi,—Not to advance is to retreat.* Aim high therefore, and press forward, having such a prize set before you. Run with patience the race set before you. Hold fast Christ as the foundation, which will stand the storm, and then carry your building as high as heaven above the storm. Let your motto be *Plus ultra—Onward.* \ \

3. Be constant and inward with God in prayer. Would you build yourselves on your most holy faith, pray much, and pray in the Holy Ghost, for except the Lord build the spiritual house, they labour in vain who build it. We can do nothing for ourselves of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God; to him therefore we must continually apply ourselves; he has promised grace to help in every time of need, but he will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel. Ask, and it shall be given you, not otherwise: ask in faith, ask in earnest, ask and seek by endeavour, ask and knock with constancy and importunity, as become Jacob's seed, and Jacob's God will not let it be in vain. By prayer give glory to God, and then you may expect to receive grace from him, and would be every way better did you pray more, and more to the purpose. Let all your comforts draw you, and all your crosses drive you, to your knees, and especially let your deficiencies in faith engage you to pray for the increase of it, and the fulfilling of the work of faith with power

You would profit more by the word of faith, if you did pray more for a blessing upon it. You will not sit down to meat, why then will you sit down to a sermon, the food of your souls, without craving a blessing. Praying contributes no less to our edification in faith than hearing does, indeed it does more, for it engages God on our side.

And whenever you pray, see that it be in the Holy Ghost; pray under the Spirit's influence and operation, who makes intercession in us, and helps our praying infirmities. Let your spirits be employed in the duty, and in order thereunto see it necessary to depend upon God's Spirit. It is not his inspiration, as a Spirit of prophecy, that we are to expect, but his conduct and strength, his light and heat, as a Spirit of adoption, a Spirit of grace and supplication.

4. Take heed of every thing that tends to quench the fire of holy love, and would cast you out of God's favour. This is intended in that branch of exhortation, *Keep yourselves in the love of God*. We must not only pray, but watch, and make it our constant care and endeavour to preserve both the good work of God in us, and the good will of God toward us.

Let us keep ourselves in love to God, as the most beautiful Being, and the most bountiful Benefactor. Take heed of every thing that would hinder the operations of his love. Let not the pleasures of a prosperous condition draw off your love from God, nor divert it to lying vanities; nor let the sorrows of an afflicted condition cool your love towards God, nor occasion you to entertain any hard thoughts of him. The love of God is that fire on the altar, with which all our sacrifices must be kindled; let it not go out for want of being blown, and stirred up, by pious and devout meditations on the grace of God, which are the fuel of pious and devout affections.

Let us keep our interest in the love of God, and beware of saying or doing any thing to forfeit it. Has God graciously condescended to take you into covenant and communion with himself, be sure you keep his commandments, that you may abide in his love; and may not lose or lessen your interest in him. Carefully avoid sin, all appearances of it, and approaches to it, for fear of offending God, and incurring his displeasure. You are upon your good behaviour, see that you behave yourselves well, that no man take your crown. If you throw yourselves out of God's love, to whom will you betake yourselves? You have lost your best friend, have made him your enemy, and who then can befriend you? Be solicitous therefore to please God, and let it be the top of your ambition to be accepted of him. Keep in the way of your duty; keep close to holy ordinances, and live in brotherly love, then you keep yourselves in the love of God.

Keep *each*—one another in the love of God; so

it may be read; watch over one another; edify one another; do all you can to prevent others from falling into sin, and to recover them from it; to provoke one another to love and to good works, and not to provoke one another's passions; let hand join in hand to promote every thing that is good, that you may strengthen and encourage one another in all the instances of holy love, and so may keep one another in the love of God. It was Cain who said, *Am I my brother's keeper*.

5. Lay hold on eternal life; it is set before you not only as the visible heavens, to be looked upon, but as a prize, to be run for, and fought for: it is offered to you; it may be yours upon very easy terms, it will be yours unless you put it away from you. Many a time you have had the offers of it made you, and now once more: give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you have, through grace, made sure your title to it. Believe the reality of it; prefer it before all the delights of sense and time; consent to the conditions upon which it is offered; be willing to part with all for it; set your hearts upon it, and keep it always in your eye.

It is life, my brethren, it is the life of your souls, it is eternal life, that you are urged to lay hold on. A life on the other side death, but a life that has no death on the other side it. Your present lives are dying lives, and so are the lives of all your friends; the lives of your ministers, you see, are so: we cannot take any fast hold of this life, or of any of the enjoyments of it; place your happiness therefore in eternal life, seek and secure it there. Your ministers, who preached to you the words of that life, are one after another gone before you to the enjoyment of it: let their death do that which their life has not done, to draw your hearts upward, upward toward God; forward, forward toward heaven.

6. Let Jesus Christ be all in all to you. In every thing wherein you have to do with God, depend upon the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; and in all things let him have the pre-eminence with you. Remember, you are Christians; but in vain are you called so, if you rest in mere natural religion, and relish not the truth, as it is in Jesus. If Christ be of no account with you, Christ will be of no effect to you; and then you are undone. If you leave Christ out of your religion, who is indeed the *Alpha* and the *Omega* of it, what comfort can you find in it? what benefit can you expect from it here or hereafter? If you look for that in yourselves, that righteousness, and that strength, which is to be had in Christ only, you must thank yourselves when the disappointment proves fatal. He who is sinking, if he embrace himself, perishes, but if he lays hold on the hand reached out to him, he may be helped. You are disciples of Christ, devoted to Christ, dependents on Christ; as, therefore, you have received him, so walk in him:

you have need of him daily, make daily use of him. He is the true Christian, in whom Christ is formed, and he the growing Christian, who grows up into Christ in all things.

Your ministers were of St. Paul's spirit, to them to live was Christ, to preach Christ; nor did they desire to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Let the same mind, therefore, be in you, and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Live upon the mercy of Christ, see yourselves lost without it, and cast yourselves upon it: let that be your stay, and stay yourselves upon it; let that be your comfort, and comfort yourselves with it. Be ready to own your dependence on Christ, and your obligations to him; Christ is a Christian's all, and therefore, blessed be God for Jesus Christ. Let that be the burthen of every song.

Lastly, Live in the believing hopes and expectations of eternal life through the mercy of Christ. If, by the grace of God, you have taken some care, some pains, to make it sure, (I hope I speak to many who have done it,) take the comfort of it. Be still looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, and with patience wait for it. Let actual thoughts and expectations of eternal life be the daily entertainment of your souls. Look upon it as real, as near, as yours; and please yourselves with the prospect of it. How often do our foolish, idle fancies build us castles in the air, and please us with the imagination of things uncertain, unlikely, impossible! When at the same time, if we would set our faith on work, that would entertain us with the delightful contemplation of real bliss, which we shall very shortly be in the possession of; and which will so far exceed our present conceptions of it, that we need not fear, lest (as it is with the things of this world) the raised expectation of them should be a drawback upon the enjoyment of them, and lessen the pleasure of it. But on the contrary, the more we converse with it in faith and hope, the better prepared we shall be for it, and the more will the capacities of the sanctified soul be enlarged to take

in those joys. What! sirs, do we hope to be in heaven quickly, to be there eternally, and yet think so seldom of it, and please ourselves so little with the foresight of its glories, and the foretaste of its pleasures. Let us raise our expectations, for the things are neither doubtful, nor distant, nor despicable, but sure, and great, and very near; and the hope of them, if built on Christ, will not make us ashamed.

Let our hopes and expectations of eternal life wean us from this world, and take our affections off from it. What an inconsiderable point is this earth, to one who has his conversation in heaven! How trifling are the things that are seen, that are temporal and transitory, to one who keeps his eye and heart on the things that are not seen, that are eternal. Let this hope purify us from all the pollutions of sin, and pacify all the tumults of our spirits, that we may be found of Christ in peace. Let it engage and quicken us to the utmost diligence in the service of God: it is sure worth while, to take pains in that work, which no less than eternal life will be the recompence of. Do we hope for the mercy of Christ? Let us then put on, as the elect of God, bowels of compassion, and upon all occasions show mercy, as those who hope to find mercy. And since temporal death must be our passage to this eternal life, let our expectations of it not only take off the terror of death, but make it welcome to us. Why should we make any difficulty of putting off the earthly house of this tabernacle, in order to our removal to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Rather let us hasten to meet with cheerfulness that messenger which will fetch us to life, though it come under the name of death; and all the days of our appointed time continue waiting till it come; with reference to the burthens and troubles of this life, waiting with a holy patience; and yet, with reference to the joy set before us, (if I may so speak,) with a holy impatience: *Why are his chariot-wheels so long a coming!* Let us have our eye to this eternal life when we pray daily, *Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come.*

A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE OF THE REV. MR. FRANCIS TALLENTS.

If my information be right, his grandfather was a Frenchman, and was brought over into England by Sir Francis Leak, (whose descendants were Lords Deincourt, afterwards Earls of Scarsdale) who did

honourably for him, because in France, upon some occasion or other, he had been instrumental to save his life.

Our Mr. Tallents was born in Nov. 1619, at a little