

SAINTS' ENCOURAGEMENT

TO

DILIGENCE IN CHRIST'S SERVICE :

WITH

MOTIVES AND MEANS TO CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AS AN EXAMPLE TO PROVE THE POINT HANDLED, THE
DEATH-BED EXPERIENCES OF MRS. B.

In keeping of them there is great reward, PSAL. xix. 11.

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THE

SAINTS' ENCOURAGEMENT.

CHRISTIAN READER,

THE author of this Treatise is so well known in London, and his former published labours are deservedly so well esteemed, that might my own opinion herein carry it, this office of mine should be omitted as unnecessary. He or his writings need not my commendation, and I should think that few readers should be so much stranger to him as to need it. But when it must be so, I take it for an honourable and pleasant work to recommend persons and things which are so laudable, as to reflect a praise upon him that praiseth them. God hath blessed the author with a humble, a serious, a peaceable, and an industrious spirit: his heart is set on the work of God, and the winning of souls. It is a great praise to him, that he is none of those who by pride, faction,

there is any hope of life. And many of God's faithful servants, by the decays of nature, do glorify God more by patience, than by activity of mind or tongue; and can only exercise repentance, faith, and love, by saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; O that I may see, and in the heavenly society in perfect love, have glorious communion with my God." Reader, do but taste thyself, what is in this Treatise, by a serious perusal, and thou wilt need no more the invitation of

Thy unworthy fellow-servant,

R. BAXTER.

Sept. 5, 1673.

TO MY BELOVED HEARERS,

ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH ARE UNDER MY PECULIAR
OVERSIGHT.

DEAR BRETHREN,

I AM under many obligations to improve my talent to the utmost for you, next to God: it is for your service I live; you have my thoughts, you have my cares, you have my prayers, you have my tears, you have my love, my joy; for you I am willing to spend and be spent. I have now been labouring amongst you, with some perils, with much weakness, and sensible decays of nature, for about six years; and now feeling my body declining, and being persuaded that I must ere long put off this tabernacle, I thought it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up by

putting you in remembrance : moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have the great things of religion always in remembrance. To this end I was ready to close with the request of those that desired the addition of this Sermon, now enlarged, to the Life and Death of my precious Brother : and I have added also the Death-bed Experiences of one amongst yourselves, which several of you were eye and ear witnesses of ; so that having such precedents to draw, and such motives to quicken you, you might (by the influence of the Spirit, and the stirring up the gift and graces of God within you) be enabled to run and not be weary, to walk and not be faint, and to mount up with wings like eagles, till you rest in Christ's bosom. I have oft thought that unbelief and laziness do ruin most souls : I have therefore endeavoured in these two * examples to demonstrate the reality of invisibles, and to fortify you against unbelief. I might also put you in mind of the holy lives and joyful deaths of the most of those which the Lord hath

* The Life and Death of my Brother, and Mrs. B.'s Death-bed Experiences.

removed from us. Have not your ears heard their triumphant praises? did you not see how undauntedly they looked death in the face? could you not witness the beauty of religion in their deportment upon a death-bed? And dare any of you question whether it be worth the while to be religious? can any of you think diligence in soul affairs lost labour? can any room yet be left for unbelief? One would think that they who have seen what we have seen, should judge it madness to doubt about the great truths of religion; but yet woful experience tells us, for all this, that the faith of most is but like a grain of mustard seed; and our frequent departing from God demonstrates too clearly, that we have too much of the evil heart of unbelief in us. O, my dear brethren, that you and I had better learnt the art of living by faith. O Lord, help our unbelief! More faith would make us lift up Christ in the world at another rate than most church-members do. Oh that precious grace! Brethren, let us labour to increase in faith; and then heart purity would increase, all grace would abound, and your fear would decrease, and your comforts greatly flow in. It is not

for nothing that the scripture speaks of joy unspeakable in believing. Oh, how fain would I, that you and I may quit ourselves like them which do indeed believe! The great prevailing of unbelief makes me larger, the great danger, the more instant upon this subject; and I know, that such of you as are well acquainted with your own hearts will judge that I have not without good reason spoken what I have. Oh that your noble and generous faith might, for the future, prove that I have neither preached nor written in vain.

The other sin that brings so many souls to poverty, misery, and eternal distress, is laziness and spiritual sloth. Though God hath placed so active a soul within us; though it hath the greatest advantages for action, the highest motives; though it cannot be unacquainted with the shame and hazard that indifference in these affairs doth expose men to; yet how strangely dull, inactive, and careless are the most! how do they sleep, eat, and trifle, whilst their great work lieth by, or is done by the halves! That I might cure if not prevent this dismal lethargy, I have presented to your constant view the life and death of an

active christian ; and as you like his comforts in death, so answer his activity in your lives. And that I might, if possible, drive the nail to the head, I made a further improvement of it, by handling that excellent scripture, “ For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” 2 Pet. i. 11. I now present that to your eye which lately sounded in your ears, that it may have the deeper impression upon your hearts and lives ; and the powerful influence may be seen by the world ; that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven, and say, “ God is in you of a truth.” I shall desire this of you, as my dying request, that you would often read this book for my sake, and practise it for your own sake. Brethren, time is short, our work, our Master, our wages, are great, and, not to mince the matter, we have yet done little ; God knows, too little, little to what we should, little to what we might, little to what others have done, and nothing to what Christ hath done for us ; nothing to what reward we look for, and nothing to what God deserves ; I had almost said, nothing to what saints and angels

in heaven do. Well, now at last let us mend our pace; instead of creeping let us run; instead of sleeping, and dreaming, let us awake, and work diligently. In a word, instead of being formal, slight, and lazy, let us be spiritual, serious, and active. Begin in your hearts, and fall to work ardently there; turn out vain thoughts, away with every "weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset you," and rob you of your strength, your evidences, your peace, and wound your conscience, or leave you half dead. "Keep your hearts with all diligence, for from thence are the issues of life and death." Be much in your closets, and act grace nobly in secret duty; then wrestle, and let not God go without a blessing! Oh, take heed of forgetting, or being careless and slight in secret duties! Let me tell you, the chief part of religion is an internal thing, and if you fail here, the whole of your profession signifieth little. Then be active in your families; remember that corrupt nature which was derived from you begins to be active betimes: the devil and wicked ones will be industrious to poison and murder your children and servants; and

your utmost diligence is too little, considering what is hazarded.

Then be active in your places for God, shine in a crooked and perverse generation: be meek, pitiful, wise, faithful, zealous, constant: forget not me in your earnest prayers, that I may have a thousand times more love to God and souls, and that I may have more grace, more gifts, more success. And, brethren, I would preach while I live, when I die, and when I am dead; for this cause I leave these lines to teach you when I am silent in the dust. That you and I may finish our course with joy, and have a sweet meeting in another world, is the prayer of yours in the sweetest bonds,

JAMES JANEWAY.

Aug. 26, 1673.

THE

SAINTS' ENCOURAGEMENT.

FOR SO AN ENTRANCE SHALL BE MINISTERED UNTO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. 2 PET. i. 11.

THE ministers of Christ have two great employments lying upon their hands. The first is, the conversion of sinners; and the second is, the edification of saints. Now the apostle Peter seems with great vigour to carry on both these designs; having formerly preached to the Jews, and that with no small success, he is not a little concerned for their strengthening, progress, and consolation. That vineyard which the Lord had by him planted with noble plants, he desired to see well watered and yielding ripe and much fruit. He was not ignorant of Satan's activity, man's negligence, and the dismal effects of both. He knew well enough that many seemed to begin well that did not end so; that some which looked as if they were bound for heaven, made shipwreck of

all before they came to the harbour, that many ran well awhile that never came to the prize, and that not a few which were judged to begin in the Spirit, did end in the flesh. To this end, he doth what he can to countermine the designs of hell, by confirming and encouraging those which were already brought to yield subjection to the yoke of Christ. It is life to faithful preachers to see their people stand fast : it is no small grief to a father to see his child stunted or pining under a consumption ; surely, it is a far greater trouble to a minister of Christ to see his hearers, that seemed sometime lively, active, and thriving, to apostatize, decay, and to prove but the skeletons of christians !

The apostle, that he might hinder this declining, labours with all his might to put them upon spiritual progress ; he would fain have them run so as to obtain, trade so as to get the true riches, the Pearl of great price, and to fight so as to conquer. He knew well enough that many were called and few chosen, and that several of those which are not far from the kingdom of heaven, will never come there, and that it will be but a sorry comfort to be almost saved ; for them that are altogether damned, to be once fair for heaven and now in hell, to be called a friend, and dealt with as an enemy, he cannot bear the thoughts of their eternal miscarriage. How doth he lay about

him both by preaching and writing to put them upon the securing their everlasting concerns, and not to leave the matters of the greatest consequence in the world at the greatest uncertainty and hazard! How many persuasions doth he use! how many powerful and affectionate exhortations doth he give them! and how doth he back all with the most cogent motives and considerations imaginable! O how fain would poor ministers have all the people saved! how loth are they to leave them before they see them in the arms of Christ! how unwilling to have any miscarry!

In the verses preceding, the apostle had been telling the christians he wrote to, that it was not enough for them to escape from the pollutions of the world: negative holiness is a poor evidence for positive happiness. Saints must be pure, and show the beauties of Christ and holiness in an impure and filthy generation in which they live. The name and credit of being christians ought not to serve their turns without the nature, reality, and sincerity: nay, true grace itself ought not to content a saint, but he should strive after the life, spirit, and power of godliness. We should be endeavouring after higher degrees of grace, and still forgetting what is behind, and pressing forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; which, if we do, our

labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. The particular arguments which he backs his exhortation with here, are these :

First, That they should not be unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ver. 8.

Secondly, From the ill consequence of their not endeavouring to make some progress, it will appear that they never had life in the root, if there be no such spiritual shootings out and fruit in the branches. He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins, ver. 9.

Thirdly, He puts them upon spiritual progress, from their making their calling and election sure by this means.

Fourthly, By this diligence and progress they should be sure never to fall so as sinners and hypocrites do ; that is, they shall not deliberately and ordinarily fall into foul and scandalous sins ; nor at all fall finally into apostacy and damnation, ver. 10.

Fifthly, By this holy diligence and activity in grace, they should finish their course with joy, and so an abundant entrance should be ministered to them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ver. 11.

These words are a gracious promise to diligent christians ; in which take notice of,

I. The promise.

II. The condition of the promise.

I. The promise itself; in which you may observe,

1. The substance.

2. The circumstances which increase and set forth the glory of the promise.

For the substance of the promise; it is an entrance into the kingdom of Christ.

For the circumstances which do so lively set forth the greatness and glory of this promise, we observe, 1. This kingdom is no small one, it is the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. The security of it; it shall be. 3. Another circumstance which doth heighten this mercy, is the persons to whom it is given; unto you. 4.

Another thing that maketh the mercy great, with a witness, is the eternity of it; the everlasting kingdom. 5. The manner of the conveyance of all this in a triumphant glorious manner, with great state and joy going before; the entrance into heaven shall be ministered to them abundantly.

II. We have the condition of the promise, implied in that word; "So:" which bids you look back to the foregoing verses, and by comparing them, you will find this to be the condition of the promise.

1. True godliness.

2. The utmost diligence and activity in the ways of God.

3. And perseverance in so doing.

I shall speak a little by way of explication of the words, and then raise the doctrine which I intend to handle.

“ So :” That is, in giving all diligence to add one degree of grace to another, and labouring constantly to make your calling and election sure; in so doing, you shall have this promise made good.

“ An entrance :” A way into glory shall be plain, the door of heaven shall be set wide open, all hinderances shall be removed, you shall have nothing to interrupt your peace, your fears shall be blown quite over, enemies silenced; all mountains shall be levelled, and you shall see by the eye of faith the gates of the New Jerusalem open to you.

“ Shall be administered :” Though it be future, yet it is certain; wait awhile and the joyful messenger will come; you shall have a seasonable deliverance at death, you shall have life; the Father shall embrace you as children, the Son own you as his bride, the Spirit delight in you as his habitation and temple, and the angels shall stand ready to convey your souls to glory.

“ Unto you :” You that have been slighted by the world shall be prized of God; you that the wicked world thought not worthy to live, Christ thinks the world not worthy of you. You that

judged yourselves not to deserve the least mercy, God shall give you the highest and greatest. All of you that are thus diligent in the service of God, shall be faithfully rewarded by him; unto you, and none but you, shall this grace and favour be given; when the careless, luke-warm professors shall have the door shut against them, it shall be opened to you.

“Abundantly:” You shall have no ordinary privileges; you shall go triumphing to glory: while less active christians come with a great deal of hazard to their port, you shall come richly laden with graces and comforts top and top-gallant into the harbour.

“Into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” You shall not need fear the leaving the body, because it must lie in the dust; but glory, in that you shall leave the dung-hill to sit in the throne; the house of clay, to go to the palace of God; a prison, to go to a kingdom; and that not a mean one, but a glorious one, such as Christ enjoys, that which he hath purchased for and settled you in; and you need not fear that the greatness, and riches, and glory of it should expose it to hazard as is usual here below. Be of good cheer, you shall enjoy it as long as Christ doth, it shall never be taken away from you, it cannot be wasted, impoverished, or

lost; neither shall you be taken from it by death; but your happiness shall run parallel with eternity; as long as Christ lives you shall not die, as long as he is happy you cannot be miserable; and till God have lost his power and faithfulness, and Christ his love, and eternity become short, you shall enjoy that rest, glory, and happiness.

The doctrine which I shall speak to from these words, is this :

DOCT. THAT THEY WHICH USE THEIR UTMOST DILIGENCE IN THE THINGS OF GOD ALL THEIR DAYS, SHALL AT LAST HAVE AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE MINISTERED TO THEM INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

In the handling of this doctrine I shall follow this method. I shall inquire,

I. What kind of diligence it is that is required.

II. What is implied in that abundant entrance.

III. I shall prove it.

IV. How this is ministered unto the saints.

V. I shall give some reasons of the point.

VI. I shall answer objections.

VII. I shall make some improvement of all.

I. I shall inquire what kind of diligence it is, that is required as the qualification of this promise.

Negatively, 1. It is not a mere external dili-

gence that will give one a sufficient title to this promise. How many are there who spread out their hands and make many prayers! how many that add fasting to their prayers, and that seem to take some pleasure in the ordinances of God, and seem as well pleased to hear the word as to hear the sweetest music, or to be present when a set of viols in concert are well handled; yet for all this, shall he be put off, with "Depart, I know you not;" and this shall they have at God's hands, to lie down in shame! It is possible to seek and not find, to run and never come to the prize, and fight and yet never to conquer. O how many wear Christ's livery, and say they do him service, that shall receive no wages, but sorrow and misery! Isa. i. 11, 15. Isa. lviii. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. Luke xiii. 24. Matt. vii. 21.

2. Neither will partial diligence have such a reward. How common a thing is it for men to pick and choose in the service of this great Master! Such and such duties as are easy, and call for no great pains or self-denial, and may carry a great deal of credit and repute with them, such they will perform. If to go to church twice upon the Lord's day, and to read a chapter at night, and deal honestly and justly by their neighbours; if to forbear fornication and drunkenness will secure them, then a great many more would go to heaven than

are ever likely to come there, Mal. i. 9. Matt. xxiii. 23. Luke xviii. 11.

3. Neither will diligence for awhile, which after a little heat ends in slightness, formality, and apostacy, be found that which will have such encouragement at death, and at last be crowned with glory. Are there not too many of those which at first are very forward professors, and seem to be greatly in love with Christ, and zealous for religion in its power; but alas, how doth their righteousness vanish like the morning dew! Do they not quickly forget their first love? yea, some of them which were ready to pull out their eyes for the ministers of Christ, after a while are ready to pull out their ministers' eyes! It was a strange alteration in the Jews, to hear them one day crying "Hosannah," and the next, "Crucify him, crucify him;" one while justifying the Lord Christ, and another while condemning him. But yet this is that which we see acted over and over again too often in the world; but let not such expect the commendation of their Master. Do they not put Christ again to open shame? and with what face then can such look for glory from him? Matt. xiii. 19—21. Hos. vi. 4. Gal. iii. 1, 3. Heb. vi. 6. x. 29, 38.

4. Nor must any one expect by his own works to earn such wages. If we could weep and pray

all our days ; if we never be at rest day nor night, but be constantly pouring out our soul to God, and be engaged every moment in either divine meditation, reading, hearing, spiritual conference, receiving the sacrament, and divine exercise, yet let not such look for heaven as matter of debt and merit. The confident and proud Pharisee is more like to meet with a repulse than the humble publican. There is not one saint in earth that can, by all that he can do, make expiation for one vain thought, much less deserve a dignity so unspeakable as a crown of glory. Nay, there is not one saint in heaven that can say, This is the kingdom that my holiness and diligence hath procured : it is the rich that are like to be sent empty away. Those who justify themselves, and are pure in their own eyes, and say they are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, may find, when it is too late to remedy it, that they are poor, and need every thing ; and instead of peace, may have their hopes and confidences at death swept down, Gal. ii. 16. Rom. iii. 20. Eph. ii. 9. Rom. x. 3. Rev. iii. 17. Prov. xxx. 12.

But, next, I shall show you *positively* what diligence it is that shall be sure of such a reward.

1. It is an internal as well as an external diligence. God is a Spirit, and they that worship

him must worship him in spirit and in truth. God requireth truth in the inward parts; the understanding must admire him, as well as the tongue speak of him; the will must be for him, and choose him as the ultimate happiness of the soul, as well as the knee bow to him; the heart must love him, as well as the lips praise him, or else he looks upon the man as one that mocks; prayer is hypocrisy without the heart. In a word, all religion is but a compliment, a cheat, a lie, except the soul be engaged for God. And if the soul be in good earnest, and the mind be willing, God calls that a perfect man; and you may mark this perfect man, and behold this upright one, for the end of that man will be peace. His beginning may be tears, his middle wars, scars, and wounds; but the day is his, and he shall come off bravely with flying colours, and his General's commendations; a triumphant conquest and an eternal jubilee shall be that man's portion. Sincerity never wants a reward: uprightness and God's presence go together, John iv. 24. Psal. li. 6. Gal. vi. 7. Hos. xi. 12. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psal. xxxvii. 37. cxl. 13.

2. It must be a scriptural and commanded diligence. He that is diligent in service without his master's warrant, may, instead of a reward, have that cutting question put to him, "Who

hath required these things at your hand?" Nothing is acceptable to the Lord, but what he hath prescribed. We are never likely to be rewarded for any thing but what God hath commanded. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is still the language of the faithful servant. Whatsoever hath God's institution upon it, is not to be disputed but obeyed. The faithful servant's eye is still to the rule, and he judgeth it folly to be wise above that which is written, and little less than blasphemy to teach God what laws he must rule and govern his subjects by. This is that he saith to himself and others, "To the law and to the testimony." The precepts of God are sweet to him; these he reads, these he meditates upon, and these he desires to practise. He dares not for his soul clip or mar the Great King's coin; his desire is to have respect to all God's commands, and none else, Deut. iv. 2. Jer. vii. 31. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Psal. cxix. 6, 20.

3. It is the utmost diligence that is required, "So we shall have this entrance abundantly ministered into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." God is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek; what we do we must do with all possible diligence. All the faculties of our soul must be engaged with all their might for God. He disparages God, Christ,

and heaven, who looks upon them as matters to be minded by the by. He must not look to have the crown that doth not strive for it. It is not for nothing that christianity is set out often in scripture, by such expressions as intimate the greatest diligence, fervour, resolution: and those who thus seek shall find, those who thus run shall obtain, those who thus fight shall triumph. Remember this, christians, that if ever you intend to finish your course with joy, and to leave this world honourably, you must set to your work in good earnest. Our God, souls, heaven, and eternity are not things to be trifled with. Heaven and glory, nay, the peace of God in this world, will abundantly make amends for the utmost diligence in all the duties of religion, and the utmost affection too, Heb. xi. 6. Matt. vi. 33. Luke xiii. 24, 25. Matt. xi. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 12. Eccl. ix. 10.

4. There must be a constant diligence if ever we intend to come off at last with comfort. We have our Master's eye constantly upon us, his ears are always open to hear us, his hand is never weary of helping of us. Our engagements and relations to God are constant, our wages run on constantly, our souls are always in hazard while their great enemy keeps the field. Our advocate is always making intercession, and he that is not

constant in his service, doth not well consider what comforts he loseth, what dangers he exposeth himself to ; and that it may be interpreted that he doth begin to demur whether it be worth his while to go on, and whether invisibles be not fancies, and religion a cheat, and a course of sin to be preferred before a life of holiness. Remember the promise is to him that overcometh ; “ He that endureth to the end shall be saved ; ” he that is faithful to the death will be crowned with a crown of life.

O what a pity it is that any should be so foolish as to set out in the road to Zion, and yet tire before they are at their journey's end ! How sad a thing is it any should begin well and end ill ; that so many lovely blossoms should fall before they come to perfection ! O why do not men and women take that counsel which Christ giveth us ? Why do they not sit down and consider what the charges of religion may amount to, what self-denial, mortification, watchfulness, and diligence, what scoffs and reproaches, what losses and sufferings it may cost them before they come to that blessed rest, the bosom of Jesus ? Man, never take upon thee the profession of religion, except thou art resolved to go through with it. Never expose thyself to the scorn of the world for the name, and to the contempt of God for want of the

power, of godliness. Would you have a short happiness? Can you be contented with a finite glory? Are you willing that that word eternal should be left out of the lease of the saints' inheritance? They which expect everlasting rest hereafter, must be constant in their work here. As "everlasting" is a significant word in the covenant that God makes with man, so *constant* is a word that must not be left out in man's articles of service with God; and if by patient continuance in well doing they seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, they shall not miss of the fruit of their hopes and labours, eternal life, Rom. ii. 7. Psal. cxix. 112. Matt. x. 22. Heb. vi. 11, 12. Isa. xlix. 23. Col. i. 22, 23. 1 Chron. xxviii. 7.

5. This diligence must be accompanied with profound humility. Pride is a fly that will spoil the sweetest ointment. When we have done all, we must say and think that we are unprofitable servants; and look upon it as little less than a wonder of grace that such poor sorry performances are not rejected with the greatest contempt, and that God doth not say unto us, What hast thou to do to take my name into thy mouth? and adore that mercy that will give a look to such vile worms. When David is most like a man after God's own heart, he sits down and wonders that God

should have any regard to him. Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto," 2 Sam. vii. 18. And, "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee," 1 Chron. xxix. 14. When Paul is at his highest, he is still making humble reflections upon God's admirable and stupendous grace, and his own unworthiness and vileness. And though sometimes he speaks of what he did, yet there was a kind of necessity for it, and he always puts the crown upon the head of grace. If he do any thing, it is not he but Christ; if he labour more abundantly, and suffer above measure, and be succeeded more than all the apostles, he will not glory in it, but still grace shall carry away the praise and honour of all, Luke xvii. 10. Job ix. 2, 3. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Tim. i. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

And thus you see I have showed you what diligence it is that so glorious a reward is promised to, as an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is not a mere external diligence, nor a partial diligence, nor a temporary diligence, nor a proud meritorious diligence, that this promise is made to;

but an internal, spiritual, scriptural diligence. It is the utmost diligence, wherein the whole soul and the whole body is engaged for God; and that with the utmost intenseness and fervour of spirit: and this for a constancy as to an habitual inclination and suitableness to it, and after all attributing the reward not to debt and our merit, but pure grace, and counting our own righteousness as filthy rags, and desiring to be found, not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness of Christ, which is by faith.

II. What is implied in that abundant entrance which shall be ministered to this diligent saint at last.

It speaks no ordinary kindness, his privilege shall not be that of common believers; not a mere safe arrival to glory, though that alone would infinitely recompense the greatest diligence, zeal, and constancy of the highest saint that ever breathed, nay, it speaks not only such a state wherein they have good hopes through grace, and their hopes are far greater than their fears; but something higher than all this. As,

1. It implieth a sensible renovation of their natures, by which they feel their hearts wrought up to a sweet con-naturalness to divine things. How do they feel their thoughts going out with freedom after spiritual matters! how suitable is it now to them to act for God, to design him in

all things ! how much of spirituality in their discourse ! even all they do hath a savour of religion in it. O what warmth and life is there in all their performances ! they fill up every duty, every relation, every action with grace ; and though a vein of religion run through all they do, yet it is not forced, except you will call the power of a new nature, a force ; and the constraining influence of love to Christ, a violence. Now the man is able to say from his own experience, that the commands of Christ are not grievous, nor his yoke heavy : he now knows what it means to have the law of God written in his heart, and from an inward vital principle to act with freedom, delight, and constancy for God. The chains are now in a great measure knocked off, and his soul is set at liberty, and now he is able to run and not be weary, to walk and not to faint, and to mount up with wings like an eagle. He now feels what it is to love the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and might ; and he is able to make his appeal to Him that knoweth all things, that he knows that he loveth him : and now it is no difficult thing for him to deny himself to do or suffer anything for God. How warm is his love, and what a flame is there in his affections to God ! how strong is his faith ! how lively his hope ! how great his patience ! how high, regular, and constant

is his zeal ! with what meekness, and sweetness, and charity doth he carry it to all men ; but especially to them which are of the household of faith ! In a word, how soberly, righteously, and godly doth the man demean himself ; and how great a conformity is there in him to the great rule, the word, the great pattern, the Lord Christ, and his own great hopes, a life of perfect holiness and happiness, in a blessed eternity ! And is all this a small matter ? this saint seemeth now to look a little like the child of such a Father as God ; the subject of such a King as Christ ; the spouse of that glorious and incomparable Bridegroom, the Prince of peace. And now he is able to say, Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul. This Captain hath made his enemies to flee. Now sin hath no dominion over him, and he doth no more question the truth of his grace, than he doth his own being. O blessed state ! how evenly, cheerfully, and honourably must such a one walk. *This* is the first thing that is implied in that abundant entrance that shall be ministered to the diligent saint ; he shall feel his heart suited to God in a far greater measure than before ; and this is an excellent preparative for glory : by this he is made meet for an inheritance among the saints, Psal. cxix. 16, 35. xix. 10. Isa. lxiv. 5. Prov. iii. 17. 1 John v. 3.

2. It implies a lively sense of the pardon of all his sins ; he hath heard the Lord Christ, as it were, whispering that word in his ear, “ Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven.” He knows through grace that he hath repented and believed, and he doth not at all question, but that his sins are blotted out ; and this cannot but be a time of refreshing to his soul. Time was that his sins did stare him in the face, and the iniquity of his heels did compass him about. Time was that he was under the arrests of justice, conscience did apprehend and lay chains upon him, and many indictments were brought in against him ; but his great Advocate hath quashed the indictment ; his Surety hath paid the debts, and all the demands of justice are satisfied ; and now, who can lay any thing to the charge of this person ? it is Christ that justifieth, who can condemn ? And is not this a desirable state ? What would some poor debtors give to be clear of their creditors ! what would some guilty sinners give for an assurance of forgiveness ! what more welcome to the malefactor than a pardon ? “ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin ! Blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven.” Now he has no fear of hell ; that fire is quenched by the blood of Christ ; he is now sure he shall be delivered from the wrath to come, Heb. viii. 12. Acts iii. 19. Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. Jam. v. 15. Rom. viii. 33, 34.

3. It implieth, as a consequence of the former, peace with God ; “ Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” Rom. v. 1. Now God is no longer an enemy, but a friend ; nay, a God in covenant, a Father : and what a privilege this is, is beyond the tongue of an angel to express ; so that now the soul may cry out with just admiration with the apostle, “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Children of God ! Lord, what a word is that ! Is not the Lord ashamed to be their Father ? Surely if he be their Father, they shall not want : he will feed, clothe, provide for, and portion them. “ If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,” 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18. 1 John iii. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 14. Heb. xii. 7. Psal. xxv. 10. xxiii. 1.

4. This abundant entrance implieth yet further, a being loosed from all fears of death, and a triumphant looking into the grave, and beyond it into eternity. How easy a thing is it now to die ! how confidently can the man meet the King of terrors ! Death hath now lost his sting, the grave its darkness and horror ; and the believer can now

say with courage and joy, "Now, Death, do thy work as soon as thou wilt; my soul is ready for its flight, through mercy my work is not now to do; I can speak it from my heart, 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?'" He is able to speak in the language of that blessed saint; "Now let thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Death is now a friend, and not an enemy. "O how I long," saith this faithful one, "to see that which most dread!" When he is in health, he thinks with joy of sickness; when he is sick, he could be very well contented to be more sick; when heart, and flesh, and all fail, he knows that God will not fail him, but is his portion for ever. He can speak of his winding-sheet, and burial, and rottenness, as a harmless rest which will renew his strength, as knowing that these vile bodies shall be like unto the glorious body of the Lord Christ. He is glad at heart to see the symptoms of his dissolution, and he goes into eternity with as much content and satisfaction, as the betrothed virgin goes to her marriage, or the labourer to receive his wages, or the victorious soldier into the presence of his prince. And what can make that man miserable who is lifted up above the fears of death, and desires of life; who can think of death, judgment, and eternity joyfully? 1 Cor.

xv. 55. Luke ii. 29. 2 Cor. v. 1—4. Phil. i. 23.

5. Another thing that is implied in this abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is this; a more clear, distinct apprehension of spiritual and invisible objects, and a more sensible experience of the reality of gospel mysteries. How low and childish are the conceptions, that a child of God hath of God and all his attributes, of Christ and all his offices and relations, when he is in his infancy and minority, to what he hath when he comes to this spiritual manhood! He now looks with Stephen's eyes, he "beholds the glory of God, and the Lord Christ sitting at the right hand of God." He sometimes saw, as it were, darkly; but now with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. How admirably doth the man now discourse of heaven, as if he had some of Paul's visions! how highly doth he extol that goodly land, as if he stood upon the top of Pisgah! how excellently doth he set forth the beauties of Christ, as if he had been upon the mount, and had seen him transfigured, or had lain on his bosom! 1 Cor. xiii. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 7. Prov. xxviii. 5.

6. Another thing that makes his passage into

eternity more glorious, is a lively, full, well-grounded assurance of his interest in the eternal inheritance: all that I have said had been but a fancy, a delusion, a misery, without proprietorship; and proprietorship that is not known loseth its sweetness. But to understand the things that are graciously given, and upon good grounds to be able to say; "All this is mine;" to speak what David did, and to be able to make it good, "The Lord is my portion;" to call God Father, and Christ Redeemer, and heaven his inheritance; and to be able to show the evidences of all, and to clear one's claim; O that is the rich heir indeed! How doth such a one rejoice when he reads his Father's will and testament, in which so glorious an estate is given to and settled upon him for ever! when he seriously considers what a doleful undone condition most are in! and what a difference grace hath made between him and them, when he contemplates what he hath in hand, and what in reversion, and how well all is secured, upon the promise and oath of the Most High, the unchangeable nature of God, the death of the testator, so that earth and hell cannot rob, cheat, or wrong him, and heaven will not! When he considers seriously the greatness, the nearness, the certainty, and the eternity of his glory; how can it fail to bring a little heaven unto his soul, and

even antedate the glories of that future world, as much as man is capable of bearing them in this mortal state, Heb. x. 22. Cant. ii. 16. Psal. xvi. 5. 1 John iii. 2, 19, 21. iv. 13. Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

7. And to make the glory, yet if possible, still far greater upon earth, and that the saints may have “an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;” it is required, that the Spirit should witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God, and fill him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And this is the very highest pitch on this side glory; this is the earnest of the inheritance; this is little less than a draught of those rivers, and that fountain of pleasure, “which is at the right hand of God for evermore.” Now the man is a little able to tell you what that “white stone” means, and that “new name” which no one knows, save he that hath it; he is, as it were, lifted up into the third heaven, and sees and hears things unutterable. Now his affections are too big to be clothed with words; he loves, he rejoices, he admires, he adores God, and he is in such a spiritual strait between God’s service here, and glory above, that he scarce knows what to do. Sometimes he is so full of praise, that he cannot be at leisure to do any thing, but praise and magnify that rich grace which

hath done such wonders for him, that hath looked upon so vile a creature, and taken him into his bosom. "O what is man, that God should be mindful of him, and the son of man that he should visit him?" And then he turns himself to God, and breaks forth into hallelujahs, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and praise be to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." And again, he saith, "Hallelujah;" "What shall I render to the Lord for all his goodness? ten thousand praises to the King of saints for his incomparable kindness to a poor worm! Who am I, that the Lord should deal thus familiarly with me? why me, Lord, why me, and pass by thousands? even so, Father, for it seemeth good in thine eyes. O the glory, the transcendent, the excellent glory that I feel! O what a sight do I see! 'Sure this is no other than the gate of heaven;' sure I am now in the suburbs of the New Jerusalem! Love and praise is now my business. 'O magnify the Lord with me; come, let us exalt his name together, let us make his praise glorious; let us shout for joy, and triumph in his goodness. Come all ye inhabitants of the world, and praise him; let every thing that hath breath praise him; let the mountains and hills praise him; let the seas praise him, and the floods clap their hands.' Come, let us rejoice together,

the Lord hath found his poor prodigal, the Father has fallen upon his neck and kissed him ; and his kisses are like heaven, and his love worth ten worlds. Come, help me to love and praise him ; come, help me, O ye mighty angels, you understand and are well skilled in this work ; let all praise him, all is too little ; and if ten heavens of angels, and ten thousand worlds of saints should all praise him, it would be infinitely short of that glory and praise which is due to his name. Well, I am contented to be overcome ; I am enraptured, and yet I am willing to be so : the love, the beauty, the riches of that incomparable, royal, glorious One, makes all the crowns of the world dirt ; their beauties, deformity, their excellency, a shadow, a bubble, nothing. I am overpowered ; that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory begins to rest upon my head. O take time away, O how I long for eternity, and then I could bear that weight better. I want nothing now but an actual and eternal possession ; ‘ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ; mine eyes have seen thy salvation, now let thy servant depart in peace.’ But yet I am not so hasty, but that I am heartily willing to stay thy leisure ; if thou hast any doing or suffering work, any thing that may promote thy glory, and the interest of thy Son, Lord, send me. I am ready ; only bear thy poor creature company,

and according to thy word, be with thy servant, and I am willing ; come reproaches, scoffs, bands, scourgings, racks, all is nothing ; I count not my life dear, so I may serve this Master. I can do all things, but it is all from grace, thanks be to Christ who strengthens me : if he should withdraw, I should be as faint and weak as another man. Christ is my all, and to him will I give all glory, praise, love, and obedience.”

Thus the soul is so straitened, that it cannot tell what to do ; it is taken up with God, his glory and praise ; and yet his honour upon earth, and the miserable state of poor besotted sinners, must not be forgotten. With what pity and bowels doth this saint look down upon the frantic world ! with what affection doth he bemoan their madness, who make nothing of all this glory, who can scorn this joy, as if it were but the effect of a distemper-ed fancy ! “ O ” saith he, “ that you did but know what I know, and see with my eyes ! O that I could but tell you what I feel and experience ! I will venture my salvation upon it, that the joys of the Holy Ghost are infinitely more sweet than those carnal delights, which you are so much taken up with. O do but try, ‘ O taste and see how good the Lord is.’ And if upon a thorough trial, you do not find it better than I can express, and you repent your choice, then say that the

bible was false, that saints are mistaken, and religion is a cheat; but till you have tried what a life of holiness is, do not condemn it; till you know what excellency there is in God and Christ, do not reject them; till you understand what the peace of God is, do not laugh at it, as if it were a fancy. O come, look upon a dying man and wonder; I challenge you amongst all your gallant champions to bring one that can look death in the face with such joy. I challenge all your sensual epicures to tell me what pleasures are to be compared to what a believer sometimes is feasted with." Then he falls upon them with earnestness, and pleads with them for their poor souls' sake, not so foolishly to undervalue that which is of such unspeakable worth. "O why will you die? what do you mean to feed like swine, when you may be feasted with the children? what do you think will be the end of your carnal pleasures, will they end in such triumphant joys?" And so he speaks a good word for God; and if in such a blessed state one can be sad, and a man within sight of heaven can be grieved, he is troubled that every body doth not love, admire, and serve God at the same or a better rate, than himself. And thus he continues waiting and longing, and yet patiently looking for his Master's coming; and when he cometh, O how welcome is he! how

cheerfully and joyfully doth he resign his spirit ! how confidently doth he appear before God as one that he was no stranger to ! Never did child after some absence in a far country more gladly come to his father's house, never did loving wife entertain her tender husband with more content ; never did loyal subject come into his prince's presence with more pleasure, than this precious soul doth go to God ! Eph. i. 13, 14. iv. 30. 1 Pet. i. 8. Isa. lxi. 10. Cant. i. 4. ii. 3. Psal. lxiii. 3. Heb. vi. 18. Psal. v. 12. John xiv. 18. Isa. li. 12.

And thus I have showed you what this abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ doth imply. It implies a sensible renovation of their natures and a sweet suitableness to God, a lively sense of the pardon of all our sins, and a peace with God, a being lifted above fears, a more clear and distinct apprehension of invisibles, as to their reality and excellency, and a well-grounded assurance of our proprietorship and interest in the great things of another world, and of the nearness of the possession and the eternity of enjoyment, and the Spirit sealing up the soul to the day of redemption, and filling it with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And is it now worth the while to be a christian ? Is the labour in vain, and the pains without some

fruit? Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.

III. The next thing I promised to do, was, to demonstrate and prove, that the saint who is thus diligent, as I mentioned, shall have such a glorious entrance ministered to him, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What doth the scripture prove more fully, "Say to the righteous, It shall be well with them; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings," Isa. iii. 10. And will God expose the reputation of his prophets, and command them to speak that in his name, which he will not see made good to a tittle? "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him," John xiv. 21. "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them," Psal. cxix. 165. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," I Cor. ii. 9. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace," Psal. xxxvii. 37. Multitudes of scriptures speak the same thing, and that which God hath spoken, saints have experienced: ask David

whether God hath ever been worse than his word, and he will tell you "Truly, God is good unto Israel; even to them that are of an upright heart." Psal. lxxiii. 1. And upon this account, he is still calling upon all to love, trust, and obey him, and tells them, however he might sometimes be under a temptation and mistake, yet that it is good for him to draw nigh to God, ver. 28. Upon this account, he calls to all to bless and magnify the Lord with him, Psal. xxxiv. 3. What is it makes Paul to long to be dissolved? What causeth him to speak of death as an innocent, harmless thing? Whence is it that that good old saint saith, "Now let thy servant depart in peace," but because "his eyes had seen his salvation?" Are there not many thousands of the people of God that have been able to subscribe to these truths? It may be they were sometimes sowing in tears, but when the harvest of death came, they reaped a crop of consolation. What else meant their joys and praise in sickness, pains, death? There are a great many, as well as David, who could say, that God was their exceeding joy, Psal. xliii. 4. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," Psal. xxx. 5. It is the duty and privilege of the saints of God to rejoice and shout for joy, Psal. xxxii. 11. And how can they fail to rejoice when God is theirs? and if

God be for them, who can be against them ? This, this is that which hath made the people of God even burst out into praises, when some carnal people did even wonder how they could hold from cursing. "Come," saith one, "and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul." "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift," saith another. "O blessed be God for a Christ and a pardon; I would not now be to live for a world. O how glad am I, that death is so near; but why should I talk of death, it is too harsh a word, I shall rest, I shall sleep in the bosom of the Lord, I shall not die but live." "O," saith another, "if this be dying, dying is sweet!" "Welcome the will of God," saith another: and how many of the diligent servants of Christ could as willingly lie down in their graves as in their beds. Sirs, have none of you been eye and ear witnesses of such things as these? did you never see one that hath received the sentence of death from his doctor, as cheerfully as the condemned malefactor hath a reprieve or pardon? Did you never hear one that had but little breath, spending of it in singing and praise? if you have not, I thank God I have more than once or twice. And doth not all this prove, that the diligent shall have his reward; and that the active saint shall have an abundant entrance into glory. Surely if it hath been so frequently

promised, and so often experienced, there is little reason why any one should doubt but it shall be so still. God's arm is not weakened, his affection to holiness is not abated, neither is his treasure in the least lessened ; what he hath done he will do, and we may with very good reason argue from past experience to future expectations.

IV. I come to inquire how this abundant entrance is ministered into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. God doth it by shutting out whatsoever may interrupt the joyful and triumphant passage of the believer to his glorious rest. All the mountains shall be levelled, and crooked things made straight. Whatsoever may hinder his smooth and easy progress, is in a great measure removed ; the mountains of sins are cast into the depth of the sea, his iniquities are done away as a cloud, and his transgressions as a thick cloud. Sin's power is quite weakened, and it lies now gasping ready to fetch its last breath. The conscience is fully pacified, the demands of the law are satisfied, the blood of Christ hath quite cleared the score, the surety hath received an acquittance, Christ's resurrection and ascension to glory was his full discharge, and he hath given an acquittance also to the sinner, and promised to secure him for ever against all the creditors, and to keep off all arrests.

Now he need not fear, Satan is silenced, the great accuser hath done his worst, and now he is cast out, and who can lay any thing to the charge of this elect one? it is Christ that justifies, who can condemn? Rom. viii. 34. Time was when the poor debtor durst scarce look out of doors for fear of arrest; he was in continual fear of being apprehended, imprisoned, arraigned, cast, condemned, and executed; but he is now secured against all, "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. He is now a free man, and therefore a glad man; now he can walk amongst bones and skulls without any dread; the grave hath now lost its horror; it is now but a close chamber to sleep securely in till the wedding clothes are quite made, and the mansion-house ready, and the bridegroom and retinue shall come to awaken him, Isa. xlv. 22. Col. ii. 14, 15. Gal. iii. 13. Rom. v. 19. iv. 25. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. Heb. x. 11, 12, 14, 18—22. viii. 12.

2. God doth minister to the diligent saints an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as by shutting out and removing what might hinder their joyful passage, so by opening what might hasten and sweeten their way. He opens his book, and lets them see their names written there; he opens the promises,

and lets them read what he hath given them there. All the great and precious promises are to them Yea and Amen, truly fulfilled and fulfilling; the great records of heaven are unsealed to him; and he is made to understand that God had a design of kindness upon him before the foundations of the world; he beholds the very arms and bosom of the Father opened ready to embrace him, he hears a sweet voice as it were sounding in his ear, Come, my child, enter into thy chamber and hide thyself, till my indignation be over, Isa. xxvi. 20. His eyes are now opened, and he is anointed with spiritual eye-salve, and his understanding is enlightened wonderfully: he hath reason, faith, the word, the Spirit to give him light. Methinks he looks like a king in his triumphant chariot going his progress. How pleasant is his journey! now which way soever he looks, he sees matter of joy and praise, and that which doth make his passage glorious: if he look backward, he remembers with comfort the battles that have been fought under his valiant Captain; he beholds the Egyptians dead upon the shore, he sees Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Bashan subdued: he is now almost come out of the wilderness, now he is out of danger of the lions, bears, and serpents; he sees the field quite cleared, except here and there a gasping enemy that lieth bleeding

of his mortal wounds ; and he can now say, as Paul, “ I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing,” 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. O how sweet a thing is it to remember the years of the right hand of the Most High ! “ At such a place the Lord first began in mercy to take hold of me ; at another he came in with seasonable supplies, and there he wooed me, and after a while he got my heart ! O I would not for a world that the work were undone ; it was the best day’s work that I ever made since I was born ; then, then Christ betrothed me to himself, and since that I have been fed richly, and strengthened greatly, and in some measure been enabled to walk before the Lord in integrity and uprightness of heart.” And then he looks inward, and there he sees the glorious workmanship of God, the image of Christ upon every faculty of the soul, every room richly furnished by the great King, since he came to dwell with him ; and now his body and soul is employed for nobler use than before ; and he beholds grace in the inward parts ; there are faith, love, joy, hope, he is all glorious within like the temple of the Holy Ghost. He looks upward, and be-

hold, there is the glorious habitation of his Father; there is his treasure, estate; there is his Lord and dear Redeemer; there are all his true friends, or there they will be ere long. He looks forward, and lo, a cloud of witnesses that are running before him; he looks beyond the grave into a blessed eternity, and it is no small pleasure to him to think, that this vile body shall be made like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ; it doth not a little comfort him to know that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up of victory. Yea, the very thoughts of the dissolution of this world are delightful to him: with what comfort doth he meditate upon that approaching day, when the earth shall burn like an oven, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the graves shall be opened, and the earth and sea shall give up their dead, and the angels shall gather the elect from the four quarters of the earth; and how triumphantly shall they meet the Lord in the clouds; and what a brave shout will all the sons of God give, when they shall see that glorious beautiful One! And that day they see not very far off, they do with joy behold his harbingers coming to make ready for his appearance. It puts life into his duties, and quickens his hope to see Christ, as it

were, onward on his journey to fetch him ; and he thinks of judgment with the greatest content of all, when all the attributes of God shall be so much glorified, Christ so admired and completely enjoyed, and himself fully acquitted and fixed in unspeakable glory. And then he looks round about him, and beholds most of the world in a miserable, Christless, and almost hopeless state ; except a miracle of mercy speedily convert them, they are as surely damned, as God is happy. And who made me to differ ? O admirable grace ! Hallelujah, blessed and for ever blessed be God, that looked upon such a one, when he passed by thousands ! And then he looks downward, and there he sees by faith, millions in that dreadful prison, and the door shut upon them, and himself at liberty, and the door of God's house, the gates of the New Jerusalem, the bosom of Christ open to him : and how can all this fail to administer abundance of consolation to this man ? Can such a one as this be sad ? Is it possible for him to keep his heart from love, joy, and light, and his tongue from praises ? And thus God doth minister an abundant entrance to the diligent saint, by opening his own arms, and the believer's eyes, and showing him such things are even unutterably excellent, infinitely desirable, eternally glorious, Psal. xxv. 14. Rev. iii. 7. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Ephes. i.

18. 1 John v. 20. Eph. iii. 16—19. Rom. vi. 5, 6, 14.

3. A saint's journey home is made more comfortable, and his entrance to that city more sweet, his journey more pleasant, by the admirable provisions that are laid him in, to feed upon in the road. Believe it, sirs, a saint hath rare fare, gallant cheer, and rich diet, and all at free cost; he is feasted all the day long; he is brought oft into the banqueting-house, and hath the rarest, the costliest, the wholesomest diet, that which is most hearty and strengthening, that which is most dainty and pleasant, and the greatest variety, and nothing is wanting that may make his state happy, except a full enjoyment of glory itself. The Lord gives him all the experiences of his power and goodness to his churches in former ages to feed his hopes on; nay, many choice providences, many answers of prayers, many foretastes of glory, many ordinances, especially that great one of the Lord's supper, in which Christ and all his benefits are served up in a royal dish to refresh and feast, the faith, hope, and love of the saints. And that which sweetens all, is this; he knows that all this is but a little, to what he shall shortly live upon when he comes to the marriage-supper; then he shall always be feasted and never surfeited. And besides all this, he hath the sweet

and refreshing incomes of the Spirit, filling him with such true pleasure, that he can easily spare the most sumptuous banquet the noblest feast, and highest worldly delights, as infinitely short of one hour's treatment in his great Friend's chamber. And if this be his entertainment in the inn, what shall he have at the court? if this heavenly manna be his food in the wilderness, at what a rate is he like to live when he comes into Canaan? if this be the provision of the way, what is that of the country? Isa. xxv. 6. Prov. ix. 2. Cant. ii. 4. Psal. xxiii. 1, &c. John vi. 55. Psal. lxxiv. 14.

4. That his entrance may be abundantly glorious, God doth send out his blessed messengers and servants to guide and direct him; and to comfort and encourage him, and to lead him safely and joyfully to his palace. Sometimes God sends a word, and guides him by his counsel, till he hath brought him to glory; at another time, his ministers are sent to do the work of inferior angels, to preach glad tidings of great joy, to open the treasures of Divine love to him, and to show him Christ, righteousness, and their justification; the righteousness that is imparted to them, and their sanctification, their royal robes, and the bridegroom, and to help to dress them for glory; sometimes the saints and fellow-christians are sent out to visit and congratulate his

nearness to the kingdom; and to send him off with a shout of praises into a happy eternity, and to complete all, to express his love yet further, the great King sends his own attendants and chariot, the blessed angels to bring their precious souls, as soon as ever they leave those mansions of clay, into his own blessed presence; and O how glad of this office! how sweetly do those ministering spirits warble out their praises at their marriage and coronation, who were so glad at their conversion! Isa. xxx. 21. Job xxxiii. 23. Luke xvi. 22.

5. To make their entrance most magnificent and triumphant, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the blessed Trinity, are ready to give them a welcome to glory. Now that which was in the eternal counsels is come to pass; if the Father loved them when they were crying and praying, if he did not despise their broken spirit, if grace imperfect was so great a delight to him, what is it to hear his children praising, to see them come safe and sound to his house, and to look upon his own image in some perfection and beauty, to see his look like himself, and full of love, joy, and beauty, to see the spouse of his only Son arrived safe to the harbour, and the fruit of his purchase and love; surely this must be a sight well pleasing to the Father. And as for the Son, without con-

troversy, he is not a little pleased to behold his royal bride in her princely attire, all glorious and lovely by the beauty and jewels that he adorned her with. Surely the first word of salutation will be, Come, thou blessed of my Father, and beloved of the Son, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee before the world had a being. Methinks when I read the history of Isaac's going out into the field to meet Rebecca, when I observe their kind greeting, and how cheerfully and gladly he led her into his tent, and how thoroughly his mother's death is forgot, and her room well filled by his wife, it puts me a little in mind of the far greater love and kindness of the Prince of peace to his Rebecca; he did not only send his servant to woo and get her heart, but he came himself, and would not be satisfied, whatever it cost him, till he had got her love; his prayers, pains, blood, nothing is too good for her, though so mean, poor, deformed; he mends all by his love, and makes her rich, beautiful, and strong, and sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied; how much more when she hath loyally followed his commands, and loved him above heaven and earth, and is brought like a queen into his presence, will he meet her with gladness, and carry her into his court and royal palace, and there rejoice over her for ever! He now sees that his poverty hath made his wife rich,

his emptiness filled her, his death given her life.

And what a sweet blast doth the blessed Spirit breathe upon him! and how doth he in a moment ripen all his graces and comforts! and without doubt, if the Spirit be grieved when he is rejected, he is pleased when received, and his work is brought to perfection. But, alas, I am here at a stand, it doth not yet appear what will be then, but God will do far abundantly above what we can think; and therefore I have warrant to speak so high as I do.

I might add the glorious saints that have long since possessed that blessed inheritance, that through many tribulations are come to rest, how glad will they be to see them come safe also! they are not a little pleased that one more is brought to serve God more highly and honourably, and to help them to praise him, and make the concert yet more full and complete. If Aaron were glad at heart to go out and meet with Moses when he came to deliver the poor Israelites out of their bondage, how glad will Moses, Elias, Paul, and millions more of saints, be to see the Israelite and perfect conqueror come within the walls of the glorious Zion, free from all his former slaveries, and in a state of glorious liberty with the Son of God, 1 John ii. 28. Matt.

xxv. 34, 46. Heb. xii. 22, 23. Matt. xxv. 23. xvi. 27.

Thus I have despatched the fourth thing that I promised to speak to, and that was to show you how this entrance is ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is done by shutting out and removing whatsoever may any way obstruct their comfortable passage; and by opening their way, and making it plain, and showing them beforehand what might contribute to the delightfulness of their journey; and by laying them in on the road full, rich, dainty provision, and all at free cost; and by sending out messengers, especially his ministers and angels, to make their passage more comfortable, sure, and honourable; and lastly, by a welcome to glory by God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saints and angels; and if this be not "an abundant entrance," I know not what is or can be.

V. I come now to give you some reasons why the diligent saint shall be thus rewarded.

1. God hath promised it to them. He hath said, that their labour shall not be in vain; and that in keeping the commands of God there shall be a great reward, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Is it not His promise, who cannot be worse than his word, that "the

righteous shall be glad in the Lord ; and all the upright in heart shall glory," Psal. lxxiv. 10. If a cup of cold water shall in no wise lose its reward, shall he that gives body, and soul, and estate, and every thing to God, lose his ? Hath not Christ more than once promised great things to his diligent servants, that patiently continue in well doing ? " To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life," Rev. ii. 7. " He shall not be hurt of the second death," ver. 11. " I will give him to eat of the hidden manna, and a white stone, &c. and a crown of life," ver. 17. " He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life ; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels," Rev. iii. 5. " Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven, from my God, and my new name," ver. 12. " To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit down with me on my throne, as I overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne," ver. 21. " If ye love me keep my commandments : and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for

ever," John xiv. 15, 16. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him; because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him," 1 John iii. 22, 24. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever," Isa. xxxii. 17. I shall add but one promise more, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint, Isa. xl. 31.

2. Another reason why the diligent saint shall have "an entrance ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour," is, because of his own glory, which is the more advanced. What a mighty revenue of praise and love doth God receive by manifesting so much of his love in this world to his poor saints! How clearly doth he demonstrate the reality and excellency of invisibles by it! how much of his goodness and faithfulness is thereby discovered! how doth it vindicate his omniscience, his purity, and spirituality! what a mighty conviction of his being to the wicked and atheistical world! What clearer proof can there be to sense of the justice of God, and of the vast difference that he will

make between them that fear, love, and diligently serve him, and them that set light by his counsels, undervalue his commands, and despise his rewards or threats? Heb. vi. 10. Mal. iii. 18. compared with iv. 1, 2.

3. The last reason that I shall now give (though more might be added) is, that he may encourage the diligent, and make them go on resolutely without fainting, and expect yet greater things, and raise their hopes yet higher still, and make the lazy to mend their pace; and all to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth," Psal. lviii. 11. And that it is not in vain to serve the Lord, the Lord will have his people to have a word to answer the scoffer, who asks him what he gets by all his prayers, and tears, and preciseness. When his soul is solaced, he saith, "This is the joy that I prayed for, this the riches, the food that I laboured for, this is the God in whom I have trusted; and if the earnest penny be so great, what is the full sum? Fall on therefore, O my soul, and despise the scorns of fools, keep thy eye upon the recompence of the reward," Heb. x. 23. Isa. xxv. 9. Psal. xlv. 8. Jer. iv. 2. Isa. xlv. 25.

VI. I come now to answer some objections, which may seem to contradict this truth, which

hath been so largely proved : and the first objection is this.

Obj. 1. Do not many wicked men live and die in peace ? doth not David complain, "That there are no bands in their death : that they are not in trouble as other men ?" Psal. lxxiii. 4. Doth not Job speak almost at the same rate ? Job xxi. 7. What privilege then hath a saint above a sinner ? what advantage hath the diligent believer more than the sluggard ? and what benefit and profit the industrious Christian more than the formal hypocrite ? and what difference is there between their peace ? and how cometh it to pass, that some of them which live like devils, die like lambs ?

I answer. What you call peace deserves not such a sweet name ; for "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked ;" but it is carnal confidence and presumption ; and they are so far from this true peace, that is akin to heaven, that there is but a step between them and the state of the damned, and they owe all their peace to their ignorance and hardness of heart, and searedness of conscience. O did they but know what a case they are in, they would soon cry out with amazement, What shall we do to be saved ? and be so far from being displeased with the minister that jogs them, and saith, "Awake, sleeper, what

meanest thou," that they would wonder that he is no more earnest and loud in his cry, and more pitiful in his endeavours to bring them out of that dreadful lethargy and stupidity, that he now perceives them to lie under. And who would desire such a rest as a lethargy, swoon, or apoplexy brings? who would reckon he sleeps securely, when he lieth in the devil's cradle? who that understands himself would have a peace, that he must be beholden to a league with hell for? Isa. lvii. 21. 1 Tim. iv. 2. Ephes. iv. 18, 19. Isa. xxviii. 15.

Obj. 2. But I have heard these men speak of their hopes and confidence in the Lord, and bless God for their assurance of the pardon of their sins; and ask them if they have made their peace with God, and they will answer, that they thank God, that's a work is not now to do; I pray therefore show us the difference between these two sorts of men, which seem to be very unlike one another in their lives.

There is as much difference between their peace, as there is between light and darkness, heaven and hell, something and nothing.

1. They differ in their original and foundation: the rise of the peace of a saint is from the promise, his comforts are scripture consolations; he finds that rich grace hath wrought in him the condition

of the promise, and upon a serious debate with his own spirit, and thorough discoursing the matter with his own heart, it brings in this witness for him, that he hath had a discovery of his poor, lost, undone state, that he hath in some measure been convinced of sin and misery, that he hath been convinced of his own utter inability to save himself, that he hath seen an absolute necessity of Christ, an infinite fulness and excellency in him, that he hath been enabled to receive him upon his own terms, and to resign up all to him, that he hath been made to leave sin, as to the love and liking of it, and to be affectionately willing to take God the Father for the ultimate happiness and portion of his soul, God the Son for the only way to the Father, and his Redeemer, God the Holy Ghost to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort him, and to endeavour to give up his whole man, body and soul, to the obedience of his whole will, with the utmost intentness of spirit, with deliberation, judgment, and resolution to stand by this choice, by the strength of God, for ever. And this he hath frequently found upon inquiry, to be the constant frame of his spirit; and therefore the scripture pronouncing such blessed, he is humbly bold to own what grace hath done for him. Now this man's hopes and confidence have a good foundation, it is built upon the foundation

of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone ; it is a peace of God's approbation, of God's signing and sealing.

But now on the other side, the peace which the hypocrite hath is built upon the sand, he hath not one promise that he can rationally lay any claim to ; nay, the whole word of God assaults him, and tells him how vain his confidence is ; and that if, for all this, he will speak peace to himself, that he must try shortly whether he can make it good, when conscience, scripture, law and gospel, God and man, appear in the field against him. In a word, the cause of his peace is ignorance, hardness, deadness. The god of this world hath blinded his eyes : God is author of the saint's peace, and the devil of the sinner's, Matt. vii. 24, &c. Phil. iv. 7. Luke xi. 21. Rom. xv. 4.

2. They differ in their concomitants and effects. The saint hath always these things accompanying his comforts ; admiration of God's pardoning grace, and wonder that there should be such a thing as mercy for him ; magnifying of the blessed Jesus, who was the great manager of that great affair, the peace between God and his soul ; a holy, thankful, fruitful life ; a humble judging of himself, and a pitying of others : when the Spirit hath grafted true peace in the soul, these are the fruits which it bears. But is it thus with the formal

hypocrite; judge, I pray, rightly, and see what fruits his peace brings forth: are they not the grapes of Sodom and the fruits of Gomorrah? doth he indeed admire and adore the patience of God towards him? doth he not rather make bold with God, and turn his grace into wantonness? How little doth he esteem his omniscience, power, spirituality, purity! how far is he from sanctifying the Lord in his heart, and making him his fear and dread! how vilely doth he undervalue and prostitute his holy name, using it only in an oath, or when he taketh it into his filthy mouth without any reverence or sense of his excellency! And as for Christ, he makes light of him, and prefers every cursed lust, any vile companion, yea, the dirt he treads on, shall I say more, the devil himself, before him. What else is the meaning of his service, activity, and constancy to carry on the interest of hell, and the unsuitableness, contempt, and opposition that he makes against the advancing of the interest of the Lord Christ? I need say no more. In a word, for all his peace with God, he is at war with his nature, laws, Son, Spirit, service; and yet how foolishly doth he boast of peace, comfort, hopes, and justify himself and censure his betters! James iii. 18. Gal. v. 19, &c. Deut. xxxii. 32.

3. The saint's joys and comforts differ in their

very nature ; the saint's joys are spiritual, the hypocrite's carnal and sensual ; the saint's rational, the formalist's brutish, and against both scripture and reason : the saint's joys are solid, great, and glorious, the hypocrite's are frothy, small, and shameful, Deut. xxix. 19. Eccl. ii. 2. Jam. iii. 15. Jude 19.

4. Their comforts differ in their growth and continuance. The believer's comforts were a great while under the clouds of fear, and that Divine seed was long sown before it grew up to such a harvest ; and although he be still reaping, yet a fresh harvest is still growing, and he shall never make an end of gathering them in ; his peace and comforts grow stronger and stronger, as troubles, and sickness, and trials come upon him, and at death they are greatest of all ; for then he enters into his Master's joy, and enjoys his peace till the Almighty hath lost his power, which will last till the infinite riches of heaven's glory are spent, and eternity is at an end. As for the hypocrite, his peace is short-lived ; at the furthest death will put an end to it, and then you shall see what is become of all his peace, joy, hopes ; when instead of comfort he shall lie down in shame, and awake in eternal horror. And who would desire such deceitful joys, that, ere a man is aware, leave him in everlasting torments ? I have been the longer

in the answering of this objection, because it is common, and millions of those that bear the name of Christ are cheated and eternally ruined with such a false peace. And what sayest thou that readest these lines, which of these two is thy peace? Lay down the book, and consider, and let not thy heart be quiet till thou understand what foundation its quiet rest is built upon. Tell it that many times it is a sign that the strong man armed hath got possession, when all things are in peace. Ask thy soul, whether it ever understood its natural enmity against God, whether that be in any measure laid down. Art thou reconciled to the holy nature, laws, and service of God? and hast thou commenced an irreconcilable war against sin? is Christ thy Captain, the Spirit thy Assistant? and who usually carries the field, the flesh or Spirit? O be not contented till you have a good account given in from conscience and experience in this great affair; for it is a matter of life or death, and a business of the highest consequence imaginable; and till this witness be well settled, I will not give a rush for all thy comforts, peace, and hopes, Job viii. 13. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Job xx. 5. Prov. xiv. 32. Isa. xxxv. 10.

Obj. 3. But for all that hath been said concerning the abundant entrance that the diligent saint shall have into the everlasting kingdom of

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, experience tells us, that many a diligent saint goes off without any comfort, and their sun sets in a cloud.

I grant this may be sometimes. God may for reasons best known to his wisdom, conceal his love from his dear children, till they see it cleared beyond doubt. Christ himself, when he was just a dying, was under a desertion, and cried out in great bitterness of spirit, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Therefore I will not, I cannot lay it down as a universal, infallible rule, that all saints in this life shall have such unspeakable joys, such rich consolation. But yet this is God's usual way, and he bids us mark it, and count upon it, "the end of the upright shall be peace." And now I shall more directly answer.

1. It may be the person that you judged so diligent, was not so; it may be his diligence reached principally to his external actions. The greatest work of a saint is an invisible work, and, it may be, here might be a great failure; it may be, though he was diligent in hearing, frequent in discoursing, constant in duty, yet for all that he might want much of that faith, and love, and spirituality, and importunity, and watchfulness in duty that is required; and no wonder then at all if the poor man have his comfort to seek; for in these things lieth the life, activity, and beauty of

Christianity. I am persuaded that it is a great rarity for one that is much exercised in these vital acts of religion to want the evidence of his reality and sincerity, except it be merely for the further trial and exercise of his grace; and then it is but for a while usually, and then the Lord comes in with the greater comfort, and the consolations of Christ are then the more sweet. I must also except persons under the power of melancholy; and yet even such usually have some considerable discoveries of Divine love before they die. We must also distinguish between diseases; if the disease disturb the fancy, and interrupt the clear use of the understanding, you must remember that it is the disease, and not the man speaks then; and therefore be sure you censure neither the person nor religion in such a case.

2. It may be the man may experience more than he thinks fit to acquaint you or any one else with. Do you know what intercourse is carried on between a dying saint and a living God? it may be he hath not breath to speak, or words to express what he feels or enjoys; it may be he doth not at present judge that he is bound to tell every body what he knows or feels; it may be he may be silent for fear of discouraging other saints, that have not the same comfort that he hath; it may be he is afraid of being thought too highly of, and

that Christ should lose what is his due, it may be, if it were to some judicious saints or minister, he might speak more freely than to you.

3. When he comes to entrance, then all clouds vanish, all fears are removed; and what tongue can speak the joys that such a soul feels? As soon as ever the door is opened for the soul to go out, angels stand ready to receive it, and heaven's gates are open to let it in, and Christ's arms to embrace it; and can that soul which enjoys a Christ in glory, want any thing to make his happiness complete? And this every diligent saint doth most certainly do. When they leave this world they have a welcome to a better; then all tears are wiped away from their eyes; and when they are in heaven, the first moment's glory will make them forget the greatest sorrows that were antecedent to it.

VII. I am now come to make some improvement of what hath been delivered.

Use 1. If the diligent saints shall have such "an abundant entrance ministered unto them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," then this justifies their greatest seriousness, activity, and constancy in the ways of God.

Sirs, You need wonder no longer why the believer doth so much, but rather that he doth not a

thousand times more. Blame his exactness no longer ; remember it is for eternity : call not his preciseness folly, till you can prove that the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is worth nothing. Say not that they are foolish, unreasonable men, till you can make it appear, that they have made a losing bargain by parting with all to buy the pearl of great price. Never term them mad men, till you can make good your charge. When you see their crowns upon their heads, then cry out upon them for fools for striving to win it, if you can ! When you see their triumphant joys upon a death-bed, and hear their praises, and see their smiling when others would be quaking, then deride their diligence as needless ! When you see the lazy hypocrite rejected, and the faithful owned, rewarded, glorified, and God calling them wise, then call them fools ! Stay but a while, and you shall see the fire they made such haste to escape from. Let us reason the case a little with this wise man, that laughs at holiness as a low, needless, unprofitable business. Is it a piece of folly to get the greatest riches, the highest honours, to take the sweetest and safest pleasures ? is getting of a kingdom in your judgment such a mad thing ? is conquering enemies, obtaining the most glorious victories, a foolish thing ? What will you say, that an everlasting

inheritance is no riches? is the being in the presence of God, and having his ear and heart, hand and glory, no honour? are the consolations of the Spirit, the joys of heaven, and the pleasures that are at God's right hand for ever, nothing? is freedom from all misery, and possessing all happiness, nothing? if life and death, heaven and hell, be all nothing, what is something? If the merchant always make a good voyage, and hath still a sure, a saving, a gainful return, you shall scarce jeer him out of his trade; if the malefactor or debtor have got his life, pardon, and liberty, you shall scarce make him believe that he was a fool for accepting it; neither will the diligent and active saint be disheartened from following the trade, which hath brought in such a vast and incredible return, and is like to bring him in more and more still. His debts are all paid, and his pardon sealed, and he is in a state of glorious liberty; and having tasted the sweetness of it, that man shall have somewhat to do that should persuade him to return to his prison, and to fall in love with his fetters. O what do you mean, O ye deluded and bewitched sinners, that you are not contented to go on madly to hell, but you must scoff at all for fools, that are not as desperately mad as yourselves! If you count everlasting condemnation but a light business, because you

are blind, and see not how great that wrath, how intolerable the torment, and yet how unavoidable and eternal, blame not those whose eyes are enlightened, to see all this, if they venture not. And on the other hand, if God, glory, and eternity be little things in your judgment, blame not those who understand them better, if they count them weighty. And stay till you know what heaven and hell mean, before you call men madmen and fools for securing the one and avoiding the other.

Christians, be not in the least disheartened, but rather quickened ; quit you like men, be strong ; behold the crown, win it, and wear it ; let nothing discourage you ; methinks that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory should make all hinderances insignificant that stand in the way of getting or keeping it, Isa. lix. 15. 1 Pet. iv. 4. Isa. liv. 17.

Use 2. If the diligent saint shall have a glorious “ entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” what shall the active sinner have, that doth evil with both hands, that draws iniquity as it were with cart-ropes ; whose heart is full of wickedness, and who takes pleasure in impiety ; to whom it is meat and drink to oppose the will of God ; whose inward part is very wickedness, and whose mind is fully set upon it,—come what will, on he will go in spite of warn-

ings, in spite of entreaties, in spite of judgments ;— that care nothing for all ; whose throat is an open sepulchre, whose mouth is full of cursing, bitterness, blasphemy ; who is posting on to destruction, as if he feared to come too late ; who hath stifled and seared his conscience, and broke through all that hath stood in his way ; who is unwearied, laborious, and constant to the devil, though he hath had but a pitiful requital for his pains ?—surely if the saint shall have a glorious entrance into the kingdom of Christ, the sinner shall have a dismal entrance into the everlasting kingdom of darkness. Whatsoever might sweeten his condition formerly shall then imbitter it ; his comforts shall be shut out ; his great estate brings him in a poor revenue of joys, to think how many thousands he had, and that all cannot purchase him one moment's ease ; the sweetness of his estate is turned into bitterness, when he is forced to have leisure, now in spite of his heart, to sit down and consider what a poor, insignificant, unprofitable thing he ventured his soul for. His old companions are now shut out, he could be glad at heart to bid them farewell to eternity : this is all the poor help of his friends, that they stand by bewailing his departure, and not one of them can speak one word of comfort to him without hazard to its own. It is but sorry relief to him to look upon this and that person,

and to think I must either part company for ever, or meet at the dreadful place of execution. It may be the faithful minister may be shut out, lest he should tell him plainly what his case is. O what a sad case must the sinner be in ! all help and hope is shut out, and instead of plays, friends, pleasures, (all which he must take his leave of for ever,) he beholds a dreadful door opened, and in come God's serjeants to apprehend him, and no bail can be taken. And when the door is once open, O what a flock of unwelcome guests come in ! Now conscience will give him a visit whether he will or no, and tell him such a story as makes his heart ache : then how doth the guilty sinner tremble ! The indictment the law brings in is black, the witnesses many and clear, and the sinner is condemned for his life and soul for eternity. His sins stare him in the face, and wrath and vengeance are just ready to seize him ; he feels now that sin and hell, which he made so light of, are no jesting things. Which way soever the man looks, he sees nothing but horror, misery, ruin. If he look backward, what hath he left to comfort him, but the sad remembrance of his past enjoyment, for which he must now give an exact account ? and sin and pleasure in the review upon a death-bed is another kind of thing than it was in the committing.

Now farewell fine houses and gardens, farewell hawking and hunting, farewell taverns, plays, vicious company. And if he look forwards, what doth he behold that can yield him any great content? One of the most desirable and pleasant sights that he sees before him, is the grave, and if that were all, it were well, though he were buried in a dunghill. I will not say, how dismal that dark vault is to him, that was all for his liberty, and wont to take his rest on down, and stretch himself upon a bed of ivory; for him that was wont to fare deliciously every day, to be food for vermin; for him, that had his constant attendants about him, to have none but a few worms to wait on him: but pain, sickness, death, corruption, are the least of those evils that he sees before him: the prison were not so dreadful, were it not for the Judge, assizes, and execution. O how dreadful a sight must it be to see the dreadful lake burning with fire and brimstone, into which he must be cast! how strange a prospect to see, instead of flattering attendants, the devils ready to seize upon his trembling soul, and hell opening its mouth ready to receive him, and to shut the door of hope and mercy upon him for ever! to look up and see an angry God, who is able to pass that irreversible and terrible sentence upon him, "Depart, thou cursed;" and to see Christ

accusing him, while he pleads for and acquits those whom he hated and persecuted ; and to look round about, and to see none that hath one word to speak for him, none to pacify the Judge, divert or prolong the sentence or execution, none to mitigate his torments ! Will the sinner then make a laughing business of damnation ? will God's judging his soul be a small matter then ? will the precise and diligent saint be then called or esteemed a fool, a madman ? will not the thoughts of these things upon a death-bed cool the sinner's courage ?

And what hath he now to bear up his sinking spirits ? what is there to support him from crying out in horror and despair ? what is it that can make a man in this case lift up his head with any comfort or content ? what remains now but a fearful expectation of fiery indignation ? And hath not this man some of the sparks of hell flung into his conscience ? doth not the never-dying worm begin to gnaw ? is not the fire already kindled that shall never be quenched ? And what provisions are now laid in to live upon ? what must be his food, what his drink, what his clothing, his inheritance, his lodging, his employment, his companions ? must he not feed upon the fruit of his own folly ? must he not drink of the cup of God's wrath ? must he not lodge in a bed of flames ? shall not his employment be to reap the crop of

sorrows for ever which he sowed in time? are not the devils and damned like to be his companions for ever?

And whilst the poor despised believer, who dreaded the place of torment, and who thought the wrath to come no light matter, is escaped, and is landed safe in eternal glory, and is blessing, and loving, and enjoying of God in unspeakable and eternal glory, he must lie under the weight of Divine wrath, and must not have one drop to cool his flaming tongue. And when saints are welcomed to glory, what a greeting is he like to have when he comes into the society of lost spirits! O how will they curse the day that ever they had a being, that ever they saw one another! how will they rue their folly that ever they should encourage one another to venture upon such intolerable torments, that they should purchase the short pleasures of sin with such sorrows! O that ever men who had reasonable souls should be so bewitched! but now, will they or will they not, bear it they must.

They that would not give themselves time and leisure to think of these things when they might have been prevented, must now take eternity to repent, and consider what they have done, and what they have undone, what they have lost, and what they have found. And O how doth the

thoughts of that unchangeable state sink the sinner ! If after millions of millions of ages he were to have the least hopes, respite, or ease, it were comparatively tolerable ! But O that for ever, that eternity, that, that is the cutting word !

And what dost thou say to all this, O thou careless unconverted sinner ? is sin and pleasure still as desirable as ever ? is it worth the while for a quarter of an hour's gratifying one's lust to run the hazard of all these miseries ? can you still find in your heart to make a mock of sin ? is judgment, damnation, hell, still nothing ? art thou willing to venture for all this ? shall nothing but feeling make thee be wise and believe that there is a hell ? Come, reason the case with me, and do not madly cast away your soul, and lose heaven for nothing. Are these things indeed so inconsiderable as that they do not deserve a serious thought ? have you matters of greater concern to trouble your head with ? I pray you do me the kindness, and yourself the right, to produce some of those weighty things that are of such vast importance, as that the salvation of a soul must be neglected for them. What is it that is more necessary than holiness ? Come, speak like a man of reason : is it the entertainment of a friend ? is it the company of your vicious connexions ? is it the

getting of a good place in a play-house? are these the matters of importance? is it feasting, drinking, or other carnal indulgences? is ruining your soul more necessary than the saving of it? must these stand in competition with Christ's holiness and glory? dare you vindicate and justify this before the great Judge at that day? Will it be a sufficient plea to say, Lord, I was not at leisure to serve thee, I had so much work to do for the devil that I had no time? or will this excuse be significant, when the Judge shall say, Sinner, what reason hadst thou to slight my laws, to despise my Son, and refuse life and happiness? Dare you answer, and say, I had my lusts to gratify, the world to look after, and I thought never to have seen this day? And wilt thou still, for all this, put it to the venture, will you after such warnings go on? For your soul's sake, consider how you shall answer in the day of God, when holiness and justice shall sit on the bench: O ask thy soul what it means, call it to the bar, judge and condemn thy folly, and for your life venture no longer at your careless rate, lest you repent too late, and cry out upon a death-bed with amazement, "How shall I do to appear before the terrible Judge? how shall I bear his wrath, and how shall I avoid his indignation?"

Once more, debate the thing soberly, it is not

yet too late, and I can scarce let thee go till I see thee in a better mind. You have read what condition a diligent saint is like to be in when he comes to die, and what entertainment he is like to meet with in another world; and you have heard what the lazy formalist or diligent sinner is like to meet with when he comes to die. Come, man, now, and make a wise and speedy choice; which of these conditions is most desirable, which would you be in when you come to die? I know you would die the death of the righteous, and wish your latter end may be like his. O man, why should not his life be as desirable as his death? what is there in his life that should make thee loth to imitate it? what art thou afraid of in his practice, that thou art so unwilling to follow it? Is it holiness that thou darest so much? why, if that be the thing, it must be confessed, that without it there is no seeing of God: but would holiness disparage or undo thee that thou art so afraid of it? will holiness make thee miserable? then how comes God who is perfect in holiness to be so in happiness? how come saints and angels above to be so blessed? is not holiness and a conformity to God the greatest part of their happiness? and how came that triumphant saint by his comforts, but by a discovery of the glorious image of God upon his soul? The more holiness, the more

pleasure and joy. It is Satan and the ignorant world that would persuade you, that when you come to be truly religious, you must take leave of your joys.

Come, friend, it is for your soul and life; do not so easily believe those that never tried what religion is, and have no good will for you or God; believe neither the devil nor the world, nor any of them all, in a business of such moment; but search and try, and believe that God who cannot lie, and that word which so many millions have found made good; believe them that were once as foolish as you, and could hardly be brought out of that mind, but now they would not for a world but they had changed their mind.

Well, now, man, what sayest thou? art thou resolved immediately to retire into thy chamber? art thou resolved to fall upon thy face before the Lord, and not let thy heart be at rest in its sleepy carelessness, nor cease to pray to the Lord till he hath enlightened thee, till he hath discovered the evil of sin, the beauty of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the fulness of the Creator to thee? If thou art, I will be bold to tell thee, thy labour shall not be in vain; God will quickly hear Ephraim bemoaning of himself, the Father's arms and heart will soon be open, the prodigal shall, for all this, be welcome.

But if still thou art resolved not to trouble thyself with the thoughts of these things, thou wilt not hazard the loss of thy lusts and swinish pleasures, thou wilt not displease thy friends, thou wilt not be laughed at for a fool, but on thou wilt go, and do as others do, whatever may come of it, then thank yourself if you miss comfort when you come to die ; then make the best of your pleasures, gold, interest, friends ; let them bribe death, and protect you from the arrest, and hold the serjeant's hands ; let them put in bail for you, if they can ; let them stand between you, and justice, and your accusers, quash the indictment, bribe the Judge, stop the sentence or execution, if they can : but let me tell thee, none at all can do it, nor dare attempt it : and I leave these lines as a standing witness against thee, that I gave thee fair warning, and made an advantageous offer to thee in the name of God ; but thou didst foolishly, obstinately, resolvedly reject life, and choose death. Therefore blame not Justice if he give you that misery which you did choose, and deny you that happiness which you did reject. I have done my message, and if you will not be prevailed with, who can help it ? I tell you again, look for it ; for as sure as God liveth, you shall find it true, that sin will be bitterness in the end, Mic. vii. 3. Jer. iii. 5. ii. 25. Rom. iii. 13, &c. Matt. xxv. 46. compared with

41, &c. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. Matt. xxii. 13. Psal. ix. 7. Luke xvi. 23, 24, &c. Heb. x. 27. Isa. xxxiii. 14.

Use 3. If the diligent saint, and none but he, shall have this “abundant entrance ministered to him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” then let us all examine whether we be these diligent saints, that we may beforehand know what we are to look for. Well now, let us commune with our own hearts, and not be satisfied till they bring in a true account.

Are we the persons that have made it our business to be religious? have we worshipped God in spirit and in truth? have our hearts been indeed engaged for him? have we as great a love for him as ever we had for the world, or sin, or relations? is this the great care of our lives, and that which we seek in the first and chief place, that we may be found of him in peace? have we indeed sought to serve God with all our hearts, and strength, and might? have we kept our eye still to the rule, and endeavoured to walk according to that rule? hath the word of God been our meditation, delight, practice? have we stirred up our hearts when they began to flag and grow dull, lazy, and tired? Do we act grace in duty, and labour to get it stronger and stronger, and corruption weaker

and weaker? do we keep up our watch and take heed to our spirits? do we feel what a sweet suitability to God means? and that the duties of religion are in a manner natural to us, and we are never better than when we are more immediately engaged in the service of God? Do we feel our wills bowed to the Divine will, and a sweet composedness of spirit under all God's dispensations? that nothing greatly troubles us but what is displeasing unto God? Do we feel our heart loving, delighting, and rejoicing in God? Is there nothing in the world that we desire so much as a greater conformity to God, and a complete enjoyment of him to all eternity? Have we a high respect to all his commands, and an opposition to all sin? Are we ready for all good works, and this with intentness, affection, and constancy? Are we always of this mind, and do we not repent our choice? Are we never weary of our Master, and his work? are we contented very well with his wages, and time of payment? Is this indeed the habitual frame of our spirits? and are we resolved in the strength of God thus to continue to the end? and yet do we look up to the righteousness of Christ, as that alone which we must trust to? and do we look upon our own as imperfect, filthy, loathsome? Do we adore that mercy which hath found out such an excellent way to

save the honour of all God's attributes, and yet to be the life of our souls, and thus attribute election, vocation, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification, to pure, free, infinite grace ?

Why, if this be the frame of our spirits, if this be indeed our practice, experience, and resolution, why then I can say we are the persons that shall have peace in death, joy and life after death, and confidence in glory, and eternal happiness in the day of judgment ; we are they that shall have " an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

But alas, alas, where are these noble souls to be found ? who is there almost that engages his heart to lay hold upon God ? who knows what it is to wrestle, strive, run ? O how faint, dull, and heavy are we ! how much unsuitableness to God, how hard to get to duty, and how little of the heart in it ! Where is the man that knows what it is to act faith and love, and humility in duty, that is truly importunate, active, spiritual, and continues so for any time ? How hard a thing do we find it to watch with Christ one hour, much more to keep up our watch day and night, and to be constantly upon our guard ! how few valiant soldiers hath our Captain now ! where are those resolute brave souls to be found that quit themselves gallantly ? O where is that ancient spirit which

sometimes actuated the children of God? Do we indeed run as if a crown were the prize? do we indeed work as if heaven were the wages? do we in good earnest use that diligence which becomes persons who are securing their lives, souls, and an everlasting kingdom? O how basely do we undervalue that glory by our slightness in seeking, carelessness in securing, and folly in hazarding it!

Have not the best of us all a great deal of reason to cry out of our unbelief, stupidity, and atheism? is this all we do for a kingdom? Will not the men of the world rise against us and condemn us, that they should rise up early and lie down late, and all to get a little food and raiment, or some poor temporal advantage? Will not the wicked sinners condemn us, that take so much pains to enjoy their pleasures, and gratify their appetites, and ruin themselves? Will not the poor ants reproach us, that labour so industriously to lay in provision for a time of need in summer? O what do we mean? how lazily and unconcernedly do we manage a work of the greatest profit, pleasure, and necessity! What! is the price of that great pearl fallen! is Christ now worth nothing? hath heaven lost its excellency? can that which sometimes could not be obtained without all diligence be now got with none at all? Hath Christ now abated any thing of that spirituality, activity, and

vigour, which sometimes he did require of his servants? Can heaven be got upon easier terms than he lays down in his word? is this sleepy, luke-warm profession, this cold, formal praying, being in an agony? Is this the contending, striving, watching, labouring, that the scripture speaks of? Surely he that speaks of being in labour more abundant, of mortifying the deeds of the flesh, of walking in the Spirit, meant another thing than our heartless, barren, cold duties, which we too commonly put off God and our conscience with. O with what face can we look for such glorious things from God when we do so little for God? It is no wonder at all that most of us live at great uncertainties, it is no wonder that we are much in the dark, and that our fears are usually as great as our hopes. Whom may we thank for all this, but our lazy, trifling, careless hearts? Does the husbandman expect a good crop at harvest without ploughing or sowing? doth the tradesman expect an estate should drop into his hands without his own industry? doth the soldier expect to secure his life, to conquer his enemy, to get his commander's commendation and reward by sleeping? No more can a professor rationally look for such great things as the peace of God, joy in the Holy Ghost, and a triumphant entrance into the city of God, without a humble, diligent,

constant respect to the commands of his great Master.

You cry out for want of comfort, and complain that you have not an assurance; why, let me ask you, what do you do towards the procuring of this great thing? do you pray and strive in prayer? do you watch your thoughts, affections, passions? have you any government over your spirits? do you live a life of faith? do you exercise love, zeal, meekness, patience, self-denial? do you live above the world? do you live in heaven in your affections, designs, and conversation? do you exercise yourself unto godliness, and make religion the great work of your life? do you keep a conscience void of offence towards God and all men? If not, I pray, instead of complaining for want of comfort, complain for want of grace; cry out upon your unbelieving, lazy, treacherous, worldly heart; bewail your want of love to God, your unsuitableness to spiritual things, your ignorance, your atheism, your want of prizing of Christ. Bemoan your unfaithfulness to God, your own soul, and others; bewail your barrenness under all the cost and charge of the great Husbandman, and turn your complaints into endeavours. Go to the blood of Christ, beg the Spirit, improve ordinances, stir up your lazy hearts, and let them not be at quiet in their dull, heavy, unactive

profession ; Psal. iv. 4. Isa. lxiv. 7. Jer. xxx. 21. Cant. v. 3. Jer. viii. 6.

Use 4. I shall now come to a word of exhortation ; and that I shall direct first to saints, and then to sinners.

First, I shall exhort *saints*. Is it that the diligent saint shall have “an abundant entrance ministered unto him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?” then let me hence put myself, and you that are believers, upon the greatest diligence, activity, and vigour, lest we fall short of this glorious privilege.

Motive 1. Consider how frequently, how earnestly, and with what solemnity it is commanded by God himself. Did you never read, “Get wisdom, get understanding : forget it not ; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee : love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom : and with all thy getting get understanding,” &c. Prov. iv. 5, 6, 7. The word “get” is *buy* in Hebrew ; and it is as much as if the Spirit of God had said, You have now an open market, and an excellent bargain offered ; buy it at any rate, it is worth your money ; get it whatever it cost you, though it be prayers, tears, and strong cries, though it cost you your right hand or right eye, your beloved sin, the

mortification of your dearest lust, the exactest watchfulness and self-denial. Nay, though it cost you your estate, your liberty, your life, you cannot lose by it. Whatever you neglect, neglect not the looking after this; your utmost diligence is well bestowed on such a work, the highest price is not too much for such a pearl; if you be wise, get it upon any terms in the world. Doth not our apostle in the verses foregoing put them upon diligence; nay, all diligence? 2 Pet. i. 5, 10. Doth not the prophet plead with men with a great deal of earnestness about their carelessness in this great affair? Isa. lv. 2. "Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Doth not the Lord Christ commend those violent ones that took the kingdom of heaven by storm, and put us upon the same work? What else doth he mean by those precepts, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life?" John vi. 27. And, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof:" and, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," Luke xiii. 24.

Do not the apostles put us upon the like work? What else is the signification of those words which

are so frequent in their writings, running, wrestling, contending, fighting? to what purpose else are their cautions? How many take heeds have we! how often are we bid to make sure, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling! to take fast hold of instruction! to hold out! to endure to the end and overcome! How many scriptures might I produce of this nature! and what do they all speak, but the indispensable duty that the command of our great Master layeth upon us, to use our utmost diligence in matters that concern his glory and our eternal welfare? And shall the precepts of God be slighted? are his commands of no authority? are his laws of no force? Well then, if God be our Father, let us do him that honour, as well as ourselves that kindness and honour, to obey him. If Christ be indeed our Lord, Master, Husband, let us show that we are his subjects, servants, and spouse, by our ready compliance with his equal, sweet, and holy commands.

2. Consider, as you have many precepts for this duty, so you have many precedents to excite you. All the true servants of God are labourers; if you could look into all the closets of believers, you should see them there wrestling with God upon their knees by prayer; if you could look into their hearts, you might see them always in the

soldier's posture. Little doth the world think what some of them are doing in their spirits, and what work is carried on within, while they let their hearts run up and down without control. They see them eating and drinking, and walking and working, and they think by this they are like themselves; but they understand not what food their souls live on, what trade their souls drive, what pains their souls take for an inheritance for ever. Every true saint takes pains and works hard; and would we be called servants, and expect wages, and do little or no work; methinks the diligence of some should shame us into greater activity. What! are not our souls as precious as theirs? would not the loss of them be as sad to us as them? will not our grace, peace, and glory be as well worth the looking after as theirs?

O at what a pitiful rate do some, that we would hope have the root of the matter in them, live, compared with others! how humbly, patiently, and zealously have some saints walked! how holily did the prophets, apostles, and martyrs live! and was their labour lost? do we think they did too much for heaven? dare we condemn them as too precise, too careful to please God and secure heaven? do not we applaud their zeal, courage, constancy, and can we commend them without condemning ourselves? was their activity highly

lovely and honourable, and is not our neglect shameful, who do nothing like them? why should not we do as much as they? is not the obligation as great upon us as them? is not the Master the same, the wages the same? O what do we mean that we are so sleepy, careless, slothful? Did Peter and Paul pray as we do? did David praise and love God as we do? did the primitive saints hear sermons with such unconcerned spirits as we do? do we look as if we could cheerfully look into a prison and embrace our chains as an ornament? do we act as if we could step cheerfully up a ladder to a gibbet, or hug a faggot and stake? O let us look about us, we fall exceedingly short of the saints of former days! O where is that spirit that once breathed amongst the people of God? Come, sirs, let us up and be doing, and the Lord be with us: we have a cloud of witnesses that is gone before us; they all served their Master faithfully while they were here, and now they are above they do it better. O now how finely do they warble out the praises of the Most High! how warm are their hearts! how lively, cheerful, and constant! O what brave servants hath God above! O that there were some proportion between our services here and theirs above! O that we were more naturalized to Divine employments! O that the commands of God were our pleasure! O that

God would help, warm, and quicken our graces, that we may do his will upon earth as it is done by saints and angels in heaven !

If such examples be too high, and beyond our view and observation, may we not learn something of our fellow-creatures here below ? doth not God send us dull scholars to school to the fowls, beasts, insects ? “ Go to the ant, thou sluggard ; consider her ways, and be wise ; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest,” Prov. vi. 6—11. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard ? when wilt thou arise out of sleep ? doth not the diligence of the poor husbandman, mechanic, or labourer greatly reproach us ; nay, the racers at the olympic games, the fencers, (the apostle alludes to such,) who did all for a poor prize ; their activity and curiosity may condemn us ; for they did it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible ; they were not sure to obtain, but we may so run, not as uncertainly, and so fight, not as those that beat the air, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26. O what a deal ado there is to get and keep a little of that which some call riches, whilst the true riches are contemned ! Awake, O christian, and look about thee ; be as diligent for heaven as the earth, take as much pains for eternal glory as men do for worldly honour, be as careful about the substance

as they are about the shadow, and then when they are bewailing their folly, thou wilt be enjoying the fruit of thy labour and hopes, unspeakable happiness.

If all these examples signify little, if things on earth and heaven be not regarded, then turn thine eye and look down on the diligence of hell. Dost thou not see what pains the devil takes to deceive, tempt, and ruin thee and others? and will not this continually engage thee to watchfulness? Dost thou never observe the poor bewitched world, and deluded sinner, what rising early, what watching, what hazard do they run, and all for the gratifying of their lusts, and the pleasing of the devil, and the damnation of their own soul? and they do not grudge their pains, nor think much of their labour, nor at present repent their cost. Fye, christian, fye; shall the devil do so much for our ruin, and we so little to resist him, and save ourselves? shall sinners think nothing too good for their lusts, and we think every thing too good for God? shall they take so much pains for hell, and we so little for heaven? Come, for shame, let us up and be doing, and mend our pace, and work hard, and be followers of them who through faith and patience are inheritors of the promise. Heb. xii. 1, &c. vi. 12. 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

3. Consider, to make you more diligent, for whom it is that you work. Doth not God deserve well at your hands? is there any in heaven or earth, that you have greater reason to serve? do you never consider what obligations you are under, who gave you your being, who subjected the creatures to you, who both defended and kept you all your days? is it not Him whom I would have you serve with more activity? Is a dull, grumbling, slothful spirit becoming one under such engagement, from whom are all thy present enjoyments, from whom thy future expectations? And do you think that God looks for but a little of you? Are you not called his peculiar people, and should not you be zealous of good works? is not Christ your Redeemer, and was that a kindness to be forgot and slighted? O where is gratitude and ingenuousness?

If goodness can quicken obedience, who is better to us than God? if the Master's eye signify any thing, when is it off us? if his greatness can provoke us, who among the sons of the mighty is comparable to him? as Luke vii. 4. Rev. v. 12. Psal. c. 3. xxxvi. 6. Rev. v. 9.

4. Consider the nature of the work. It is no dirty, low, dishonourable service that we are put upon, but that which would very well become the greatest princes that ever wore a crown. God's

service would ennoble honours, make crowns glorious, and put a true worth and dignity upon that which without it is but a name, a shadow, and worse than nothing. What is it that the Lord our God doth require of us, but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with our God? What doth he command, but what is an advancement of our natures, a privilege, an honour? O that we did indeed understand our work aright, and then we should need but few more motives to go about it. Mic. vi. 8. Titus ii. 14. Ezek. xviii. 29. Psal. cxlvii. 20.

5. Consider what wages you are like to have in this world. In keeping of God's commands there is great reward, his work itself is wages. Oh, the sweetness, peace, joy that is in hand, especially if there be great diligence and fidelity. To have a title to a good estate, and to be able to clear it, though we be not quite of age, methinks should have somewhat of pleasure in it. Turn back, and read over again what you have read, and sit down, and consider whether there be not enough in it to put us upon doing what we do with all our might: Psal. xix. 11. Prov. iii. 17. Isa. xxxii. 17. Rom. xiv. 17.

6. Consider what reward diligence is like to have in another world. Who can utter the thousand thousandth part of what a saint is worth?

The riches, glory, and pleasures of ten thousand worlds are all nothing to what a believer shall enjoy, as soon as ever he is called home by his Master. But I need go no farther than my text; read it, and ponder well every word, "The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Read them again and again. Do you know what the meaning of all those words is? A kingdom! What will not some do and venture for a kingdom? What thoughts, care, counsel, what seeking for allies, what promises, yea, what rewards to those that can help them to get and secure it? what cost too great, what fighting, watching, diligence, is thought much of? Invincible difficulties are levelled, unspeakable hazards overlooked, and I will not say, sometimes the damnation of a soul is reckoned a small matter if it stand in the way of a crown and kingdom: but I tell you, nay, God tells you, that these kingdoms below are poor things to that above. All the crowns, and sceptres, and jewels of all the monarchs under heaven laid together, are but a heap of rubbish compared to that kingdom. Kingdoms have their bounds, and the greatest monarchs have the limits of their dominion; their glory may be eclipsed by civil or foreign troubles; and a thousand occurrences may make that man's heart ache whose head is dignified with a crown royal: but it is far

otherwise in this kingdom ; it is a kingdom that hath no bounds, whose peace and glory is interrupted with no wars, famine, plague, fire, or troubles. Nothing but glory, pleasure, joy, happiness is there, no impurities, divisions, sickness, nothing that offends. What joy, triumph, honour, is there ! and every one that comes there is a king, hath his crown. Oh, what a place is that where so many millions of kings meet ! Blessed are those that are advanced to that honour, and happy are those which shall be advanced to that dignity ! that, that is preferment indeed, worth praying, watching, striving, fighting, venturing all for. Oh, the glory, riches, privileges of this kingdom ! How sweet and healthful an air is that where none shall say, I am sick ! how delightful a place must that needs be, where are rivers of pleasures, and that infinite fountain of full joy for evermore ! No need of watching, guard, fighting ; a complete victory hath put an end to all these things ; and what remains but the fruit of so glorious a conquest, joy, feasting, and a triumphant jubilee ? What hath the saint then to do, but to behold the glory of his palace, to view the rarity of his city, the New Jerusalem, and to praise, love, and enjoy God in unspeakable happiness ?

But, that which makes this kingdom still more desirable, and worthy of the greatest diligence to

get and secure, is, that it is an EVERLASTING KINGDOM. Here the greatest kings, after a few years at most, in spite of power, art, dignity, policy, must themselves become subjects to the king of terrors, and bow their necks to his sceptre; and instead of a stately palace, princely grandeur and pomp, instead of a glorious kingdom, must lie down in darkness, dwell in the dust, and leave nothing behind them, but some poor remembrances of their greatness; which, it may be, a little time may quite deface, wear out, devour. But this is a kingdom that hath no end, neither shall mortality disparage the glory of these kings. Eternity may be written upon the gates of their palace, and immortality upon the head of every king. After ten millions of millions of ages their kingdom shall be as glorious as the first day they took the possession of it, their comforts as fresh, their bodies and souls as strong, active, and lively as they were when they were first awakened by the resurrection. All that a saint now does or suffers is short, but all that he receives and enjoys then will be eternal; his life eternal life, his joy everlasting joy, his inheritance an eternal inheritance, his kingdom, crown, glory, all eternal; and is not all this worth using all diligence for? Shall I, can I say more still to quicken industry? It is the kingdom of OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

There we shall have his blessed company, which makes heaven more glorious than else it would be; there we shall see his face, have his embraces, lie in his bosom, and be joint heirs with him for ever. Oh, what would not some give to see as little of Christ here, as James and John did! but, oh, what a sight will that be to see Him face to face who is infinitely more glorious than all created excellences! But here I am at a stand—Let faith and meditation go on still till the soul is in an ecstasy of admiration and affection: as for words, they are infinitely short of the nature of the thing—And what sayest thou now, O weary labourer, dost thou not find a new life to animate thy soul? Does not thy heart begin to burn? Is not all this like oil to make the wheels run more swiftly? Canst thou still be lukewarm and indifferent? Is there any room left for sloth still? What! dost thou make nothing of *Christ, Saviour, kingdom, eternity*? Have all these words of weight lost their significancy? Once more, awake for shame, and mend thy pace; this slow walk disparages your faith, your Christ, your kingdom.

If all this will not prevail with us to make more haste, what will? Lift up thine eyes and look before thee; remember where you are. Is not this the vineyard? and what! shall we loiter there? Is not this the market-place, and shall we idle

there? And if such kind of motives have lost their efficacy, consider the shortness of your time, the greatness of your work, the many hinderances that you may meet with, and the unspeakable danger of sleeping when such an enemy is at your gates. And if yet thou remain sluggish, read that one scripture, "Thou wicked and slothful servant,—thou oughtest to have put out my money to the exchangers; and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxv. 26—30. Dan. xii. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 16. Psal. cxxxiii. 3. xvi. 11.

And what sayest thou now, O my soul, will this dull doing serve the turn still? have the precepts of God no authority? have so many examples and precedents no influence? can you possibly over-do where the relation is so near, and the obligation so deep? doth not the work commend itself? doth it not bring wages along with it? Is a kingdom worth nothing? Is eternity short? and are CHRIST and JESUS words of no great power?

Who now can find in his heart to be so unkind to God, and cruel to himself, as to be sluggish still? Give me leave to expostulate the case a little with thee, O my soul, for I cannot be satisfied, I will not let thee be at quiet, till the matter is mended. Believers, shall I speak one word more, and reason the cause with you; hath not the Lord opened your eyes and given you some sight of the excellency and reality of invisibles, hath he not given you your spiritual senses, was there not a time that you could say he was altogether lovely? How sweet once were his commands! When thou wert praying, and weeping, and wrestling, and Christ came and wiped thine eyes, and kissed thee, and gave thee his blessing, was it not pleasant? were those duties lost? was that labour in vain? art thou now half in the mind that all was but a fancy? What could the atheists say worse? what can gratify the devil more? what more provoking to your dearest Friend? Didst thou not then make thy boast and tell what God had done for thy soul, and invite others to taste and see, and was that feast but a dream? O for shame, belie not infinite goodness. Is this your thanks for so unspeakable a gift? doth not your trifling in the things of God blaspheme him before the whole world, and as it were tell them that you cannot tell, whether heaven be not a shadow, or Christ a Master

worth serving, and religion an employment worth engaging in with all one's soul? I pray, how do you think they construe your formality and sloth, but thus? Surely there is no great matter in those things that ministers talk so much of, Christ, heaven, holiness; for if there were, one would think that those who pretended to them should pursue matters of such consequence with incomparably more seriousness, diligence, and activity. O little do we think what wrong our laziness doth to the cause of God! O therefore, for God's sake, for your souls' sake, for the sake of the poor world, who are in hazard of being hardened in their sins by it, let us stir up ourselves, and fall to our great work, like men and women that are under the deep impressions of the reality, glory, eternity, and nearness of that invisible estate; and that seeing such a thing is attainable, cannot take up with any thing below "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This is all I shall say at present with relation to the first part of the exhortation, which was directed to the people of God.

Second, I shall exhort *sinners*. I now address myself to the poor mad world, that are busy indeed; but what is it about, but in ruining themselves? they are diligent indeed, but it is in the service of a hard master; they take a great

deal of pains, but it is to little purpose, except dishonouring God, and ruining their own and others' souls. O ye simple ones, it is to you that the mighty Jehovah hath sent me; to you I must cry, and you I must once more warn to flee from the wrath to come. Hold, sinner, hold, why drivest thou on so furiously? whither art thou going so hastily? What is it you spend your time, your thought, and money upon? what wages are you like to have for such work? will this swearing, cursing, sensuality, indeed end in everlasting happiness? is that way ye are running in the way to heaven? is it not the way to death, misery, and hell? Before you step one step further, in the name of God, I charge you to stand. Be well advised what you do; as the Lord liveth, you are a dead man if you go on in that road: all that have gone on in it have dearly repented. But behold I show you a more excellent way; and my soul for yours, if you keep in that way, if you do not come safe to your journey's end, and sup nobly at night, and sleep soft and quietly till the morning. What say you, will you take my counsel, or rather Christ's advice? You are hard at work; I would now have you work that it may be worth the while; I would have you take pains for considerable gains; I would have you labour for such wages as may maintain you comfortably.

Have you not heard and read, what the diligent and faithful servant shall have, that works with all his might in God's vineyard? his penny will be worth all the pounds that the rich worldling doth so greedily seek; his pay will be in such coin as hath worth and weight in it, and will go current in another world; his reward will be an everlasting crown of glory. And what do you say to this poor, deluded sinner? is there any thing in sin better than a kingdom? Can Satan give such an inheritance as heaven? can he bestow a crown of glory upon his servant? What do you think of all that hath been said? dare you stand forth and say that it is a fancy, a cheat, a lie? Speak man, and show yourself a man in what you say, and not a stark fool, a brute, a mad-man; if you are well in your senses, I fear not a fair debate. If truth itself may be credited, I doubt not but I shall have your assent and consent to what I have and shall say; come sinner, stand forth, I say, and answer. Dost thou believe that there is a God? is not this God infinitely good, holy, and true? do you indeed believe this? well, and do you believe that his word shall be made good to a tittle? that his commands are just? that there is a necessity of obeying them? that all his promises shall be fulfilled, and that his threatenings must have execution? Do you give

your hearty assent to all this? What! and go on still, or sit down without fear and trembling? Why man, what dost mean? art thou contented to dwell with everlasting burnings? or is an eternity of glory a light matter? is it wisdom, reason to prefer dung before jewels, misery before happiness, hell before heaven? Dare you stand by it and own it before God and angels, when you see the saint's crowns, and the sinner's chains, prison, flames, that the sinner's choice is best, and Satan's service better than Christ's? whatsoever you think now, I know what note you will then be in. O how will you wish in vain that you had but taken as much pains for heaven as you did for hell! O that you were but in the case that those glorious ones are in; how will you bless them, and in spite of your heart judge them wise, and yourself a fool! and will venture still! Come, sinner, for God's sake, for thy soul's sake, turn speedily, and use as much diligence to save thy soul, as thou didst before to lose it. What is there in sin, and Satan, and hell, that thou shouldst be so fond of them, and venture so hard, and be at such cost and pains for them? Speak, man, what hast thou to say in the praise of sin, that thou dost so affectionately cleave to it, as if it were thy life, thy joy, thy heaven? What hast thou to speak for the honour of thy master the devil, that thou servest

him so faithfully, diligently, constantly? I am persuaded thou hast not one word to say; and I am sure thou hast no reason in the world on thy side, and I am as confident that all thou wilt get by them at last will be shame and sorrow. Well, now are you of the same mind still, or will you change your master and employment, and with all your might serve the Lord? What do you say, will you or no? Have you any thing to object against him or his service? What harm would religion, in its power, do you? What is there in godliness that makes you so much afraid of closing with it? Which of all God's commands are unreasonable? What doth he require of thee but what is infinitely for thy profit? Is there anything in holiness that a wise man need be afraid of? Is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves, so dismal a thing? Is a life of purity, and joy, and communion with God so tedious a thing, that one had better venture upon eternal flames than such a life? Once more, I come to know what your resolution is in this matter, and to persuade you, if possible, instead of being diligent for nothing, to be so for something. And that I may prevail, I shall lay before you these following considerations briefly.

1. Consider, sinner, of what vast concern this

matter is that I am dealing with you about. Were it a small thing, I should more contentedly bear a denial, but it is a business of the greatest importance in the world : it is your life, the life of your soul ; it is an inheritance, a kingdom, your comfort, honour, interest, every thing : I say again, it is your all ; and what would not a man in his wits do to get and secure all ; such an ALL as all the glory of the world is but dung to it ; a glorious and eternal happiness : oh that you did but know what a proposal I make ! Oh, that you did indeed believe, and then I should not need to question but that I might spare urging of more motives to engage your heart and soul in diligent serving of God and securing your soul.

2. Consider, to how little advantage you labour, till you in good earnest set about this work. Your time, pains, and cost is lost ; till then your gettings are inconsiderable. Suppose that (which I believe none but a madman expects) you could gain the whole world ; and if you lose your soul can you boast of your bargain. Consider whether it be worth while to rise up early, and lie down late, and fill one's head and heart with care, and all for a shadow, and that which profits not ; when that pains, and those thoughts, if rightly expended, might bring in a vast income upon which you might live well for ever. O be not so

hasty to run after a butterfly, so eager in the pursuit of vanity, so diligent about that which will turn to no account, while Christ, heaven, and glory may be had with a great deal less trouble.

3. Consider what others have got by their diligence. Inquire of any of all the saints, and ask them whether praying, hearing, receiving the sacrament, loving God, believing, hoping, nay watching, denying themselves, enduring of affliction, bearing of crosses, hath not been more profitable to them than the pleasures of sin, which sometimes they also were such fools as to be taken with? Ask David whether his serving of God, or his crown, brought him in the greater revenue? and he will soon answer you, that the light of God's countenance is better than mountains of gold and silver, than rivers of wine and oil, than the greatest increase of corn. Time would fail me to mention Enoch, Noah, Elijah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Paul, and millions more, what joys, pleasure, honours, intimacy with God here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

4. Consider what arguments, what entreaties, what importunities we use in persuading you. I beseech you in Christ's stead, take fast hold of wisdom, come into Christ's vineyard. Oh, why stand you here all the day idle? I might add many more motives: Oh, consider who it is for

whom I would have you work ; it is the God that feeds you, and can and will make you happy if you serve him faithfully ; it is for Christ who redeemed you, and will give you a crown of life if you diligently follow him till death ; it is for your own soul. Oh, consider what great offers are made you, and what dreadful damages you will sustain if you do not speedily comply. Now God is willing to accept of you for his servant and child, and promiseth life and heaven for your reward. Time is short, it will quickly be too late ; the greatest diligence is little enough : what you do, do quickly, and do it with all your might : so you also may have an abundant entrance, &c.

I shall conclude all with a few words of direction to all, what they should do to get this diligence, and an “ abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Direction 1. Put away from you whatsoever may hinder your diligence, darken your evidences, and make the thoughts of God, death, and judgment dismal to you. Be sure you cast off your works of darkness ; let not one sin be entertained in your heart with love and liking ; take heed of a secret beloved sin, beware of unbelief. Take heed of being pleased too much with the world and carnal delights ; dread sensuality, wicked company

slightness and formality in duty ; have a care of letting fall your watch, and wilful laziness, and putting the matters of your soul to the venture. There is no running with fetters ; and no working in chains and shackles, no coming to this joy except these hinderances be removed, never expect to come triumphantly to heaven except this direction be observed. Nay all your peace, joy, and hopes, if you do not take this course, are worth nothing, Heb. xii. 1. Isa. lv. 7. i. 16, 18.

2. Be sure the first and grand work be well laid in deep humility, sound conversion, and a heart-change. If the will be really turned from sin to God, and your heart in good earnest set for him, it is a mighty help to quicken diligence. What will such a man think much of ? what pains will he be at in searching his heart, in searching the scriptures, and in comparing himself with the rule ! O search and try yourself, and do it with fear and jealousy ; remember how deceitful your heart is, beg of God to try you, and let this be one of your constant petitions, Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I may never be ashamed. Do not easily take it for granted that you are converted, beg, beg some faithful minister to search you to the quick, and remember a godly jealousy doth always become you, and that the most con-

fidēt are seldom right. Acts iii. 19. ii. 37. Psal. cxix. 80. Matt. vii. 24, 25.

3. Be constantly looking unto Jesus and the promises. Improve Christ in all his offices and relations: let his life make you more humble, meek, self-denying, obedient, zealous, lively, and spiritual; let his death kill sin; and let his resurrection raise your affections, and set your heart on heaven where Christ dwells. Urge his promise, whereby he hath engaged to be with his saints to the end of the world, and to give them his peace. Remember the word upon which he hath made you to trust; a sound faith in Christ and the promises would bring in strength and consolation: if we lived more upon Christ and less upon ourselves, more upon the promises and less upon sense, we might have other kind of comforts in life and death than most have: Heb. xii. 2. John xiv. 27. Rom. xv. 13.

4. Be earnest for the Spirit. If you ask more of it, and with more importunity, you would have no denial; you have Christ's advice to encourage your endeavours and hopes. It is by the Spirit the soul is set at liberty; it is by the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the flesh; it is the Spirit that fills us with sighings and groanings unutterable; it is that which fills us with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The fruit of the Spirit is joy and

peace : O, quench not the Spirit, but be most earnest in your prayers for it. Gal. v. 22. Rom. viii. 26.

5. Let not a day pass without serious communing with your own hearts. Inquire of your poor soul whether there be anything of the acting of grace in duty, anything of faith, love, humility, zeal ; what answer you have of prayer, what of God you enjoy in all ordinances. In all companies inquire what progress you make heavenwards, and what declinings and backslidings you are guilty of, and do not bear with your hearts when they begin to be dull, indifferent, and formal. And adore Divine goodness if you feel any fresh gales and spiritual joys ; be sure you give the glory of all to grace, and think still of yourself as a poor unprofitable servant. Psal. iv. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Jer. viii. 6. Psal. cxix. 59, 60.

6. Improve all ordinances, providences, and societies for the quickening of your graces, the raising your experiences, and bringing you nearer to God. There is a divine art and skill, if we could learn it, of turning every thing into gold, and making ourselves richer by losses, stronger by weakness, healthful by sickness, and making every gale to fill our sails, and bring us nearer to our harbour. Prov. x. 29. Psal. xxv. 10. Rom. viii. 28. Isa. xl. 31.

7. Maintain a constant, holy care and solicitude about your soul. Remember that to serve God and save your soul is your business, and that all other things are little or nothing, but as they have respect to this. O stir up yourselves with all your might in all duties, and count it a madness to be careless and slight in anything that concerns God and your souls. Do what you can possibly to shake your sloth off; do all with your might which relateth directly to God, and your eternal state. Psalm cxix. 5. Matt. vi. 33.

8. Meditate upon the eye of God, the excellency and reality of invisibles. Is it possible to be dull and idle in the presence of such a master as we serve? What made Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, to live at such a rate as they did? Did not faith quicken their obedience, and make unseen things present? did not that show them the glory, and assure them of nearness and proprietorship? Oh, let us look to the things that are not seen, and less to the things that are seen, and then we shall quickly be of Paul's mind, to prefer heaven before earth, and ever long to be dissolved, that we may be with Christ.

9. Look often into the scriptures, and dwell upon the truths that are there. What precious promises are there! who can believe them, and be slothful in God's service? You may with joy

draw water out of these wells of consolation :
Rom. xv. 4. Psalm cxix. 14, 15, 16, &c. xix. 10.

10. Think much of the grave, judgment, and eternity. In thus doing, you may be quickened in duty, filled with experience, and at last come to this blessed privilege, to have "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

O that none of us might now take up with a lazy profession, but labour with all our might, to arrive to this blessed pitch, to live humbly, holily, honourably, and to die triumphantly !

AN ACCOUNT

OF SOME OF THE

DEATH-BED EXPERIENCES OF MRS. B.

WHICH WERE

TAKEN FROM HER OWN MOUTH IN SHORT HAND.

MRS. B—— not long before her last sickness was under several hurries and temptations, which the Lord was in some measure pleased to help me to remove. And no sooner was she under some composure in spirit, but the Lord was pleased to visit her with a fever, in which he did to admiration manifest himself to her. I wrote down some particulars from her own mouth when I went to visit her.

The first time that I observed anything extraordinary in her sickness, she cried out with holy admiration at God's condescension to her, and said, "I am like little Zaccheus, that have been climbing and looking after Christ, and longing to see him; and he hath looked upon me, and come to my house, and feasted me; I have supped with

him, and he with me, and his banner over me was love: how sweet are his flagons of love! I have found that his promises are all true and unspeakably sweet: he hath not said to the seed of Jacob Seek my face in vain. Upon him will I wait. I am but a blast, a nothing, and yet I have found the truth of his love to my soul, and now I know I shall live for ever. I have done my work, I have fought the good fight; henceforth there remains for me a crown incorruptible that fadeth not away. Satan desired to sift me, but Christ hath prayed for me. If I had not had Christ to fly to, and help me now, I had been in a sad condition indeed. But blessed be free grace, I know Christ loves me dearly, and I love him dearly, but he loves most. As long as I have lain here, Christ hath not been absent from me one moment, and if he seemed to withdraw, it was but a very little, and to see how I did value his love and could bear his absence."

Then one speaking concerning the privileges of the elect; she said, "O how blessed are the citizens of Zion, but I cannot tell how to lift up my heart in the praises of the King of Zion as I would; when I come to the New Jerusalem I shall do it better: the people of God will then wonder that Christ should do so much for them, when they were so poor, and deserved so little. Oh

admired be his glory ! how doth he now draw me with his goodness ! I had thought a low place good enough, and too good for me ; but God hath provided a high place for me, but what it is I cannot tell, but that I shall have it I am sure. I am in such a condition now, that I cannot say as the psalmist, Oh, ‘ spare me that I may recover a little strength,’ but, Oh take me as soon as thou wilt, for thou hast strengthened me with strength in my soul : ‘ I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ Oh, that all of you that are present did but feel what I now through infinite mercy feel ! Then she particularly prayed for me, that God would mightily own and encourage me, and then, she said, none of your enemies shall prosper. Oh, the refreshings ! oh, the refreshings that I now feel ! Christ hath been Master, Father, Husband unto me ; and indeed what hath not Christ been to my soul ? he condescended to furnish the room of my heart for his own delight, and mine too.”—

I then spoke more largely of the excellency of Christ to her, and of the glory of the invisible world that she was going to, at which she cried out, “ Oh, I would not have Christ to seek now for a world ; if I had my work now to do, I should have been trembling instead of rejoicing and praising God. God hath made this bed easy to me, he hath not left nor forsaken me. If death

stands here, Christ stands there, and so long I care not ; death hath now lost his sting. Oh, how doth the love of Christ satisfy me every morning ! Oh, that sweet sentence, how it rings in my ears, ‘ Come ye blessed of my Father.’ ”

This sentence was often in her mouth with a holy triumph, “ Oh, how ready is Christ to pity poor creatures ! ”

I told her that the Lord had given her that white stone, and in that a new name written, which none knew but they that had it. She soon burst out at this, “ I would not now give one farthing for a whole world ; unseen things appear real and great, and these lower things are now nothing. So gracious is the Lord to me, that he doth not suffer Satan so much as to tempt me now, he is quite chained up. I was sometimes afraid lest when the Bridegroom came I should not be ready, but rich grace hath blown away my fears. I can, through mercy, say I am ready ; come now, Lord, as soon as thou wilt, my work is done. He will keep them in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed upon him. Oh, how rich am I ! There is not a promise in the whole bible but I can say is mine. Oh, blessed be free grace, let Satan pluck and pull if he dare, he shall never pluck me out of the arms of Christ. ‘ Who shall separate me from the love of Christ ? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all

that is within me, bless his holy name! he hath pardoned all my sins, and hath loved me with an everlasting love.’”

After this, I prayed with her; both in and after prayer she seemed to be in the very suburbs of heaven, and immediately cried out, “Oh, how do I long! Oh, how do I long to be with Jesus! ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions.’ Oh, Christ hath prepared a place for me; and it is but yet a little while, and he will come and fetch me. ‘Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.’ He makes no tarrying, I will wait his leisure; he comes, he is never absent from me, he stands by me, and smiles upon me, and maketh me so long to die; I cannot tell what to do, I do so long to be in his arms! Lord, come; dear Lord, come as soon as thou wilt, I am ready. Oh, come, Lord, and show thyself to thy poor saints, quicken their graces. Oh, that they may be steady, and be still pressing on to the mark of the high calling.—My dear Redeemer loves me, and speaks a good word for me, and for every one that layeth hold upon him. He loveth us first.—Lord, give thy love to every one here, and let none of these that come to see me miss of heaven.

“Bless the children of thy poor handmaid, and give them thy grace, and keep them as thou hast kept their poor mother. Thou hast bid me delight

myself in the Lord ; and thou hast said, I shall have the desires of my heart. I do delight in thee, O Lord ; and what do I desire more than to please thee, to enjoy thee, and to leave thee for a Father and portion for my children ?——I have him whom my soul loves, whom my soul delights in. My dear friends, now Christ is preaching to you by poor me the sweetness and excellency that is in himself. Oh, who that knows Christ can live without him ? Sirs, is not speaking experimentally and feelingly of Christ sweet ?——Sure I have not long to be here.”

Then speaking to one of her children, she said, “The Lord give thee a double portion of his grace.—Oh, Christ, he is altogether lovely, he is so lovely, that I cannot sufficiently set forth my well-beloved : ‘My beloved is mine, and I am his.’ I know God will be a Father to my children ; I rest in the faith of it. Oh that my children may not have their work to do when they are in this condition ! Oh, who knows what a terrible thing it is to die without a Christ ? but it is sweet to go to Jesus ; and if it be so sweet to enjoy Christ, how bitter must it be to want him ! Oh, how do I long to be dissolved, and to be with Christ !”

Then she prayed again excellently well for me, and for my special preservation in particular : and after prayer, she said, “I have a grant, I know it

shall not go ill with you ; ‘ The rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the back of the righteous.’” Yea, she appointed me a text to preach upon at her funeral : “ I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living,” Psal. xxvii. 13. Being asked whether she would have some of a cordial ; she answered, “ No, no, away with your cordials, Jesus Christ is now my only cordial, O how do I long to be in his presence : ‘ In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. How amiable are thy tabernacles, how pleasant is thy dwelling-place, O Lord of hosts, to me !’ No tongue can disclose what I feel. I can say, ‘ Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what Christ hath’ bought for me, ‘ laid up for me,’ given to me.”

All this while she lay smiling and triumphing like one that was more than a conqueror through Christ that did strengthen her : and after a while she turned to me and said, “ O sir, I am one of those that you shall not be ashamed of in the day of judgment ; the Lord hath made you a happy instrument to my poor soul.” Then she quoted many sweet and precious promises, such as that, ‘ Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,’

&c. “ Oh, what a pattern is this ! all is mine, and Christ is mine, and I am his ; life and death, all is mine, but all is free grace ; none of all this is from any excellency in me more than another ; all is pure grace, all is from Christ ; I have given away all to Christ, I have referred all to Christ, and he hath done all things well for me.—While I lie here my soul is panting after Christ ; but shortly my body shall be at rest from all these pains, but my soul shall be in better rest.”

Some did interrupt her in her talking, and desired that she would let others speak, or compose herself to rest. She answered, “ If I talked idly, you might hinder ; but when I speak what my heart is full of, why should you hinder me from praising my God, and speaking of the faithfulness and sweetness of Christ ?”

Her sight was now taken away, and her face seemed somewhat swelled with pain ; yet she did not complain in the least of her pain, but said, “ It is true, I have not now any great comeliness, but yet Christ loves me, and I shall be as white as snow when my Bridegroom presents me to his Father.” A while after her nurse gave her something to drink ; after which she said, “ I shall shortly drink it new in my Father’s kingdom. One of Christ’s cordials is worth a thousand of these.”

One that was by said, “ Ah, thirsty soul,” when

she drank, but said she, "Christ hath poured water upon my dry and thirsty land, and floods upon my wilderness. If a doctor should come now to me, and say, 'What, would you live?' I would say, I had rather immediately go to Christ. I would give all the praise that I am able to the Lord for his wonderful kindnesses to me. I have begged many a time, and often, that nothing might satisfy me but Christ, and that I might not be contented till I had a fulness in Christ; and now I can say, Christ hath answered me. I am satisfied with his love; the desires of the faithful shall be granted. I have laid hold upon the Lord, like a lion: I have boldly fed upon Christ, and I am now like a giant refreshed with new wine. He saith, Ask, and you shall have, and I am sure I have found him as good as his word. No soul seeks but he finds, if he will continue seeking; no soul knocks, but Christ is ready to come and open, if he do not bolt him out."

One came to see her when her sight was dim or left, and she said to her, "I should be glad to see you, but I am contented, I see better things." Being in great pain and removed, she said, "I am now in the Red sea, and the wilderness, but I shall quickly be in the land of Canaan." Then she spoke to some that were about her, and

exhorted them : “ Begin your work as soon as you can, and follow after Christ ; though there be a little trouble for a while, yet follow him still, ‘ his paths will be pleasantness, and his ways peace.’ If there be anything in the ways of Christ that is uneasy, he will shortly remove that. Christ hath me under his sweet wings : O that the black cypress were over me, Oh that I were at rest ! but be patient, O my soul, it is but a moment.”

Then she prayed again for all the church that she stood related to, that God would bring them all triumphing to glory. “ Oh, friends,” said she, “ look well to the inward part, search every corner.” When she perceived some to be weeping about her, she said, “ Oh, weep not for me, for I rejoice, and Christ rejoiceth in me ; weep for yourselves. Oh sirs, begin betimes : there is God’s early, and man’s ; God’s is presently, man’s is at death, or in old age, or distress ; oh, seek God now presently, and take this from me, Begin with God, and he will end with you.—The Lord hath had respect unto the low estate of his handmaid, therefore my soul doth and shall magnify him for ever.”

One said, That it was but a little while and she would be at rest. She said, “ Oh come, Lord Jesus, if it were now, I care not ; come, Lord,

bring death ; oh, that I could see death a coming ! Christ is mine, and I am his. Come now, death, and do thy work. ‘ My Beloved is the chiefest of ten thousand ! ’ Oh, he is so lovely ! Oh, I see his lovely face by faith. Oh, how he smiles ! Oh, my dear Saviour !

“ Oh, my dear friends, methinks you should beg of God to take me, now you see me thus transported with his love. Oh, what a blessed saying do I hear, ‘ Come, thou blessed of my Father ! ’ Oh, the blessed which are in the other world, they make Christ himself glad to see them, he rejoiceth over them ! Friends, my breath is even gone, I can not talk any more now.”

But by and by she began again ; and said, “ But why should I not lay out my largest penny whilst I have it to spend— ? The Lord strengthen all your graces.” It being the saturday before the sacrament, she said, “ The Lord be with his guests to-morrow, and make them welcome at his table ; the Lord walk among them, and dwell in the midst of them.—I was afraid I was a hypocrite, but now I know I am not ; I am now growing stronger and stronger, and so I shall do till I am perfect in Christ. ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.’ I shall praise him now as long as I have a being.”

It being late, and we being about to depart, she

said, "Oh, what a blessed meeting shall we shortly have! how shall we rejoice and praise God together!"

Upon the Lord's day she continued in an admirable frame, more and more blessing and praising God: saying, "Oh, that I had but breath to praise him." After I had prayed with her, the Lord was pleased to give her a little more breath, and she quickly spent it for him. And, oh, at what a rate did she praise the Lord! her joys increased wonderfully; and then she said, "Oh, how I long to die, but yet I will patiently submit to life."

Upon monday she began to be in greater pains than ordinary, and then she begged that the Lord would give her faith and patience, adding, "But the will of the Lord be done. Oh, what a case were I in, if my work were now to do! Satan would this day have tempted me to impatience, but the Lord did rebuke him and strengthen me."

Upon tuesday she was exceedingly weak, and when her speech began to fail her, she said, "My heart is as full as it can hold, though I cannot now speak it so well: God hath strengthened me, or else I could not lie thus. God is good still; the Lord doth condescend to my senses, and deals familiarly with his poor handmaid; I live not now by faith so much as by sense."

Being asked how she did, she answered, "God

is good still ; all is mine." Then she disowned her own righteousness, and attributed all to free grace. Then she said to me, " All the promises are mine, and you have helped me to lay a good claim to them."

Being asked again, how she did ; she answered, " I am in great pain," (and then death was upon her,) " but I am willing to lie in this pain, if it were a twelvemonth, nay, as long as the Lord will, so he do but still continue these unspeakable joys." These were the last words she spoke in my hearing. But after I left her, she continued in the same frame till between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, and then she judged that she heard sweet music, and could not be satisfied, but that I must be sent for to hear that melody ; but before I could come to her she was joined in the glorious concert above.

HALLELUJAH.

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