

## SERMON UPON ROMANS II. 7.

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*To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.—ROM. II. 7.*

IN this scripture we have a plain and full character of the heirs of promise, or a short but complete description of that good which is necessary to life. The words are occasioned by the apostle's mentioning of the righteous judgment of God, which rendereth to every man according to their works. That general mentioned in ver. 6 is more distinctly explained in the next verses, wherein he showeth how the righteous judge will carry himself towards the good and towards the bad in the judgment of absolution and condemnation: towards the good in the text; toward the bad, ver. 8, 'But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.' The one is a reward of grace, and the other is a punishment awarded by his exact justice. We are to consider the first of these, the reward of grace, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.'

In the words observe the qualification and the reward—

1. The qualification or description of the heirs of promise.

[1.] By their end and design: they 'seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.'

[2.] The means or way wherein they seek it; by 'well-doing.'

[3.] Their constancy and perseverance in that way, *καθ' ὑπομονήν*, by 'patient continuance.'

Well, then, here is a short and full description of those who shall be saved. They are those who, out of the hope of the eternal reward, persevere in the obedience of the truth; for they that 'continue in well-doing' are opposed to them that 'obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness,' whereby is intended those that sin against the light of nature, and refuse the direction of the gospel. So that 'well-doing' must be stated partly by the light of nature, and partly by the light of scripture; or rather, by this latter alone, as it compriseth and explaineth the other. And their constancy and patient continuance in this work is as considerable as the work itself. Continuance implieth a constant tenor of righteousness and holiness; and patient continuance implies continuance notwithstanding temptations to the contrary, or bearing the persecutions which they underwent for the duties of the

christian profession, still going on in the pursuit of that reward which Christ hath promised.

2. The reward is 'eternal life.' This they looked and this they laboured for. They were not carried on upon temporal encouragements, but eternal bliss in the world to come; and this is an excellent counterpoise against the loss or the discomforts of the present life.

*Doct.* That God will give eternal life to all those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek after it.

The point will be best opened by discussing the circumstances of the text. I shall speak—(1.) Of the qualification; (2.) Of the reward.

I. The qualification. And there I must speak—

First, Of their design and aim: they 'seek for glory, honour, and immortality.' In all businesses and affairs the end must be first thought of.

Now these persons which are here described propound to themselves the noblest and highest end which the heart of man can pitch upon, even 'glory, honour, and immortality.' Amongst men, the ambitious, who aspire to crowns and kingdoms, and aim at perpetual fame by their virtues and rare exploits, are judged persons of greater gallantry than covetous muckworms and brutish epicures; yet their highest thoughts and designs are very base and low in comparison of sincere christians, who 'by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality,' and whom nothing less will content and satisfy than the enjoyment of God himself in his heavenly kingdom, and all that happiness which he hath promised to his faithful servants. The threshold will not content them, but the throne; their end is far more noble than the designs of all the rest of the world. And whereas others do carry themselves but as an higher and wiser sort of beasts, and so are unworthy of an immortal soul, these carry themselves as men possessed with a divine spirit. The beasts have an instinct that guideth them to seek things convenient for that life which they have; and a man that is satisfied with his portion here, and only relisheth the contentments of the rational and bodily life, carrieth himself more like a living creature than a rational creature, more like a beast than like a man; all their business and bustle is to have their wills and pleasure for a while, as if they had not any hopes or fears of any greater things hereafter: Ps. xlix. 20, 'Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish;' because he merely inclineth to present satisfactions; for reason is a middle thing between the life of faith and the life of sense. If it be not sublimated by faith, it is debased by sense; and then what great matter is it if you be a man, or a dog, or a swine, if reason be only given you to cater for the body, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof? But let us more distinctly see what is the aim and design of those noble and brave spirits. There are two things in the text—the object and the act; the thing aimed at, and their respect towards it.

1. The thing aimed at is 'glory, honour, and immortality.' Let me open the meaning of these words apart, and then show why so many are heaped together.

[1.] *Glory.* Glory is *status illustris*, appearing excellency. There is a glory of this world, but that is fading: 1 Peter i. 24, 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.' The

flower is more fading than the grass itself, and is sooner shed than the stalk rotteth ; so many a man's excellency dieth before he dieth, and his glory is gone, when he remaineth as a neglected stalk. But this is a more solid glory, called by the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' This glory is in their persons : Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ;' Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body ;' Mat. xiii. 43, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ;' 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' All the spectators shall stand wondering what he meaneth to do with those who were but newly crept out of dust and rottenness, so wonderful is the glory of the saints in the world to come. And as this glory concerns their persons, so their state. Christ will advance them to a glorious estate, to high dignity and honour, which the scripture expresseth sometimes by thrones : Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne ;' sometimes by a crown : 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day.' Visible marks of favour and honour will Christ put upon them.

[2.] Honour ; that imports praise and commendation, for honour is a testimony of excellency. To seek the honour of this world is destructive to faith : John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only ?' But the honour which Christ will put upon those that are faithful to him in the world to come is the great object of faith, by which we vanquish those temptations of disgrace and scorn which we meet with here in this world. Christ will then commend their faith before men and angels : Rev. iii. 5, 'I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Oh, what a blessed thing is it to be owned by Christ, and approved as faithful in his service by the judge of all the world, at whose sentence we must stand or fall ! The apostle saith, 2 Cor. x. 18, 'For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.' To have a testimony in our own consciences is very sweet. Let the world slander, yet, if God approveth, it is sufficient. But it will be more honourable to us when the judge upon the throne shall acquit us ; and not only so, but approve and commend us. It is said, 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart ; and then shall every man have praise of God ;' that is, be not too forward in your censures ; in time God will display the seducers, and discover every man's intentions and purposes. Then they that deserve it shall have shame, and every man that hath done well shall by God be justified and commended. What kind of approbation we shall have is shown : Mat. xxv. 21, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' This is the honour which the saints expect.

[3.] The third word is 'immortality,' *ἀφθαρσίαν*, incorruption. All

the glory and honour of the world soon fadeth away. If our fame survive us, what good will it do us when we are dead? Alas! it is but a poor shadow of that eternal glory and honour which Christ will put upon the saints. Their glory is immortal, and never withereth. The glory and honour of the world is uncertain; their hosanna is soon turned into a *crucifige*, crucify him: 2 Sam. xix. 43, 'We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye.' And in the very next verse, chap. xx. 1, 'We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.' They who but just now claimed ten parts in David, presently disclaim and disown him, as having no part in him at all; so suddenly are men's affections and esteem of us altered. And as our glory perisheth, so we perish, even the best of men: Acts xiii. 36, 'David after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.' What a deal ado men keep to get praise and honour in the world; but what doth this profit you when you are dead, and must be laid in the grave with others? But the saints look higher. As they seek 'glory and honour,' so they seek incorruption or 'immortality;' a glory which will abide with them, and they with it, to all eternity.

Thus we have considered the words apart. Now why are so many heaped up together? It is not done casually; the same is observed elsewhere: 1 Peter i. 7, 'That your faith may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Now this is done partly to represent the fulness of this blessed and glorious estate. The honour which Christ puts upon his servants at his appearing is manifold. Many words cannot express it; they shall be much commended, and gloriously rewarded. And partly to recompense and make up the shame and disgrace of our trials. How infamous soever Christ's servants be in the world, yet they are glorious with God, and honourable in his sight; and 'when Christ shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory,' Col. iii. 4. Well, now, this is the object of the expectation.

2. Their respect to it; they seek it. Seeking implies two things—(1.) An hearty desire; (2.) An earnest endeavour in the use of means.

[1.] An hearty desire; for seeking is the earnest desire of a thing lost or absent. The seeking of this glory, honour, and immortality implieth an earnest desire of it, as appeareth by Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above;' which is further expressed by, 'Set your affections upon things above.' And this is not a slight desire, but such a desire as prevaileth above the desires of other things; such an affection to them as is not controlled by other affections: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' First, that is, so as our pursuit of other things doth not cross our affections to these. Many desire heaven and glory, but they are soon put out of the humour, and take up with the pleasures, and honours, and profits of the world, and they become slaves to their fleshly appetites and senses, and the good things here below.

[2.] Seeking implieth diligence and an earnest endeavour, such as the woman used that sought her lost groat: Heb. xiii. 14, 'Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' If we desire it,

and long after it, something must be done in order thereunto. As our desires are greater, so our endeavours will be greater than after worldly things; for to seek is to bestow our earnest care and serious diligence upon it. See how it is expressed in scripture; by labour: John vi. 27, 'Working,' and 'working out;' Phil. ii. 12, by 'pressing towards it;' Phil. iii. 14, by 'striving;' Luke xiii. 24, because we meet with opposition. You must not think to come to the enjoyment of this great happiness with idleness and cold wishes. No; we must be at pains, and such pains as flesh and blood will count hard labour. Well, now, we may from hence conclude the first part of the mark of the heirs of promise.

(1.) By the object; they are distinguished from the wicked and carnal part of the world, who covet the honours, riches, and pleasures of the present life; but these are engaged in a more noble design; they 'seek glory, and honour, and immortality;' that is, they seek not vainglory, but labour to make themselves truly glorious, honourable, and immortal.

(2.) Again from the object and act together; they distinguish themselves from all infidels and unbelievers; for they 'seek glory and honour' where it is to be found, and in the way wherein it is to be found, and so go upon sure grounds. They are ascertained by the truth of God's word, and depend upon it, that if they seriously set themselves to obey and honour God in the world, they shall have glory and honour with him: 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Those that honour me, I will honour;' John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, him shall my Father honour;' and elsewhere. Upon this they are certain.

(3.) By the seriousness of the act; they distinguish themselves from hypocrites or partial believers. Those that have a slight sense of eternity will desire 'glory, and honour, and immortality;' but to desire it so as that it shall be their top care; to desire it so as that all other things should be lessened in their opinion, estimation, and affection; to desire it so as to labour after it in the first place; this is the disposition of the sincere only. They can withdraw the veil of sense, and look to the glory that cometh from God only. They prize it above all the glory of the world, and resolutely choose it for their portion, with an habitual and thorough consent of their wills; and the drift, and aim, and bent of their lives is to be for God and their salvation, and this is first and chiefly sought after in all their endeavours.

Secondly, The means and way wherein they seek after it: 'By patient continuance in well-doing.' A good design without a good way is nothing; and therefore, next to a right end, we must choose a right way; and if we desire salvation, we must mind the right way thither. Now in the way and means three things are considerable. Here is—(1.) Well-doing; (2.) Continuance; (3.) Patient continuance. If one of these be wanting, all cometh to nought. If well-doing be wanting, our perseverance is but an obstinacy in things sweet and pleasing to the flesh; and our patience but a carnal self-denial, nothing conducing to our great end. If well-doing be regarded, yet if there be not a continuance, or a continuance only when we are put to no trial, then the benefit is lost. All three must concur.

1. For well-doing. Let us state that first, that we may not be mis-

taken. The world is filled with ill notions; every man applaudeth himself in his own course, be it never so vain. The covetous, the ambitious, the dissolute, when they thrive in their several ways, they will think they do well: Ps. xlix. 18, 'Though whilst he lived, he blessed his soul; and men will praise thee when thou dost well to thyself.' A man's own self-deceiving heart measureth good and evil by his present condition in the world. The brutish worldling applauds himself in his own course when it succeedeth. The glutton thinketh he doeth well when he maketh much of, and cherisheth and pampereth himself. The ambitious applaudeth himself in his good fortune. The prodigal, when he spendeth, thinketh he doeth well; and the covetous, when he spareth, thinketh he doeth well; and contrary persons will say so. Ay! but there must be another rule than the fancies of men; that is, well-doing, which really turneth to our eternal good. To do well is to obey righteousness, to obey the truth; for it is opposed to those that violate the light of nature, and wrangle and dispute away that true religion which is offered for their cure and remedy.

[1.] To do well is to obey righteousness, or to act agreeably to those obligations which lie upon us with respect to our relation to God, others, and ourselves. There are but three beings in a moral consideration—God, neighbour, and self. Paul's adverbs are suited to them: Titus ii. 12, 'Soberly, righteously, and godly.' As to self-government of our fancies and appetites, we are to live 'soberly,' in an holy weanedness and moderation in the midst of all present delights and comforts. As to our neighbour, we are to live 'righteously,' in all justice, truth, mercy, fidelity in our relations, as parents, husbands, subjects, children, wives. As to God, we are to live 'godly,' in an holy subjection to him, and entire dependence upon him, and communion with him. So to do well with respect to God is to behave ourselves as to one that is so excellent, powerful, and good, and upon whom we depend so much, not breaking his laws for all the world. As to others, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do even so to them,' Mat. vii. 12. Not only negatively, to prevent the wrong, but positively, to do good. As to ourselves, we must subordinate all things to our true happiness, and be more careful for the soul than for the body. All this, righteousness, or the evidence of natural light, calleth for at our hands, that we love our creator, and live to him, and depend upon him; for if he be God, he is our first cause, highest Lord, chiefest good, and last end. That love to others is showed in doing to them as we would should be done to us. We would have others helpful to us, so must we to our power be helpful to them; he that will be for none but himself cannot justly expect that any should be for him. And for ourselves, man consists of a body and of a soul. Now all our senses and bodily powers and appetites must be subordinated to the good of the soul; for the soul is the chiefest part. Well, then, if we live in the neglect of God, and be only self-lovers and self-pleasers, and wrong ourselves by gratifying our flesh, do we do well? If we prefer every paltry vanity before the favour of God, slander and wrong our neighbour, please appetite before reason, and let the beast ride the man, surely we obey unrighteousness; we do not do well.

[2.] We must obey the truth; that is, act agreeably to the revealed

will of God in scripture; that is to do well. It is the scripture which helpeth us to distinguish good from evil, and will be a sure direction in well-doing: Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;' Prov. vi. 23, 'For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light;' Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' We are not to be ruled by our own thoughts, but by God's word, which amply sets forth our duty to us. The light of nature is very dim, and it would be a matter of great difficulty to find out our duty if we had no supernatural light to help us. Therefore God hath given his word, and that not only to instruct us in moral duties, most of which are evident by the light of nature, but also in supernatural verities, which tend to our relief and deliverance by Christ. Well, then, well-doing is not one work only, but all our entire obedience, which is necessary to salvation, that we may not only love God, do good to others, govern our appetites and desires, but believe in Christ, and live according to his holy institutes, and perform all the duties which belong to his new remedying law. This is well-doing.

2. There must be continuance in well-doing. As we must endeavour universally to do all that God hath commanded us, so we must continue this care unto the end: Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' In a journey it is not enough to go a mile or two, but we must continue till we come to our journey's end; so must we never give over whilst we are in this world. There may be interruptions, diversions, and stragglings, but a christian gets into the way again. Sometimes we slip and stumble, and sometimes step aside, but we must not go back again. Some are good for a pang or fit: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!' I might heap up many considerations here, but the thing is evident. The law bindeth continually, and grace planted in the heart should influence all our actions. God's eye is always upon us, and every hour and moment we are anew obliged to him for his benefits. How reasonable is it our duty should last, and the use of means be continued till we attain our end! Therefore do not lose your crown, and the benefit of all you have done already. The promise runneth to perseverance: Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

3. Here is patient continuance; that is necessary also. The good ground is described to be that which 'bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The other grounds brought forth fruit, but they did not bring forth fruit with patience. The stony ground was impatient of contradiction and afflictions; the thorny ground was impatient of the delay of the reward, and therefore took up with present things, riches and honours and voluptuous living; but they that have a deep sense of the other world, and can tarry God's leisure, enduring the hardships of obedience, and look for their happiness in the world to come, that is the good ground. So Heb. vi. 12, 'Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' We shall meet with opposition within and without; till we can deny ourselves,

our hearts are not sound with God. We need the working patience, because of the labour and pains which belongeth to well-doing; and the waiting patience, because our reward is to come; and the bearing patience, because of the troubles and dangers which we must endure, if we would be faithful with God; loss of estate, slanders of the wicked, and sometimes danger of life. The working patience should not be grievous to us, because the pains of godliness will be recompensed with the fruit of it, the peace and comfort that followeth it; and because there is more labour in committing sin than doing good. The waiting patience should not be grievous, because there must be a time for the trial of our faith. They are hypocrites which must have their reward at present: Mat. vi. 2, 'Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' The believer he can wait for it; he looketh for glory and honour too, but not now. The bearing patience should not be irksome, because faithfulness in our trials is most comfortable to us, and most acceptable to God. Comfortable to us; we have not ordinarily so clear a proof of the reality of grace as when we are under sore trials: 1 Peter i. 7, 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Faith is then faith indeed, and obedience obedience indeed. The greater the work, and the more impediments we meet with, self-denying obedience doth most evidence itself to the conscience. Whilst we do anything for God, while we do it without shame, opposition, and loss, it is more hard to interpret our sincerity: it is more acceptable to God; it is tried friendship and obedience which is most valuable. The obedience of a soldier is pleasing to a general in a time of peace; when he saith to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; but especially in the most desperate hazards, when he doth not dispute commands when he is bidden to go upon the cannon's mouth. From the whole, mortification, self-denial, contempt of the world, patience under manifold sufferings, is necessary to all that would be faithful with God, and are sure notes of his people.

II. The reward is eternal life. This will make amends for all. By it is meant all manner of happiness.

1. Eternal life is a freedom from all misery whatsoever, in estates, names, relations, bodies, souls. As the body is free from all weakness, so the soul is free from all sin; faultless, without spot or wrinkle.

2. There is a perfect and entire possession of all manner of good; God is all in all to them.

3. This estate is to abide for ever and ever.

*Use 1.* Let us examine whether we be in the number of those that shall be saved. Eternal life is believed of all christians, at least with a dead opinionative belief; they do not count it a lie or a fable. Now, who are those that shall enjoy it? for God will not give it to all.

I answer—Here is a plain note and evidence by which you may judge your claim—(1.) They are such as seek it; (2.) They seek it in a way of well-doing; (3.) They continue thus to do.

1. They that seek it; for God will never bring us to heaven without our wills nor against our consent, nor make that man happy that doth not desire to be so; yea, that doth not seek it in the first place.



Now this cutteth off a great many ; all them that do nothing towards the attaining of it, and all them that seek nothing, have no settled design, but live at haphazard, as occasion offereth, and leave the boat to the stream ; that come into the world they know not why, and go out of the world they know not whither. All such careless and inconsiderate people can have no claim ; all such have no higher end than to enjoy their sensual pleasures while they may. Besides, they that do not seek it in the first place. They do something, but it is little or nothing to the purpose. The strength and choice of their desires and endeavours are not directed this way. Eternal life must be esteemed and chosen above other things which draw our hearts, and must be chiefly sought after in our endeavours, and then something may be gathered from seeking.

2. They seek it in a way of well-doing ; not only praying for it, but living according to the directions of God's holy word ; that is to say, by seeking his favour in Christ, and maintaining communion with God in the Spirit, by serious converses with him in the means of grace, governing our affections and passions, and by a constant self-denial, mortification, and temperance, getting a victory over the world and the desires of the flesh. And as to others, by carrying ourselves in all meekness and charity, without envy, malice, injury, and oppression, and doing good to all as we have opportunity, especially, to the household of faith. This is the well-doing recommended to us in the scripture, and this is our beginning and progress towards eternal life ; for we must apprehend it not only under the notion of glory and immortality, but under the notion of exact holiness as well as complete happiness ; under the notion of conformity to God and communion with God ; for God's will is done in heaven as well as upon earth ; and the heaven of christians is to see God and to be like him. Many seem to desire it as a state of felicity, but they hate it as a state of perfect holiness (which is the better part of it), a sinless, immaculate estate. Well, then, by this part of the evidence many are excluded. Partly all those who live according to their own humours and fancies, and vain desires, and the customs of men, or the course of this world, and were never acquainted with a life of holiness spent in communion with God and subjection to his will. Partly also all they that do evil, dishonour God, oppress and wrong their brethren by violence or slanders, and live in malice and envy, who were never acquainted with self-government, or bridling their sensual and worldly desires, so that the honours, profits, and pleasures of the flesh have the pre-eminence in their esteem, choice, and practice. Partly too all those that do no good ; that have not fed, visited, clothed, relieved the destitute, comforted the afflicted : Mat. xxv. 41-45, 'Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these,

ye did it not to me.' In short, all those who yield no obedience to God, but cast off his yoke, or that yield a partial obedience, submitting it may be to outward acts of worship, but neglecting the duties of justice and charity ; or, on the other side, make conscience of duties of commerce with men, but delight not in communion with God, and trouble not themselves with seeking his favour and reconciliation by Christ.

3. They are such as continue patiently in a course of well-doing to the end of their lives ; for it is not enough to begin well, but the work must still be carried on till we come to receive our reward : Heb. iii. 14, 'For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' But you will say, If our comfort be suspended upon this condition, then we can never know that we are heirs of promise till we come to die. I answer—It is not *eventus perseverandi*, not actual perseverance to the end, which maketh the evidence ; but *labor, conatus, et cura perseverandi*, the resolution and endeavour to continue in a diligent use of all means, to continue in the way of well-doing, and to please God in all things. And the more you thus give diligence to persevere in this holy purpose, the more assurance you get of the goodness of your condition : Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end ; that ye be not slothful,' &c. A christian may be assured, and his assurance groweth upon him the more he sets himself continually to obey God. Now this part of the evidence cuts off partly all those that are only good by fits and starts and good moods ; sometimes they set their faces heavenward, but their lusts return, and then they are worse than they were before : partly those who prove final apostates ; they began to build, but they leave the work unfinished, and 'after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome,' 2 Peter ii. 20.

Use 2. Is exhortation, to press you—

1. To seek after honour, glory, and immortality. Oh, this is the best pursuit you can engage in. What is better for you ? Can the world or the devil propound anything so good, or better, than this glorious estate ? Are the dreggy contentments of the flesh, the vain-glory and honour of the world, the uncertain riches we enjoy here, worthy to come in competition with eternal life ? Surely in matter of motive a christian hath the advantage, however a carnal man hath the advantage in matter of principle, because in him it is wholly entire and unbroken.

2. To well-doing. Surely you should not need many arguments to press you to do well ; rather to press you to do ill should be the more difficult task, it is so contrary to our reason, and the right constitution of our natures, but that we are strangely depraved. O christians ! what do we invite you to, but to love God above all, and seek his favour in Christ, and love your neighbour as yourself, and by temperance, purity, and chastity to preserve your own vessels, both bodies and souls, in sanctification and honour ? Surely these duties are not gyves, but ornaments ; and such subjection to God should be preferred before liberty in sinning.

3. To continue with patience. I will press you to this by two arguments—

[1.] There will be always the same reason for going on that there was for beginning at first. Did the sense of your duty invite you? The same bond of duty lieth upon you still. Did the hopes of the world to come engage you? Heaven is not yet obtained. And will you lose all the cost you have been at already? Gal. iii. 4, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain?'

[2.] There can be no temptation great enough to recompense you for the loss of your reward of eternal life. Is it reproach? When men despise, God will honour thee; and it is a blessed thing to be reviled for righteousness' sake. Is it worldly loss? Better lose the world than lose our souls: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Is life in danger? Losing life for Christ is the way to save it; and John xi. 25, 'Though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Is it the continual reviving of troubles? In the other world there is nothing to assault thy perseverance; there thou art out of the gunshot of temptations, and shalt serve God without defect or difficulty; there our service is not troublesome to us.

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