

PAUL'S DEPARTURE AND CROWN;

or,

An Exposition Upon 2 Timothy 4:6-8

[ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR]

How great and glorious is the Christian's ultimate destiny—a kingdom and a crown! Surely it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what ear never heard, nor mortal eye ever saw? the mansions of the blest—the realms of glory— 'a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory.' For whom can so precious an inheritance be intended? How are those treated in this world who are entitled to so glorious, so exalted, so eternal, and unchangeable an inheritance in the world to come? How do the heirs to immortality conduct themselves in such a prospect? An inheritance sure and certain—an absolute reversion which no contingency can possibly affect. All these are inquiries of the deepest interest—the most solemn importance. Above all, when we inquire as to our personal title to the heavenly mansions—Am I one of the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ?—most intensely should this question agitate the soul, when we reflect that, unless we are entitled to this inestimable reversion, we must be plunged into the most awful, the most irretrievable and external torments! There is no middle way—no escape from hell, but by going to heaven. Is heaven reserved only for the noble and the learned, like Paul? God forbid! but, on the contrary, we hear the voice of the divinity proclaiming, 'Not many wise men after the flesh—not many mighty—not many noble.' 'Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, the earth my footstool.' He looketh upon the high and low—the learned and the noble—the mighty princes and the unlettered labourer; and then makes this wondrous declaration— 'To this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' The world

will treat such humble ones as it treated the Lord of life and glory, with scorn, contempt, insult, robbery—death. They bear all with patience—return good for evil—are the followers of him who went about doing good—are known as living epistles, because they have been with Christ; they daily enjoy his guidance and protection, and in their desires after conformity to his image, they breathe the atmosphere of heaven. This is what the heir of glory strives after; but, alas! he has to encounter an evil heart, an ensnaring world, and the reproaches and revilings of his fellow-men, aided by satanic influence. Can we wonder, then, that he who is thus besieged, and believes that his work is finished, should, with Paul, be ready to depart and receive his rich inheritance? The lapse of time affects not the strong consolations of hope; as it was with Paul, so Bunyan felt. His longings after the heavenly manna abounded when the cold hand of death pressed upon his brow; his desire was 'to be dissolved, and to be with Christ'; when his course of temple and relative duty was run, he waited for the messenger from the celestial city to conduct him home. Christian, are you actively engaged in fulfilling the duties of your course? or, in the humble hope that your course is accomplished, are you patiently waiting the heavenly messenger? If the Christian's state is one of trial now, it was much more so in former times. We can have very little idea of the feelings of a dissenter from the religion of the State, like Paul, under the cruel Nero, or like Bunyan, under the debauched Charles the Second—both of them liable, without a moment's warning, to be carried away to prison, or to be murdered, privately or publicly,

for refusing submission to civil governors in matters of faith or worship. Although they possessed every loyal and patriotic feeling, they dared not obey those human laws which usurped the prerogatives of God, by interfering with divine worship. Their lives were in their hands; in the midst of imminent danger they boldly avowed the truth, and set us a noble example. Their intercourse with heaven was doubly sweet from the uncertainty of liberty and life. For them to live was Christ, and therefore they well knew the gain of dying. In proportion as temporal blessings were eminently doubtful, so spiritual and eternal benefits were precious.

This treatise was one of those ten excellent manuscripts found already prepared for the press, after the unexpected decease of its pious author. It bears the marks of having been composed, and perhaps preached, towards the end of his pilgrimage. Had his valuable life been spared a few months longer, this work would, very probably, have been enlarged, and the subdivisions somewhat improved. The principal heads are now inserted as separate lines, to assist the reader in referring to its several parts; and notes are added to explain old words and customs, and, in some cases, to point out a few of the beautiful and striking passages with which it abounds. Many of these ought to be indelibly impressed upon our minds. 'The words of the Lord *are* pure words; *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times' (Psa 12:6). The question naturally arises—What is this 'furnace of earth' in which the Lord's words are purified? Seven being the number of perfection, conveys the idea that it will be in the furnace until it appears perfectly refined. Bunyan considers that these earthen furnaces are the bodies of the saints. In the trials, troubles, and persecutions to which they are subjected, the Word bears them up triumphantly, so that the purity and excellency

of the holy oracles conspicuously appears, like the trial of faith mentioned by Peter (1 Peter 1:7). Dr. Gill considers that these crucibles mean Christ and his ministers; while Bunyan, with his enlarged mind, identifies them with the whole of Christ's followers. Some of these crucibles prove not to be genuine, and perish in the using, not being able to abide the fire. Such was the case with one of Mr. Bunyan's friends. John Childs, who, for fear of persecution, conformed, became horror-stricken for the denial of his Master, and notorious for having destroyed himself.

In this treatise it is most affectionately impressed upon us to heap up treasures that will go with us into the unseen world, as of greater importance than those things which perish with the using. 'A Christian, and spend thy time, thy strength, and parts,' for that which maketh to itself wings and fleeth away! 'Remember thou art a man of another world, a subject of a more noble kingdom—that of God, and of heaven. Make not heavenly things stoop to the world; but hoist up thy mind to the things that are above, and practically hold forth before all the world the blessed word of life.' If death is the king of terrors to fallen humanity, still there are truths abounding with consolation, that when the Christian departs, the angels are ready, as in the case of Lazarus, to convey the happy spirit to Abraham's bosom; the struggle is short, and then comes the reward. In this world we must have tribulation; but in heaven white robes, the palm of victory, and the conqueror's crown, await the saints. Paul heard a voice which raised his soul above the fears of death, and gave him a desire to depart; its melodious sound invited him home—it was the voice of eternal truth, saying, 'Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'

George Offor

PAUL'S DEPARTURE AND CROWN

'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a 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 Timothy 4:6-8

These words were, by the apostle Paul, written to Timothy, whom he had begot to the faith, by the preaching of the gospel of Christ; in which are many things of great concernment both for instruction and consolation; something of which I shall open unto you for your profit and edification. But before I come to the words themselves, as they are a relation of Paul's case, I shall take notice of something from them as they depend upon the words going before, being a vehement exhortation to Timothy to be constant and faithful in his work; which, in brief, may be summed up in these particulars: 1st, A solemn binding charge before God and Jesus Christ our Lord, that he be constant in preaching the Word, whether in or out of season, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine; and that because of that ungodly spirit that would possess professors after he was dead; for the time will come, saith he, that they will not endure sound doctrine, neither sound reproof, nor sound trial of their state and condition by the Word, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,—the plague that once God threatened to rebellious Israel (Deut 28:27)—and be turned unto fables. Much like this is that in the Acts of the Apostles, 'For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears' (Acts 20:29-31)

This evil then is to be prevented:—by a diligent watchfulness in ministers;—By a diligent preaching the word of the Lord;—and, By sound and close rebukes, reproofs, and exhortations to those in whosoever the least there appears any swerving or turning aside from the gospel. The ministers of the gospel have each of them all that authority that belongs to their calling and office, and need not to stay for power from men to put the laws of Christ in his church into due and full execution (Titus 2:15). This 'remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, - that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men' (Micah 5:7). Therefore he adds, 'Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions,' if thou shouldst be opposed in thy work, 'do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry' (2 Tim 4:5).¹ How our time-serving and self-saving ministers will salve their conscience from the stroke that God's Word will one day give them, and how they will stand before the judgment-seat to render an account of this their doings, let them see to it; surely God will require it of their hand!

But, O Timothy, do thou be diligent, do thou watch in all things, do thou endure affliction, do thou the work of an evangelist, make thou full proof of thy ministry, 'for I am not ready to be offered,' &c. The words, then, of my text are a reason of this exhortation to Timothy, that he should continue watchful, and abide faithful in his calling. 'For I am now ready to be offered'; that is, to be put to death for the gospel.

¹ Solemn indeed is the responsibility of a Christian minister, and every follower of the Lamb bears that office privately, and should be earnest in prayer that public ministers may do the work of evangelists, not only by insisting upon the necessity of the new birth and its solemn reality, the happiness of a close walk with God, and the glorious rest that remaineth, but to visit the poor and rich at their own habitations, in sickness and health, and watch over their people as those that must give an account.—Ed.

Hence then learn two things,

First, That the murders and outrage that our brethren suffer at the hands of wicked men should not discourage those that live, from a full and faithful performance of their duty to God and man, whatever may be the consequence thereof. Or thus, when we see our brethren before us fall to the earth by death, through the violence of the enemies of God, for their holy and Christian profession, we should covet to make good their ground against them, though our turn should be the next. We should valiantly do in this matter, as is the custom of soldiers in war; take great care that the ground be maintained, and the front kept full and complete. 'Thou, therefore,' saith Paul, 'endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ' (2 Tim 2:3). And in another place, We should not be moved by these afflictions, but endure by resisting even unto blood (1 Thess 3:3). Wherefore Paul saith again, 'Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God' (2 Tim 1:8). Thus let the spirit of Moses rest upon Joshua (Num 27:20), and the spirit of Elijah rest upon Elisha (2 Kings 2:15). Stand up, therefore, like valiant worthies, as the ministers of my God, and fly not every man to his own, while the cause, and ways, and brethren of our Lord are buffeted and condemned by the world. And remember, that those that keep the charge of the Lord when most go a-whoring from under their God, they, when he turns the captivity of his people, shall be counted worthy to come nigh unto him, 'to offer the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God.' But for the rest, though they may yet stand before the people, because they stood before them in a way of idolatry, yet it shall not be to their honour, nor to their comfort; but to their shame, as the same scripture saith (Eze 44:10-16).

1. Let this therefore smite with conviction those that, in this day of Jacob's trouble, have been false with God, his cause, and people: I say, those first and especially as the chief ringleaders of this cowardliness, who have done it against light, profession, and resolutions. Behold, thou hast sinned against the Lord, and

be sure thy sins will find thee out; and though thou mayest now have as a judgment of God upon thee, thy right eye darkened that thou mayest not see, yet awakening time will overtake thee, and that too between the straits, when he will show thee, to the great confusion of thy face, and the amazement of them that behold thee, how great an affront he counts it to be left by thee, in a day when his truth is cast down to the ground (Rom 11:10). I have often thought of that prophet that went down from Judah to Bethel, to prophesy against the idolatry that was there set up by the King; who, because he kept not the commandment of God, but did eat and drink in that place, at the persuasion of a lying prophet, was met at last by a lion, who slew him there in the way, where his carcase was made a spectacle of God to passengers (1 Kings 13). If thou be spiritual, judge what I say; and think not to be one of that number that shall have the harps of God, when God appears for Zion, and that shall sing that song of Moses, and also the song of the Lamb; for that is only for those who have fought the godly fight, and gotten the victory over the beast, his image, mark, number, and name.

2. Let this also be an awe to thee, who hast hankerings to do as the other: Beware, and remember Judas, and the end God brought upon him; he will not always bear such things; these times have showed us already that he beholds them with great dislike; why should thou hang up in chains as a terror to all that know thee? And never object that some have done it, and yet are at peace in their souls; for peace in a sinful course is one of the greatest of curses. And 'the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead' (Prov 21:6).

[*Second.*] The Second thing to be learned from these words, as they have a relation to them going before, is encouragement to those that are yet in the storm; and that from three great arguments.

1. Paul's peace and comfort now at the time of his death, which he signifieth to Timothy by these three expressions, 'I have fought a good fight—I have finished *my* course—I have kept the faith.'

2. By the blessed reward he should have for his labour from Christ in another world, together with all those that love the appearing of the Lord, at 'that great and notable day.'

3. That now his last act should not be inferior to any act he did for God, while he was alive and preached in the world; for his body should now be an offering, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. To all which I shall speak something in my discourse upon these words; and, therefore, to come to them:

'I AM NOW READY TO BE OFFERED.'

In these words we have to inquire into two things. **FIRST.** What it is to be 'offered.' **SECOND.** What it is to be 'ready to be offered up.' 'I am now ready to be offered.'

[WHAT IT IS TO BE OFFERED.]

FIRST. For the first of these. Paul, by saying he was 'to be offered,' alludeth to some of the sacrifices that of old were under the law; and thereby signifieth to Timothy that his death and martyrdom for the gospel should be both sweet in the nostrils of God, and of great profit to his church in this world; for so were the sacrifices of old. Paul, therefore, lifts his eyes up higher than simply to look upon death, as it is the common fate of men; and he had good reason to do it, for his death was violent; it was also for Christ, and for his church and truth; and it is usual with Paul thus to set out the suffering of the saints, which they undergo for the name and testimony of Jesus. Yea, he will have our prayers a sacrifice; our praises, thanksgiving, and mortification, sacrifices; almsdeed, and the offering up of the Gentiles, sacrifices, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and here his death also must be for a sacrifice, and an acceptable offering to God (Heb 13:15,16; Rom 12:1,2, 15:16).

Peter also saith, We are priests 'to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:5). Of which sacrifices, it seems by Paul, the death of a Christian for Jesus' sake must needs be counted one. Besides, Paul further insinuates this by some other sentences in his epistles; as by that in the epistle to the Colossians, where he saith, 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which

is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church' (Col 1:24). Not by way of merit, for so Christ alone, and that by once being offered himself, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb 10:10-14). But his meaning is, that as Christ was offered in sacrifice for his church as a Saviour, so Paul would offer himself as a sacrifice for Christ's church, as a saint, as a minister, and one that was counted faithful. 'Yea,' saith he, 'and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all' (Phil 2:17). This, then, teacheth us several things worthy our consideration.

First. That the blood of the saints, that they lose for his name, is a sweet savour to God. And so saith the Holy Ghost, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints' (Psa 116:15). And again, 'He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight' (Psa 72:14).

Second. Those that suffer for Christ are of great benefit to his church, as the sacrifices of old were confirming and strengthening to Israel; wherefore Paul saith, his bonds encouraged his brethren, and made them much more bold in the way of God to speak his word without fear (Phil 1:14).

Third. The sufferings, or offering of the saints in sacrifice, it is of great use and advantage to the gospel; of use, I say, many ways. (1.) The blood of the saints defends it; (2.) confirmeth it; and (3.) redeemeth that thereof that hath been lost in antichristian darkness.

1. They do thereby defend and preserve it from those that would take it from us, or from those that would impose another upon us. 'I am set,' saith Paul, 'for the defence of the gospel,' and my sufferings have fallen out for the furtherance of it (Phil 1:17). That is, it hath not only continued to hold its ground, but hath also got more by my contentions, sufferings, and hazards for it.

2. It confirms it; and this is part of the meaning of Paul in those large relations of his sufferings for Christ, saying, 'Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool, I *am* more - in prisons more frequent,' &c.; as he saith again,

and these things 'I do for the gospel's sake.' And again, 'That the truth of the 'gospel might be continued with you.' So again, 'I suffer,' saith he, in the gospel 'as an evil-doer *even* unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound; yea,' saith he, 'therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake' (2 Tim 2:9,10). That is, that the gospel may be preserved entire, that the souls that are yet unborn may have the benefit of it, with eternal glory.

3. The sufferings of the saints are of a redeeming virtue; for, by their patient enduring and losing their blood for the word, they recover the truths of God that have been buried in Antichristian rubbish, from that soil and slur that thereby hath for a long time cleaved unto them; wherefore it is said, 'They overcame him, the beast, 'by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death' (Rev 12:11). They overcame him; that is, they recovered the truth from under his aspersions, and delivered it from all its enemies. David saith, 'The words of the Lord *are* - as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times' (Psa 12:6). What is this furnace of earth but the body of the saints of God, in which the Word is tried, as by fire in persecution, yea, 'purified seven times'; that is, brought forth at last by the death of the Christians in its purity before the world. How hath the headship and lordship of Christ, with many other doctrines of God, been taken away from the Pope by the sufferings of our brethren before us? While their flesh did fry in the flames, the Word of God was cleansed, and by such means purified in these their earthen furnaces, and so delivered to us. The lamps of Gideon were then discovered when his soldiers' pitchers were broken; if our pitchers were broke for the Lord and his gospel's sake, those lamps will then be discovered that before lay hid and unseen (Judg 7:15-22). Much use might be made of this good doctrine.

Learn thus much:—

1. [*Learn*] The judgment that is made of our sufferings by carnal men is nothing at all to be heeded; they see not the glory that is wrapped up in our cause, nor the innocence and goodness of our conscience in our enduring of these afflictions; they judge according to the

flesh, according to outward appearance. For so, indeed, we seem to lie under contempt, and to be in a disgraceful condition; but all things here are converted to another use and end. That which is contemptible when persons are guilty, is honourable when persons are clear; and that which brings shame when persons are buffeted for their faults, is thankworthy in those that endure grief, suffering wrongfully (1 Peter 2:19-22). Though to suffer for sin be the token of God's displeasure, yet to those that suffer for righteousness, it is a token of greatest favour; wherefore matter not how the world doth esteem of thee and thy present distress, that thou bearest with patience for God and his Word; but believe that those things that are both shame and dishonour to others, are glory and honour to thee (2 Thess 1:4-10). O for a man to be able to say, 'For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain' (Acts 28:20). It makes his face to shine like the face of an angel, and his lips to drop like the honey-comb (Cant 4:11).

2. *We learn* also from hence, the reason why some in days before us have made light of the rage of the world; but they have laughed at destruction when it cometh (Job 5:21,22). And have gone forth to meet the armed men; and with Job's war-horse, 'mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the sword; the quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield, he said among the trumpets, Ha, ha' (Job 39:22,25). It hath been their [God's fearers] glory to suffer for Christ; as it is said of the saints of old, 'they departed from the presence of the counsel, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name' (Acts 5:41). As Paul also saith, 'most gladly I will,' mark, 'most gladly, rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me' (2 Cor 12:9,10). Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, &c. Let those that suffer for theft and murder hang down their heads like a bulrush, and carry it like those that are going to hanging; but let those whose trials are for the Word of God know, by these very things they are dignified.

3. *Learn* also in this to be confident, that thy sufferings have their sound and a voice before God and men. First, Before God, to provoke him to vengeance, 'when he maketh inquisition for blood' (Psa 9:12; Gen 4:9-11). The blood of Abel cried until it brought down wrath upon Cain; and so did the blood of Christ and his apostles, till it had laid Jerusalem upon heaps. Secondly, Thy blood will also have a voice before men, and that possibly for their good. The faithful Christian, in his patient suffering, knows not what work he may do for God; who knows but thy blood may be so remembered by thy children, neighbours, and enemies, as to convince them thou wert for the truth? Yea, who knows but their thoughts of thy resolution for Christ, in thy resisting unto blood, may have so good an effect upon some, as to persuade them to close with his ways? The three children in the fiery furnace made Nebuchadnezzar cry out there was no God like theirs! Indeed, this is hard labour, but be content, the dearer thou payest for it to win the souls of others, the greater will be thy crown, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall appear; and in the meanwhile, thy death shall be as a sacrifice pleasing to God and his saints.

[WHAT IT IS TO BE NOW READY TO BE OFFERED.]

SECOND. The second thing that I would inquire into is this: What it is to be 'ready to be offered up'? Or how we should understand this word 'ready': 'I am now ready to be offered up.' Which I think may be understood three manner of ways.

First. With respect to that readiness that was continually in the heart of those that hated him, to destroy him with his doctrines; *Second.* Or it may be understood with respect to the readiness of this blessed apostle's mind, his being ready and willing always to embrace the cross for the word's sake; or, *Third.* We may very well understand it that he had done his work for God in this world, and therefore was ready to be gone.

[*Readiness of enemies to destroy the apostle and his doctrine.*]

First. For the first of these: The enemies of God and his truth, they never want will and malice to oppose the Word of God; they are also always so far forth in readiness to murder and slaughter the saints, as the prophet cries to Jerusalem, 'Behold the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood' (Eze 22:6), that is, they had will and malice always at hand to oppose the upright in heart. And therefore our Lord Jesus saith, 'they are they that kill the body'; he doth not say they can do it as relating to their will, and their custom, if let loose; and we may understand thereby that it is no more to them to kill the people of God, than it is to butchers to kill sheep and oxen. For though it be indeed a truth that God's hand is always safe upon the hilt of their sword, yet by them we are killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Psa 44:22; Rom 8:36). That is, in their desires always, as well as by their deeds, when they are let loose, as Paul's kinsman said to the captain, 'There lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with a curse,² that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee' (Acts 23:12,13,21). And hence it is, that by the Word they are called dragons, lions, bears, wolves, leopards, dogs, and the like; all which are beasts of prey, and delight to live by the death of others.³ Paul therefore seeing and

² 'With a curse,' is from the Puritan version.—Ed.

³ Wretched are the persecutors, like a troubled sea, casting up mire and filth, vainly opposing the sinner's duty of personal inquiry for salvation, and harassing him if he refuses to submit to human dogmas, creeds, catechisms, and liturgies—the inventions of men. Although the power is curtailed, the disposition remains the same; restless and unwearied, they stick at nothing to glut their revenge upon the disciples of Christ. But all in vain; the gospel spreads although the persecutor kicks; it is against the sharp goads; he rushes upon Jehovah's buckler and crushes himself; is wretched in this life and lost to all eternity; unless, as in the case of Saul, unspeakable mercy arrests him—Ed.

knowing that this readiness was in his enemies to pour out his bowels to the earth, he cried out to Timothy, saying, 'make thou full proof of thy ministry, for' I am now ready to be slain; 'I am now ready to be offered' (2 Tim 4:5,6). These words thus understood may be useful many ways.

1. To show us we live, not because of any good nature or inclination that is in our enemies towards us; for they, as to their wills, are ready to destroy us; but they are in the hand of God, in whose hand is also our times (Psa 31:15). Wherefore, though by the will of our enemies, we are always delivered to death, yet 'behold we live' (2 Cor 6:9). Therefore in this sense it may be said, 'Where is the fury of the oppressor?' It is not in his power to dispose of, therefore here it may be said again, he is not 'ready to destroy' (Isa 51:13). The cup that God's people in all ages have drank of, even the cup of affliction and persecution, it is not in the hand of the enemy, but in the hand of God; and he, not they, poureth out of the same (Psa 75:8). So that they, with all their raging waves, have banks and bounds set to them, by which they are limited within their range, as the bear is by his chain. 'Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain' (Psa 76:10; Job 38:10,11).

2. This should encourage us not to forsake the way of our Lord Jesus, when threatened by our adversaries, because they are in his chain: indeed they are ready in their wills to destroy us; but as to power and liberty to do it, that is not at all with them; who would fear to go, even by the very nose of a lion, if his chain would not suffer him to hurt us.⁴ It is too much below the spirit of a Christian to fear a man

⁴ The lions growled and roared upon the pilgrims in Bunyan's days, to prevent their making a public profession of Christ by uniting with one of his churches; represented in the *Pilgrim's Progress* by the palace justly called Beautiful. Many were then kept back, to their serious injury or ruin, by fear of enormous penalties or imprisonment, but NOW, what keeps you back, O Christian. Fears for the loss of property, liberty, or life, would have been a wretched plea for the loss of the soul, how much less the fear of ridicule from ungodly friends or relatives.—Ed.

that shall die (Isa 51:12,13). And they that have so done, have forgotten the Lord their Maker, who preserveth the hairs of our head (Luke 12:7). Yea, let me tell you he that so doth, he feareth to trust the Lord with his life, estate, and concernments, and chooseth rather to trust to himself, and that too out of God's way; and though such persons may lick themselves whole now, while they are fallen and senseless, they must count for these things again, and then they shall see that fear of men, and to be ashamed of Christ, will load them with no light burden. Also, it is an uncomely thing for any man in his profession to be in and out with the times; and to do this when winked at by men, that they would not do if they frowned. Do such fear God? nay, they fear the fear of men, when they should sanctify the Lord himself, and let him be their dread, and let him be their fear (Isa 8:12,13).

3. Let the readiness that is in the enemies of God to destroy, provoke thee to make ready also, as I said a little before; go out to meet the armed men; 'David ran to meet Goliath'; rub up man,⁵ put on thy harness, 'put on the whole armour of God, that thou mayest be ready,' as well as thy adversaries, as blessed Paul was here, 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand' (1 Sam 17:46-48). But because this will fall in fittest under the second head, I shall, therefore, discourse of it there.

[*The readiness IN MIND of the blessed apostle to suffer.*]

Second. The second thing considered in the words is this, that to be *ready* might be understood with respect to the blessed apostle's mind, that was graciously brought over into a willingness to embrace the cross for the Word's sake; and thus in other places he himself expounds it. 'I am ready,' saith he, 'not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus' (Acts 21:13). That also

⁵ A familiar expression; 'rub up,' prepare for action. 'Put on thy harness,' an obsolete term for armour, weapons, and habiliments of war; the spiritual warfare, 'put on the whole armour of God.'—Ed.

implies as much where he saith, 'Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God' (Acts 20:24). As the enemies, then, were ready and willing in their hearts, so he was ready and willing in his. This man was like to those mighty men of Solomon, that were ready prepared for the war, and waited on the king, fit to be sent at any time upon the most sharp and pinching service (2 Chron 17:12-19). A thing fitly becoming all the saints, but chiefly those that minister in the word and doctrine. Understand the words thus, and they also teach us many things, both for conviction and for edification.

1. Here we see that a Christian's heart should be unclenched from this world; for he that is ready to be made a sacrifice for Christ and his blessed Word, he must be one that is not entangled with the affairs of this life: how else can he please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier? Thus was it with this blessed man; he was brought to God's foot with Abraham, and crucified to this world with Christ; he had passed a sentence of death upon all earthly pleasures and profits beforehand, that they might not deaden his spirit when he came to suffer for his profession (2 Tim 2:4; 2 Cor 1:8,9; Gal 2:20, 6:14).

2. This shows us the true effects of unfeigned faith and love, for they were the rise of this most blessed frame of heart; read 2 Corinthians 4:8-13, and compare it with 2 Corinthians 12:9,10; and men may talk what they will of their faith and love to the Lord Jesus, and to his holy gospel. But if they throw up their open profession of his name for fear of those that hate him, it is evident their mouths go before their hearts, and that their words are bigger than their graces. 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,' and so thy faith and love (Prov 24:10). Herein is love, 'that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13).

3. This shows us the true effects of a right sight and sense of the sufferings that attend the gospel; that they shall become truly profitable to those that shall bear them aright. What made he ready for? it was for sufferings; and why

made he ready for them but because he saw they wrought out for him a 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?' (2 Cor 4:17). This made Moses also spurn at a crown and a kingdom; to look with a disdainful eye upon all the glory of Egypt. He saw the reward that was laid up in heaven for those that suffered for Christ. Therefore, 'he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ grater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible' (Heb 11:21-27). Every one cannot thus look upon the afflictions and temptations that attend the gospel; no, not every one that professeth it, as appears by their shrinking and shirking at the noise of the trumpet, and alarum to war. They can be content, as cowards in a garrison, to lie still under some smaller pieces of service, as hearing the Word, entering in, to follow with loving in word and in tongue, and the like; but to 'go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach,' and to be in jeopardy every hour for the truth of the glorious gospel, that they dare not do (Heb 13:13; 1 Cor 15:30). Nay, instead of making ready with Paul to engage the dragon and his angels, they study how to evade and shun the cross of Christ; secretly rejoicing if they can but delude their conscience, and make it still and quiet, while they do yet unworthily (Rev 12:7-9).

4. By this readiness we may discern who are unfeignedly willing to find out that they may do the whole will of God; even those that are already made willing to suffer for his sake; they are still inquiring, 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' not mattering nor regarding the cross and distress that attends it. 'The Holy Ghost witnesseth' to me, saith Paul, that 'in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy,' &c. (Acts 20:23,24). Counting that to see and be doing of heavenly things, will countervail all the trouble

and sorrow that attends them; this therefore sharply rebuketh those that can be glad to be ignorant of the knowledge of some truths, especially of them that are persecuted; still answering those that charge them with walking irregularly, that they do but according to their light. Whereas the hearts that be full of love to the name and glory of Christ, will in quiet return and come; yea, and be glad, if they find the words of God, and will eat them with savour and sweet delight, how bitter soever they are to the belly: because of that testimony they bind us up to maintain before peoples, and nations, and kings (Rev 10:10,11). 'I am now ready to be offered.'

[Paul ready to depart, having done his work for God in this world.]

Third. The third thing to be considered in the words is this, That the apostle, by saying, 'I am now ready,' doth signify that now he had done that work that God had appointed him to do in the world. 'I am now ready,' because I have done my work; this is further manifest by the following words of the text; 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand'; namely, my time to depart this world. The words also that follow are much to the purpose, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,' &c., much like that of our Lord Jesus. 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do' (John 17:4). Now then, put all these things together, namely, that I am to be offered a sacrifice, and for this my enemies are ready, my heart is also ready; and because I have done my work, I am therefore every way ready. This is a frame and condition that deserveth not only to stand in the Word of God for Paul's everlasting praise, but to be a provoking argument to all that read or hear thereof, to follow the same steps. I shall therefore, to help it forward, according to grace received, draw one conclusion from the words, and speak a few words to it. The conclusion is this: That it is the duty and wisdom of those that fear God so to manage their time and work that he hath allotted unto them, that they may not have part of their work to do when they should be departing the world.

[THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY AND WISDOM TO BE THUS READY.]

This truth I might further urge from the very words of the text, they being written on purpose by Paul to stir up Timothy and all the godly to press hard after this very thing. But to pass that, and to mind you of some other scriptures that press it hard as a duty, and then to proceed to some few examples of the wise and most eminent saints. Which when I have done I shall, 1. Show you reason for it. 2. Give you encouragement to it. 3. Press it with several motives. 4. Make some use and application of the whole, and so conclude.

That this is the duty and wisdom of those that fear God, you may see by Christ's exhortation to watchfulness, and to prepare for his second coming; 'Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh' (Matt 24:44). These words, as they are spoken to stir up the godly to be ready to meet their Lord at his coming, so because the godly must meet him as well in his judgments and providences here, as at his personal appearing at the last day; therefore they should be diligent to be fitting themselves to meet him in all such dispensations. 'And because,' saith God, 'I will do this unto thee; prepare to meet thy God, O Israel' (Amos 4:12). Now death is one of the most certain of those dispensations; yea, and such, that it leaveth to those no help at all, or means to perform for ever, that which, shouldst thou want it, that is lacking to thy work. Wherefore Solomon also doth press us to this very work, and that from this consideration, 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might, for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest' (Eccl 9:10). Baulk nothing of thy duty, neither defer to do it; for thou art in thy way to thy grave, and there thou canst not finish ought that by neglect thou leavest undone; therefore be diligent while life lasts.⁶

⁶ Would you be ready to die in peace? then seek a close walk and communion with God in time of health. A life of faith ensures a life of glory. Live and walk in the Spirit; as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts. To live thus is Christ; to die is

Another scripture is that in Peter's epistle to those that were scattered abroad. 'Seeing,' saith he, 'that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace,' &c. (2 Peter 3:14). He is there discoursing of the coming of Christ to judgment, as Christ also was in the other; and from the certainty and dread of that day he doth press them on to a continual diligence, and is to be understood as that of Paul to Timothy, a diligent watching in all things, that as he saith again, they may stand complete in all the will of God, not lacking this or that of that work which was given them to do of God and this world (2 Tim 4:5). Much might be said for the further proof of this duty; but to give you some examples of the godly men of old, whereby it will appear, that as it is our duty to do it so it is also our wisdom. And hence,

It is said of Enoch, that he 'walked with God' (Gen 5:22), and of Noah, that he was faithful in his generation, and also 'walked with God' (Gen 6:9). That is, they kept touch⁷ with him, still keeping up to the work and duty that every day required; not doing their duty by fits and by starts, but in a fervent spirit they served the Lord. So again it is said of Abraham, that his work was to walk before God in a way of faith and self-denial, which he with diligence performed. And therefore the Holy Ghost saith, he 'died in a good old age' (Gen 25:8); thereby insinuating that he made both ends meet⁸ together, the end of his work with the end of his days, and so came to his grave, 'in a full age,

gain, the more sudden the more joyful and glorious.—Ed.

⁷ This meaning of the word 'touch' is now obsolete. It refers to touching the seal on a deed, called sealing it; a solemn, deliberate pledge to keep close to your covenants. 'I keep touch with my promise.' *Sir Thomas More*.—Ed.

⁸ 'To make both ends meet,' is a proverbial expression, meaning that our expenses should not exceed our income; but, in this more solemn sense we should fulfil our daily duties as they approach, as all our moments have duties assigned to them. Omissions can never be recovered; hence the necessity of forgiveness for Christ's sake, who fulfilled *every* duty, and hence the necessity of perpetual watchfulness.—Ed.

as a shock of corn cometh in in his season' (Job 5:26). Jacob also, when he blessed his sons, as he lay upon his death-bed before them, doth sweetly comfort himself with this, after all his toil and travel, saying, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,'⁹ as if he had said, Lord, I have faithfully walked before thee in the days of my pilgrimage, through the help and power of thy grace; and now having nothing to do but to die, I lie waiting for thy coming to gather me up to thyself and my father: so, when he 'had made an end of commanding his sons,' now his bottom was wound,¹⁰ 'he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people' (Gen 49:18-33). Caleb and Joshua are said to be men of excellent spirit, because they were faithful in this their work (Num 14:24). David was eminent this way, and had done his work before his death-day came: 'After he had served his own generation by the will of God,' then he 'fell on sleep' (Acts 13:36). Which in the Old Testament is signified by three passages, 1. By his losing his heat before his death, thereby showing his work for God was done, he now only waited to die. 2. By that passage, 'these *are* the last words of David,' even the wind up of all the doctrines of that sweet psalmist of Israel (2 Sam 23:1,2). 3. That in the Psalms is very significant, 'The prayers of David the son of

⁹ How delightfully does this exclamation flow from the lips of the pious patriarch, overcome by his exertion in this solemn death-bed scene. He pauses, and then, with his recovering breath, appeals to heaven—'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.' Poor old man, the cold sweat of death is on thy brow, the angels stand ready to open the gate of the celestial city; finish thy solemn instructions to thy children, and then thou shalt enter upon the fruition of all thy patient waiting, thy fearing, fighting, trembling, doubting, shall be absorbed in immeasurable, eternal bliss.—Ed.

¹⁰ This is a very illustrative allusion. When a spinner has wound up all his material, the technical term is, 'The bottom is wound.' When a poor spinner by age or infirmity, is incapable of work, it would be said, 'Ah! his bottom is wound.' In this text, Jacob had finally made an end of all his earthly duties, and had now only to close his eyes for the last time upon the world.—Ed.

Jesse are ended' (Psa 72:20). In the whole, they all do doubtless speak forth this in the main, that David made great conscience of walking with God, by labouring to drive his work before him, that his work and life might meet together: for that indeed is a good man's wisdom. Job had great conscience also as to this very thing, as witness both God's testimony and his own conscience for him (Job 1:8, 31). Elijah had brought his work to that issue that he had but to anoint Hazael to be king of Assyria, Jehu to be king of Israel, and Elisha prophet in his room, and then to be caught up into heaven (1 Kings 19:15,16). What shall I say? I might come to Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josias; with old Simeon also, whose days were lengthened chiefly, not because he was behind with God and his conscience as to his work for God in the world, but to see with his eyes now at last the Lord's Christ: a sweet forefitting for death! Zacharias, with Elizabeth his wife, that good old couple also, how tender and doubtful were they in this matter, to walk 'in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord,' in a blessed blameless way! (Luke 1:6, 2:25). Their son also is not to be left out, who rather than he would be put out of his way, and hindered from fulfilling his course, would venture the loss of the love of a king, and the loss of his head for a word (Mark 6:17,18). All these, with many more, are as so many mighty arguments for the praise of that I asserted before, to wit, that it is the duty and wisdom of those that fear God, so to manage their time and work, that he hath here allotted unto them, that they may not have part of their work to do when they should be departing this world. I might urge also many reasons to enforce this truth upon you, as,

[*Reasons to enforce this duty.*]

First. Otherwise, the great and chief design of God in sending us into the world, especially in converting us and possessing our souls with gifts and graces, and many other benefits, that we might here be to the glory of his grace, is as much as in us lies, frustrate and disappointed. 'This people have I formed for myself,' saith he, 'they shall show forth my praise' (Isa 43:21): and so again, 'ye have not chosen me, but I

have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain' (John 15:16). God never intended, when he covered thy nakedness with the righteousness of his dear Son, and delivered thee from the condemning power of sin and the law, that thou shouldst still live as do those who know not God. 'This I say therefore,' saith Paul, 'and testify in the Lord; that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles, in the vanity of their mind' (Eph 4:17). What, a Christian, and live as does the world? (John 17:16). A Christian, and spend thy time, thy strength, and parts, for things that perish in the using? Remember, man, if the grace of God hath taken hold of thy soul, thou art a man of another world, and indeed a subject of another and more noble kingdom, the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of the gospel, of grace, of faith and righteousness, and the kingdom of heaven hereafter (Rom 14:16-18). In these things thou shouldst exercise thyself; not making heavenly things which God hath bestowed upon thee to stoop to things that are of the world, but rather here beat down thy body, mortify thy members; hoist up thy mind to the things that are above, and practically hold forth before all the world that blessed word of life (1 Cor 9:26,27). This, I say, is God's design; this is the tendency, the natural tendency of every grace of God bestowed upon thee: and herein is our Father glorified, that we bring forth much fruit (Col 3:1-4; John 15:8).

Second. A second reason why Christians should so manage their time and the work that God hath appointed them to do for his name in this world, that they may not have part thereof to do when they should be departing this world, it is because, if they do not, dying will be a hard work with them especially if God awakeneth them about their neglect of their duty (1 Cor 11:30-32). The way of God with his people is to visit their sins in this life; and the worst time for thee to be visited for them, is when thy life is smitten down, as it were to the dust of death, even when all natural infirmities break in like a flood upon thee, sickness, fainting, pains, wearisomeness, and the like; now I say, to be charged also with the neglect of duty, when in no capacity to do it; yea, perhaps so feeble, as

scarce able to abide to hear thy dearest friend in this life speak to thee; will not this make dying hard. Yea, when thou shalt seem both in thine own eyes, as also in the eyes of others, to fall short of the kingdom of heaven for this and the other transgression, will not this make dying hard? (Heb 4:1,2). David found it hard, when he cried, 'O spare me' a little, 'that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more' (Psa 39:13). David at this time was chastened for some iniquity; yea, brought for his folly to the doors of the shadow of death. But here he could not enter without great distress of mind; wherefore he cries out for respite and time to do the will of God, and the work allotted to him. So again, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow: then called I upon the name of the Lord.' Ay, this will make thee cry, though thou be as good as David! Wherefore learn by his sorrow, as he himself also learned, at last, to serve his own generation by the will of God, before he fell asleep. God can tell how to pardon thy sins, and yet make them such a bitter thing, and so heavy a burden to thee, that thou wouldst not, if thou wast but once distressed with it, come there again for all this world, Ah! it is easy with him to have this pardon in his bosom, when yet he is breaking all thy bones, and pouring out thy gall upon the ground; yea, to show himself then unto thee in so dreadful a majesty, that heaven and earth shall seem to thee to tremble at his presence! Let then the thoughts of this prevail with thee, as a reason of great weight to provoke thee to study to manage thy time and work in wisdom while thou art well.¹¹

¹¹ These are solemn and most weighty arguments to press upon us the fulfilment of our daily duties. How incomprehensible are the ways of God. His love is proved by bitterly convicting us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Like Christian and Hopeful in *Doubling Castle*, sometimes so overwhelming as to drive us to the verge of despair and self-destruction. We fall not down the precipice, for still there is hope and pardon in his bosom, and at the proper time it will be revealed.—Ed.

Third. Another reason, why those that fear God should so manage their time and work for God in this world, that they may not have part to do when they should be departing this life, it is, because loitering in thy work doth, as much as in it lieth, defer and hold back the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. One thing, amongst many, that letteth¹² the appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven, is, that his body, with the several members thereof, are not yet complete and full; they are not all yet come to the knowledge of the Son of God, 'to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Eph 4:8-13); that is, to the complete making up of his body; for as Peter saith, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (2 Peter 3:9). And so also to the complete performance of all their duty and work they have for God in this world. And I say, the faster the work of conversion, repentance, faith, self-denial, and the rest of the Christian duties, are performed by the saints in their day, the more they make way for the coming of the Lord from heaven. Wherefore Peter saith again, '*Seeing then that* we look for such things, 'what manner of persons ought we to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hasting unto,' or, as it is in the margin, 'hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat' (2 Peter 3:11,12). When the bride hath made herself ready, 'the marriage of the Lamb is come' (Rev 19:7). That is, the Lord will then wait upon the world no longer, when his saints are fit to receive him. As he said to Lot when he came to burn down Sodom, 'Haste thee' to Zoar, 'for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither' (Gen 19:20-22). So concerning the great day of judgment to the world, which shall be also the day of blessedness and rest to the people of God, it cannot come until the Lamb's wife hath made herself ready; until all the saints that belong to glory are ready. And before I go further, what

¹² That preventeth; 'letteth' is from the old verb to let or hinder, as used Romans 1:13.—Ed.

might I yet say to fasten this reason upon the truly gracious soul? What! wilt thou yet loiter in the work of thy day? wilt thou still be unwilling to hasten righteousness? dost thou not know that thou by so doing deferrest the coming of thy dearest Lord? Besides, that is the day of his glory, the day when he shall come in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels; and wilt not thou by thy diligence help it forwards? Must also the general assembly and church of the first-born wait upon thee for their full portions of glory? Wilt thou by thus doing endeavour to keep them wrapt up still in the dust of the earth, there to dwell with the worm and corruption? The Lord awaken thee, that thou mayst see thy loitering doth do this, and doth also hinder thy own soul of the inheritance prepared for thee.¹³

4. Another reason why saints should press hard after a complete performing their work that God hath allotted unto them is, because, so far forth as they fall short, in that they impair their own glory. For as the Lord hath commanded his people to work for him in this world, so also he of grace hath promised to reward whatever they Christianly do. For whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bound or free. Yea, he counts it unrighteousness to forget their work of faith and labour of love, but a righteous thing to recompense them for it in the day of our Lord Jesus (Heb 6:10; 2 Thess 1:6,7). This, well considered, is of great force to prevail with those that are covetous of glory, such as Moses and Paul, with the rest of that spirit. As the apostle saith also to the saints at Corinth, 'Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that

your labour is not in vain in the Lord' (1 Cor 15:50).

Having thus given you the reasons why God's people should be diligent in that work that God hath allotted for them to be doing for him in this world, I shall, in the next place, give you some directions, as helps to further you in this work. And they are such as tend to take away those hindrances that come upon thee, either by discouragement, or by reason of hardness and benumbedness of spirit; for great hindrances overtake God's people from both these impediments.

[*Directions, as helps to further in this work.*]

First. If thou wouldst be faithful to do that work that God hath allotted thee to do in this world for his name, labour to live much in the favour and sense of thy freedom and liberty by Jesus Christ; that is, keep this, if possible, ever before thee, that thou art a redeemed one, taken out of this world, and from under the curse of the law, out of the power of the devil, &c., and placed in a kingdom of grace, and forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. This is of absolute use in this matter; yea, so absolute, that it is impossible for any Christian to do his word Christianly without some enjoyment of it. For this, in the 1st of Luke, is made the very ground of all good works, both as to their nature and our continuance in them; and is also reckoned there an essential part of that covenant that God made with our fathers; even 'that he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, before him all the days of our life' (Luke 1:74,75). And indeed, take this away, and what ground can there be laid for any man to persevere in good works? None at all. For take away grace and remission of sins for Christ's sake, and you leave men nothing to help them but the terrors of the law and judgment of God, which, at best, can beget but a servile and slavish spirit in that man in whom it dwells; which spirit is so far off from being an help to us in our pursuit of good works, that it makes us we cannot endure that which is commanded, but, Israel-like, it flieth from God even as from

¹³ This language is probably founded on Revelation 22:14, 'Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' Until the work that is assigned to us is done, we cannot cross the river and ascend to the New Jerusalem. 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.' He who is diligent to finish his work may reply with truth, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'—Ed.

the face of a serpent (Heb 12:20; Exo 19). As Solomon saith, 'A servant will not be corrected by words, for, though he understand, he will not answer' (Prov 29:19). Get thou then thy soul possessed with the spirit of the Son, and believe thou art set perfectly free by him from whatsoever thou by sin hast deserved at the hand of revenging justice. This doctrine unlooseth thy bands, takes off thy yoke, and lets thee go upright. This doctrine puts spiritual and heavenly inclinations into thy soul; and the faith of this truth doth show thee that God hath so surprised thee, and gone beyond thee, with his blessed and everlasting love, that thou canst not but reckon thyself his debtor for ever. 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh' (Rom 8:12). That argument of Paul to Philemon is here true in the highest degree, thou owest to God for his grace to thee, 'even thine own self besides' (Phile 19). This Paul further testifies, both in the 6th and 7th of the Romans. In the one he saith, we are 'free from sin'; in the other he saith, we are 'dead to the law,' that our fruit might be unto holiness: that we might 'bring forth fruit unto God' (Rom 6:22, 7:4). For, as I said, if either thy ungodly lusts, or the power and force of the law, have dominion over thy spirit, thou art not in a condition now to be performing thy work to God in this world. I have heretofore marvelled at the quarrelsome spirit that possessed the people that Malachi speaketh of, how they found fault with, in a manner, all things that were commanded them to do; but I have since observed their ungodly disposition was grounded upon this, their doubting of the love of God, 'Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' (Mal 1:2). And, indeed, if people once say to God, by way of doubt, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' no marvel though that people be like those in Malachi's time, a discontented, a murmuring, backward people about everything that is good. Read that whole book of Malachi.

Second. If thou wouldst be faithful to do that work that God hath allotted thee to do in this world for his name, then labour to see a beauty and glory in holiness, and in every good work: this tends much to the engaging of thy heart. 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear

before him, all the earth' (Psa 96:9). And for thy help in this, think much on this in general, that 'Thus saith the Lord' is the wind-up of every command; for, indeed, much of the glory and beauty of duties doth lie in the glory and excellency of the person that doth command them; and hence it is that 'Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty' is in the head of every law, because that law should therefore be revered by, and be made glorious and beautiful to all. And we see, upon this very account, what power and place the precepts of kings do take in the hearts of their subjects, every one loving and reverencing the statute, because there is the name of their king. Will you rebel against the king? is a word that shakes the world.¹⁴ Well, then, turn these things about for an argument to the matter in hand, and let the name of God, seeing he is wiser and better, and of more glory and beauty than kings, beget in thy heart a beauty in all things that are commanded thee of God. And, indeed, if thou do not in this act thus, thou wilt stumble at some of thy duty and work thou hast to do; for some of the commands of God are, in themselves, so mean and low, that take away the name of God from them, and thou wilt do as Naaman the Syrian, despise, instead of obeying. What is there in the Lord's supper, in baptism, yea, in preaching the Word, and prayer, were they not the appointments of God? His name being entailed to them, makes them every one glorious and beautiful. Wherefore, no marvel if he that looks upon them without their title-page goeth away in a rage, like Naaman, preferring others before them. What is Jordan? 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel; may I not wash in them and be clean?' saith he

¹⁴ Bunyan was in his politics a thorough loyalist. When a young man he even fought at the siege of Leicester, when it was besieged by the royal army. Probably the horrible cruelties practised upon the peaceful inhabitants, by the cavaliers, at the taking of that city, induced him to leave the service. His pastor, J. Gifford, had also served in the royal army as an officer; both of them narrowly escaped. This may account for Bunyan's high monarchical principles, they appear very prominently in many of his works.—Ed.

(2 Kings 5:10-12). This was because he remembered not that the name of God was in the command. Israel's trumpets of ram's horns (Josh 6:2-4), and Isaiah's walking naked (Isa 20:3), and Ezekiel's wars against a tile (Eze 4:1-4), would, doubtless, have been ignoble acts, but that the name of God was that which gave them reverence, power, glory, and beauty. Set therefore the name of God, and 'Thus saith the Lord,' against all reasonings, defamings, and reproaches, that either by the world, or thy own heart, thou findest to arise against thy duty, and let his name and authority alone be a sufficient argument with thee, 'to behold the beauty' that he hath put upon all his ways, 'and to inquire in his temple' (Psa 27:4).

Third. Wouldst thou be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for his name? then make much of a trembling heart and conscience; for though the Word be the line and rule whereby we must order and govern all our actions, yet a trembling heart and tender conscience is of absolute necessity for our so doing. A hard heart can do nothing with the word of Jesus Christ. 'Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word' (Isa 66:5). 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling' (Psa 2:11). I spake before against a servile and slavish frame of spirit, therefore you must not understand me here as if I meant now to cherish such a one; no, it is a heart that trembleth for, or at the grace of God; and a conscience made tender by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Such a conscience as is awakened both by wrath and grace, by the terror and the mercy of God; for it stands with the spirit of a son to fear before his father; yea, to fear chastings, though not to fear damnation. Let, therefore, destruction from God be a terror to thy heart, though not that destruction that attends them that perish by sin for ever (Job 31:23). Though this I might add further; it may do thee no harm, but good, to cast an eye over thy shoulder at those that now lie roaring under the vengeance of eternal fire; it may put thee in mind of what thou wast once, and of what thou must yet assuredly be, if grace by Christ preventeth not (Isa 66:24). Keep, then, thy conscience awake with wrath and grace, with

heaven and hell; but let grace and heaven bear sway. Paul made much of a tender conscience, else he had never done as he did, nor suffered what we read of. 'And herein,' saith he, 'do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and *toward* men' (Acts 24:16). But this could not a stony, benumbed, bribed, deluded, or a muzzled conscience do. Paul was like the nightingale with his breast against the thorn.¹⁵ That his heart might still keep waking, he would accustom himself to the meditation of those things that should beget both love and fear; and would always be very chary, lest he offended his conscience. 'Herein do I exercise myself,' &c. Be diligent, then, in this matter, if thou wouldst be faithful with God. A tender conscience, to some people, is like Solomon's brawling woman, a burthen to those that have it (Prov 25:24). But let it be to thee like those that invited David to go up to the house of the Lord (Psa 122:1). Hear it, and cherish it with pleasure and delight.

Fourth. If thou wouldst be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for his name; then let religion be the only business to take up thy thoughts and time. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might' (Eccl 9:10). With all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Religion, to most men, is but a by-business, with which they use to fill up spare hours; or as a stalking-horse, which is used to catch the game.¹⁶ How few are there in the world that

¹⁵ Many extraordinary tales are told of the nightingale, as to their great memory, and facility in imitating the human voice. Sitting in thorns is more for protection than penance. See *Goldsmith's Animated Nature*. It was a generally received opinion that the nightingale, to keep himself awake in the night, sat on a tree of thorn, so that if he nodded he would be pricked in the breast. The learned and witty Dr. Thomas Fuller thus alludes to it:— 'I am sure the nightingale which would wake will not be angry with the thorn which pricketh her breast when she noddeth.' How useful would it be if a thorn could be so placed as to prick those who nod at church!—Ed.

¹⁶ A painted figure of a horse, behind which the sportsman stealthily approaches the game.

have their conversation 'only as becometh the gospel!' (Phil 1:27). A heart sound in God's statutes, a heart united to the fear of God, a heart moulded and fashioned by the Word of God, is a rare thing; rare, because it is hard to be found, and rare because it is indeed the fruit of an excellent spirit, and a token of one saved by the Lord (Psa 119:80, 86:11). But this indifferency in religion, this fashioning ourselves in our language, gesture, behaviour, and carriage, to the fancies and fopperies of this world, as it is in itself much unbecoming a people that should bear the name of their God in their foreheads, so it cannot be but a very great and sore obstruction to thy faithful walking with God in this world (Rom 6:17). Gird up, then, thy loins like a man,¹⁷ let God and his Christ, and his Word, and his people, and cause, be the chief in thy soul; and as heretofore thou hast afforded this world the most of thy time, and travel, and study, so now convert all these to the use of religion. 'As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness' (Rom 6:19). Holy things must be in every heart where this is faithfully put in practice.

1. Daily bring thy heart and the Word of God together, that thy heart may be levelled by it, and also filled with it. The want of performing this sincerely, is a great cause of that unfaithfulness that is in us to God. Bring, then, thy heart to the Word daily, to try how thou believest the Word today, to try how it agrees with the Word today. This is the way to make clean work daily, to keep thy soul warm and living daily. 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' saith David. 'By taking heed *thereto* according to thy Word' (Psa 119:9). So again, 'Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips, I have kept *me*

from the paths of the destroyer' (Psa 17:4). And again, 'Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee' (Psa 119:11). He that delighteth 'in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth meditate day and night, he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper' (Psa 1:2,3).

2. A continual remembrance that to every day thou hast thy work allotted thee; and that sufficient for that day are the evils that attend thee (Matt 6:34). This remembrance set Paul upon his watch daily; made him die to himself and this world daily, and provoked him also daily to wind up the spirit of his mind; transforming himself by the power of the Word, from that proneness that was in his flesh to carnal things (1 Cor 15:30-33). This will make thee keep the knife at thy throat in all places, and business, and company (Prov 23:2).

3. Let thy heart be more affected with what concerns the honour of God, and the profit and glory of the gospel, than with what are thy concerns as a man, with all earthly advantages. This will make thee refuse things that are lawful, if they appear to be inexpedient. Yea, this will make thee, like the apostles of old, prefer another man's peace and edification before thine own profit, and to take more pleasure in the increase of the power of godliness in any, than in the increase of thy corn and wine.

4. Reckon with thy own heart every day, before thou lie down to sleep, and cast up both what thou hast received from God, done for him, and where thou hast also been wanting. This will beget praise and humility, and put thee upon redeeming the day that is past; whereby thou wilt be able, through the continual supplies of grace, in some good measure to drive thy work before thee, and to shorten it as thy life doth shorten; and mayst comfortably live in the hope of bringing both ends sweetly together. But to pass this.

Fifth. If thou wouldst be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for his name, then beware thou do not stop and stick when hard work comes before thee. It is with Christians as it is with

'One underneath his horse, to get a shoot doth stalk
Another over dykes upon his stilts doth walk.'
—Drayton's *Polyolbion*, vol. iii. p. 25.—Ed.

¹⁷ So dress as to pass without being noticed; neither precise nor formal, slovenly nor dandyish; dress *like a man* or woman. Conduct yourself as one that fears God.—Ed.

other scholars, they sometimes meet with hard lessons; but these thou must also learn, or thou canst not do thy work. The Word and Spirit of God come sometimes like chain-shot to us, as if it would cut down all; as when Abraham was to offer up Isaac, and the Levites to slay their brethren (Gen 22; Exo 32:26-28). Paul also must go from place to place to preach, though he knew beforehand he was to be afflicted there (Acts 20:23). God may sometimes say to thee, as he said to his servant Moses, 'Take the serpent by the tail'; or, as the Lord Jesus said to Peter, Walk upon the sea (Exo 4:3,4). These are hard things, but have not been rejected when God hath called to do them. O how willingly would our flesh and blood escape the cross of Christ! The comforts of the gospel, the sweetness of the promise, how pleasing is it to us! Like Ephraim here, we love to tread out the corn (Hosea 10:11), and to hear those pleasant songs and music that gospel sermons make, where only grace is preached, and nothing of our duty as to works of self-denial; but as for such, God will tread upon their fair neck, and yoke them with Christ's yoke; for there they have a work to do, even a work of self-denial.¹⁸

Now this work sometimes lieth in acts that seem to be desperate, as when a man must both leave and hate his life, and all he hath for Christ, or else he cannot serve him nor be counted his disciple (Luke 14:26-33). Thus it seemed with Christ himself when he went his fatal journey up to Jerusalem; he went thither, as he knew, to die, and therefore trod every step as it were in his own bowels;¹⁹ but yet, no doubt, with great temptation to shun and avoid that voyage; and therefore it is said, 'He set his face steadfastly to go up,' scorning to be invited to the contrary, and to prevent the noise of his weak disciples, Master, save thyself (Luke 9:51). It is said he ascended before them, insomuch that they were amazed to see his resolution, while they themselves were afraid of

that dreadful effect that might follow (Mark 10:32-34). Also when he came there, and was to be apprehended, he went to the garden that Judas knew, his old accustomed place; so when they asked him the killing question, he answered, 'I am *he*' (John 18:1-5).

Sometimes in acts that seem to be foolish, as when men deny themselves of those comforts, and pleasures, and friendships, and honours, of the world that formerly they used to have, and choose rather to associate themselves with the very abjects of this world²⁰—I mean, such as carnal men count so—counting their ways and manners of life, though attended with a thousand calamities, more profitable, and pleasing, and delightful, than all former glory. Thus Elisha left his father's house, though to pour water upon the hands of Elijah (2 Kings 3:11). And thus the disciples left their fathers' ships and nets, to live a beggarly life with Jesus Christ; as Paul did leave the feet of Gamaliel for the whip, and the stocks, and the deaths that attended the blessed gospel. One would have thought that had been a simple way of Peter to leave all for Christ, before he knew what Christ would give him, as that 19th of Matthew seems to import; but Christ will have it so (v 27). He that will save his life must lose it; and he that will lose his life in this world for Christ, shall keep it to life eternal (John 12:25). I might add many things of this nature, to show you what hard chapters sometimes God sets his best people; but thy work is, if thou wouldst be faithful, not to stop nor stick at anything (Matt 10:37). Some, when they come at the cross, they will either there make a stop and go no further, or else, if they can, they will step over it; if not, they will go round about: do not thou do this, but take it up and kiss it, and bear it

¹⁸ The head having been crowned with thorns, it is unsuitable that the feet should tread on rose leaves.—*Mason*.

¹⁹ How very striking is this expression. O! that it may assist in riveting upon our souls a vivid remembrance of the Saviour's sufferings.—*Ed*.

²⁰ Some Pharisees, falsely called by the Romish churches 'saints,' have claimed merit from associating with dirt and filth, and vermin, beggars, and vagabonds, upon dunghills, to show their contempt of the world! All this was to gain the applause of the world. God's saints will associate with the salt of the earth, with God's fearers, who whether *rich* or *poor*, are equally despised by the world.—*Ed*.

after Jesus.²¹ 'God forbid,' saith Paul, 'that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (Gal 6:14).

Now, for thy better performing this piece of service for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: O it is hard work to pocket up the reproaches of all the foolish people, as if we had found great spoil; and to suffer all their revilings, lies, and slanders, without cursing them, as Elisha did the children; to answer them with prayers and blessings for their cursings. It is far more easy to give them taunt for taunt, and reviling for reviling; to give them blow for blow; yea, to call for fire from heaven against them. But to 'bless them that curse you, and to pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you'—even of malice, of old grudge, and on purpose to vex and afflict our mind, and to make us break out into a rage—this is work above us; now our patience should look up to unseen things; now remember Christ's carriage to them that spilt his blood; or all is in danger of bursting, and thou of miscarrying in theses things. I might here also dilate upon Job's case, and the lesson God set him, when, at one stroke, he did beat down all (Job 1:15), only spared his life, but made that also so bitter to him that his soul chose strangling rather than it (Job 7:15). O when every providence of God unto thee is like the messengers of Job, and the last to bring more heavy tidings than all that went before him (Job 1); when life, estate, wife, children, body, and soul, and all at once, seem to be struck at by heaven and earth; here are hard lessons; now to behave myself even as a weaned child, now to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21). Thus, with few words, Job ascribeth righteousness to his

²¹ Reader, do not mistake this to mean a piece of wood shaped as a cross. It means cherish, love, be conformed to the conduct or image of Christ, follow him in reproaches and revilings, and count it your honour to suffer for his sake. 'Kiss it,' has the same meaning as the words of the Psalmist, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish.' It is the soul mentally kissing the Saviour, and not a bit of wood, which would then be an idol, inflicting the deep guilt of idolatry.—Ed.

Maker; but though they were but few, they proceeded from so blessed a frame of heart, that causeth the penman of the Word to stay himself and wonder, saying, 'In all this Job sinned not' with his lips, 'nor charged God foolishly.' In all this—what a great deal will the Holy Ghost make of that which seems but little when it flows from an upright heart! and it indeed may well be so accounted of all that know what is in man, and what he is prone unto.

1. Labour to believe that all these things are tokens of the love of God (Heb 12:6; Rev 3:19). 2. Remember often that thou art not the first that hath met with these things in the world. 'It hated me,' saith Christ, 'before *it hated* you' (John 15:18). 3. Arm thyself with a patient and quiet mind to bear and suffer for his sake (1 Peter 4:1-3). 4. Look back upon thy provocations wherewith thou mayst have provoked God (Deut 9:7; Lev 26:41,42); then wilt thou accept of the punishment for thy sins, and confess it was less than thine iniquities deserve (Ezra 9:13). 5. Pray thou mayst hear the voice of the rod, and have a heart to answer the end of God therein (Micah 6:9). 6. Remember the promise— 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose' (Rom 8:28).

Sixth. If thou wouldst be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for his name, then labour away to possess thy heart with a right understanding, both of the things that this world yieldeth, and of the things that shall be hereafter. I am confident that most, if not all the miscarriages of the saints and people of God, they have their rise from deceivable thoughts here. The things of this world appear to us more, and those that are to come less, than they are; and hence it is that many are so hot and eager for things that be in the world, and so cold and heartless for those that be in heaven. Satan is here a mighty artist, and can show us all earthly things in a multiplying glass; but when we look up to things above, we see them as through sackcloth of hair;²² but take thou heed, be not ruled by

²² Upon the opening of the sixth seal in the book of

thy sensual appetite that can only savour fleshly things, neither be thou ruled by carnal reason, which always darkeneth the things of heaven. But go to the Word, and as that says, so judge thou. That tells thee all things under the sun are vanity, nay worse, vexation of spirit (Eccl 1:2). That tells thee the world is not, even then when it doth most appear to be; wilt thou set thine heart upon that which is not? 'for riches *certainly* make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven' (Prov 23:5). The same may be said for honours, pleasures, and the like; they are poor, low, base things to be entertained by a Christian's heart. The man that hath most of them may 'in the fulness of his sufficiency be in straits'; yea, '*when* he is about to fill his belly with them, God may cast the fury of his wrath upon him' (Job 20:22,25); 'so is he that layeth up treasure for himself' on earth, 'and is not rich towards God' (Luke 12:20,21). A horse that is loaden with gold and pearls all day, may have a foul stable and a galled back at night. And woe be to him that increaseth that which is not his, and that ladeth himself with thick clay. O man of God, throw this bone to the dogs; suck not at it, there is no marrow there (Heb 2:6). Set thine affections on 'things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God' (Col 3:1-4). Behold what God hath prepared for them that love him. And if God hath blessed thee with ought, set not thine heart upon it; honour the Lord with thy substance. Labour to 'be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life' (1 Tim 6:17-19). Further, to lighten thine eyes a little, and,

1. *Concerning the glory of the world.*

(1.) It is that which God doth mostly give to those that are not his; for the poor receive the

gospel; not many rich, 'not many mighty, not many noble *are called*' (1 Cor 1:26).

(2.) Much of this world and its glory is permitted of God to be disposed of by the devil, and he is called both the prince and god thereof (John 14:30; 2 Cor 4:4). Yea, when Satan told Christ he could give it to whom he would, Christ did not say, Thou liest, but answered, by the Word, 'It is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve' (Luke 4:6-8). Implying also, that commonly when men get much of the honours and glory of this world, it is by bending the knee too low to the prince and god thereof.

(3.) The nature of the best of worldly things, if hankered after, is to deaden the spirit (Rom 8:6,7), to estrange the heart from God, to pierce thee through with many sorrows, and to drown thee in perdition and destruction (1 John 2:15). 'O man of God, flee those things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness'; and 'Fight the good fight, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called,' &c. (1 Tim 6:9-12).

2. *As to the things of God*, what shall I say? the things of his Word, and Spirit, and kingdom, they so far go beyond the conceivings of the heart of man, that none can utter them but by the Holy Spirit; but there is no deceit in them; 'no lie is of the truth,' what they promise they will perform with additions of amazing glory (1 John 2:21). Taste them first, and then thou shalt see them. 'O' come 'taste and see that the Lord *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him' (Psa 34:8). To stoop low is a good work, which is an act of thine, if it be done in faith and love, though but by a cup of cold water; it is really more worth in itself, and of higher esteem with God, than all worldly and perishing glory; there is no comparison, the one perisheth with the using, and for the other is laid up 'a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor 4:17). But again, as thou shouldst labour to possess thy heart with a right understanding of the perishing nature of the riches and pleasures of this world, and of the durable riches and righteousness that is in Christ, and all heavenly things; so thou shouldst labour to keep always in thy eye what sin is, what hell is, what the wrath of God and

Revelation, there was 'a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon as blood.' A preternatural and awful darkness broods over nature, preparatory to its final dissolution. Thus Satan darkens the things above to the natural man, so that he cannot discern spiritual things, while those of time and sense are magnified and multiplied in his estimation.—Ed.

everlasting burnings are. Transfer them to thyself, as it were on a finger,²³ that thou mayst learn to think of nothing more highly than is meet, but to give to what thou beholdest their own due weight; then thou wilt fear where thou shouldst fear, love what is worthy thy love, and slight that which is of no worth. These are just weights, and even balances; now thou dealest not with deceitful weights; and this is the way to be rich in good works, and to bring thy work, that God hath appointed, to a good issue against thy dying day.

Seventh. But again, if thou wouldst be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world, for his name, then beware that thou slip not, or let pass by, the present opportunity that providence layeth before thee. Work while it is called today, 'the night cometh when no man can work' (John 9:4). In that parable of the man that took a far journey, it is said, as he gave to every servant his work, so he 'commanded the porter to watch'; that is, for his Lord's coming back, and in the mean time, for all opportunities to perform the work he left in their hand, and committed unto their trust (Mark 13:34,35).²⁴ Seest thou the poor? seest thou the fatherless? seest thou thy foe in distress? draw out thy breast, shut not up thy bowels of compassion, deal thy bread to the hungry, bring the poor that are cast out into thine house, hide not thyself from thine own flesh, take the opportunity that presents itself to thee, either by the eye or the hearing of the ear,

²³ This refers to the phylacteries worn by every Jew while in his daily prayers. These are long strips of leather, having small boxes containing the law minutely written in Hebrew, worn upon the forehead and wrist, and bound round *the fingers*. A custom founded on Exodus 13:9, 16; Proverbs 7:3. That the Divine law should direct the head and fingers, as representing the mind and conduct, so would Bunyan have all Christians carry, at all times, in the mind and conduct, the riches and righteousness of Christ.—Ed.

²⁴ There are no idlers in God's Israel, every one has his appointed work to fulfil against his appointed day. Christian, watch against idleness.

'For Satan has some mischief still
For idle hands to do.'—Ed.

or by some godly motion that passeth over thy heart (Isa 58:7; Rom 12:20). 'Say not' to such messengers, 'go, and come again tomorrow; if thou hast it by thee'; now the opportunity is put into thy hand, delay not to do it, and the Lord be with thee! (Prov 3:28). Good opportunities are God's seasons for the doing of thy work; wherefore watch for them, and take them as they come. Paul tells us 'he was in watchings often' (2 Cor 11:26,27); surely it was that he might take the season that God should give him to do this work for him; as he also saith to Timothy, 'Watch thou in all things, - do the work,' &c. Opportunities as to some things come but once in one's lifetime, as in the case of Esther, and of Nicodemus, and holy Joseph; when Esther begged the life of the Jews, and the other the body of Jesus; which once had they let slip or neglected, they could not have recovered it again for ever. Watch then for the opportunity. 1. Because it is God's season; which, without doubts, is the best season and time for every purpose (Eccl 3:11). 2. Because Satan watches to spoil, by mistiming as well as by corrupting whatever thou shalt do for God. 'When I would do good,' saith Paul, 'evil is present,' that is, either to withdraw me from my purpose, or else to infect my work (Rom 7:21). 3. This is the way to be profitable unto others. Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man, as thou *art*, and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man (Job 35:8). 4. This is also the way to be doing good to thyself (Job 22:2). 'He that watereth shall be watered himself' (Prov 11:25). 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days' (Eccl 11:1; Deut 15:10). As God said to Coniah, 'Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, *and* then it *was* well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it *was* well *with him*' (Jer 22:15,16).

And I say, that the opportunity may not slip thee, either for want of care or provision, (1.) Sit always loose from an overmuch affecting thine own concerns, and believe that thou wast not born for thyself; 'a brother is born for adversity' (Prov 17:17). (2.) Get thy heart tenderly affected with the welfare and prosperity of all things that bear the stamp and image of God (2 Cor 11:29). (3.) Study thy own

place and capacity that God hath put thee in, in this world; for suitable to thy place thy work and opportunities are (1 Cor 7:24). (4.) Make provision beforehand, that when things present themselves thou mayst come up to a good performance; be 'prepared to every good work' (2 Tim 2:21). (5.) Take heed of carnal reasonings, keep thy heart tender; but set thy face like a flint for God (Gal 1:9). (6.) And look well to the manner of every duty.

Eighth. Wouldst thou be faithful to do that work that God hath appointed thee to do in this world for his name? believe then, that whatever good thing thou dost for him, if done according to the Word, it is not only accepted by him now, but recorded, to be remembered for thee, against the time to come; yea, laid up for thee as treasure in chests and coffers, to be brought out to be rewarded before both men and angels, to thy eternal comfort, by Jesus Christ our Lord. 'Lay not up,' saith Christ, 'treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal' (Matt 6:19,20). The treasure that here our Lord commands we should with diligence lay up in heaven, is found both in Luke, and Paul, and Peter, to be meant by doing good work.

1. Luke renders it thus, 'Sell that ye have and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth,' the latter part of the verse expounding the former (Luke 12:33).

2. Paul saith thus, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate: laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life' (1 Tim 6:17,19).

3. Peter also acknowledgeth and asserteth this, where, in his exhortation to elders to do their duty faithfully, and with cheerfulness, he affirms, if they do so, they 'shall receive a

crown of glory that fadeth not away' (1 Peter 5:2-4); which Paul also calleth a reward for cheerful work (1 Cor 9:17; 2 Tim 4:2). And that as an act of justice by the hand of a righteous judge, in the day when the Lord shall come to give reward to his servants the prophets, and to his saints, and to all that fear his name, small and great; for 'every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour' (1 Cor 3:8).

[*Objections answered.*]

But before I go any further, I must answer three objections that may be made by those that read this book.

The First Objection. The first is this; some godly heart may say, I dare not own that what I do shall ever be regarded, much less rewarded by God in another world because of the unworthiness of my person, and because of the many infirmities and sinful weaknesses that attend me every day.

Answer. This objection is built partly upon a bashful modesty, partly upon ignorance, and partly upon unbelief. My answer to it is as followeth.

You must remind and look back to what but now hath been proved, namely, That both Christ and his apostles do all agree in this, that there is a reward for the righteous, and that their good deeds are laid up as treasures for them in heaven, and are certainly to be bestowed upon them in the last day with abundance of eternal glory. 2. Now then, to speak to thy case, and to remove the bottom of thy objection, that the unworthiness of thy person, and thy sinful infirmities, that attend thee in every duty, do make thee think thy works shall not be either regarded or rewarded in another world. But consider, first, as to the unworthiness of thy person. They that are in Christ Jesus are always complete before God, in the righteousness that Christ hath obtained, how infirm, and weak, and wicked soever they appear to themselves. Before God, therefore, in this righteousness thou standest all the day long, and that upon a double account; first, by the act of faith, because thou hast believed in him that thou mightest be justified by the

righteousness of Christ; but if this fail, I mean the act of believing, still thou standest justified by God's imputing this righteousness to thee, which imputation standing purely upon the grace and good pleasure of God to thee, that holds thee still as just before God, though thou wantest at present the comfort thereof. Thus, therefore, thy person stands always accepted; and, indeed, no man's works can at all be regarded, if his person, in the first place, be not respected. The Lord had respect first to Abel, and after to his offering (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4). But he can have respect to no man before works done, unless he find them in the righteousness of Christ; for they must be accepted through a righteousness, which, because they have none of their own, therefore they have one of God's imputing, even that of his Son, which he wrought for us when he was born of the Virgin, &c. As to thy sinful infirmities that attend thee in every work, they cannot hinder thee from laying up treasure in heaven, thy heart being upright in the way with God; nor will he be unrighteous at all to forget thy good deeds in the day when Christ shall come from heaven.

1. Because by the same reason then he must disown all the good works of all his prophets and apostles; for they have all been attended with weaknesses and sinful infirmities; from the beginning hitherto there is not a man, 'not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not' (Eccl 7:20). The best of our works are accompanied with sin: 'When I would do good,' saith Paul, 'evil is present with me' (Rom 7:21). This, therefore, must not hinder. And for thy further satisfaction in this, consider, as Christ presents thy person before God, acceptable without thy works, freely and alone by his righteousness, so his office is to take away the iniquity of thy holy things, that they also by him may be accepted of God (Exo 28:36-38; 1 Peter 2:5). Wherefore, it is further said, for the encouragement of the weak and feeble, He shall not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but shall bring forth judgment unto victory (Matt 12:20). The bruised reed, you know, is weak; and by bruises we should understand sinful infirmities. And so also concerning the smoking flax; by smoking you must understand sinful weakness; but none

of these shall either hinder the justification of thy person, or the acceptation of thy performance, they being done in faith and love, let thy temptations be never so many, because of Jesus Christ his priestly office now at the right hand of God. By him, therefore, let us offer spiritual sacrifices; for they shall be acceptable to God and our Father.

2. Because otherwise God and Christ would prove false to their own word, which is horrible blasphemy once to imagine; who hath promised that when the Son of God shall come to judgment, he shall render to 'every man according to his work' (Rev 22:12); and doth upon this very account encourage his servants to a patient enduring of the hottest persecutions: 'for great is your reward in heaven' (Matt 5:12; Luke 6:23,35; Matt 6:1, 10:41,42). From this also he bindeth his saints and servants to be sincerely liberal, and good, and kind to all; first, because otherwise, they have no reward of their Father which is in heaven, that is, for what they do not; but if they do it, then, though it be but a cup of cold water given to a prophet or righteous man, they shall receive a prophet's reward, a righteous man's reward; yea, they shall receive it in any wise, 'they shall in no wise lose their reward.'

3. It must be so, otherwise he should deny a reward to the works and operations of his own good grace he hath freely bestowed upon us; but that he will not do. He is not unfaithful to forget your work of faith and labour of love (Heb 6:10). And so of all other graces, 'our work shall not be in vain in the Lord' (1 Cor 4:58). And, as I said before, temptations, weaknesses, and sins, shall not hinder the truly gracious of this their blessed reward. Nay, they shall further it, 'if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 1:6,7). And the reason is, because the truth and sincerity of God's grace in us doth so much the more discover itself, by how much it is opposed and resisted by weakness and sin. It is recorded to the everlasting renown of three of David's mighties, that they would break through a host of giant-

like enemies, to fetch water for their longing king; for it bespoke their valour, their love, and good-will to him; the same also is true concerning thy graces, and every act of them when assaulted with an host of weaknesses (1 Chron 11:12,15-18).

The Second Objection. And now I come to the second objection, and that ariseth from our being completely justified freely by the grace of God through Christ; and by the same means alone brought to glory; and may be framed thus:—but seeing we are freely justified, and brought to glory by free grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and seeing the glory that we shall be possessed of upon the account of the Lord Jesus, is both full and complete, both for happiness and continuing therein, what need will there be that our work should be rewarded? Nay, may not the doctrine of reward for good works be here not only needless, but indeed an impairing and lessening the completeness of that glory to which we are brought, and in which we shall live inconceivably happy for ever, by free grace?

Answer. That we are justified in the sight of the Divine Majesty, from the whole lump of our sins, both past, present, and to come, by free grace, through that one offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, I bless God I believe it, and that we shall be brought to glory by the same grace, through the same most blessed Jesus, I thank God by his grace I believe that also. Again, that the glory to which we shall be brought by free grace, through the only merits of Jesus, is unspeakably glorious and complete, I question no more than I question the blessed truths but now confessed. But yet, notwithstanding all this, there is a reward for the righteous, a reward for their works of faith and love, whether in a doing or a suffering way, and that not principally to be enjoyed here, but hereafter; ‘great is your reward in heaven,’ as I proved in the answer to the first objection. And now I shall answer further:—

1. If this reward had been an impairing or derogation to the free grace of God that saveth us, he would never have mentioned it for our encouragement unto good works, nor have added a promise of reward for them that do

them, nor have counted himself unfaithful if he should not do it.

2. The same may be said concerning Jesus Christ, who doubtless loveth and tendereth the honour of his own merits, as much as any who are saved by him can do, whether they be in heaven or earth; yet he hath promised a reward to a cup of cold water, or giving of any other alms; and hath further told us, they that do these things, they do lay up treasure in heaven, namely, a reward when their Lord doth come, then to be received by them to their eternal comfort.

3. Paul was as great a maintainer of the doctrine of God’s free grace, and of justification from sin, by the righteousness of Christ imputed by grace, as any he that ever lived in Christ’s service, from the world’s beginning till now: and yet he was for this doctrine; he expected himself, and encouraged others also to look for such a reward, for doing and suffering for Christ, which he calls ‘a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory’ (2 Cor 4:17). Surely, as Christ saith, in a case not far distant from this in hand, ‘if *it were* not so, he would have told us’ (John 14:1-3). Now could I tell what those rewards are that Christ hath prepared, and will one day bestow upon those that do for him in faith and love in this world, I should therein also say more than now I dare or ought; yet this let me say in general, they are such as should make us leap to think on, and that we should remember with exceeding joy, and never think that it is contrary to the Christian faith, to rejoice and be glad for that which yet we understand not (Matt 5:11,12; Luke 6:23). ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be,’ &c. But ‘every man that hath this hope in him,’ namely, that he shall be more than here he can imagine, ‘purifieth himself even as he is pure’ (1 John 3:2,3). Things promised when not revealed to be known by us while here, are therefore not made known, because too big and wonderful. When Paul was up in paradise, he heard unspeakable words not possible for man to utter (2 Cor 12:3,4). Wherefore, a reward I find, and that laid up in heaven, but what it is I know not, neither is it possible for any here to know it any further, than by certain general

words of God, such as these, praise, honour, glory, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory, thrones, judging of angels, a kingdom, with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, &c. (1 Cor 4:5; 1 Peter 1:7; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; Matt 25:34-36). Wherefore, to both these objections, let me yet answer thus a few words. Though thy modesty or thy opinion will not suffer thee to look for a reward for what thou dost here for thy Lord, by the faith and love of the gospel; yea, though in the day of judgment thou shouldst there slight all thou didst on earth for thy Lord, saying, When, Lord, when did we do it? he will answer, Then, even then when ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me (Matt 25:37-40).

The Third Objection. But is not the reward that God hath promised to his saints, for their good works to be enjoyed only here?

Answer. 1. For concerning holy walking, according to God's command, yieldeth even here abundance of blessed fruits, as he saith, 'in keeping of them *there is* great reward,' and again, 'this man shall be blessed in his deed,' that is, now, even in this time, as he saith in another place; for indeed there is so much goodness and blessedness to be found in a holy and godly life, that were a man to have nothing hereafter, the present comfort and glory that lieth as the juice in the grape, in all things rightly done for God, it were sufficient to answer all our travail and self-denial in our work of faith and labour of love, to do the will of God.²⁵

2. Dost thou love thy friends, dost thou love thine enemies, dost thou love thy family or relations, or the church of God? then cry for strength from heaven, and for wisdom, and a heart from heaven to walk wisely before them. For if a man be remiss, negligent, and careless

²⁵ Godliness, saith Paul, has the 'promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' This should be more dwelt upon by our ministers, as Bunyan sets the example. The mind of a Christian has the richest enjoyments, however his body may be persecuted, for over that only the enemy has power. A prison may be the gate of heaven. With God as our Father, a wall of fire round about, and the glory in our midst, 'what can we want beside?'—Ed.

in his conversation, not much mattering whom he offends, displeases, or discourages, by doing this or that, so he may save himself, please his foolish heart, and get this world, or the like, this man hath lost a good report of them that are without, and is fallen into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Tim 3:7). He is fallen into reproach, and is slighted, disdained, both he, his profession, and all he says, either by way of reproof, rebuke, or exhortation: physician, cure thyself, say all to such a one; this man is a sayer, but not a doer, say they; he believeth not what he says; yea, religion itself is made to stink by this man's ungodly life. This is he that hardens his children, that stumbleth the world, that grieveth the tender and godly Christian; but I say, he that walketh uprightly, that tenders²⁶ the name of God, the credit of the gospel, and the welfare of others, seeking with Paul, not his own profit, but the profit of others, that they may be saved; this man holds forth the Word of life, this man is a good savour of Christ amongst them that are saved; yea, may prove, by so doing, the instrument in God's hand of the salvation of many souls.

3. This is the way to be clear from the blood of all men, the way not to be charged with the ruin and everlasting misery of poor immortal souls. Great is the danger that attends an ungodly life, or an ungodly action, by them that profess the gospel (Jer 2:33). When wicked men learn to be wicked of professors, when professors cause the enemies of God to blaspheme, doubtless sad and woeful effects must needs be the fruit of so doing (2 Sam 12:14). How many in Israel were destroyed for that which Aaron, Gideon, and Manasseh, unworthily did in their day? (Exo 32:25; Judg 8:24-27). A godly man, if he take not heed to himself, may do that in his life that may send many to everlasting burnings, when he himself is in everlasting bliss. But on the contrary, let men walk with God, and there they shall be excused; the blood of them that perish shall lie at their own door, and thou shalt be clear. 'I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*,' saith Paul

²⁶ To tender; to care for, to guard. 'He had provoked others to tender and seek the glory of God.'—*Udal*. Not frequently used in this sense.—Ed.

(Acts 20:26). And again, ‘your blood be upon your own heads, I *am* clean’ (Acts 18:6). Yea, he that doth thus, shall leave in them that perish an accusing conscience, even begotten by his good conversation, and by that they shall be forced to justify God, his people, and way, in the day of their visitation; in the day when they are descending into the pit to the damned (1 Peter 2:12).

4. This is the way to maintain always the answer, the echoing answer of a good conscience in thy own soul. Godliness is of great use in this way; for the man that hath a good conscience to Godward, hath a continual feast in his own soul: while others say there is casting down, he shall say there is lifting up; for he shall save the humble person (Job 22:23-30). Some indeed, in the midst of their profession, are reproached, smitten, and condemned of their own heart, their conscience still biting and stinging of them, because of the uncleanness of their hands, and they cannot lift up their face unto God; they have not the answer of a good conscience toward him, but must walk as persons false to their God, and as traitors to their own eternal welfare; but the godly upright man shall have the light shine upon his ways, and he shall take his steps in butter and honey. ‘The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever’ (Isa 32:17). ‘If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things; beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God’ (1 John 3:20-22).

5. The godly man that walketh with God, that chiefly careth to do the work that God hath allotted him to do for his name in this world, he hath not only these advantages, but further, he hath as it were a privilege of power with God, he can sway much with him; as it is said of Jacob, as a prince he had power with God to prevail in times of difficulty (Gen 32:28). And so again, it is said of Judah, being faithful with the saints, he ruled with God (Hosea 11:12). How many times did that good man Moses turn away the wrath of God from the many thousands of Israel; yea, as it were, he held the hands of God, and staved off the judgments not once nor twice; the effectual

fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (2 Sam 5:10). One man that walketh much with God, may work wonders in this very thing; he may be a means of saving whole countries and kingdoms from those judgments their sins deserve. How many times, when Israel provoked the Lord to anger, did he yet defer to destroy them? and the reason of that forbearance, he tells them it was for David’s sake; for my servant David’s sake I will not do it. As the Lord said also concerning Paul, ‘Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee’; that is, to save their lives from the rage of the sea (Acts 27:24). Yea, when a judgment is not only threatened, but the decree gone forth for its execution, then godly upright men may sometimes cause the very decree itself to cease without bringing forth (Zech 2:1-3). Or else may so time the judgment that is decreed, that the church shall best be able to bear it (Matt 24:20).

6. The man that is tender of God’s glory in this world, still ruling and governing his affairs by the Word, and desirous to be faithful to the work and employment that God hath appointed him to do for his name; that man shall still be let into the secrets of God; he shall know that which God will reserve and hide from many; ‘Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do,’ saith the Lord?— ‘For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,’ &c. (Gen 18:17,19). So again, ‘The secret of the Lord *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant’ (Psa 25:14). ‘And to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright*, will I shew the salvation of God’ (Psa 50:23). Such a man shall have things new as well as old. His converse with the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, shall be turned into a kind of familiarity; he shall be led into the Word, and shall still increase in knowledge: when others shall be stinted and look with old faces, being black and dry as a stick, he shall be like a fatted calf, like the tree that is planted by the rivers of water, his flesh shall be fresh as the flesh of a child, and God will renew the face of his soul.

7. If any escape public calamities, usually they are such as are very tender of the name of

God, and that make it their business to walk before him. They either escape by being mercifully taken away before it, or by being safely preserved in the midst of the judgment, until the indignation be overpast. Therefore God saith in one place, the 'righteous are taken away from the evil *to come*' (Isa 57:1). But if not so, as all be not, then they shall have their life for a prey (Jer 39:15-18). Caleb and Joshua escaped all the plagues that befel to Israel in the wilderness, for they followed God (Num 14:24). Somewhat of this you have also in that scripture, 'Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be, ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger' (Zeph 2:3). According to this is that in Luke, 'Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man' (Luke 21:36). When a man's ways please the Lord, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him. Marvellous is the work of God in the preservation of his saints that are faithful with him, when dangers and calamities come; as Joseph, David, Jeremiah, and Paul, with many others, may appear. 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh' (Job 5:19-21).

8. If afflictions do overtake thee, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, yet those afflictions shall not befall thee for those causes for which they befall the slothful and backsliding Christian; neither shall they have that pinching and galling operation upon thee, as on those who have left their first love and tenderness for God's glory in the world.

(1.) Upon the faithful upright man, though he also may be corrected and chastised for sin, yet, I say, he abiding close with God, afflictions come rather for trial and for the exercise of grace received, than as rebukes for this or that wickedness; when upon the backsliding heartless Christian these things shall come from

fatherly anger and displeasure, and that for their sins against him. Job did acknowledge himself a sinner, and that God therefore might chastise him: but yet he rather believed it was chiefly for the trial of his grace, as indeed, and in truth, it was (Job 7:20, 23:10). 'He is a perfect man,' saith God to Satan, 'and one that feareth God, and escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause' (Job 2:3). God will not say thus of every one when affliction is laid upon them, though they yet may be his children; but rather declareth and pronounceth that it is for their transgressions, because they have wickedly departed from him (Psa 39:11, 38:1-4).

(2.) Now, affliction arising from these two causes, their effects in the manner of their working, though grace turns them both for good, is very different one from the other; he who hath been helped to walk with God, is not assaulted with those turnings and returnings of guilt when he is afflicted, as he who hath basely departed from God; the one can plead his integrity, when the other blusheth for shame. See both these cases in one person, even that goodly beloved David. When the Lord did rebuke him for sin, then he cries, O blood guiltiness, O 'cast me not away from thy presence' (Psa 51:11). But when he at another time knew himself guiltless, though then also sorely afflicted, behold with what boldness he turns his face unto God; 'O Lord, my God,' saith he, 'if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; [yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy] let the enemy persecute my soul, and take *it*; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah,' &c. (Psa 7:3-5).

This, therefore, must needs be a blessed help in distress, for a man to have a good conscience when affliction hath taken hold on him; for a man then, in his looking behind and before, to return with peace to his own soul, that man must needs find honey in this lion, that can plead his innocency and uprightness. All the people curse me, saith Jeremiah, but that without a cause, for I have neither lent nor

taken on usury; which it seems was a sin at that day (Jer 15:10).

9. When men are faithful with God in this world, to do the work he hath appointed for them, by this means a dying bed is made easier, and that upon a double account. (1.) By reason of that present peace such shall have, even in their time of languishing. (2.) By reason of the good company such shall have at their departure.

(1.) Such souls usually abound in present peace; they look not back upon the years they have spent with that shame as the idle and slothful Christian does. 'Remember now, Lord, - how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart' (Isa 38:3). Blessed is the man that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness (Psa 41:1-3).

Ah! when God makes the bed,²⁷ he must needs lie easy that weakness hath cast thereon; a blessed pillow hath that man for his head, though to all beholders it is hard as a stone. Jacob, on his deathbed, had two things that made it easy:—(a) The faith of his going to rest, 'I am to be gathered unto my people'; that is, to the blessed that have yielded up the ghost before me (Gen 49:29). (b) The remembrance of the sealings of the countenance of God upon him, when he walked before him in the days of his pilgrimage: when Joseph came to see him, before he left this world, Israel, saith the Word, 'strengthened himself and sat upon his bed'; and the first word that dropt out of this good man's mouth, O how full of glory was it! 'God

²⁷ How tenderly does the Psalmist exhibit the love of God to his chosen under this figure, 'Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.' He will never leave nor forsake them; and, when heart and flesh shall fail, he will guide them and receive them to his glory. 'Wonders of grace to God belong.' Christian women! with such an example, can you hesitate to go and make the bed of a poor sick and afflicted neighbour?—Ed.

Almighty appeared unto me,' saith he, 'at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,' &c. (Gen 48:1-3). O blessed discourse for a sick bed, when those can talk thus that lie thereon, from as true a ground as Jacob; but thus will God make the bed of those who walk close with him in this world.

(2.) The dying bed of such a man is made easy by reason also of the good company such shall have at their departure; and that is, (1) The angels; (b) Their good works they have done for God in the world.

(a) The angels of heaven shall wait upon them, as they did upon blessed Lazarus, to carry them into Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). I know all that go to paradise are by these holy ones conducted thither; but yet, for all that, such as die under the clouds for unchristian walking with God, may meet with darkness in that day—may go heavily hence, notwithstanding that (Job 5:14). Yea, their bed may be as uncomfortable to them as if they lay upon nothing but the cords, and their departing from it, as to appearance, more uncomfortable by far. But as for those who have been faithful to their God, they shall see before them, shall know their tabernacles, '*shall be in peace*' (Job 5:24), 'the everlasting gates shall be opened unto them,' in all which, from earth, they shall see the glory (Acts 7:55,56).²⁸ I once was told a story of what happened at a good man's death, the which I have often remembered, with wonderment and gladness. After he had lain for some time sick, his hour came that he must depart, and behold, while he lay, as we call it, drawing on, to the amazement of the mourners, there was heard about his bed such blessed and ravishing music as they never heard before; which also continued till his soul departed, and then began to cease, and grow, as to its sound, as if it was departing the house, and so still seemed to go further and further off, till at last they could hear it not longer. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into

²⁸ 'Jesus can make a dying bed
 Feel soft as downy pillows are,
 While on his breast I lean my head,
 And breath my life out sweetly there.'
 —Dr. Watts.

the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him': behold, then, how God can make thy sick bed easy! (1 Cor 2:9).

(b) A dying bed is made easy by those good works that men have done in their life for the name of God: 'Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them'; yea, and go before them too (Rev 14:13). No man need be afraid to be accompanied by good deeds to heaven. Be afraid of sins, they are like bloodhounds at the heels; and be sure thy sins will find thee out, even thee who hast not been pardoned in the precious blood of Christ; but as for those who have submitted themselves to the righteousness of God for their justification, and who have, through faith and love to his name, been frequent in deeds of righteousness, they shall not appear empty before their God, 'their works,' their good works, 'follow them.' These shall enter into rest, and walk with Christ in white. I observe, when Israel had passed over

Jordan, they were to go to possess between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, from whence was to be pronounced the blessing and the cursing (Deut 27). The gospel meaning of which I take to be as followeth: I take Jordan to be a type of death: and these two mountains, with the cursing and blessing, to be a type of the judgment that comes on every man, so soon as he goes from hence— 'and after death the judgment'—so that he that escapes the cursing, he alone goes into blessedness; but he that Mount Ebal smiteth, he falls short of heaven! O! none knows the noise that doth sound in sinners' souls from Ebal and Gerizim when they are departed hence; yet it may be they know not what will become of them till they hear these echoings from these two mountains: but here the good man is sure Mount Gerizim doth pronounce him blessed. Blessed, then, are the dead that die in the Lord, for their works will follow them till they are past all danger. These are the Christian's train that follow him to rest; these are a good man's company that follow him to heaven.