THE SAINTS' EVERLASTING REST, ABRIDGED

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The Saints' Everlasting Rest, Abridged by Richard Baxter & Isaac Crewdson

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BY

RICHARD BAXTER.

Abridged by

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PREFACE.

BAXTER'S "Saints' Everlasting Rest," in its original form, has been singularly blessed to the awakening and conversion of many, and it would be easy to enumerate illustrious characters, eminently pious Christians, to whom it has been peculiarly useful,—animating them on their heavenward journey. The names of Allein and Janeway can hardly be omitted. Addison, Barrow, Boyle, and Usher, were among those who highly valued the writings of Baxter; and it was at the earnest importunity of Archbishop Usher that he wrote his "Call to the Unconverted;" respecting which (in a paper found after his death,) Baxter says, "This little book God hath blessed beyond all that I have written, EXCEPT THE SAINTS' REST."

The Editor, in preparing this work, has used Fawcett's Abridgment of Baxter's Saints' Rest, of which he trusts the most valuable part has

been retained. In a few instances a little alteration has been made in the arrangement, and occasionally an expression varied. He has been induced to present this compendium to the public, in the hope that, being thus reduced to a samller compass, it may find its way into a still wider circle; and, through the Divine Blessing, be yet more extensively instrumental in producing fruit unto holiness, the end whereof is everlasting life.

Should any Reader be offended with the language in some of the following pages, the Editor would beg of him to consider whether it has not the sanction of an Authority not to be questioned? If it is the language of our Lord and his Apostles, is it either wise or safe, to forbear the use of such expressions, as, we must conclude, do most fitly describe the awful realities of another world? On this subject, the Editor would also refer him to the last paragraph of the Sixth Chapter.

Ardwick, near Manchester, 1829.

THE

SAINTS' EVERLASTING REST.

CHAPTER I.

Address to the Reader, with some Account of the Nature of the Saints' Rest.

READER, whatever thou art, young or old, rich or poor, I entreat thee, and charge thee, in the name of thy Lord, who will shortly call thee to a reckoning, and judge thee to thy everlasting unchangeable state, that thou give not these things the reading only, and so dismiss them with a bare approbation; but that thou set upon this work, and take GOD in CHRIST for thy only REST, and fix thy heart upon HIM above all.—May the living God, who is the *rest* of his saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual and heavenly, that loving Him, and delighting in Him, may be the work of our lives; and that neither I that write, nor thou that readest this book, may ever be turned from this path of life; *lest, a promise being left us of entering into this rest, we should come short of it*, through our own unbelief or negligence.

The Lord reveal to me, what I may reveal to you! The Lord open some light, and shew both you and me our inheritance! Not as to Balaam only, whose eyes were open to see the goodness of Jacob's tents, and Israel's tabernacles, where he had no portion. Not as to Moses only, who saw the land which he never entered; but as the pearl was revealed to the merchant in the gospel, who rested not till he had sold all that he had, and bought it; and, as heaven was opened to Stephen, which he was shortly to enter, and the glory shewed him, which should be his own possession!

The things contained in heavenly rest are such as these:—a ceasing from means of grace;—a perfect freedom from all evils;—the nearest enjoyment of God, the chief good;—and a sweet and constant action, of all the powers of body and soul, in this enjoyment of God.

1. One thing contained in heavenly rest is, the ceasing from means of grace. When we are at our journey's end, we have done with the way. *Whether prophecies, they shall fail; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge*, it also, so far as it had the nature of means, *shall vanish away*.[1] There shall be no more prayer, because no more necessity; but the full enjoyment of what we prayed for:

1 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

neither shall we need to fast, and weep, and watch any more, being out of the reach of sin and temptations. Preaching is done; the ministry of man ceaseth; the labourers are called in, because the harvest is gathered, the tares burned, and the work finished; the unregenerate past hope, and the saints past fear for ever.

2. There is in heavenly rest, a perfect freedom from all evils. In heaven there is *nothing that defileth*, or is unclean. All *that* remains *without*;[2] and there is no such thing as grief or sorrow known there. *We did weep and lament, when the world did rejoice; but our sorrow is turned into joy, and our joy shall no man take from us.*[3]

3. The principal part of this rest is, our nearest enjoyment of God, the chief good. And here, reader, wonder not if I be at a loss. If men and angels should study to speak the blessedness of that state in one word, what could they say beyond this, that it is the nearest enjoyment of God! Oh! the full joys offered to a believer, in that one sentence of Christ, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me!"[4] They indeed are happy, that

2 Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15.—3 John xvi. 20, 22.—4 John xvii. 24.