

that eternal rest which they have gained ; for they are witnesses to us, unimpeachable witnesses, of the truth of the Bible, of the power of divine grace, of the practicability of a truly religious life, and of the blessedness of *their* end, who select the service of God and the yoke of Christ, in preference to the pleasures of the world and the bondage of sin. The voice of God speaks to us through their instrumentality. Through *them* He calls upon us, "to lay aside every weight and the sin which most easily besets us, and to run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith."* Through *them* He addresses us, now, as candidates for the heavenly prize, and says—"Be not slothful but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Let us then with the permission and blessing of God, contemplate for a few moments, the *examples* which are held up to our view, and the *exhortation* which is given in regard to them.

I. In the description which the text presents of these persons, two points especially demand attention ; their *privilege* and their *character*. Their *privilege* is briefly summed up, in that part of the text which describes them as "inheriting the promises." The promises of God, present to the mind a wide field of contemplation. In that precious deposit of truth, the word of God, we have promises that relate to time, promises that relate to eternity ; promises of spiritual and promises of temporal blessings ; promises that refer to the Church of God collectively, and promises that refer to its individual members—to their peculiar trials—their appropriate duties—their exalted hopes and expectations.

There is, first, that great promise of the Gospel, which is in fact, the foundation of every other pro-

* Heb. 12. 1-2.

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