

At the very end of J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, Sam, Frodo's servant and companion in the long perilous journey to destroy the one great ring of power, bids his master a tearful farewell at the Grey Havens, where Frodo takes ship to leave Middle Earth; and then Sam turns homeward, accompanied by his friends Merry and Pippin. Merry and Pippin part from him to ride on to Buckland. And then we read:

But Sam turned to Bywater, and so came back up the Hill, as day was ending once more. And he went on, and there was yellow light, and fire within; and the evening meal was ready, and he was expected. And Rose drew him in, and set him in his chair, and put little Elanor upon his lap. He drew a deep breath. "Well, I'm back," he said.

I believe that our entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be like this. After the dangers, toils, and snares that we have passed through, we will at last come home! And the light of God will shine upon us, and the warmth of God's love will surround us and fill our hearts until they seem ready to break for joy! The festive-board will groan with the abundant provisions of God's grace, and our faces will shine as we feast on the good things He has prepared for us. We will sit down in comfortable throne-chairs, and we will be reunited with our dear loved ones who have waited for our coming. And we will be able to breathe one great final sigh of relief, because we will be home for ever!

Are these merely pretty sentiments and wishful thoughts? NO! God Himself has promised us such an entrance into His eternal kingdom!

God has provided us with everything necessary for life and godliness, so that we might exert ourselves toward spiritual maturity, and in so doing, receive assurances that we are partakers of God's grace.

Exertion toward spiritual maturity assures us of effectiveness and productiveness in the Christian life.

Exertion toward spiritual maturity assures us of God's preservation for as long as we live.

Exertion toward spiritual maturity assures us of a rich welcome into Christ's eternal kingdom.

Do we wish such assurances? God has shown us the way to receive them.

God has given us everything necessary for life and godliness. By faith we