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Rev. Dr. Buell's

ANNIVERSARY, EUCHARISTICAL, AND
HALF-CENTURY

S E R M O N.

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ANNIVERSARY, EUCARISTICAL, AND



S. E. R. M. O. N.

*The import of the Saint's confession, that the Times
of Men are in the hand of God :*

EXHIBITED TO VIEW

IN AN

ANNIVERSARY, EUCHARISTICAL, AND
HALF-CENTURY

S E R M O N ;

Delivered at EAST-HAMPTON, on the LORD'S
DAY, January 1, 1792.

By SAMUEL BUELL, D. D.

. And Pastor of the Church there.

—For He is thy life, and the length of thy days. MOSES.
Having therefore obtained help of God I continue unto this day.

PAUL.

—Knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. PAUL.

—We will remember thy love more than wine. SOLOMON.

*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in
him.* PAUL.

I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. DAVID.

NEW-LONDON : PRINTED BY T. GREEN & SON.

To the flock of Christ in East-Hampton.

THE following Sermon which was primarily designed for your private use, at your request, is made public by the press; whereby it is hoped (that by the blessing of God) it will become useful to others, as well as to you. I suppose one reason why you have desired its publication, may be for the purpose of transmitting down to the rising generation, some signal dispensations of divine Providence and grace in your day: Also, in part, in that 'tis a Half-Century Sermon, it being rare that such an one is preached; I myself never heard, nor saw one: Partly, also, as I hope, for your own instruction and edification. Although I was twice, or more than twice as long as common in the delivery, (being two hours) yet I observed that your attention was kept up and increasing to the end. Under each branch of my discourse I studied precision and brevity, suppressing a flow of thought that I might avoid prolixity; but I found I could not possibly do justice in any tolerable degree, to such a variety of interesting topics, and avoid being lengthy. As to this little piece of mine, I question not, but like the generality of single sermons, after it has had a perusal for once, it will, by some, be laid aside as worn out and forgotten; but "as your times are in the hand of the Lord," I trust you will find something here, that may be useful in all the times that pass over you; that it will especially be useful for Communicants to read after they come from the Lord's-Table; and when you are called to elect a Pastor, if I am then dead, I shall hereby speak to you.—May the Lord continue to own and bless you—and enrich you with all the graces of his Spirit—And may we rejoice together in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, at his appearing. To this end may He bless the following sermon to you, (and also to others) which is the prayer of him who is your servant for Jesus' sake.

SAMUEL BUELL.



Anniversary, &c.

I AM come into this awful and delightful desk at this time with a view to deliver you an Anniversary Eucharistical and Half-Century Sermon. This three-fold occasion will necessarily invite your mediation upon a variety of topics. I shall not undertake that which is beyond the compass of my power, viz. fully to ascertain how far forth we stand connected with things past, present and to come, but I shall lead you to see, that as called into existence, "your times are in the hand of God"—That you are acting a part upon the stage of life, as in a probationary state for an endless eternity—That you will soon exchange worlds, and meet the august realities of an everlasting state—That preparation therefor, is of the highest possible importance—That you are under infinite obligations to live to God, and to acknowledge Him in all that variety of dispensation, wherein he passes before you; suffice it to say, at present, I shall invite your run of meditation correspondent to the three-fold occasion of my preaching at this time. While a number of texts have been revolved in my mind, adapted to the present purpose, I have elected those words which you may read in

P S A L M xxxi. 15. *My Times are in thy Hand.*

THIS Psalm was pen'd by the Royal Prophet David in his advanced age, and when exposed to the lols of life. In this situation he had recourse by faith to his God, and soon became the subject of apprehended safety, triumphant joy, and divine gloriation in Him. He had just said, "thou art my God," my God in covenant with me, and then adds, "my times are in thy Hand." The Psalmist makes use of the plural number,
" my

“my times,” that is, all the events of time, and the timing of them; prosperity, adversity, life and death, all the changing scenes of life from the first æra or beginning of time, to the end thereof with us, are in God’s hand. That is, in the hand of divine power, and under the all-disposing providence of God: for this figurative mode of expression, ascribing a hand to God, who is a Spirit, and hath not bodily parts, is to be understood only as express’d by way of analogy or allusion, and principally imports divine power and providential influence, or the exertment of God’s power and perfections on the creature.* The words of our text contain an excellent confession of faith, made by the “man after God’s own heart:” A confession highly worthy of our imitation, both as to the matter and manner thereof; truly believing that “our times are in the hand of God.” In as much as we *all* give our assent to this interesting truth, the proof thereof at this time may be the less needful.

Therefore in discoursing further upon the words, it is proposed by the assistance of divine grace,

I. To point out some signal times and capital events to which the words of our text may refer, or will aptly apply.

II. To consider the import of the confession expressed in our text, “My times are in thy hand.”

III. The Improvement will follow suitable to the respective occasions of this discourse.

I. In the first place then, I am to point out some signal times and capital events, to which the words of our text may refer, or will aptly apply. Here we may first observe, that the first existence of man and beginning of time with him is in the Lord’s hand. Let philosophers dispute about the origin, nature and essence of the soul of man—when first formed by the creating power of the Father of Spirits, and when first united to the body; and let divines determine with St. Augustin, that the soul is
created

* Isa. 59. 1. Job 2. 10. &c.

created in infusing, and in infusing it is created; *all* must agree that there is the beginning of time with man. Self-existence, independency and eternity, as being from everlasting to everlasting, is peculiar to the great I AM, or Jehovah. As to man, a creature of time, in connexion with eternity, he is called into existence and is born in the set time that God designed and ordered, as doing all things "according to the counsel of his will:" Hence the royal inspir'd Preacher tells us, "there is a time to be born." Thus it hath been with reference to *all* that have come into existence and been born in the old or new world; or that shall till time will be no more. God "hath made of one blood *all* nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath determined"—or *both marked out* in his eternal and unerring counsel *the times* fore allotted [to each] in their respective order, and appointed the several boundaries of their *habitation*—to this one great end, that they might be excited to seek after the Lord their maker.

I proceed—the time of the new birth, and for the effectual application, or actual bestowment of salvation *which is by Christ Jesus*, is in the Lord's hand. This implies the mission of the Holy Spirit, his preparatory work, (in the adult)—his regenerating act, or his implanting a principle of spiritual life and grace—and effectual calling by his powerful efficiency:—by all which, the happy subjects thereof, are now made *partakers of Christ*, and brought into the *fellowship of the Son of God*: they are now *in him*, "who of God is made unto *them* wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." They now through faith receive the *atonement*, and are not only justified and sanctified, but have also "power given them to become the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is given to them to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode, and as a divine supernatural spring of life and action. They share in all the benefits of redemption by Jesus Christ, and are crowned with

with the loving-kindness of God, in the life which now is, but most eminently in the life which is to come.— Now the time for *all this*, is in the Lord's hand. He hath his set time therefor, "a day of power," "the day of espousal," of joy and gladness, "the accepted time, the day of salvation:" the hour now comes, in which the dead are made to hear and live. They must have preservation in life, till the happy moment of their spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ. The Lord said unto them when in their blood live: (Heb.) "I said unto thee live in thy blood."* They must live until the fixed time for God to manifest his infinite love to them. Then the decree brings forth by all-powerful and all-glorious operation. A work this is of equal necessity as that of impetration or procurement of redemption. This work of application, is therefore a work of the last importance: — What is Christ to me, unless he is mine?

Again, Times of increasing light, for transformation —for the formal sealing the Holy Spirit, and thereby assurance of divine love—and for sensible nearness to, and solemn, delightful fellowship and communion with the divine Trinity—and for abounding solid joy and peace divine, are in the Lord's hand. These spiritual blessings, these divine beatitudes lie inwrap'd in precious promises, as rich veins of gold and silver do in a mine, and by the experiment or power of faith, become inlaid and clustered together in the heart of the real Christian. Every true convert as the subject of divine illumination, has a spiritual knowledge of the glorious objects of divine faith and love; and possesses some degree of peace and joy divine, at least, some times, or if under desertion, is mourning the want thereof. For otherwise, how can it be, that "old things are passed away, and all things are become new?" Every true believer is the subject of the *object seal* of the Holy Spirit, which distinguishes the person from others, as now sanctified and set apart for God and his service. The *formal sealing* of
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* Ezek. 16. 6.

the Holy Spirit, is, his giving a sure and certain testimony to the reality of that work of grace He hath wrought in our souls, and to our interest in Christ, and our eternal salvation, according to the promises, "that are yea and amen in him, to the glory of God." Now fears and doubts are exiled, and the love of God ratified and cleared up to the soul. This certificate brought from the throne of mercy, by the blessed Spirit sealed with Christ's blood, utters into the heart light and life, joy and peace divine, and even heaven upon earth. This formal seal of the Holy Spirit never precedes, but is consequent upon believing, as the Apostle saith to the *Ephesians*, "after ye believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise."* Sometimes it follows immediately upon the soul's first closing with Christ. The happy young convert hath such powerful illumination, clear views of divine objects, visible actings of grace, and sensibility of divine love as give a comfortable or full assurance of an interest in Christ, and the promises. Unutterably happy the portion of such converts, if they never lose their first love—persevere in a walk under the cloudless shines of Jehovah's precious countenance, possessing the power and comfort of religion, till time with them is no more. But commonly young converts are the subjects of light and darkness hopes and fears, and are often well nigh, or quite giving up their hope of a saving change, after their first light and comfort. If for a time they think their mountain stands strong, they shall never be moved, yet presently they are in darkness and trouble again. Nothing can, or ought to give satisfaction in this case, short of increasing light and sensible actings of grace. That which is now wanting is the formal sealing of the Holy Spirit, which is frequently given after exercises have run high, and the soul has followed hard after God.—"Then shall we know, when we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning;"† that after

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* Eph. i. 13.

† Hosea, 6. 3.—Psalm 30. 5.

a night of darkness, perplexity and weeping, the morning comes with beams of light and joy, leading on to meridian splendor, and fulness of bliss, in duration eternal. The Lord's people who make business of religion, and keep up a close walk with Him, find more sensible nearness to him, and more intimate communion with him at some particular seasons than they enjoy in a constant way. Times in which, comparatively, (as *Job* speaks) they only hear with the ear, and times, in which they see with the eye.* The Father of mercies and of lights raying into their souls, they have encreasing, spiritual knowledge; and thereby increasing views of the true moral beauty and infinite amiableness of divine objects and divine things. They behold the moral perfection of Christ, the infinite excellency and amiableness of his person, and his sufficiency as mediator; and under clear and lively views of his divine and mediatorial glory, they find and feel a divine gloriation in him, and ravishing sweetness, and heavenly joy in his excellent and transcendent love. They behold him as "altogether lovely," having all desirable excellencies in him. The Lord's people now behold his glory shining in all his works; in special the harmony and infinite glory of his redeeming attributes as manifested in the face, in the Person and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the astonishing work of man's redemption by him. They see "that mercy and truth have met together; that righteousness and peace have embraced each other.—In Christ all the divine attributes appear united in the most glorious manner. When mercy shines and triumphs in infinite grace and glory; when love divine stoops down to the deeps of misery to fetch poor, lost, justly condemned sinners to the heights of eternal glory, inflexible, severe and awful justice, and absolute purity and holiness sit on the throne of glory, and triumph in infinite eternal honour. If a Saint were to speak out and tell us his own experiences at such an hour as this, might we not expect to hear
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* *Job* 42. 5.

him say, " I see and feel, I am before God, and He ap-
 " pears upon a seat of majesty, self-sufficient and all-
 " sufficient, the fountain of being, perfection and bles-
 " sedness. He appears in the glory of his infinite and
 " adorable sovereignty; the supreme of Beings, sitting
 " on a throne of grace, in the glory of his holiness. The
 " sight of his several awful endearing glories sink me
 " into deep self-abasement, I shrink, as it were, into
 " nothing before Him, and feel myself less than an at-
 " tom. In the view of the infinite inflexible justice of
 " God, and his absolute and glorious holiness, I trem-
 " ble before the bright, the pure and blended flame, and
 " feel abashed and confounded at my own infinite un-
 " likeness to that spotless rectitude and perfection. Al-
 " though in a flame of supreme love to divine objects,
 " yet I find myself far, very far from perfection in holi-
 " ness, or any one grace. I never saw so much of my
 " own infinite vileness, and the want of conformity to
 " the moral excellencies of God; nor did I ever loath
 " myself for sin as I now do. I never saw sin so contra-
 " ry to all that is in God; to his justice, to his holiness,
 " to his grace, and to his glory. In the view of the
 " boundless goodness, love, and grace of God, I am
 " filled with an overflowing admiration and amazement,
 " that he should open the inexhaustible stores and trea-
 " sures of that goodness to enrich and bless forever such
 " an infinitely vile sinner. I stand speechless, and am
 " ready, as it were, to fall dead at the sight of my own
 " vile ingratitude and base returns to Him; That the
 " great I AM looks down from the height of his sanctu-
 " ary upon me, as with a look of love and compassion,
 " and that I have so much overlooked such stoops and
 " reaches of boundless love and mercy." The soul now
 under realizing views of the glorious wisdom and holiness
 of God, and his transcendent and infinite goodness, his
 love and grace in his son Jesus Christ, feels an unutterable
 joy and satisfaction in that boundless ocean of good and
 perfection, and does, as it were, open, expand and stretch
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itself to grasp as much of it, as it can receive for the present. The light which now transforms the soul into the moral or holy image of God, and bows it low, as submissive to his sovereign will, elevates it to the top of *Mount Pisgab*; so that all the world becomes but a dark valley below the feet: And the soul now dwells on high, in the possession of an all-sufficing good, for time and eternity, while it seems swallowed up in God, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness. The soul is now inspired with undissembled gratitude, adoration and praise; but it seems to be a sort of rashness and boldness for a creature so vile, so feeble and insufficient therefor, to attempt the celebration of the praises of a Being so infinitely great and glorious in holiness, as Jehovah now appears to the view of the soul; yet a sight of the moral beauty and infinite amiableness of his perfections, sensibility of his infinite love, and of infinite obligation to Him, seem to have a sort of an omnipotent efficacy and sweet constraint in them, so that the soul cannot refrain "crying, Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The soul wishes the whole creation fired with praise, as *David* in some of his last Psalms, is ready to, or does call upon the holy angels to afford their welcome assistance in this joyful work. At the same time it appears to the soul a reality, that a whole eternity of the sublimest praises raised and offered by countless millions of the brightest and most exalted intelligences that do or can exist, would be perfect silence before Jehovah, compared with his infinite incomprehensible greatness and glory. "Now" (says the soul) I dwell at home in God, and dwell in love divine. Now I become the subject of the formal sealing of the Holy Spirit: I now have a new name in a white stone, which no man knoweth, saving him that receiveth it: Now I have the witness of my own spirit or conscience and the testimony of the Divine Spirit joined therewith, giving assurance that I am an adopted child of God, and an heir of eternal glory." How much so ever there may be of a medi-

um or a mediate witness, it now at least, seems to the soul that there is an immediate testimony of the Holy Spirit, giving full assurance of the love of God. I need not light a candle to behold the sun-shines; nor will I admit that to be the effect of the Holy Spirit's operation, that will not bear the trial of the written word of God. "Never had I before this happy hour (says the faint) such clear light, and solid permanent comfort, such a sabbath of rest and perfection of peace in believing, such a solemn and delightful gracious communion with the divine Trinity. I find a new engagedness of heart and disposition therefor, and consecrate myself afresh to the service and glory of the adorable TRINITY forever and ever." Whatever others may imagine, the Lord's people well know, that *these* divine manifestations and operations, communications and prelibations of future immense and immortal glory, are of and from the Lord; and that the timing thereof is in his sovereign hand.

I add, those changes and vicissitudes of time which take place among men, with reference to prosperity and adversity are ordered by, and are in the hand of God.—The Psalmist makes use of the plural number *times*, as expressive of vicissitudes.—The world is a rolling wheel, and every thing in it, even those things that appear most stable, may suffer change and mutation. Nobles, Princes, States, Kingdoms and Empires; Cities, Towns, Families and Individuals may appear for the present in a flourishing situation, and seem to swim on the smooth face of pleasure; wait but a little while and the scene is all changed; the Lord, in whose hand our times are, turns a leaf in the volume of his decrees, and those who sung for joy of heart, are suddenly plunged in misery and sorrow.—Others that have long groaned under burdens, sighed in misery under painful sufferings, as hastily leap from them to liberty, light and comfort. The Lord's people have new scenes almost continually opening to view; all cannot exhibit visibility of change as *Jab, Joseph*

Jeph and many others have done ; but all are acquainted with vicissitudes. — Happy they who are habitually and actually prepared to meet all the changing scenes of life, “ and stand secure amidst a falling world :” And who can truly say,

“ Through all the changing scenes of life,
 “ In trouble and in joy,
 “ The praises of my God shall still
 “ My heart and tongue employ.”

All this strange variety of changes rolling on in perpetual succession, is the work of God ; He forms the light of prosperity, and creates the darkness of adversity ; good and evil come from his hand.

Moreover, the time of deliverance from trials and afflictive ills is in God’s hand. The Lord’s people in this their state of probation often share in heavy trials ; sometimes they are grievously persecuted ; sometimes they have to conflict with terrible temptations, keen privations under the loss of their dearest outward comforts ; and sometimes are lamenting the absence of the Comforter. Their exercises often run high in a great variety of respects ; they learn that in the “ world they shall have trouble,” and the cross is the way to the crown. The kind, the degree, and the duration of their suffering afflictive ill is in the Lord’s hand, and he hath a set time for their deliverance as really as for Zion’s prosperity ; and as he had for the liberation of his people from *Egypt* and *Babylon*

I add, the time for a person to exercise faith and repentance is in the Lord’s hand. Sinners under the gospel are called upon to exercise repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they escape eternal death, and possess eternal life. For this infinitely important purpose the Lord allows sinners a space of time, as he gave *Jazabel* a space to repent. The day of grace hath differing periods ; is sometimes longer and
 sometimes

sometimes shorter, as the day of life is. We say the sinner's time for faith and repentance is in the hand of God, not eternity in the hand of God for this purpose; for beyond time, in eternity, there is no repentance unto life; inspiration assures us that all beyond time is eternal; therefore if the sinner goes into the eternal state without grace, he will abide without grace forever. Here it may be observed, that our day of grace may expire before the day of life; as the *stalk* may continue after the *flower* be dropt off. There may be a judicial weighing of the sinner, a *menetekal*, that puts an eternal period to his day of grace. God in just and righteous judgment may give up disobedient sinners to a state of blindness and hardness of heart, and by oath bar them out of rest forever. Hence then how exceedingly precious is *time*, an happy or miserable eternity may depend on the good or ill improvement of the present fleeting moments.

Moreover the time for a person's usefulness on the stage of life is in the Lord's hand. Every person, especially every one that lays claim to the christian character, is indispensably obligated to live to God, and to be useful to society. Obligation is increased by the powers, capacities, talents and stations, with which persons are entrusted for the purpose of serving God, and their generation. Very various are the stations assigned mankind, and as various the services called for; services to be performed for the glorifying of God, and innumerable services to be done for the bodies and souls of men; to promote their secular and civil interests, and their eternal salvation. Some are advanced to the most honorable and important stations in *Church* or *State* for the purpose of usefulness. Many are useful in the humble walk of private life. Others in a two-fold capacity at the same time, or at divers times in different stations. The sovereign Lord of the universe can with infinite ease raise up, qualify and eminently improve a man for a time in a station high, interesting and vastly important,
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and soon improve him in a sphere of action equally high and important. Surprising and inconceivable as the beneficial consequences are, and will be, we may behold the same extraordinary person endowed with rare measures of military skill and prowess, acting the *Hero* in the military line, "for our people, and for the cities of our God," and by his blessing, success, and in consequence crowned with the laurels of victory and triumph over mighty forces, rashly acting the part of opposition to the free enjoyment of liberty and property. We may soon thereupon fix the eye on the same extraordinary Person and view him as enriched with a fund of political knowledge, wisdom and fidelity; elected by a united free people to preside in the chief Chair of *State*, which he fills with honor, adequate to the merit of his reputation, tho' standing so high in national fame, as well as by the just tribute of an universal *Plaudit* by millions in *United States*, which constitute an extensive and growing empire. The late revolution in our own country exemplifies our remark, as affording witness to it by present living example.* The Lord often conveys incomprehensible blessings to men, by the instrumentality of man. Ministers of the gospel have designation to office in a station highly honourable and immensely important, for the grand design of usefulness. They have "the glorious gospel of the blessed God committed to their charge," and are made *guardians of souls* which must exist eternally. They bear an office which was sanctified by *Christ*, who himself bore it, and thereby dignified it forever. The purposes

* If a person exalted so high on the stage of honor, acts the christian *Hero* so as to overcome the mighty force of temptation to self-exaltation, the victory and triumph will be immensely more noble and honorable than can possibly be obtained in the military line or chair of *State*, although the whole world were to be the field of conquest, or the seat of empire.

The victory and triumph of the real christian over death, is infinitely more magnificent, gainful and honourable than all the triumphs ordained by the *Senate of Rome*, in honor to their victorious Generals.

purposes we serve are high and God-like. We are to "gather fruit unto life eternal." If *some* mostly employ their time and talents in the lower sphere of scaffolding work; there are *others* more highly and happily employed as at work upon the Temple, as instrumental in squaring and laying the stones in the spiritual building, "the church of the living God." They are enabled to improve their gifts and exercise their graces with a wise reference to promoting the Redeemer's kingdom among men:— and by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit with their ministrations they "turn sinners to righteousness, and build up saints in faith, holiness and comfort:" and as a gracious reward shall shine as stars of the first magnitude in the kingdom of glory forever. Now the duration of time for usefulness in any station whatsoever is in the Lord's hand. Some have but a short space of time and opportunity allowed them for usefulness in the world; others a longer space.—Some have a long run and series of opportunity for special service, and are eminently useful to a good old age. More eminent usefulness may cease before the expiration of life; yet are the Lord's people useful as long as they can pray and exhibit praise-worthy example. With respect to degrees of usefulness, and the duration of time therefor, the glorious and adorable sovereignty of God is most eminently displayed.

Lastly here, the duration and end of a man's time is in God's hand. "There is a time to die," as well as to be born, and the one, and the other abide unalterably fixed in the vast volume of the divine decrees. We are immortal till the appointed time comes, for the end of time with us; beyond that we cannot possess life for a moment, whether elder or younger. "Man knoweth not his time;" but God as the sovereign Lord of life and death, "hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," and hath fixed the final hour and moment, when time with us, "shall be no more." Henceforth, all will be boundless eternity!

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Thus have we taken a brief survey of the times of men as in the hand of God, and seen how the text will apply : We now proceed,

II. *Secondly*, to consider the import of the saint's confession, that his "times are in God's hand." Now this implies a firm belief of the being and infinite perfections of God. To profess that the times of men are in the hand of God, and yet not to believe the existence of a God, is infinitely absurd. That there is a supreme and eternal Being, and that he is possessed of all infinite perfections, are truths so visible by the light of nature, that St. Paul declares the *heathen* inexcusable that call these truths in question.* Every thing in the natural and moral world—the effects of the exertion of infinite attributes, and the visible accomplishment of the prophecies and promises of scripture demonstrate to the saint that there is a supreme eternal Being, possessed of an assemblage of all infinite possible perfections. Superadded to *all this* the true believer has a spiritual supernatural knowledge of God in Christ, by divine illumination, and a feeling sense of the presence of God ; of his divinity, and the divinity of bible truth ; as every one has that is the happy subject of saving faith.

We proceed, this confession as made by the saint acting in character, implies regeneration, the infusion of grace, and exercise of faith, by the energy of the Holy Spirit. No unregenerate person can make this confession both as to matter and manner, as it ought to be made ; for it supposes the exercise of faith. The psalmist in the exercise of faith, said, "my God," and in the exercise of that faith, he adds, "my times are in thy hand."

I add, this confession, "my times are in thy hand," implies a firm belief and full persuasion of the governing providence of God. The saint has full assurance from divine revelation that the ONE supreme God, the great Creator, is also the governor of the universe : that his providence

* Rom. i. 20, 21.

providence is *universal*, and extends to every individual in the whole system of beings. The faint knows and believes that the divine pages plainly teach us, that God is qualified, by his infinite perfections, for the government of the world; that 'tis necessary that he should govern it, and that he therefore does. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all :"* over all things in the natural world; and he is governor and judge also of the moral world, angels and men,— "and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."† The faint believes and confesses, that every thing which comes to pass is by the ordinative or permissive providence of God.

Again, this confession implies, that the time allowed us here is God's time, and man's talent. To confess that our times are in God's hand, is to acknowledge that we are not lords of the time allowed us; but stewards under him, intrusted by him with time, as a most precious talent, for the improvement of which we are accountable to him. Time ought to be considered as one of the most important trustments committed to us, to be employed in the service of God; and in a way of preparation for eternity. Precious and important we call the talent of time, for the man is yet unborn that can fully weigh and comprehend the worth of it; while on it hangs suspended the weight of worlds eternal: yet there is no one talent so misused and so universally, wretchedly abused by mankind as the talent of time. Shall death-beds tell us what it is to murder time? time that is God's, and in his hand.

Moreover, this confession—as connected with the foregoing words implies a firm belief of protection and safety. The *psalmist* had said in the preceding verse, his enemies had devised to take away his life, he adds, "but I trusted in thee, O Jehovah: I said thou art my God:" Jehovah imports being and eternity, and his name [EL] that follows,

* Psalm 103. 19. † Dan. 4. 35.

follows, translated [God] notes forth his power: Now this "Jehovah, my God," who is Being from everlasting to everlasting, possessed of omnipotent, supreme and eternal power is become engaged for my protection and safety. His Name is the asylum or tower to which I have recourse by faith, and am entirely safe. Jehovah, God, is my *shield*, as well as "my exceeding great reward:" I shall abide safe and comfortable "under the shadow of the Almighty, in the secret place of the Most HIGH:" His infinite attributes ascertain my safety and felicity for ever and ever.

Again, this confession—as in connexion with the foregoing words, implies sight and sensibility of infinite distance between God and man, the Creator and the creature. "Jehovah my God," "my times are in thy hand," all stand connected together, but imply infinite disproportion between the beings spoken of. Jehovah speaks being itself, a fulness of being, an immense sea of being, and in whole very being itself. Self-existing, independent, fountain of all being, eternal, immutable, infinite in power and all perfections. Now if we set this acknowledgement in contrast with the confession the psalmist makes of himself, the distance and disproportion will appear as it really is infinite. *Jehovah*, thou art being itself, very being; I am but shew, little more than a shew, a mere shadow, a semblance of being: Thou hast an infinitude of being, which I have not; I am nearer to nothing than fulness of being: Thou art self-existent and independent; what little of being I have is derived; I am a created, dependant creature: "my times are in thy hand," thou art eternal, from eternity to eternity unchangeably the same. I have just come into existence, am but of yesterday, a creature of time; thou art eternal, what thou now art thou ever hast been, and what thou ever hast been, and now art, thou forever must needs be. Thus we see the import of the confession in our text.

I again add—this confession, "my times are in thy hand,"

hand," implies a necessary dependance upon God, and acquiescence in it, as submissive to the divine will, as fitting it should be so. The dependance of the ray upon the sun, of the stream upon the fountain, can be but a faint emblem of the necessary dependance of a faint upon God for being and well-being. This the *psalmist* well knew, when he made the confession in the text; he saw the events of time were in the hand of his God, and that it was fitting it should be so, he therefore submitted to him as on the throne of government and grace. He now did that which the Lord's people can when they have a right frame of heart, viz. sign a blank and leave it with the Lord to fill up: knowing that his power is immense and uncontrollable, his sovereign will absolutely good and infinitely perfect, and that the supreme wisdom cannot err.

Lastly, this confession, "my times are in thy hand," implies spiritual joy and divine gloriation. The words evidently carry in them an air of joy and triumph. My times, all the events of time, are in the hand of Jehovah, who is my God, who will order all things for me according to covenant engagement. In Jehovah, my God, I boast all the day long, my soul goes to him as to my "exceeding joy," my God in Christ. I am the subject of ineffable joy and divine gloriation, and shall be forever, for "my times are in the hand of Jehovah my God."

We may hence see and learn, that there is much included in the faint's confession rightly made.—That it concerns us to be looking and preparing for changes.—That it becomes us to be reconciled to our own decease, and the decease of relatives and friends; for our, and their times, are in the Lord's hand.—That to see all things and events in the hand of God, and to acquiesce therein, is the one only certain way for rest and comfort in the world.—But we must not dwell here at present.*

Thus

* Here this *sermon* may be divided.

Thus we have taken a brief survey of the *times* of men as in the Lord's hand : and considered the import of the saint's confession of this *truth*. If we reflect for a few moments upon the preceding *discourse*, we may observe that 'tis adapted and will fitly apply to the threefold occasion of delivering a sermon at this time, as advertised in the *exordium*, viz. an *anniversary*, *eucharistical* and *half-century sermon* : for time, and all things relative to each of these *occasions*, is in the hand of God. Therefore the foundation being laid, that which remains to be spoken at this time, by way of improvement, address, and application, may mostly be divided into three *parts* ; the first of which hath respect to the *anniversary occasion*.

FIRST PART.

This first part, which is designed to be the improvement of an anniversary Sermon, may perhaps, occasion a query with *some*, why this sermon (in part) has the *title* of an anniversary sermon ; the reply is, because, that for the space of forty-five years I have annually or every year preached a *new-year's* sermon to my *people*. During this space of time, it has been the practice of minister and people in this place, to take some special notice of the beginning of the year, by meeting in this *house* on every new year's day, for solemn meditation and religious exercises. Careful to avoid every thing of a superstitious aspect, yet employing common time to holy purposes, as we have opportunity ; from a principle of zeal toward God, and of care for our souls : wishing to redeem time, and to begin the year with God, by the exercises of worship and solemn devotion. I would just premise and observe, that to commemorate the works of God, is a duty of perpetual, as well as universal obligation, and can never be out of *season* : but there are times in which it appears eminently in *season*, and seems the special duty of the day : and most eminently so, is the *Lord's-day*, and a *New-Year's-day*. Upon *these days* especially, it is important

portant duty to be exercised in meditating on, and commemorating God's wonderful works of *creation, redemption* and *providence*. To call into view, to commemorate and celebrate the display of the glory of God's creating *perfections*, the glory of his power, and wisdom, and goodness, sovereignty and almsufficiency. As also the yet more marvellous display of the glory of his redeeming *attributes*, as they shine in their admirable beauty and harmony "in the *face*, in the *person*, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the brightness of divine glory." Holding in memory his glorious resurrection; and that as Lord of the sabbath, he hath changed it from the last, to the first day of the week. It is also eminently in *season*, on the Lord's day, and on a New-Year's day, to commemorate God's wonderful works of Providence, and the display of the glory of his governing perfections. It is therefore natural to observe, that we have now a double call to the important duty of commemorating God's wonderful works of *creation, redemption, and providence*: For this is the *Lord's-day*, and a *New-Year's-day*; they are now associated, and unitedly invite us to commemorate *those* works of God, so glorious, inexhaustable and eternal! The time will not admit at present, that we meditate upon these *divine themes* distinctly; they must only occasionally be touched upon in the several *parts* of our discourse as we proceed. Our text and run of thought upon it, pointing out our "times as in the hand of God," directly tend to invite us at present, to commemorate the more signal dispensations of God's providence and grace toward us. I shall therefore now make an address to the *Assembly* in general, upon this important point of duty.

My dear people, the most of you doubtless remember that God required the *Israelites* "to remember all the way which he led them for forty years in the wilderness*—that he called them "to look to the rock whence they were hewn"†—that it was the pious resolve of David

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* Deut. 8. 2. † Isa. 51, 1.

“to remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.” † Let me now invite you to call into view some singular tokens of God’s infinite kindness toward you, and thereby your infinite obligations to praise him, and to be consecrated to his service and glory. How very singular and important our existence here in this world : formed with such an alliance to angel and spirit as to take rank above all the creatures on this side the stars ! From the noble structure and powers of the human mind, it appears that we were formed with a subjective capacity, capable of the everlasting fruition of God. Such is our kind of being, as declares *our* author *God*, the Father of our spirits, and that we are bound to him ; as manifesting such singular kindness unto us. Let us now for a moment look back to the æra of our existence and the timing of it, and the manifestation of the singular kindness of God *therein*. Our God, in whose hand “our times are,” in his deep counsel and infinite wisdom fixed upon the time for our existence and coming into the world. Not in the period of time assign’d the *antediluvian world*, “when all flesh had corrupted his way,”—nor in the *new world*, before, nor under the *law* given by *Moses*, which had only “the shadow of good things to come ;” but under the *christian dispensation* ; when “the wall of partition is taken down”—that *Christ* may be *preached* to the *gentiles*.” Not in the time of the bloody persecutions of the *church*, in the three first centuries of the *christian æra*, under *Roman pagan* : nor in the dark and idolatrous time of anti-christian tyranny and superstition ; “when all the world wandered after the beast ;” but since the glorious reformation from *popery*, and the establishment of the *protestant religion* : now near two thousand years since the coming of *Christ our Lord* ;—and in a day of copious effusions of the *Holy Spirit*, and of marvellous grace : so as that we see the preludes to, and even the first dawnings of the *latter-day glory*. Nor is it to be
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† Psal. 77. 10.

passed over in silence, that in consequence of the late wonderful revolution in *America* we hope to enjoy perpetual freedom from *civil* and *ecclesiastical* tyranny : which, with the enjoyment of all gospel privileges give us occasion to adopt the language of inspiration, "The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places." How hath the Lord opened the treasures of his goodness and pour'd his blessings in upon you on all sides, and followed you with his rich, various, free and repeated mercies from the first commencement of your existence to the present moment. In the days of helpless infancy, and through every stage of life, how hath he provided for you, and conferred the blessings of health, food and raiment upon you ? The luminaries of heaven shine, the earth labours, and all the (otherwise discordant) elements conspire to promote your comfort. Power and goodness divine have accompanied every moment of life, equally swift in approach, for your conservation and consolation. If the series of mercies seem'd for a time in a measure interrupted, by afflictive ills, this manner of dispensation, was wisely and well and even kindly calculated to afford you lessons of useful instruction. When sickness and death have invaded your neighbours, your friend, or relative, and spread havoc and desolation around you, and it may be have taken away a member of the family in which you live, you have escaped ; and this day appear as monuments of God's sparing mercy. How great the preventing and delivering goodness of God ! What numerous seen, and yet more unseen dangers have been escaped ? What numberless positive blessings, temporal, spiritual, personal and relative, public and private, have been confer'd upon you by the *immediate* hand of God, your bountiful benefactor. Permit me to remind you yet more fully of the infinite kindness of God toward you, manifested by the various means he makes use of to promote your eternal salvation. In consequence of the *donation*, the *mediation*, the *obedience* and *death* of *Christ*, you are invited, and urged by

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motives that have sanctions of infinite weight, to make
 sure of an interest in Him by faith, and thereby of eternal
 blessedness. By an early education you have been taught
 "man's chief end;" divine providence has smiled or
 frowned to draw or drive; bibles have been put into your
 hands; friends counsel you; thousands of saints are pray-
 ing for you; for this purpose holy angels attend our wor-
 shipping assemblies while the gospel is preached to you,
 and holy ordinances administer'd: ministers of the gospel
 "knowing the terrors of the Lord persuade you;"—they
 set life and death eternal before you, in all their glories
 and terrors; they proclaim your guilt, misery and danger
 —and exhibit to view the unsearchable riches of the glo-
 rious *Emmanuel*: his suitableness as a Saviour, and his
 infinite sufficiency to save, and his gracious readiness.—
 For this purpose, heaven darts down its splendors to
 attract—*Sinai* thunders wrath divine; hell flashes forth
 flaming ruin, to the end you may be excited "to flee
 from the wrath to come:" conscience admonishes you;
 the Holy Spirit co-operates with providences and ordi-
 nances to excite you to make sure of an interest in the
 Lord Christ, and eternal salvation by him. In the view
 of these numerous and mighty efforts of divine goodness
 to promote your *well-being* in both *worlds*, may it not
 be said, "what could have been done more, that has not
 been done?"—Surely such an amazing series of singular
 unmerited favours ought to inflame your gratitude, and
 to excite entire consecration to the service and glory of
 God, your supreme benefactor. But if you refuse,—
 hear O earth, with horror; be astonished, O ye heavens,
 that God the fountain of being and all good, has so little
 gratitude from our stupid world! Here I might naturally
 address the Lord's people, who hope they have experi-
 mentally known his love; but this will soon come in of
 course. I might also take special notice of the signal
 salvations of our God the year past, how he has surround-
 ed us with his goodness, and enriched us with his mercy,
 and

and crowned the year with numerous salvations ; but the time would fail. In the view of such a profusion of blessings let me call upon you cautiously to avoid vile and horrid ingratitude ; ingratitude that may justly shock and confound—while it is enough to sink the whole world into the depths of hell ! To be every moment receiving blessings from God, and yet perpetually offending him to his face ; can *infernal spirits* in everlasting chains become guilty of such astonishing ingratitude ! Let me invite you to abound in the duty of commemorating glorious divine operations, relative to God's wonderful works of *creation, redemption, and providence* : and take heed that you don't content yourselves with a mere *historical* and *superficial* commemoration : but ever look that your *remembrance* of these high and mighty events be attuned to the *nature and importance* of them, and applied to *experimental, devotional and practical* purposes in religion. Our remembrance must be attended with the exercise of particular graces and virtues—with assent and persuasion—with approbation and wonder—with humility and reverence—with contrition and penitence—with affection and complacency—with thanksgiving and praise—with faith, hope, prayer, frequency and perseverance—and with correspondent life and course of action. —Thus let us enter upon a new revolution of time ; and as knowing our “ times are in the Lord's hand.” I have only to add here, as in the view of such peculiar distinguishing favours as we all share in ; and of the answerable obligations we are all under,—“ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world ; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

SECOND

SECOND PART.

Forasmuch as a large number of this large auditory have this day partaken of the commemorating ordinance of the *Lord's supper*, this hath given occasion for this part of my discourse, which is called *Eucharistical*. The sacrament of the Lord's supper hath several names by which it is known. It is frequently called the *eucharist*; so the *Greek church* called it, and we from them give it the same name, which properly signifies a thanksgiving; and it is so called in the first place, because our Lord in the institution of it, *gave thanks*. (1 Cor. 11. 24.) In the next place it is so called, because we in partaking thereof ought to give thanks. It is an ordinance of thanksgiving, appointed for the joyful celebrating of the Redeemer's praises. The cup of *salvation* must be "the cup of blessing:" the high praises of God should be in our mouths and in our hearts.† To attend the eucharist or holy sacrament, is to take an oath of allegiance unto the Lord. God doth in and by this ordinance seal to us, "to be to us a God:" and herein we seal to him "to be to him a people." We resign and give up our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; covenanting and promising to walk closely with him in all manner of gospel obedience all our days.— Therefore it will be natural upon this occasion to exhort the Lord's people to thanksgiving—and consecration to the service of God.

I therefore now make an address in particular to you my fellow-communicants, and fellow-candidates for eternal glory. That I may inflame your love, increase your gratitude, and excite you to give thanks and praise to the Divine Trinity, "and to walk as you have received the Lord Jesus Christ," answerable to the design of this *eucharistical*

† It hath been the practice of many churches of Christ to have a thanksgiving day, following the *eucharist*—others have a eucharistical sermon, exhorting to give thanks, and to walk with God.

charistical part of my discourse, it may be useful to exhibit to your view the infinite obligations you are under to the performance of *these* and all other duties ; and the exercise of *these* and all other graces : obligations resulting from the infinite perfections of God, and his communicative goodness, and singular kindness toward you. But here let me just observe, that whatever my charitable persuasion toward you may be in general, by that which I may now say, I do not mean to give my sanction to your hope that you have received the grace of God. If in our Lord's little family of twelve, there was a *Judas* that betrayed him under the mask of friendship, it will be marvellous indeed, if there be not a *traitor* found among hundreds. But as knowing that those who come to the *Lord's-supper* in this place, come with a prevailing hope that they have experienced a saving change, I now meet and address you on your own ground.—Ye children of God, his peculiar favourites, you have heard “ that your times ” in every point of view, are in “ the hand of your God,” therefore make confession of this truth with thanksgiving and praise. View the kindness of your God in your admirable formation ; “ there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.” You will view the timing of your existence and coming into the world, and with gratitude acknowledge the kindness of your God : your lot is cast in a land of marvellous light, and in a day of abounding grace, by plentiful measures of divine influence. You will often recognize with gratitude the infinite kindness of the Lord toward you in that he preserved you in life amidst perils of death, from the moment of your existence, for a number of years “ when lying in your blood ” and guilt, until the fixed time came for your effectual calling. You will remember, that when the Holy Spirit first took hold of your heart by way of powerful conviction of your sin, guilt, and misery, he found you rushing on toward destruction, and that even *then* when “ the arrows of the Almighty were

were within you; and his terrors took hold of you," so that in the view of your guilt you were trembling every moment with fears of just and speedy damnation eternal. I say even then such was the reigning power of enmity in your heart; and such the pride, the daring and horrid pride of your heart, that you obstinately opposed the soul-humbling method of salvation by the gospel; and you would have resisted 'till dead, and damned forever, had not your opposition been conquered by the irresistible energy of divine and sovereign grace, in the day of the Lord's power, when you became the willing subjects of the Lord Christ your King Redeemer. You will often review the more signal tokens of the Lord's infinite loving-kindness towards you through all the vicissitudes of life since your first saving acquaintance with him. How you have been assisted by the holy Spirit to exert your graces, and to perform duties spiritually and evangelically; and to conform to the divine will, providentially and revealed, with a sacred pleasure. How you have by the power of divine grace repelled and broke the force of temptation, by Satan, the world and the flesh. How when dismal gloom by desertion over-spread your mind, and tormenting doubts and fears rushed in upon you, the Lord dispelled your darkness, and revived your hope and comfort by light divine. How he often enabled you "to cry *Abba Father*," and often appeared for you as a prayer-hearing God. How he hath upheld and supported you under trials and afflictive *ills*, and hath caused your consolation to exceed your tribulation. How some events most unpromising and adverse in themselves, have by the over-ruling power and love of God served to promote your temporal and spiritual felicity. How when your graces and virtues withered, he noticed your sighs for want of the absent *Comforter*, and granted you "fresh anointings, so that your souls became "as a watered garden."—How hath the Lord, from time to time admitted you to converse with him in public ordinance

and also met with you in your retirements, both by day and night, in the house and by the way, and held divine communion with you. In a word, how have you found upon all occasions a sufficiency in the grace of God, for doing and suffering his will : so that you have been ready to say a thousand times, "surely God is good to Israel." Especially when he hath, as it were, unlocked his peculiar treasures to enrich you with light, love and peace divine, and even caused you to rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Thus hath the Lord led you on in your way to heaven by his Word and Spirit to this day ; and this day hath given a renewed testimony of his infinite kindness by admitting you to communion with him at the holy *eucharist*, which demands thanksgiving and praise. You will now reflect, that this is the Lord's Day, our communion Day, and a new-year's Day.—Have we not to day, as it were, heard the Lord of love saying unto us, "Come ye children of my love, I will begin this *new year* with you at a love feast : as inviting you to behold the Lamb of my election and affection in sufferings, even unto death for the purpose of your eternal salvation. Here at *my board*, richly furnished, in and through the Mediator the *Son* of my love, I make over my self to you in all my infinite perfections, and all my most glorious subsistences, I will be your God, and you shall be my people. By faith avouch me to be your God, and the promises and blessings of the new covenant are ratified to you by solemn oath, and sealed by sacred blood. Thus begin this year with me, perform your vows, walk with me, and I, who *Am* that *I Am*, will be your confederate God for ever and ever."—With holy joy and admiration we say *Amen*, we give thanks, and let the high praises of the adorable TRINITY be in our mouths and in our hearts, henceforth forever. If any of you have not had that sensible nearness to the Lord, and that delightful communion with him, that you longed and prayed for, search after the cause
why

why you have not, and be humble. Learn the sovereignty of God in timing his communications, and the necessity of the divine influences in order to exercise graces, and to perform duties as you ought :—mourn your deficiencies—persevere in thirsting after and praying for nearness to God—and improve this holy ordinance for the purpose of a purifying effect upon the heart and life, and it will not be a lost, but gainful opportunity.—If the Lord in infinite condescending love and grace hath admitted you to delightful converse and communion with him ;—if he has brought you “ into his banqueting house, and his banner over you has been love,” and his love has been shed abroad in your hearts ;—if by faith you have fed on the bread of life from heaven, and drunk of the soul-refreshing waters of eternal life—you have infinite occasion to give thanks and to sing unto the Lord. We have all indeed occasion so to do, who are truly the Lord’s people and have had such marvellous sights exhibited to view to day. In the holy sacrament is to be seen the *Lamb* of God slain, and as both able and worthy to open the seals of the everlasting gospel, the book of light and life eternal.—Here we see the infinite evil of sin in the red glass of Christ’s sufferings, and by his atonement made for it, even by blood and death :—here we see his free, distinguishing, condescending, expensive, strong and everlasting love ; and all needful blessings for time and eternity flowing to us, as believers, in the stream of his precious blood as incarnate God. Here we see the harmony of the redeeming attributes of God as meeting in Christ, relative to the salvation of fallen man, shining forth in their united full blaze of infinite everlasting glory. These marvellous things apprehended by faith are enough to overwhelm the soul as in an unathomable, shoreless ocean of love, grace, and glory !—and to excite the angelic song, “ glory to God in the highest.” And now, ye saints of the most high God, who has loved you with an everlasting love, everlasting
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in its counsels, effects and consequences, and therefore with loving-kindness has he drawn you ; drawn you by his arm exerted by infinite love, and sprinkled with the blood of his co-equal, co-eternal, " well beloved Son," when driving back the devouring flame, and snatching you " as brands out of the burning," and drawing you near to *himself*. Making you the monumental pillars and trophies of his boundless power, love and grace ; thereby intending to shew to all worlds what the exertion of his perfections can produce out of the ruined mass of mankind. And having loved you, " he will rejoice over you, and rest in his love for ever." For you he hath opened the inexhaustible fountain of his goodness, and conferred upon you an affluence of spiritual blessings in Christ ;—blessings most excellent in their nature and quality, the sure pledges of infinite love, and eternal in duration :—And let me now add a consideration which gives an amazing emphasis to all now said, viz. all this profusion of singular, immortal, infinite, god-like blessings must be resolved into the rich, free, sovereign, overflowing, infinite and unmerited goodness of God. If the question should be asked, Why are we *thus blessed* ? this is the only solution, that can be given to all eternity, " even so Father for so it seemed good in thy sight !" The demerit of our crimes was infinitely the reverse.—We deserved not the least mercy—but to be made miserable, perfectly and eternally. Now in such a view of things, what say you, my fellow candidates for eternal glory, ye favourites of heaven, can ye refrain from praising God for what he is in himself, and from giving thanks to him, for the overflowings of infinite goodness to you. Is it possible for you to keep silence, that the posts of the house, and stones of the wall may utter their voice, and cry, Ingratitude, astonishing ingratitude ! What evidence can you have that every evil spirit is cast out of your heart, while a dumb spirit holds possession ? Can it ever be, that you who

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are the subjects of such a profusion of blessings and benedicted with mercies, should be the subjects of such vile and shocking ingratitude? Surely, in as much as you enjoy blessings as great as the infinite goodness of God can bestow, and as great as the infinite merit of Christ could purchase, you will resolve with the sweet singer of *Israel*, "every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever."† And again, "while I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being."‡ You will sing "the song of *Moses* the servant of God, and the song of the *Lamb*, saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty."—You will every day join the everlasting song of saints, and sing—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory, and dominion, forever and ever, Amen."

What remains now, but to testify your gratitude, and sensibility of obligation to praise and give thanks, by holy admiration, holy joy, and self-dedication to the service and glory of God. You come from the holy *eucharist*, full of abiding holy admiration. That "God is mindful of man," vile man: that he will dwell with man on earth, and hold communion with him—'tis a truth, but an astonishing one!—You will come from this holy ordinance rejoicing in God, as your exceeding joy; in all his infinite attributes; attributes which guaranty your eternal salvation; and rejoicing in the whole of his will as absolutely good and infinitely perfect.—Rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ; in his *person*—in all his offices—in the benefits of redemption by him—in his high exaltation and universal government—in all his promises and all his precepts: Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, in all his infinite perfections, and glorious operations: Rejoicing in the prosperity of *Zion*, and in the
word

† Pfal. 145. 2. ‡ Pfal. 146. 2.

word and ordinances of God, and in his people as the excellent of the earth. Let me exhort you to see to it that your rejoicing in these glorious topics remains in you ; and that your joy in them is the death of all joy in sin.—At the same time intersperse lamentations with your joy, in the view of your numerous deficiencies and offences.

“ It grieves me, Lord, it grieves me sore,

“ That I have liv'd to thee no more.

You will also see to it that you come from the Lord's table with firmness of resolution made in the strength of the Lord, that you serve him, honour Christ, cautiously avoid all evil ; and persevere in the practice of every christian duty and virtue. You profess experimental religion, and that you will endeavour the practice of universal holiness. Without christian practice and an holy life, you will lack scripture evidence that you have grace and holy affections ; for they directly, and powerfully tend to, and have their exercises and fruit in holy practice. In order to your being universally holy and obedient, your obedience must consist not only in *negatives*, universally avoiding wicked practices ; but also you must be universal in the *positives* of religion. Christianity requires that you not only shun the very appearance of all evil ; and that as having named the name of Christ, you depart from iniquity in love and practice, totally and finally ; but also that you become fervent in spirit serving the Lord ; and holy in all manner of conversation. You must not only be blameless and harmless ; but ornaments to christianity. “ Shining in the beauties of holiness ;” “ your light so shining before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Let it appear that you have been with the Lord Jesus ; and that his life is manifest in you : in that, as branches ingrafted in him by faith, as the true vine, you bring forth evangelical fruits of heart, lip, and life ; having your conversation

as becometh his gospel : Let his love constrain you to live to him, who you hope, has died for you. It is true, that all persons under the gospel dispensation, are under infinite obligation to serve God and their generation ; obligation resulting from the infinite perfections of God, his commanding authority, and his communicative goodness. The violation of infinite obligation is iniquity infinite. You hope the Lord hath done singular things for you, that he hath dealt more kindly with you than others ; may he not then expect you will do more for him than others ? Others share in the good things of the kingdom of common providence, and in the good things of the kingdom of the gospel, they enjoy the privilege of bibles, ministers and ordinances ; but you share not only in *these*, but in the special spiritual blessings of the kingdom of grace ; and have a firm title to the boundless blessings of the kingdom of eternal glory. Surely all possible infinite obligation is devolved upon you to exert yourselves in your several proper stations to glorify God, to honour Christ, and to do all the good you can to others.—Teach the world by your practice that the scripture doctrine of salvation by free and sovereign grace, is a doctrine according to godliness : “ as a peculiar people shewing forth the praises of your God, who hath called you forth out of darkness into marvellous light :” with full purpose of heart cleaving to him, by faith, love, and obedience ; “ walking in his fear,” as you would walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.” Rest not in past experiences and present attainments ; but “ go on to perfection.” Christians that find they are under necessity of having recourse to past experience for evidence of their gracious sincerity and comfort, have not at present that exercise of grace and nearness to God they ought to have : if they had, light of evidence and comfort would arise from the present exercise of grace, as it always should. The more frequently the exercises of grace are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed
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our assurance will be: therefore, "forgetting those things which are behind,"—"Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things you shall never be moved".—Stand upon your watch tower, at all times, watching against sin and temptation; watching unto duty—the matter of it, the timing of it, and the manner of performance. Pray and praise without ceasing—converse much with God every day in your closets—and every day, and every hour in the day by ejaculatory or mental prayer. Christians that do not abound in ejaculatory prayer and praise, do not live near to God; they neglect a duty and mean eminently useful to support and promote the vigor and vitality of grace in the heart, and that by which the soul of the real christian is much fed and nourished.—Pray with an importunity that shall pierce even heaven, that the work of God among us, and where ever it is begun, may go on, and make glorious progress. That every department of *Zion* may be visited with a plentiful effusion of the *Spirit*. That "the latter-day glory" may speedily commence, and spread through the world. "That the knowledge of God may fill, and cover the earth, as the waters do the sea." To add no more *here*, I beseech and entreat you, "as you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." You received him as your supreme felicity and all-sufficing portion for time and eternity, preferring of him above all other things, either in heaven or on earth, so walk as living to him, and upon him.—You received him as your teaching prophet to enlighten you by his word and spirit, that by his divine instruction you might become wise to eternal salvation; so walk.—You received him as your great high-priest, and intercessor in the presence of God; as having made complete atonement for sin, and brought in a law-fulfilling, everlasting righteousness, rejecting your own righteousness, you depended entirely
upon

upon his for justification before God ; so walk.—You received him as your king and law-giver, pleased with his government, and choosing he should reign in your heart forever ; thus walk ye in him.—I beseech you by all the infinite attributes of Jehovah, engaged from everlasting, and exerted in time, for the purpose of your eternal salvation. I beseech you by the ineffable co-operation of the adorable Trinity, to effect and consummate your eternal well-being. I intreat you by the name and love of our dear Saviour—by his incarnation, obedience, and sufferings, by every drop of his precious blood, as the bleeding Lamb of God ; by the unutterable anguish which he bore when lifted up upon the *cross*, “ when the arrows of the Almighty were within him,” and died an accursed death for you his redeemed.—I beseech you by the triumphs of his resurrection, and his ascension to the regions of glory, and all the beneficial consequences thereof on your behalf :—By all the gracious invitations, spiritual precepts, and precious promises, he has given you as your enthroned Lord and Saviour :—By all that he has done for you in time, and that you expect him to do for you in time, and for an eternal duration. I intreat you by all the honor, glory and praise that is, and ever will be due to him, as God, man and mediator.—I beseech you by the infinite perfections and dignity of the Holy Spirit ; by his saving influences given for regeneration, for sanctification, for consolation, and for edification, until you arrive at perfection in glory. I beseech you by the love and compassion you have, (or ought to have) to the faithful ministers of Christ, and to the friends and divine lovers of Jesus, and of *Zion's* prosperity, as you would not cause their hearts to bleed, and their eyes to weep. I intreat you by the immense worth of immortal souls and the benevolence you have toward them, as you would not cast stumbling blocks in their way, to fall over into endless flaming ruin. I beseech you by the love you have to your
own

own souls—by the sure and solemn prospect of a dying bed, and comfort in the final hour ; and by the joyful prospect of a personal appearance before the flaming tribunal of Christ, to stand trial for fixation in an eternal state. I beseech you by your sacramental vow and oath of allegiance you have taken over the broken body and shed blood of your Redeemer, that you will walk with him, and as his people walk.—I beseech and intreat you by the eternal agonies of the damned, which you hope to escape, and by all the joys and beatitudes of the sanctuary of immortality and glory that you hope to possess, “ that you walk as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord.”

Thus I leave my endearing address and exhortation before you, and before the Lord. I have discharged my embassy, I have told you my errand ; more weighty, awful and interesting arguments and persuasives I cannot suggest. I now conclude, with a benevolent wish and prayer in the language of inspiration, “ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant ; make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.”

T H I R D P A R T :

I am now come to the third and last part of my discourse, and must intreat your patience and attention, while I make mention of some signal dispensations of God, and manifestations of his sovereign, infinite, unmeasured goodness towards me : in doing which, you will observe, that in some of those dispensations you are interested, as they have a relative respect unto you as the dear people of my pastoral care and charge. Doubtless, every private christian and especially ever minister of the gospel,

gospel, ought to acknowledge God as the author, prefer-
 ver and disposer of our lives. If as ministers of Christ
 our Lord, upon some proper public occasions we speak
 out our experience of the power of divine grace—and
 our trials and sufferings; our abounding labours, and
 successful essays (by the blessing of God) to promote the
 Redeemer's kingdom—*St. Paul* (and other apostles and
 even prophets) will keep us in countenance; provided that
 we primarily have and hold in view the glory of God,
 the honour of Christ, and the benefit of others. We lay
 no claim to that which is properly *apostolic* and extraor-
 dinary; we act in a lower sphere and comparatively our
 labours are small and our usefulness inconsiderable: Yet
 “we cannot but speak the things which we have seen
 and heard;”—“we also believe and therefore speak.”
 If any are disposed to censure us, yet we hope that others
 will profit thereby. Here I am naturally led to make
 the confession of the saint as in my text,—“My times
 are in the Lord's hand;”—and to say with the apostle,
 —“Having therefore obtained help from God, I con-
 tinue unto this day.” You may recollect that when I
 preached to you on the Lord's day October 30th, I then
 observed to you that that day compleated half a *century*
 or fifty years since I commenced a preacher of the gos-
 pel. On that day I invited your meditations upon the
 words of *Moses* to *Israel*—“He is thy life, and the length
 of thy days:” I then observed, that I would defer
 preaching an half century sermon 'till this day; if hap-
 pily we might live to see it: The hoped for *day* is come
 and brought with it numerous solemn services, and sacred
 pleasures. You will allow me boldness and freedom of
 speech, even beyond what I should think proper, did I
 not look upon myself near to another and better world.—

When in the morning of life and bloom of youth, in
 the ever to be remember'd year 1735, it pleased a sove-
 reign God to make me the subject of clear, powerful and
 heart affecting conviction of sin, guilt, and misery; and
 to

to give me sight of his justice in my eternal condemnation; after a powerful work of the law and an absolute submitting of myself to God as rightful Lord and sovereign. He was pleased "to shine into my heart to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ." I now beheld the infinite amiable glory and allsufficiency of Christ, as God, man mediator, and felt my heart go forth to him in acts of trust and supreme love: I now saw the infinite excellence and safety of the gospel method of salvation, and found my whole heart gained over to an approbation of, and an entire acquiescence in that divine *plan* as the device of infinite wisdom and boundless love.—From that *hour* to *this*, (through infinite riches of sovereign grace) I have found a new temper of heart, and tenor of life. At this *time* reigning benevolence toward fellow-men took possession of my heart, and has been kept up to this hour. Here let me observe, that if my ministry has been useful to you, or others, the Lord was *now* preparing the way therefor, even before most of you were born.—In consequence of these divine manifestations, for about the space of two years I was held before the throne of grace daily praying for the knowledge of duty with respect to my seeking a liberal education; and obtaining satisfaction in this point, soon after the 20th year of my age I fixedly entered upon studies, that prepared the way for taking my first degree at Yale-College in 1741. In a few weeks after, I was invited and urged by some worthy ministers of the gospel to attend their association, which was soon to have a session: I did so, and offered myself to examination, was approved, and received licence as a candidate for the gospel ministry.*—And about

* Before and after I took my degree, I was fully determined to live for half a year or a year with the Rev. Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, pursuing theological studies, not having a single thought of preaching, till I had so done: But falling in com-

about a year after was ordained at large, by members of the same association. From the first I became an itinerant preacher. Making my tours in various parts of these northern states. Preaching almost every day, and often two and three times in a day; and often to very large congregations. I journey'd about two thousand miles, and preached several hundred times in the space of a year. I preached in many congregations where the work of God had made great and glorious progress: In some places it had just begun.—In some places I saw much opposition made to the work:—In some observed many imprudences chargeable upon the friends of the work.----Many congregations (and some numerous ones,) I found under the power of awful security in sin: some of which, were soon universally awakened by the preaching of the word, and plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit; so that in a few weeks several scores of persons were in those places hopefully converted from sin to God. Thus amidst abounding labours and an amazing run of services, I had the pleasure of seeing the work of God going on and prospering gloriously.—Thus I continued itinerating and preaching for about four years. But here it may be noted, that during this space of time, I was twice seized with a fever, which each time sat heavy upon me, especially the last; so that my life was given over by myself and friends: But it pleased the sovereign Lord of life, “in whose hand our times are,” to restore me again to health and usefulness.—During the forementioned space of time, your fathers in this place

pany with the Rev. Mr. Jedediah Mills and Dr. Bellamy, they insisted upon my offering myself upon trials soon. Still I had in view living with Mr. Edwards before I preached. After about five months I arrived at Northampton, and was obliged to preach almost daily there, as well as elsewhere: The Lord was pleased to crown my labours with astonishing success, even there Mr. Edwards would not admit me to sit down to study under him; insisting upon it, that it was my indispensable duty to go on preaching as I had begun.

place repeatedly and warmly applied to me requesting that I would accept of a call to this place, with a view to my settlement in the gospel ministry among them; which call I repulsed, as I did many others in that day. — In September 1745, President Edwards, (who had from the first of my ministry acted the part of a kind father to me) by his importunity prevailed upon me to set out upon a journey for the purpose of preaching the gospel in the southern states. I proceeded as far as the *Jerseys* on my way; where meeting with the Rev. Messrs. Dickinson, Tennant and President Burr, they professed a well pleasedness with my design; but as two of them had just returned home from this place, and knowing the situation of this people, they deliberated and proposed my coming here before I proceeded. — I complied, and came to this town November 9, 1745, and the next day being the Lord's-day, I preached for the first time here upon the words of *St. Paul*, viz. "I determine to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." When I came into town I was fully resolved to leave it in a few months; but spending the winter here, the people in the spring gave me a very unanimous call to settle in the ministry with them. I was thereupon for several months much exercised as to my duty; but finally accepted the call; and was installed *here* September 19th, 1746. President Edwards preached upon this occasion from a text that some have since thought almost prophetic.† The Rev. Mr. Hunting being very infirm was dismissed from his pastoral relation to this people upon my instalment. In his day, in the years 1741 and 42, there was a very powerful work of God in this place.* It was supposed, that
upwards

† *Isai.*

* In the time of vacation at College, May, 1741, Mr. David Brainard and myself, having heard of the work of God as going on at *Southold*, and in this place, came upon the Island to acquaint ourselves with it. I had then much satisfaction, not only
in

upwards of a hundred persons were then savingly wrought upon : In consequence of which, about three score persons were added to the church soon after my instalment. In 1749 the work of God's grace was carried on powerfully in our *eastern* and western *villages* : a considerable number of young people were wrought upon in each. The work was not so powerful in the body of the town at that time. But in the ever memorable year 1764, the work of God became general and universal : persons of every age, from five or six years to eighty, were the subjects of the work. This work of God was the most powerful, the most genuine and evangelical that ever I knew. My printed Narrative of this work in some of your hands, may inform you more fully. In consequence of this glorious work, in a few months after it began, I propounded for full communion 99 persons at one time, who were added to the church ; and soon after a large number more.— There were a great number of children, some youth, and many that wanted more assurance, who were hopefully the subjects of a saving change, that did not offer themselves to join the church at this time. This work brought some of the subjects of it to the possession of the latter day glory to an eminent degree, in which they lived and died. In the year 1785, it pleased a sovereign God to grant again another plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit upon us.—The work of God at this time was carried on with amazing power in the midst of us. As many as six or eight every week for the space of three months, were hopefully savingly wrought upon. As fast as some met with light and comfort, others were awakened ; yet the work was not so universal as in 1764 : yet in a few months above an hundred were added to the church ; professing experimental and practical

in hearing the Rev. Mr. Barr preach several sermons in this place, but also in conversation with many of the subjects of this work.

tical religion. Others at this time became the subjects of some hope of a saving change. In the last year, 1791, the work of God among us, claims our remembrance "as one of the years of the right hand of the most high." The Lord "with whom is the residue of the spirit" has been pleased to visit us again with the divine influences. Between thirty and forty have been lately added to the church, more we trust are on their way about to come, in that many hope they have been the subjects of this work. The subjects of this work have been very powerfully wrought upon; and seem to have been uncommonly selected out from among others. This late work has not been so general among sinners as usually we have known. But for a universal visitation and fresh anointings of the Lord's people and their increasing light and comfort, I never know a revival of religion among us equal thereto since I have been your pastor.—It is to be noted and remember'd, that in the intermediate spaces of these plentiful effusions of the Holy Spirit from first to last there have been some hopeful instances of saving conversion to God. We have during the whole time enjoyed some special tokens of the Lord's gracious presence with us. Thus have we seen and known since I have been your pastor, (exclusive of 41-2) four harvest times and seasons of the plentiful out pouring of the Holy Spirit, and times of the flocking of souls to Christ, and of accessions thereupon to his church. I have not heard or known of a people in any department of *Zion* that within the space of fifty years, have been so frequently favoured with such plentiful "out pourings of the Holy Spirit" upon them; infinitely vile, unworthy and ungrateful as we are! Having thus briefly reminded you of the infinite kindness of the glorious and eternal Trinity toward us, you will naturally reflect that our obligations to those *divine persons* rise answerably high; and that our ingratitude will be proportionably aggravated, base and vile.

I

I have now to observe, that the Rev. Mr. Hunting, my predecessor, and myself, have between us, completed 92 years in the gospel-ministry in this place. That since my instalment in the year 1746, nine hundred eighty nine persons have departed life, that belonged to this town—thirteen of them the year past. In the same space of time I have baptized in this place sixteen hundred—45 of them the year past : near two hundred more than there are inhabitants at present. When I received this church, it consisted of 81 members, but three of which are now living. During this time, we have been called to part with many excellent christians, rich in experience of divine grace ; many of them died in the triumphs of faith, others comfortably. Many valuable christians have removed from us into various parts of the country, where, as we hear, they are useful.—Numerous heavy breaches and mournful vacancies have been made in this our *Zion* ; but the Lord, from time to time, hath filled them all, and more than filled them ; “ and caused joy, rejoicing, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody to be heard in this city of our God.” We have had the accession of hundreds to the church : and perhaps the number of communicants was never larger than at the present time. It must be registered in the catalogue of divine favours that I have enjoyed such a series of health, that for 44 years I was not so much as once prevented preaching by indisposition, nor had I a sick day or hour during the whole space of time. Forty-three of those years I spent in your service ; and never to this day have I been prevented—except when for a few sabbaths I was debilitated by the *influenza*. Such an uncommon measure of health, but little broke in upon for fifty years, hath been improved for the purpose of abounding ministerial services : I have preached in this space of time, above ten thousand times. Designation to office, opportunities for ministerial labours, gifts, graces, abilities
more

more or less, aids, assistances and successes, are all of and from the Lord; to whom be all the glory. "A man can receive nothing (of this kind), except it be given him from heaven:" The Lord as an infinite sovereign upon his throne, in raising up instruments for his service, can take them from the rushes, the sheep-folds, or fish-nets, qualify them for usefulness, and by them "confound the wisdom of the mighty." If He crowns our feeble attempts in his service with any degree of success, we wish to speak of it with undisssembled gratitude, and with deep abasement, as conscious of our unworthiness, of our deficiencies, and our selfishness intermixed with all our performances; and with a spring of joy, that yet a little while, and He will have all the glory of our usefulness.

Although I have preached abundantly in other places, since my connexion with you, yet mostly with you, the people of my special charge. With you, my dear people, I have laboured and travelled in the work of the gospel ministry, for a long course of years; I may say it without ostentation, that "I have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful: I have made it my constant endeavour and business to gain souls to Christ, and build them up in faith and holiness: principally insisting upon such truths as express the spirit of true religion; and tending to direct, quicken and encourage you in the way to eternal life. I esteem it as one of the precious mercies of the Lord towards me, that I have not "run in vain nor laboured in vain." I have abundant cause to bow my knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and bless his name that I have grounds to hope that he hath made me instrumental of bringing many among you into a saving acquaintance with himself.— Although you can easily recollect many of the important capital doctrines which I have mainly insisted upon in the course of my preaching; yet I have prepared therefor, and designed now to have given you a summary

mary account of them, but the time is elapsed.—I must only say, “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God;” “and have kept back nothing that is profitable unto you.” The apostolic doctrines I have preached to you are your crown and glory, as *St. John* speaks, “your crown of twelve stars:” If ever you depart from such doctrines and let these truths go, the “crown falls from your head,” and the glorious God himself will depart and be gone; yea, be gone far from a forsaken sanctuary; and you will see an *Ichabod* upon the ministry! It is the more needful that I give you warning, and exhort you to become rooted and established in the faith, and belief of the truth at present, and thereby become guarded and fortified against error, because you live in a day in which errors abound.

There are preachers and writers in this day, who boldly and freely speak out and publish errors and principles, pernicious to the souls of men: and some, so artfully, under the specious shew of sanctity, that they would deceive the elect, if that were possible. The most artful seducers are those who assert many gospel doctrines, which they suppose will be pleasing to such as are sound in the faith, concealing their corrupt principles, until they suppose they have sufficiently gain'd interest in the affections of their hearers, and then they will gradually give vent to them with as much plausibility as possible. You will watch against verging to “another gospel,” and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; as knowing that the Holy Spirit co-operates with truth; “and makes the gospel the power of God to every one that believeth.”—But as having preach'd the grand principles of the everlasting gospel to you, I might now naturally put you upon examination and enquiry how you have received and improved them: And observe to you, that if any of you continue finally to slight and neglect them, your eternal condemnation will be amazingly aggravated;

ed; "your blood will not be required of me;" I shall appear as a witness against you before the awful bar of Christ, our final judge: But the time will not admit to dwell here.—If it should please the Lord to prolong my life I shall count it worth while to spend the residue of my days in promoting the welfare and prosperity of your souls. Although I do not perceive that public services are now more wearisome than they were thirty years ago, yet, if no acute disease invades according to a course of nature I cannot continue your pastor much longer. For length of time we have had endear'd connection as *one*, mutually rejoicing in prosperity; sympathetic in adversity. I presume I am not now preaching my valedictory sermon, however, I take this opportunity to thank you for all your benevolence and kindnesses expressed towards me and mine.—Who will be my successor I know not; though I know what he ought to be in character. I hope, "no grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock:" Nor "subtle foxes that spoil the tender vines which have grapes:" Nor any that will dare "to lift up their axes upon the carved work of the temple."—I pray the Lord in infinite mercy to preserve you from the greatest outward judgment and calamity that can befall you, viz. that of an unconverted ministry! I have often thought, that could I know this would be your awful *doom*, from love to your souls, and the souls of your dear children, I should grieve myself down into the grave. I speak the truth, the very thought thereof, gives me a more sensible shock, than the thought of death itself.—I should account it one of the choicest favours in life to see an ascension gift of our enthroned Saviour Christ Jesus the Lord, conferred upon you, before my departure hence.—Now you observe that all is harmony, love and good-will—that there is not a separate, a sectarian, or any one of a different denomination from us in

the boundaries of the town:—but who can say it will be *thus*, if after my departure, you are called to the re-settlement of the gospel ministry among you?—There may be that concealed in the heart, which as yet is not acted out in the life, for want of time and answerable temptation to draw it forth. Your present outward visible harmony, by reason of an internal different taste and relish, may be broken in upon, when you come to elect a pastor, and discord unhappily prevail. Although I thus speak (with a degree of fear) “yet I hope better things.” I presume you will not take up satisfied with a flourish of words, and the art of oratory in speaking, if there be wanting, solidity of thought, and apparent solemnity of spirit: Nor with an unconnected, undigested, and confused manner of speaking, with much apparent fervency and little knowledge. You will wish to have a minister that is “both a burning and shining light;” having knowledge and zeal proportionably associated, and both rising to a degree of eminency;—a man of solid judgement, of a fruitful invention, of learned acquirements, and *Pauline* in principle;—endowed with gifts and graces, and furnished with a fund of doctrinal and experimental knowledge; not preaching up all his divinity in a few sermons; but bringing out of his treasures things new and old—“feeding you with knowledge and understanding;”—rightly dividing, and closely applying the *sword*, giving to sinners their portion; and “feeding the sheep and lambs of *Jesus*, as a workman that need not be ashamed:”—a preacher that does not *divine* for money, (though to be honorably supported) preaching Christ, and wise to win souls to him—powerfully pressing upon you faith and repentance, and strict conformity to all divine precepts; but always with evangelical references.—You will assuredly see to it, that your elect pastor, both in praying and preaching gives due honour to the Holy Spirit;—that he frequently reminds

reminds you of the necessity, the excellency, and advantage of the *Spirit's* mission—that his gracious presence is the most necessary, vital, and fundamental good;—that where He suspends his influence there will be weakness, darkness, and deadness,—that where He divinely exerts the powers of his office and the perfections of his nature, there will be light, strength, and life divine.—And that as a preacher he comes to you in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.—May the ascended and exalted Saviour, from his unwasted stores and immense fulness, confer upon you the royal donative of a spiritual pastor and teacher, “that the Lord God may meet with you in every place, where He has recorded his Name,” bless you, and dwell with you forever!

Finally, brethren, pray for me, (as I hope to for you, 'till my expiring breath) and when I have gotten beyond the reach of your prayers, I hope you will have occasion to praise the Lord for ever, that I was once for a time your minister.

I shall now conclude in few words.

Having this day entered upon the threshold of a new year, let us now unite in making the saint's confession, Jehovah, “my times are in thy hand.”—Let us offer undissembled praise to God, that we have life prolonged to this day.—Let us also enter upon this new revolution of time under realizing views of the brevity and uncertainty of life. Nothing is more certain than that our time here will be short; nothing more uncertain than how short it will be.

“The days how few, how short the years

“Of man's too rapid race!

“Each leaving as it swiftly flies,

“A shorter in its place.

“They who the longest lease enjoy,

“Have told us with a sigh,

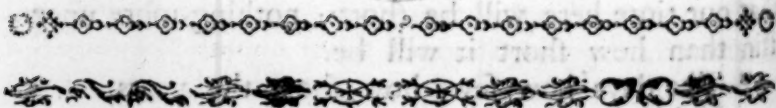
“That to be born, seems little more

“Than to begin to die.”

It

It seems that neither revelation, nor providence will let us live long in this world. How short a duration is there for us on this side the grave? It is not only possible, but highly probable, that death may meet some of us within the compass of this year. If we could look into the volume of the divine decrees, no doubt, one and another of us would there see our sentence, and the time of its execution fixed—"this year thou shalt die."—Surely it infinitely concerns each and every one of us to be found in readiness for an exchange of worlds:—without interposing delay to transact with God through Christ the divine Mediator relative to our eternal salvation. Suffice it to say, my dear hearers, (or readers) you must remember, always remember, that you were made for God, religion and eternity; and that you must have a religion that will befriend you in life, at death, at judgment, and be as lasting as eternity.

In fine—"whether we live, may we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, may we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, may we be the Lord's." AMEN and AMEN.



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