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SERMONS

BY

THEODORUS JACOBUS FRELINGHUYSEN,

FIRST MINISTER OF THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH
IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW-JERSEY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH.

AND PREFACED BY

A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE,

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMAREST.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY THE REV. THOMAS DE WITT, D.D.

NEW-YORK:

BOARD OF PUBLICATION
OF THE
REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH,
337 BROADWAY.

1856.

*Deposited in Clerk's Office
of the District of Columbia, Dec. 2. 1856*

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

It is a gratifying circumstance that so large a number of the Sermons of the elder Domine Frelinghuysen, published during the first half of the last century in the Low-Dutch language, have been recovered, and that now they are translated into the English language, and published by our Board of Publication. The disuse of the Dutch language, a long period since, had concealed from our ministers and churches these sermons. A few years since, I met with the volume containing the ten sermons, being one of the portions of the present collection. I handed the volume to the Rev. Mr. Demarest, the present translator, and cherished the hope that a translation might be made which would prove an acceptable service to the churches, which was afterwards urged by Dr. Messler upon him. Mr. D., by diligent inquiry in the part of New-Jersey where was the extended field of the labors of Mr. Frelinghuysen, succeeded in discovering and obtaining the remaining portions. It is believed that this collection of his sermons contains all that he ever published.

The character and ministry of Mr. Frelinghuysen have been transmitted through succeeding generations, as comprising fervent piety, bold, discriminating evangelical preaching, and great success in the conversion of souls, and the promotion of vital piety amid strong and violent opposition. His ministry extended from 1719 to about 1747. Very soon after the commencement of his ministry, a powerful influence accompanied it, and a revival took place in a period of formality and slumber which took root amid the opposition that was excited, and which was tested by the fruits of it extended, and abiding. The section of the Church in which he labored, has proved, until now,

one of the fairest and most fruitful within the bounds of our communion. May this not be properly connected with the precious seed sown, and the purifying salt spread by this ministry, and which to the present time remain, not having been eradicated and not having evaporated? The revival under Frelinghuysen preceded by many years the *great revival* under the labors of Whitefield, the Tennents, and others, about the middle of the last century. At his first visit to America in 1741, Whitefield, in his journal, refers to the revival then existing under the ministry of Frelinghuysen, and makes affectionate mention of his character and successful labors. Gilbert Tennent and Jonathan Edwards make an equally distinct and decided reference to his ministry as soundly evangelical, most discriminating and pungent, and largely blessed.

It will therefore be a matter of interest not only to members of our own churches, but those of other evangelical denominations, to have access to these sermons, in order to discover in them those characteristics which qualified them to make the living impression induced by their delivery. A careful perusal of them will enable us easily to discern these characteristics. They are *clearly and thoroughly evangelic* everywhere holding in prominence the great truths of the Gospel in their harmony, fullness, and right adaptation. The sinner convinced of guilt and depravity, the Saviour exalted in his finished work, and all his offices, and holiness commended and enforced, are the topics which pervade them all.

The sermons are *richly scriptural*. We everywhere find frequent quotations from Scripture shining forth on almost every page, illustrating and enforcing with a "Thus saith the Lord," the sentiments expressed. "I love," said a pious person, "those volumes and sermons, which abound in *italics*," meaning quotations from Scripture. In sermons of more recent days these are more rarely and sparsely introduced. Is it not to be feared that there has been a corresponding loss of evangelical unction and savor? These sermons are discriminating, "*commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*" Preaching should not be in its aim directly personal, but it should be so faithful in the statement of divine truth in the variety of its application to the conscience and the heart of the sinner, as to individualize himself in the audience and reception of it. The preacher should aim to realize the word of God to his hearers as "quick and powerful," "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The reader of these sermons will rise from their perusal with the conviction that such was the pray-

erful aim in their preparation, and such their proper tendency under the divine blessing. These sermons are distinguished for their *delineation of Christian experience in its various phases*, and well adapted for the cure of a wounded conscience, and the comfort of a troubled and grieved heart. The very list of texts selected shows how readily this field opened to him. In one or two sermons, there is a reference to seasons of his deep gloom and inward spiritual conflict, and that amid outward trials, so that, like his divine Master, having been "tempted himself, he was also able to succor them who are tempted."

The translator has prefixed a biographical sketch of the author. It is more full than might previously have been anticipated. The Dutch manuscripts of ministers and our ancestors of former generations, have generally not been preserved, and traditions which more than half a century since were distinct, have not been retained, or at least very vaguely.

The incident related in the biographical sketch connected with the selection of Mr. Frelinghuysen to be commissioned by the Classis of Amsterdam, to proceed to America to take charge of the newly-formed churches in Somerset county, New-Jersey, is an interesting one. Some years since, I found in the hands of a pious Hollander a volume containing a Life of *Sicco Tjadde*, a pious minister in North-Holland, who died in the prime of life. Connected with the life are a large number of his letters. These letters are exceedingly rich in the delineation of Christian experience, and reminded me of the letters of Rutherford and John Newton. In one of these letters he states what is related in the sketch, that while solicitously engaged in searching for a minister of fervid and devoted piety, as well as other requisite qualifications for the churches in New-Jersey, his attention was directed by one of his elders to Mr. Frelinghuysen, who had staid with him on his way to Embden, and had left a deep impression of his piety. *Tjadde* at once sought the acquaintance of Mr. Frelinghuysen, and became strongly attached to him in the affinity of common faith and ardent piety, and at once procured his appointment by the Classis of Amsterdam. In the letter now referred to, he warmly breathes his affection towards him, and anticipates that if his life should be spared, he would prove a great blessing to the Church in America. In another letter he makes a similar allusion to Mr. F. I consider this testimony of Sicco Tjadde a strong tribute to the character of Mr. F., as formed and developed in early life, and afterwards exhibited in his ministerial course. I afterwards greatly regretted that I did not procure and retain the volume in which these letters are found.

There is a reference in the biographical sketch to the bitter opposition raised against Mr. F. and his ministry, and the controversy connected with it, which is also alluded to in the sermons. There were controversial pamphlets published at the time. I have seen one of considerable size, published by his opponents, detailing their grievances and charges. On the perusal of it, the persuasion was strong in my mind, from the internal evidence pervading it, that while the wisdom of the "serpent and the harmlessness of the dove" were not on all occasions exercised by Mr. F. and his friends, yet the evidence is plain that the opposition mainly arose from the searching and pungent character of his evangelical preaching, and the efforts to enforce the purity of God's house.

Mr. F. was favored in the blessing which rested upon his descendants, in the faithfulness of the promise of the covenant, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." His name is now borne by one whose name is embedded in the affections of the Christian and American community, and who now presides over our Rutgers College at New-Brunswick.

The general character of these sermons remind me of the sermons and writing of the divines of Holland, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which were popular in the pious families of our Dutch ancestors, such as Brakel, Lodenstein, Hellenbroek, and others.

THOMAS DE WITT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following are all the sermons of their author which are now certainly known to have been ever published in the Dutch language. On account of the rich blessing which crowned the labors of Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, and their peculiar adaptation to such a result, a translation of his discourses was early sought after. During his life, there was, accordingly, a small collection published in the English language, accompanied with an appropriate introduction by a person by the name of Visscher. In that collection there is one sermon on a characteristic text, which is not embodied in the present volume.

The discourses, a translation of which is here proffered to the public, were preached at various periods, extending from the author's first settlement in this country to his death; at various places, chiefly within his own extensive charge in New-Jersey, and many of them on special occasions.

They may conveniently be divided into four parts, and are accompanied by as many prefaces by the author. The first three are the elaborate productions of the young man, in the full enjoyment of his physical energy, and impelled by the intense ardor of his natural feelings, directed by zeal for the promotion of the glory of the Redeemer, and were preached and published about a year after his arrival at this country. The two following ones may be characterized in the same manner, although they were not published until eight years subsequently. The ten which follow exhibit the author in full manhood, employing his choice and abundant ministerial stores, amidst evident and great conflicts, in endeavors to adapt himself, with a fearless and conscientious accuracy, to the circumstances of those whom he addressed, not failing

to administer the rich consolations of the Gospel to their proper subjects. This collection was issued by the author in the year 1733, and in the year 1736 was, through the agency of some of his friends in Holland, there given to the public, with not only the customary approval, but an expression of gratification by the Theological Faculty of the University of Groningen, with "the noble fruit," (to use their own words,) "brought from the New World to their doors." Next follow two discourses preached, the former at Six-Mile-Run, and the latter at North-Branch, as an improvement of an earthquake felt in New-Jersey 7th Dec., 1737, O. S., and were published at Utrecht. The volume concludes with four discourses, preached towards the conclusion of the author's life. These exhibit in a high degree, the familiarity with, and deep insight into, the Holy Scriptures evinced by the other discourses. They are eminently practical, exhibit a peculiar tenderness of spirit, occasionally associated with a chastened sarcasm, the natural result of the author's characteristic temperament, and hold him up to view as having, for the most part, risen above the obstacles which he had been called, the greater part of his life, to encounter.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE REV. THEODORUS JACOBUS FRELINGHUYSEN, (sometimes written by his own hand, Freylinghausen,) for such was the author's name, was born at Lingen, in East-Friesland, (now the north-west part of the kingdom of Hanover,) in about the year 1691, and seems to have received his education at the same place. It was at the suggestion of Rev. Otto Verbrugge, Professor of Theology and Oriental languages at that place, (afterwards called to Groningen,) and his respected instructor, that he applied himself to a study of the Holland language, which he was destined afterwards so usefully to employ, and by means of which he could have access to the peculiarly rich stores to be found in that tongue. Theological science and vital piety in Holland, were at this time in a highly prosperous condition. The illustrious Vitringa now occupied the theological chair at Franeker. Professor à Marck, renowned for his great learning, his approved Christian excellence, his sound judgment and acuteness as an interpreter of Scripture, and for the exhibition of these qualities in his numerous theological works, shed forth a more steady and resplendent light from Leyden. Their numerous associates were not without deserved fame. Utrecht and Groningen were doubtless now, as at other periods, not destitute of their ornaments. A Hellenbroek, a Vanderkemp, an à Brakel, and others of similar spirit, now filled the pastoral office; and while the thorough education of Mr. Frelinghuysen enabled him to avail himself of the published productions of the former, in the dead languages, his sermons and ministry afford evidence that he was familiar with the religious works written in the vernacular tongue, and had drunk deep into the spirit of their authors.

He was ordained to the pastoral office at Embden, in his native coun-

try, by Rev. Johannes Brunius, in the year 1717. An extract from an edifying and highly spiritual letter addressed to Mr. Frelinghuysen when he had been about three years in this country, by this worthy man, will not be unacceptable to the interested reader, as both showing the estimation in which he was held by the pious in his native land, and evincing that it was not only here that faithful ministers were compelled to encounter opposition in the discharge of duty: "Your former congregation," he observes, "a few excepted, are so averse to me and my imperfect ministry, that they do not come to hear me, but rather go to Correl, or remain at home. Five or six of the obscurest of them, however, attend with assiduity and care, and three of these were, a few weeks since, wonderfully brought under conviction, and led to commence seeking." He afterwards, in allusion to past sweet fellowship with Mr. Frelinghuysen, and in anticipation of more exalted fellowship, where separation will be unknown, says: "Oh! that day, that Monday, which you must remember no less than myself! My soul still often leaps for joy, when I recollect what satisfaction, what delight in the Lord Jesus, we both experienced on that day. My thanks, brother, still ascend for your love, esteem, and good will, and also for your friendly visits. How greatly am I often afflicted at the thought that association and communion with so dear a friend is now at an end! I am then, however, again forcibly impressed with the fact that if we but be believers in the all-blessed Jesus, we shall for ever behold one another in heaven, and with all the children of God for ever glorify him. Let it be so." He further says: "As for myself, I am exceedingly frail as to the body, and can not, without much difficulty, discharge my ministerial duties, being under the necessity of sitting in the pulpit. . . . This is indeed hard for the flesh, but the Lord still grants strength and self-denial to render able and willing to bear it." This excellent man was at length called as evening preacher in the Mother Church at Embden, where he died.

The families holding the Dutch Reformed faith in the middle portions of New-Jersey, which had previously been supplied by ministers of neighboring churches, having by increasing numbers and ability been led to endeavor to secure the services of a pastor, through the kind offices of Rev. Mr. Freeman, of Long Island, and not without evidences of a special divine intervention, Mr. Frelinghuysen was in the year 1719 selected and, with suitable attestations, sent to them. The circumstances of his selection and mission to this country, as further illustrating the character of the man, and showing how, under the providence of God, the slightest causes are often productive of the most momentous results, are narrated as follows: "When the call from the

churches in New-Jersey was received, a pious minister of the Classis of Amsterdam, named Sicco Tjadde, interested himself in procuring an evangelical minister to proceed thither. While inquiries were being made, Mr. Frelinghuysen passed through the town in which Sicco Tjadde resided, on his way to Embden, to assume the rectorship of the academy at that place, to which he had received an invitation, and put up for the night at the house of an elder of the church. When the hour for family worship arrived, the young stranger was invited to conduct it. He readily consented, and after reading a chapter in the sacred Scriptures, gave a brief exposition, and concluded with prayer. The elder was so much pleased with his remarks and with his whole spirit and conversation, that in the morning, when he was about to depart on his journey, he exacted a promise from him to make his house his home again, on his return, and then hastening to his pastor, exclaimed: 'I have found a man to go to America.' In due time, the promise was fulfilled, and after consultation and conference he agreed to accept the call and emigrate to America." "When he entered upon his labors in the county of Somerset, there was almost every thing to dishearten, and few things to encourage. The population was sparse, the settlements miles apart, the country covered with wood, the roads but little more than bridle-paths, and the rivers and streams unbridged."* He entered upon the discharge of his duties, with a careful adaptation to the state of those among whom he found himself placed. His discourses which follow in this volume, combined with the incidental accounts which have been transmitted of his public performances, and the manner in which he discharged his parochial duties, seem plainly to show that the physical condition of the country was an apt emblem of the character of the people who inhabited it—that great laxity of manners prevailed through his charge, naturally associated with neglect on the part of the rulers, and great tenacity with respect to their abstract church-rights on the part of the members—that while horse-racing, gambling, dissipation, and rudeness of various kinds, were common, the sanctuary was attended at convenience, and religion extensively consisted of the mere formal pursuit of the routine of duty. The laborer was also suited to the circumstances in which he found himself placed. His fearlessness and independence were remarkable, and his zeal for the truth was equal to his natural resolution. "I would sooner die a thousand deaths," he exclaimed in one of his early discourses, "than not preach the truth." The preface to one of his collections of sermons, he also concludes by

* See the *Hollanders in New-Jersey, etc., etc.*, read before the N. J. Historical Soc. Sept. 12, 1850, by Rev. Abraham Messler, D.D.

saying: "*Laudem non quæro; Culpam non timeo.* I seek not praise; I fear not blame." In his discourses he largely and strongly insisted upon that inward knowledge of our depraved and guilty state, which will lead to turn away from ourselves in despair, and look with sole reliance for repentance and remission to Jesus Christ; he maintained that piety in the heart will not obscurely show itself in the life; he taught that in the sight of God, only the truly pious have a right to employ the Lord's prayer, and that an error might be committed in teaching children to pray by not inculcating upon them their need of the spirit of prayer; aware of the danger of employing even an inspired form, irrespectively of the state of piety among those concerned, and agreeing with the most eminent divines of Holland, as well as with the great body of Presbyterian divines both in Europe and this country, and both before and after his time, in the opinion that the Lord's prayer is proposed to us in the word of God no less as a model or rule, than as a form, he did not invariably make use of it in his public religious exercises; he declared, both from the pulpit and in his labors from house to house, to those whom he regarded as strangers to renewal of heart, that they had no right to a place at the Lord's table. Offended by these proceedings, a number withdrew from his ministry, disclaiming his authority on the ground of variance on his part, from the doctrine and discipline of the Reformed Dutch Church. In endeavoring to fix the charge of censurableness upon their pastor, these persons had recourse to the Rev. Mr. Freeman, of Long Island, who had been instrumental in procuring for them his services. While Mr. Freeman listened to their representations with respect, and did not fail to lament what might be wrong in Mr. Frelinghuysen, he at the same time distinguished between essentials and circumstances, and stated to those who came to him with their complaints, that it was necessary that they should frame and subscribe their charges, and present them to their Consistories. Mr. Frelinghuysen and his consistories, at the same time, instituted a course of judicial action against them. It is remarkable that this issue presented itself within about three years after his settlement in this country. Taking exception on many grounds against the advice of Mr. Freeman, they successfully sought sympathy elsewhere. So largely were the feelings of those who took part against Mr. Frelinghuysen enlisted, that they maintained that he should be denied the countenance of his brethren in the ministry until the subject in controversy between himself and the aforementioned members of his churches were decided. While Mr. Frelinghuysen admitted his amenableness to no ecclesiastical body but the Classis of Amsterdam, the intimation just referred to

seemed particularly to point at Rev. Mr. Van Santvoort, of Staten Island, who had admitted Mr. Frelinghuysen into his pulpit. By the aid of those whom they had succeeded in engaging in their behalf, his dissatisfied members framed a voluminous complaint, in which, while an attempt was made to establish the heterodoxy of Mr. Frelinghuysen, appeals were abundantly made to prejudice and passion, to bring him, if possible, into disrepute. This led Mr. Van Santvoort to compose and issue a volume entitled, "A Dialogue between Considerans and Candidus." In this he takes up the question of the authorship of the Complaint of the people of Raritan, and renders it evident that it was not to be directly ascribed to those under whose names it was presented to the public, and that while, indeed, it evinced great legal ability, it involved those under whose auspices it was issued in the serious charge of contradicting themselves, since they had before publicly indorsed the sentiments which they now condemned in Mr. Frelinghuysen,* as advanced in his pulpit. In an appendix adjoined, while he admits that through the natural force of his feelings the zeal of Mr. Frelinghuysen might sometimes have assumed the form of rashness, he maintains that he could not be blamed for discharging pastoral duty in the particular manner which circumstances seemed to render most conducive to the attainment of the great end of his office, and that it was to be wished that his faithfulness were copied instead of being blamed. Mr. Van Santvoort thus concludes his manly and Christian work: "It has been said that 'it is not becoming to set a so-called holiness or propriety in opposition to the rules and customs of the Church, the unity of the brethren, and the love of Christ in our own hearts—that it will not do, under pretense of reformation, to put all things in commotion, and through profession of zeal, to set the house of God on fire; but that we should aim after peace—that it is better to bear any inconvenience in meekness, than, for the sake of it, to disturb the peace of believers.' We hope this will be admitted on both sides, as well as that they have come short in this respect. Let them, then, not persist in it. A word to the wise is sufficient."

Interest in what was transpiring in Mr. Frelinghuysen's charge, extended beyond the bounds of the Dutch Church. It was felt by the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, of whom, in one of his discourses, he makes affectionate mention. The distinguished Jonathan Edwards, whose situation was similar to that of Mr. Frelinghuysen, in his history of the great revival of religion in New-England, in his day, also

* He withal sets the seal of his decided approbation to the sentiments of Mr. Frelinghuysen.

speaks of a young man by the name of Frelinghuysen, of whom he had heard as being marked by an exceedingly "discriminating manner" of setting forth divine truth. It reached the mother country: "We must especially," Mr. Frelinghuysen, in the discourse already alluded to, observes, "with thankfulness acknowledge the goodness of God in raising up pious brethren in Holland and East-Friesland to remember us in their prayers and assemblies, and to sustain us by their godly and edifying epistles." He also expresses the opinion that Rev Jno. Verschuur, of Groningen, likewise also the author of a large and excellent work entitled, "Truth in the Inward Parts, or Experimental Divinity," composed his work bearing the name of "The Truth Triumphant," in his behalf.

Although Mr. Frelinghuysen continued to suffer annoyance throughout the greater part of his life, (which was brought to a close between the years '45 and '51,) and that same annoyance was experienced even by those who came after him, and looked up to him as a father and protector, (even as he had been protected by Mr. Freeman, whom after his death he affectionately terms, Father Freeman;) yet the result of the complaint against him, which was presented to the Classis of Amsterdam, was, that he was declared orthodox, and the disaffected were exhorted to a peaceful return to the bosom of the Church. He, however, received a better vindication: "It is not in my power," he observes in his "Dedication to the Lord Jesus," prefixed to the last four of the sermons found in the ensuing volume, "to describe the blessing which God has caused to rest upon my feeble ministry, my person, and my family." The vindication to be found in his own character, is to be discerned in his evident and great piety, with its accompanying consolations, as it is manifested by his published discourses, and could not but be admitted by all who contemplated him in an unprejudiced light. It is also highly interesting to contemplate the seal afforded to his acceptableness to God in the character of his household. Of five sons, all became prepared for and ordained to the sacred ministry, (although but two, or at most three, alas! were permitted to enter upon the active discharge of its duties, and even they to be occupied with them but a short time;) and his two daughters were both wives of ministers. His son, the Rev. Henricus Frelinghuysen, died in Ulster county, in the State of New-York, in the arms of Rev. Mr. Schoonmaker, father of the late Rev. Dr. Schoonmaker, of Jamaica. The Rev. Messrs. Jacobus and Ferdinandus are, in the obituary of their brother, (the Rev. John,) spoken of as "two very promising young clergymen," who, "on their passage from Europe to New-York, by the small-pox, in the bloom of life, went (a little more than a year) before him into the rest

of their Lord." One of the daughters was married to Rev. William Jackson, minister of the Dutch Reformed Church of Bergen, (reputed by those who could appreciate him, as only second to Mr. Whitefield as a preacher,) and the traveller who now passes by and will cast his eye upon the rural burial-place of that church, may behold a monumental inscription designating the grave of Anna Frelinghuysen. Miss Margaret Frelinghuysen was married to Rev. Thomas Romeyn, and although taken away in early womanhood, she was yet honored by having her son and only child, a young man of great promise, who died when he had but just entered upon the discharge of the duties of his sacred office, Rev. Theodorus Frelinghuysen Romeyn, settled in the pastoral charge of her father, subsequently also that of a beloved brother. The Rev. Theodorus Frelinghuysen was settled, with great acceptableness and usefulness at Albany. He labored there with great diligence, eminently among the youth of his charge. On account of the scarcity of appropriate books in this country, the difficulty of procuring them from abroad, and the desire of adapting his instructions to the case of several young men under his care, whom he was preparing for the holy ministry, he framed a Catechism, the fundamental truth assumed in which is, "that I am and am a rational being;" and which is pervaded by a peculiar force of demonstration, and but for a want of explicitness on the subject of original sin, could not be regarded as inferior to that of Mr. Hellenbroek in use in the Dutch Reformed Church. This Catechism passed into a second edition. Its valuable author was soon separated from his people at Albany; for having made a visit to Europe, for the purpose of obtaining funds to establish a literary and theological institution, and being on his way home, he was lost at sea. A pleasing proof of the estimation in which he was held by his friends, is found in an inscription on one of the front blank pages of a valuable work apparently presented to him after the completion of his studies and his ordination to the ministry in Holland. It runs as follows:

PIO ET DOCTO VIRO
 T H E O D O R O F R E L I N G H U Y S E N ,
 DESIGNATO VERBI DIVINI MINISTRO
 INTER AMERICANOS
 AMICO SUO INTEGERRIMO
 PATRIAM REPETENTI, ETC., ETC., ETC.;

and is signed, "Jacobus DeGroot, V. D., Minister in Ecclesia Ultrajectina, 29 Novemb., 1745."

The Rev. John Frelinghuysen, who was his father's successor, was the second son of the revered author of the following sermons, and died when but in the 28th year of his age, while on a visit for his health to Long Island. "So great," it is observed in his obituary, "is the sense the congregation at Raritan had of their peculiar happiness under the ministry of a faithful pastor, etc., etc., that the loss of him strikes them with inconsolable astonishment. Disconsolate is Raritan!" In a poetical lamentation published about this time, he is represented as exerting himself with an assiduity like that which we have seen characterized his brother of Albany among the youth of his charge, and in endeavors to raise up worthy candidates for the sacred office. In this same mournful eulogy, his wife (whose name was Van Berg, and who was the daughter of a wealthy merchant of Amsterdam) whose name is so fragrant in the churches of New-Jersey, who exultingly departed this life at an advanced age, A.D. 1807, in the city of New-Brunswick, N. J. (and who having, after the death of Mr. Frelinghuysen, been married to Rev. Mr. Jacob Rutzen Hardenbergh, is ordinarily spoken of by the respectful name of the Jufvrouw Hardenbergh) is pathetically introduced as pining away with grief under the loss of her husband. From the Rev. Jno. Frelinghuysen are descended all who now bear that respected name. Many of them have been, and it is trusted, still are, characterized by the piety which shone so brightly in the Rev. Theodorus Jacobus and his children, in fulfillment of the faithful divine word, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to them." The Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, who has received such distinguished tokens of regard both from his own State and the Union, and the Church of Christ, is the third by descent from the subject of this biographical notice. This estimable man, although he has never occupied any other than a private station in the Church, has yet, in his sphere, been marked by applying himself to the characteristic work of his ministerial ancestors—the promotion of devotion and the religious training of the young; and while it is his happiness, now in the maturity of his years, to find himself located in the very midst of the field cultivated by his grand and great-grandparent's hands, and to behold its generous fruits, the members of the Dutch Reformed Church, as well as of the other evangelical communions whose confidence and affection his ancestors so largely enjoyed, may felicitate themselves upon the fact that to such a man they may commit the training of their sons.

A minute account of the manner in which Mr. Frelinghuysen discharged his pastoral duties, and of the ultimate result which flowed from his labors, has not been transmitted to us. It seems evident, that through the laxness prevalent in his charge, among officers as well as the mass of the members, he was at first compelled, besides sustaining his own responsibilities, to assume those of his associates in the government of the church: this was indeed made a ground of complaint against him; but it was only his peculiar faithfulness in the discharge of his duties by which it was occasioned. The fact that two of the three sermons which he preached and published, soon after his settlement in his charge in this country, and which so greatly offended his formal and careless hearers, are founded upon Lord's Days of the Heidelbergh Catechism, as well as the circumstance of there still remaining a copy of Montanus on the Heidelbergh Catechism, bound with intermediate blank leaves, on which the analyses of his discourses on the Lord's Days are written in Latin, with the Scripture texts in Greek, (a clear proof, besides others, of the readiness with which he could draw upon the original fountains of sacred thought in the Hebrew and Greek respectively of the Old and New Testaments,) renders it evident that he was in the habit (according to the requirement still made of the ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church) of carefully explaining and applying that excellent system of divine truth. From his fidelity in these departments of ministerial labor we may legitimately infer his fidelity in all. There were not wanting distinguished contemporaries, whose attention was drawn to, and who, with profound interest, contemplated the delightful effects of his wise and faithful exertions, and who have left on record statements in relation to them. Such were Whitefield and Rev. Gilbert Tennant. There are also traditions respecting him among the descendants of those who were the immediate objects of his exertions. The records of the church of Raritan also (which alone have been preserved) show that 44 were there received on confession of their faith, which must have been nearly if not quite equal to one in each family. But as the blessing which attends faithful ministerial labor is chiefly a subject of experience, and not a provocative of observation, and the most flattering appearances are sometimes not associated with any permanent desirable effects, it is especially satisfactory to contemplate all in the light of substantial and abiding results. The district catechising, the weekly prayer-meeting, and the regular exposition of the Heidelbergh Catechism; we accordingly find to this day held by the members of the Reformed Dutch Church in Somerset county, as a choice inheritance re-

ceived from their fathers. Pastoral visitation by minister and consistory associated is carefully performed. It is also the custom in some of the churches, in the presence of the assembled Consistory, to seek to impress upon parents who present their children for baptism, their parental and their own baptismal vows. These duties are the more readily performed, as, in some instances, the churches are served by their own sons, who thus but carry out in their practice what they were from childhood taught by the example of their pastors and general religious sentiment to regard as solemnly obligatory; and who have learned it to be as salutary as they were taught it to be binding. Nor is it easy (especially where the original homogeneousness of the population has not been materially impaired) for those ministers or other officers who manifest indifference to any of these duties, to retain their place in the confidence of the churches. There are also desirable exhibitions of the power of the assimilating principle: the consistency of the great body of professed Christians not admitting of denial, those from abroad who become incorporated with the community, are frequently brought into an accordance of views and feelings with those among whom they are placed. Sunday-schools are vigorously plied, as a highly useful accompaniment of pastoral exertion, and a means both of promoting the spiritual improvement of the children of the church and of bringing under a religious influence those who are without. If even the names which stand foremost in the prosecution of Mr. Frelinghuysen be examined, it will be found that they are not now inferior to others, in the manifestation of the power of godliness and in advocacy of the faithful inculcation of the truth. If the classes in which our large cities are situated be excepted, it will be found that no churches contribute so largely for the spread of the Gospel. The Gospel is adequately supported without ostentation, the churches in some cases exceeding their engagements, and, with very few exceptions, having parsonages, which, in commodiousness, convenience, and attractiveness, will compare favorably with the general style of the residences. There are few of the portions of the church which have in the same period so greatly extended their borders. Where originally there was but one church, there are now about six. Various seasons of awakening and ingathering have occurred through different parts of this large field. Raritan alone has enjoyed five such. There has likewise been a constant and cheering increase in the membership of the church, and those who were early planted in the house of the Lord have flourished and brought forth fruit in old age. New houses of worship are generally erected without assistance to any

large amount from abroad, and infant churches are dependent for a very short time upon missionary aid. No congregation is contented without the entire services of a pastor. Travelling by public conveyance on the Lord's day is altogether unknown; nor can even an apparent deviation be found to occur without also being found associated with an apology to public sentiment. Horse-racing is a vice to which an approximation can not even be made without the experience of a rebuke. Gambling and intemperance are sins practised chiefly in comparative secrecy. Attendance on public religious ordinances on the Lord's day and during the week, as well as the maintenance of domestic worship, is remarkably general. The magistracy is found in a highly desirable degree operating in proper subserviency to the interests of the church: sustained and stimulated by public sentiment, it in return secures respect by its dignified exercise, and is effectual as a preventive of crime and as a means of maintaining the good order of society. A comparative view of educational statistics shows that there is no portion of the United States in which there are so few who lack a knowledge of the fundamental and most important branches of education: nor is it less to be ascribed to the character of the people, moulded by the divine blessing on the labors of Mr. Frelinghuysen and his immediate successors, than to the antiquity of the settlement, that the college of the Dutch Church is in this very field. Property is found to have descended, in many instances, unincumbered, to children's children. The exhibition of mutual respect and good-will is common: it is scarcely possible for even a stranger to pass along the highway without a friendly salutation; and the Christian observer is forcibly reminded of Boaz of old, who "came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you: and they answered him, The Lord bless thee." It but remains here to add the wish that these immediate and more distant effects of faithful labor, seconded by the divine blessing, were retained and extended until the exhibition of fidelity and the bestowment of the blessing were coëxtensive with the Church, nay, with the world.

The version into English of the following sermons, which was the result of a suggestion of Rev. Dr. Messler's, a successor of Domine Frelinghuysen's in the original church of Raritan, combined with a desire that his own children and others who are numbered among the worthy author's descendants, might have the privilege of hearing the echo of that voice which once sounded so melodious in the ears of those who had been awakened to an appreciation of the truth, was undertaken in the hope that the same blessing which attended them when preached

would again attend them when made the subject of perusal. While this expectation is primarily based upon a divine warrant, it rests, so far as the sermons themselves are concerned, not upon any adventitious qualities, but upon their character as faithful and forcible statements of the truth. They are sermons which are to be read not so much for intellectual gratification as for the higher purpose of spiritual improvement. The author observes, in one of his discourses, that he was unable to make his preparation without emotion: the translator is constrained to observe that he was not able to translate them without emotion, especially in view of the riches of divine grace which they disclose. It is impossible that they should be attentively perused without emotions subservient to either the production or the furtherance of the work of grace in the soul. That they may be a more useful closet companion, they are furnished with a somewhat copious index, directing the attention chiefly to their prominent doctrinal, practical, and experimental points.

While the author is select in his language, he seems intentionally to refrain from employing rhetorical ornament, as easily admitting of abuse: he intimates that it was his aim (after the example of other worthy preachers) to be more successful in reaching the heart by employing the words of God himself; and that he desired to accommodate himself to the larger part of the community, for whom there is but little fascination in beauties of style. While these sermons are now committed to the religious public generally, with earnest commendations and prayers, it is hoped that the churches of Jesus Christ in New-Jersey will especially feel the force of the inspired exhortation, "Remember your rulers who have spoken unto you the words of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

WM. DEMAREST,

BOUND BROOK, *March*, 1856.

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PREACHED BY

THEODORUS JACOBUS FRELINGHUYSEN,
MINISTER OF THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH ON THE RARITAN.

PUBLISHED BY SOME OF HIS FRIENDS.

PRINTED AT NEW-YORK, BY WILLIAM BRADFORD, IN THE YEAR
1721.

TO THESE ARE ADDED

TWO SERMONS ON 1 PETER 4 : 18, "IF THE RIGHTEOUS SCARCELY BE SAVED, WHERE SHALL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?"

PRINTED IN NEW-YORK, IN THE YEAR 1729.

RECOMMENDATION

BY THE REV. MESSRS. FREEMAN AND BARTHOLF.

WE, the undersigned, ministers of the word of God, by virtue of the commission received from our respective Classes, and to prove ourselves faithful to the trust committed to us by our superiors; namely, that in accordance with our office and bounden duty, we faithfully labor to promote the orthodox and scriptural doctrines of our Church, and oppose those which are contrary in their nature — we have, by request, attentively read, and with the utmost care examined, three learned, well-digested, and thrilling sermons, heretofore preached, and now for sufficient reasons published, by the reverend and learned, our brother in the ministry of the Gospel, Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, faithful minister of the Gospel in the Church of Jesus Christ at Raritan.

The first sermon is upon Isaiah 66 : 2.

The second sermon is upon the words of Paul, 1 Cor. 11 : 29, and the 30. Lord's Day, 81 and 82. Q. and A. of our Heidelbergh Catechism.

The third sermon is upon the words of Christ, Matt. 16 : 19, and the 31. Lord's Day, 83, 84, 85, Q. and A.

We have also found the contents of the forementioned sermons highly sound and scriptural, and agreeing in the smallest particulars not only with the written word of God, but also with the teachings of our Heidelbergh Catechism, adopted as a rule of doctrine, as well as with the forms employed in our Dutch churches. We can not, therefore doubt, that all who hold the reformed faith in its purity; all the pious and lovers of the truth as it is in Christ, will acquiesce in and readily accept this our recommendation. We also sincerely wish that the principles set forth in these sermons could and might, consistently with the peace and welfare of our churches, be put in practice by ourselves and all our ministers.

Your servants in Christ,

GUILM. BARTHOLF,
BERNARDUS FREEMAN.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IMPARTIAL and truth-loving reader ; you may possibly inquire why, in an age so learned, and abounding in illustrious works, issued by learned and renowned men on the very subjects here treated of, I should give to the public the following discourses : be pleased, then, to know that I have been influenced by the following considerations. In the first place, I have for some time been solicited to it by several of my friends. I know not, however, whether this would have been a sufficient inducement, since I make no pretensions to superior skill in composition. The second, and principal reason then is, that necessity has compelled me : for if you be not a stranger in our New-Netherlands Jerusalem, you are aware that I have been slanderously charged as a schismatic, and a teacher of false doctrines. That I am thus accused is too manifest to require proof. You will allow that it were the duty of those who thus accuse me, to establish what they say, either by word of mouth or by pen ; but since hitherto, this has not been done, let no one imagine that it is here my intention to vindicate myself. The trifling stories, the notorious falsehoods, that are circulated concerning me, and are by some so greedily received, are not deserving of mention, much less of refutation. It is true, there is much said of my manner in relation to the Lord's Supper ; but that I teach nothing else concerning this ordinance, but what has in every age been taught by the Reformed Church, can, in the following discourses, be readily discerned by any impartial person. Since, now, the charges made against me are serious in their nature, and affect not my person, but my office ; and that I may give no one reason to entertain suspicion in relation to the doctrines which I teach, I cheerfully permit these sermons to be published, and hesitate not to acknowledge them mine ; being assured that I have

written nothing that is inconsistent with the rule of faith, and the genuine doctrines of the Reformed Church; for I have followed the steps of numerous orthodox, faithful, and godly men, whose writings I have also employed, since I felt unable to make any improvement upon them.

If you be sanctified through the truth, and understand the truth as it is in Christ, you will also know his voice, and follow him; and maintain the truth in love. In fine, my desire and prayer is, that the Lord Jesus will come and cleanse and purify his Church; and do good unto Zion, and build the walls of Jerusalem.

I am, and remain your devoted servant in Christ,

THEODORUS JACOBUS FRELINGHUYSEN.

Written at NEW-YORK, *June 15, 1721.*

I.

The Door and Contrite God's Temple.

"BUT to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."—ISAIAH 66 : 2.

WHEN, of old, the prophet and judge Samuel was about to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, king of Israel, in place of Saul, he received from the Lord this salutary instruction, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. 16 : 7.) As he stood ready to pour forth the holy oil, the oldest son, Eliab, first presented himself; a young man of good proportions, elevated stature and agreeable countenance; so that Samuel was led to say: "This is he whom the Lord hath chosen as ruler of his people;" but the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, for I have refused him;" that is, not chosen him king, but passed by him; and assigned the reason, "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart." He thus reproveth in Samuel that frailty of our common nature, through which we are apt to be inordinately affected by the external aspect

of things, and he declared to him his infallible judgment, which is regulated not by the outward and visible appearance, but by the frame of our hearts; by our courage, skill, zeal, patience, diligence, and fear of God, which in a special manner, have their abode in the heart. This is not only true of worldly offices and employments, but of religion and the practice of true godliness. Here, eminently, the Lord looks not upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart; and in that alone does he delight. Of those who draw near to him with the mouth, and honor him with the lips, while their hearts are far from him, he says: "In vain do they worship me." (Matt. 15 : 8, 9.) Him, who like the nominal and formal Christian, contents himself with the external performance, however diligent in the observance of the institutions of religion, God regards as an idolater; for the end of all his commandments is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, (1 Tim. 1 : 5;) in the absence of which, however precise an observer of the outward forms of godliness, man is an abomination to the Lord. Shall prayer be acceptable to God, it must be offered in spirit and in truth. (John 4 : 24.) Shall attendance at the Lord's table be pleasing to him and profitable to man, he must be adorned with the wedding garment of repentance, faith, and love; for the Lord looks upon the heart. The outward performance of religious duties, without a suitable frame of mind, he hates; but to these will he look: to the poor and contrite in spirit, and those who tremble at his word, as is said in the words of our text.

The Lord here reproves the Jews for their idolatrous

attachment to the visible temple: (v. 1.) "The heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?" in which he teaches that under the New Testament he would no longer have a fixed throne or footstool as formerly, when he exhibited himself between the cherubim above the ark, as if upon a throne, and made the temple upon Mount Zion at Jerusalem, in the land of Canaan, his footstool; but that forsaking the earthly sanctuary, he would have no throne but heaven and the whole earth as his footstool; and that it would then be impossible to select a place in which to build him a house, as the place of his rest, as under the Old Testament. The Lord assigns the reason, "For all those things hath mine hand made and all those things have been," (v. 2;) whereupon he shows who are his acceptable worshippers; as if he had said, 'But wilt thou know to whom I will look as to a house and place of rest, in whom under the New Testament I will dwell as in a spiritual temple? It is to such as are spiritually poor and contrite, and who tremble at my word.'

I. The objects or persons who here come under notice; who are characterized in a three-fold manner, as, 1. "poor," 2. "of a contrite spirit," 3. "that tremble at his word."

II. The promise made to them: "To these will I look."

I. The poor, according to the force of the original word, *hani*, are such as are humble, distressed, meek;

that word being derived from a root which, among other things, signifies to be humbled, to be oppressed; and hence it is not unfitly employed to express that dejected and sorrowful state of mind, by which the Lord's people are frequently marked, in consequence either of temporal afflictions or a sense of sin and divine judgments. It thus corresponds in signification with the word "meek." We accordingly find the poor and meek associated, Is. 11 : 4: "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." An epithet this, eminently appropriate to the people of God; for believers are poor, inasmuch as they are humble, not puffed up, but little and mean in their own estimation, humble in countenance, carriage, attire, words, disposition, and in their outward converse. But, above all, like David, are they humble in the frame of their souls: 2 Sam. 6 : 22, "And I will be yet more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight;" and again, Ps. 131 : 1: "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." Do they direct their attention to God? they are led to exclaim with Job, "Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." (Job 40 : 4.) Do they turn their attention to themselves? a sense of their spiritual helplessness and need causes them, ceasing all glorying in themselves, in their emptiness to betake themselves to the fullness of Jesus. But the people of the Lord are also properly termed meek, by reason of that humble and gentle frame of soul which is to be found in believers, as a fruit of the Spirit of God; for the fruit of the Spirit is

also "meekness." (Gal. 5 : 23.) This they exhibit in friendly and quiet intercourse with their fellow-men, without yielding to anger and revenge ; in a teachable and obedient temper in relation to the commandments of the Lord ; in the patient endurance of reproach and injuries, of adversities and afflictions.

It is for this reason that the word poor, is used as synonymous with the word meek ; for what is denominated poor, Zech. 9 : 9, is expressed by the word meek in Matt. 21 : 5 : an evidence that the two frames in question, are correspondent.

Believers are denominated the poor, because afflicted and called to struggle with numerous troubles and calamities ; sometimes with such as relate to the mind, which inwardly distress them and make them exceedingly poor in spirit ; sometimes with such as relate to the body and affect them outwardly ; especially, the persecution and malice of their enemies. Hence it is said, Zeph. 3 : 12, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people." Those, also, among the Jews, who should believe in Christ, are denominated "the poor of the flock." (Zech. 11 : 11.) The afflictions and poverty of believers are spoken of in connection, Rev. 2 : 9. This is their lot. (John. 16 : 33 ; Acts. 14 : 22.) This was clearly to be seen in the first ages of Christianity. Into what depths of poverty and affliction were believers plunged, by numerous persecutions !

All these things are found in one who is really poor. Poverty in general, is a destitution of such things as are needed by man for his subsistence ; so that the poor are, in general, such as lack the necessaries of

life; as food, meat and drink, and raiment by which the body is shielded against the discomforts of the seasons—cold, heat, rain, and wind; and with anguish, distress, and concern are compelled to seek their livelihood at other's doors. This is a sad condition, and accordingly David prayed that the children of his enemies, who rendered him evil for good, might be "continually vagabonds, and beg and seek their bread out of their desolate places." Poverty is two-fold, corporeal and spiritual. The former is not here excluded; since the two are frequently associated. Believers are often poor as to this world. It has not always been their lot to have many worldly possessions, since there are other and better treasures in reserve for them. Thus poverty and need are frequently their portion. Riches are, frequently, a hindrance in following Jesus; not only because the heart is, usually, too much set upon them, and cleaves so tenaciously to them, but because they create such great reluctance when it is necessary, with Moses, to prefer the reproach of Christ to the treasures of Egypt. When, with the rich young man, many are called to count these things loss and dross, for the excellency of Christ, they go away sorrowful. It was for this reason that Jesus uttered that hard saying which is recorded, Matt. 19 : 23, 24, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and again: "I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." We accordingly see that many of those who have embraced the gospel of Jesus, are poor. This is taught by James 2 : 5: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world

rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" and the people of Christ are frequently obscure and lowly in their worldly condition. It was therefore foretold that he would turn his hands upon the little ones. (Zech. 13 : 7.) Paul also emphatically declares the same thing, 1 Cor. 1 : 26-28. It was fishermen and, for the most part, obscure persons, who were at first converted to Christ. It was the multitude and the common people who adhered to him, (John 7 : 40, 41 ;) and subsequently it was chiefly poor and obscure persons from among Jews and Gentiles, who could readily leave their worldly possessions and stations, who became the followers of Jesus in the Gospel. We hence find, that the heathen upbraided the early Christians with their poverty and obscurity ; as for example, Cæcilius, who denominates them the dregs and refuse of the people ; the most and best of whom were a poor, beggarly, and starving race, having neither riches nor reputation to secure for themselves a standing in society. Herein, however, he exceeds the limits of truth ; for when the boundaries of Christianity were somewhat enlarged and its professors increased in number, there were many of the great and rich to be found among them. There is, notwithstanding, much truth in it ; and believers are for the most part poor and obscure as to this world ; though not to the dishonor of the Gospel.

But since worldly poverty is not here the principal subject of discourse, we shall not further enlarge upon it, but pass to the consideration of spiritual poverty ; and, indeed, all believers are truly poor in spirit ; and must be such in order to be the objects of divine favor.

Thus the Saviour characterizes them, Matt. 5 : 3 : "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The spiritually poor are then not only such as are destitute of all spiritual blessings; for such is the case with all men by nature. It is true, God created man good and upright, after his own image; so that he was rich in God, in knowledge, love, and glory, and abounded in spiritual blessings. But this state was not of long continuance: he sinned and was thus despoiled of that divine image—that costly pearl—those great treasures: he was divested of his spiritual garments—he was deprived of his inestimable riches. Hence we are all poor, and destitute of spiritual blessings, and without hope of eternal life; for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, (Rom. 3 : 23;) are darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God. (Eph. 4 : 18.) By sin, all men have been plunged into an abyss of misery—into a state of fearful and overwhelming destitution. But although all men are thus poor, all are yet not poor in spirit; for the greater part, (like drunkards,) imagine themselves rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing. The poor now under consideration, are therefore such as have a knowledge of their spiritual need—as see, and are sensible of it. They are :

1. Such as have a lively, convincing apprehension of their spiritual need, sinfulness, ill-desert, and impotence; and are thus rendered sensible of their lost, damnable state, and of their inability to achieve their own deliverance; so that with David they can say: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51 : 5.)

2. Such as are, hence, also lowly and humble in their disposition and conduct, having low thoughts of themselves; (as those who are really poor always have;) not regarding themselves as aught, but as destitute of all that is good; like the publican, Luke 18.

3. Such as, by these means driven out of themselves, become humble suppliants at the throne of grace—full of desire to be filled out of the fullness of Jesus; as that poor one by the wayside, who exclaimed, Lord Jesus have mercy on me. Are they poor as to the body? they bear their poverty with patience and cheerfulness, and esteem it more highly than the treasures of this world; they are content with what they have; and the remainder, they, with humble confidence, expect from God, that father of lights, from whom all good and all perfect gifts come. (James 1 : 17.) Are they possessed of an abundance of earthly blessings, (which may be found associated with spiritual poverty,) they trust not in uncertain riches; to do good and communicate they forget not. It is for these reasons, that the people of Jesus—the objects of divine favor, are denominated poor. These are the poor, to whom Jesus referred in his message to John the Baptist: “To the poor the gospel is preached,” (Matt. 11 : 5;) and whom he specified as the object of his evangelical commission, saying, “He hath sent me to preach the gospel to the poor.” (Luke 4 : 18.)

Those who are thus poor and destitute, must also necessarily be concerned respecting it, and have a painful sense of it; on which account the prophet adds, “of a contrite spirit.” By the spirit we must understand the rational, immortal soul of man, by which he under-

stands, wills, and judges, in its operations and inward state; or it is that habit and frame and those exercises—those affections and motions which have their seat in the soul, also denominated the mind. The original word translated, contrite, signifies to strike, beat, crush, and is equivalent in meaning to that translated, to bruise, Ps. 90 : 3, and to be broken, or ground and reduced to powder, Is. 19 : 10. It hence appears, that it is here to be taken in a figurative sense; for the soul, being spiritual, can not properly be smitten and broken. The mode of expression is derived from hard substances, which must be struck with force in order to be broken. This, applied to the soul, conveys the idea, that previously they were elated, proud, and hard and inflexible as adamant; as is also said, Zech. 7 : 12. The contrite in spirit then, are those who lay aside all pride, haughtiness, and ideas of inherent worthiness, and humble themselves deeply before the Lord; and confess and acknowledge themselves to be dust and ashes, unworthy of the least favor, with heart-felt sorrow for their sins, and desires after mercy. In a contrite spirit are found:

1. A deep sense and clear perception of sin, by which the sinner is convinced of his miserable and condemned state, his unworthiness and manifold sins and helplessness; so that his sins are to him as a heavy burden weighing him down. Thus the heart becomes sensitive, tender, and dejected, in view of the curse of the law, and the wrath of God against sin. The hammer of God's law smites the soul; and thus, the word of God becomes as a fire and a hammer, by which the stony heart is broken in pieces. (Jer. 23 : 29.) Hence

arises a sense of sin, as a heavy burden, too heavy to be borne, so that with David he is compelled to say, "O Lord! rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure; for thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore." (Ps. 38 : 1, 2.)

2. Heart-felt disquietude and sadness, on account of the sins which have been committed, together with regret, not so much on account of the punishment, as of the hatefulness of sin, as it is in itself; by which so gracious a God has been displeased, and one so good and holy, dishonored; by which the sinner is with Ezra, 9 : 6, filled with shame, and like the publican, Luke 18 : 13, dares not lift up his eyes unto heaven; and tears run down from his eyes, and saturate, as it were, his heart. This is that godly sorrow of which Paul speaks, 2 Cor. 7 : 10, proceeding from hatred of sin, and love to God and virtue, and working repentance unto salvation not to be repented of: thus saith the Church, "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled." (Lam. 2 : 11.)

3. An open and free confession of sin, in all its circumstances and aggravations; with accusation, condemnation, and abhorrence of self: thus said Job, 42 : 6, "Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." Such confession of a contrite heart we have in David, Ps. 51 : 32 : 5; and in the prodigal son, Luke 15 : 10, 19.

4. Inward dejection, through which the sinner is rendered entirely hopeless, and at a loss in himself, seeing naught but guilt and helplessness, and hence unavoidable destruction, like the prodigal son: "I perish with hunger." (Luke 15 : 17.) Thus were those penitent

Jews affected, who said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

5. Cordial solicitude respecting a way of deliverance. By reason of a sense of the greatness of his sins, he knows not whither to look or turn; but, notwithstanding, places his dependence upon the grace which God can exercise through his Son. Hence, the contrite in spirit flees from the curse of the law to the Gospel; pants, and longs after grace and forgiveness, saying, How shall I become a partaker of pardon and reconciliation? How shall I obtain deliverance? Oh! that I were possessed of spiritual life! He hungers, thirsts, and pants after the refreshing water brooks. The soul thirsts after the righteousness of Christ, as a thirsty land in the heat of summer. (Ps. 143 : 6.) Thus he is driven out of himself, to the sovereign grace of God in Christ, for reconciliation, pardon, sanctification, and salvation. How graphically and sententiously is this represented in the penitent publican, Luke 18 : 13, who was, indeed, sorry and ashamed on account of his sins, and contrite in spirit, (for he stood afar off, and would not even lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast,) yet, notwithstanding, cried to God, "Be merciful to me a sinner," that is, "Be reconciled to me through the sacrifice of thy Son." We have, also, an example of a contrite spirit, in the woman spoken of, Luke 7 : 37, 38.

Since contrition of spirit also imports a heart broken, pliable, tender, feeling, lowly, humble, and affected by deep reverence for the high and everywhere present majesty of God, therefore, those who are contrite in spirit, are also such as tremble at the word of God.

“And trembleth at my word.” There is a sinful, slavish fear and trembling found in the ungodly, who, hearing of the curses and punishment to which they are exposed, are filled with exceeding great terror, and fear of hell, which may produce in them for a time, a feigned repentance, as in Saul, 1 Sam. 26 : 21. Such was also the effect upon king Belshazzar, when he saw the hand recording his doom upon the wall ; as we read, Dan. 5 : 6. When Felix heard Paul reason of the judgment, he trembled. (Acts 24 : 25.) Such trembling, however, is not here to be understood ; but this trembling at the word of God, is found in those who are of a contrite spirit, who are affected with holy and reverent emotions in view of the majesty and supremacy of God, and an earnest desire not to displease him, so that they fear and tremble at his commandments, and receive, and submit themselves to them, with filial fear. This trembling is therefore none other than an humble estimation of themselves, associated with profound reverence for the high majesty of God, as we read, Hos. 10 : 11 : thus saith Job also, 37 : 1. To tremble at the word of God is then :

1. To entertain lively esteem, and profound reverence for the word of God, as being the word of the living God, and a word which is quick and powerful, (Heb. 4 : 12 ;) to bear upon the mind a deep impression of the promises, threatenings, and commandments of the Gospel ; to be much occupied with it, and highly to value it.

2. To take pleasure and satisfaction in it, and to glory in it, as a word worthy of all acceptation, with David, Ps. 19 : 11 ; 139 : 17.

3. To hear the word with delight; to be not slow, but swift and ready to hear. (Heb. 5 : 11; James 1 : 19.)

4. To dwell in meditation upon the word, (Ps. 1 : 2;) to read, to search, attentively to consider it, earnestly to labor to penetrate into its true meaning, (John 5 : 39,) as those of Berea, Acts 17 : 11; to search for it as for hid treasures.

5. To cherish the word in the heart, to imprint it upon it; so that it can not be effaced; to be continually engaged with it, and thus, with Mary, to keep all the words of the Lord in the heart. Thus David says of himself, Ps. 119 : 11, "Thy word have I hid, etc."

6. Not only to know and understand the truths therein revealed, but to receive them with love, with humility, and renunciation of our own wisdom—to repose in the infallible testimony of God, and thus, from the heart to obey that form of doctrine into which we have been delivered. (Rom. 6 : 17.)

7. A heart-felt solicitude and care not to sin against the word, whether, by not unreservedly and universally confessing its truths, or, by deviating from the path of righteousness, which the word of God prescribes: thus David said, "I have not departed from thy judgments; for thou hast taught me." (Ps. 119 : 102.)

8. To tremble at the word of God is, also, to fear the commandments of God, and to keep them; to compare our walk and conversation with them, and to regulate ourselves by them, (Gal. 6 : 16;) and thus, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, (Phil. 2 : 2;) for this trembling is associated with diligence and care to do what is acceptable to God, which can not be done,

except by the keeping of his commandments. (Eccl. 12 : 13.) This was David's prayer. (Ps. 119 : 35.)

9. And lastly : it is to tremble at the threatenings, punishments, and judgments that are recorded in the word ; and in proportion to the knowledge of our ill desert, to fear the chastising hand of God : thus it was with David : Ps. 119 : 120 : " My flesh trembleth for fear of thee ; and I am afraid of thy judgments ;" and this is spoken of as the proper effect of the dreadful-ness of divine wrath, Ps. 2 : 11, 12. Such is the frame of the people of the Lord, and these are the persons here spoken of, and to these is an illustrious promise made ; the Lord will " look to" them.

II. " But to this man will I look." As the Lord God is a spirit, and without bodily members, it is in a figurative sense that seeing is ascribed to him. To the poor, contrite in spirit, and those who tremble at God's word, the Lord will look, that is :

1. He will be gracious and favorable to them ; for since they are poor, destitute of all things, and of a contrite spirit, they are proper objects of his favor. Such a frame of mind is acceptable to him. (Ps. 51 : 19.) And as by looking here ascribed to the Lord, his gracious omniscience is signified, so it is certain that he looks to them ; for

2. He knows them in an especial manner by name. (2 Tim. 2 : 19.) He has known them from eternity according to the purpose of his grace, and now knows them as the objects of his favor ; he is intimately acquainted with what they do, and leave undone ; he knows their uprightness, their secret devotion, their

prayers, supplications, and wrestlings, their sighing, and crying, their reading and meditating upon the word of God—in a word, their godly walk. He sees and knows their striving against sin, their sadness and sorrow on account of sin, the absence of God, and other troubles of soul. (Ps. 88 : 10.) He knows their bodily wants, their adversities, trials, and afflictions. "The Lord looks to them," that is :

3. He provides for them, and sustains them, with all that they need—with spiritual and corporeal blessings ; and suffers them to want naught, requisite for life or godliness. This care extends over them as to body and soul, both in prosperity and adversity. "They are graven on the palms of his hands." (Is. 49 : 16.) "He looks to them," that is :

4. He loves them with a love of complacency ; for as a father pitieth his children so he pities them that fear him, (Ps. 103 : 13 ;) and they are his special property ; he will therefore spare them, as a man spareth his son that serveth him. (Mal. 3 : 17.) But in particular, "the Lord looks to them," when

5. He grants them a sensible experience of his loving kindness, so that they taste that the Lord is good—when he speaks peace to them and powerfully impresses upon their minds these or similar words : "Thou art mine ;" "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," (Jer. 31 : 3 ;) "I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight," (Ex. 33 : 12 ;) "Thy sins are forgiven thee," (Mark. 2 : 5 ;) "Thou art an heir of eternal life ;" by which their souls are filled with light and strength, and they experience a sweet composure,

delightful satisfaction, quickening joy, and thus become intoxicated with love, and feel in themselves the beginnings of eternal life. Thus "the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts," assuring them that their "hope shall not make them ashamed." (Rom. 5 : 5.) This was the desire of David, Ps. 35 : 3 ; this was David's experience when he said, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased," (Ps. 4 : 7 ;) this causes to exult and say with Isaiah, 61 : 10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." This is the inward witness of the spirit of God, by which assurance is imparted to the people of God : "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8 : 16.)

6. And lastly : "To these the Lord will look," because he will dwell in them as in a spiritual temple, and be present with them in a peculiar manner ; for they are united to him—there is a mutual familiarity between God and them—they walk with God, and God with them. He dwells in them by the gracious and powerful operations of his Spirit ; for the Spirit is and dwells in them. (John 14 : 17.) Thus they are led, comforted, and strengthened ; so that they are temples of God, in which he dwells, according to his promise. This gracious presence of God, so quickening to their souls, is to them delightful beyond expression, and was therefore so greatly desired by David. Ps. 63 : 2.

This is the testimony, throughout, of the word of God—that he will be gracious and favorable to the

poor, the broken in heart, and contrite in spirit; and no wonder; for such frame is highly acceptable to him. (Ps. 51 : 19.) This is to be seen in the case of the sinful woman, Luke 7; the prodigal son, Luke 15; and the publican, Luke 18 : 13. Such frame God demands, and loves. (Joel 2 : 12, 13.) God himself is the author and efficient cause of a contrite spirit. (Ezek. 36 : 26.) A contrite spirit forsakes and denies itself for the glory of God. For this purpose the Saviour came unto the world. (Isa. 61 : 1, 2; Matt. 11 : 28.) Hence he pronounces them blessed. (Matt. 5.)

We hence see, worthy hearers, that those who are in covenant with God—the people of Christ—believers—heirs of salvation, are altogether different in the state of their souls, from what is generally supposed. The promises of God's favor and grace are made to such as are in a low, humble, and despicable state in the world, and have externally very little to attract notice; for they are spiritually poor, contrite in spirit, trembling at the word of God; humble, bruised and broken in heart, (Is. 57 : 15;) mourners, and of a sad spirit, (61 : 1, 2, 3;) poor and needy: (41 : 17,) "The poor and needy seek water," (water of life,) "but there is none;" (they can not find it in themselves, or others;) "their souls fail for thirst;" those who "can not keep alive their own souls," (Ps. 22 : 27;) are destitute: (Ps. 102 : 17,) "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." (Is. 40 : 1.) This presupposes sorrow, inward conflict, and temptation. They are set forth under the figure of a bruised reed, as those who are bowed down,

broken, and crushed to pieces; and as a smoking wick, to represent them as in a state of darkness—without much light of joy and gladness; as those who are “afflicted, tossed, with tempest, and not comforted.” (Is. 54 : 11.) Behold, these are those, who are in covenant with God—the people of Christ—heirs of salvation, whom Christ declares blessed, Matt. 5. Those only who are such in character, are at liberty to appear at the table of the Lord; as the form itself shows; for after it is said that those of ungodly and scandalous lives should abstain, it is observed, “but this is not designed to deject the contrite hearts of the faithful;” consequently, it is the poor and contrite in spirit, “who tremble at the word,” to whom the Lord looks; who may partake of the sacred meal. Each one will now be compelled to admit, that those who do not bear this character—who are not poor and contrite in spirit, and who do not tremble at the word of God, are not in covenant with God, and therefore may not appear at the table of the Lord, unless they would bring down judgment on themselves. It is therefore necessary that we examine, whether we be possessed of this frame; and, especially, is this now the duty of you, who propose to observe the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. This is the express command of God. (1 Cor. 11 : 28.)

What think ye my hearers? are ye poor, contrite in spirit, and those who tremble at the word of God? If you have given your earnest attention, you have been able to learn how it is with you in this respect. Calmly ask yourselves in the presence of the all-seeing God:

1. Am I spiritually poor? Have I a sensible knowledge of my sad and condemned state? Do I feel that

in myself I am so guilty, impure, and evil—so alienated from God, and the life of God—so wretched, poor, miserable, blind, naked, and unable to deliver myself, or do aught towards my deliverance, that I must perish if I remain thus ?

2. Have I through a sense of my spiritual need, and desperate state, become distressed, concerned, and at a loss ? Do I accuse, condemn, and loathe myself ? Am I anxious to know how I may be delivered from so sad a condition ? Are my spiritual need and misery the grand cause of my lamentation and grief ? and is the language of my soul, what shall become of me ? Ah ! miserable creature ! How poor, blind, unbelieving ! how destitute of sensibility and affection ! Truly, unless God have mercy on me, unless I obtain part in the atonement of Jesus, and become truly sanctified, I must become eternally miserable ! It is proper to the poor to complain, or in the language of Solomon, to use entreaties. (Prov. 18 : 23.) The heart of him who is poor and needy “is wounded within him.” (Ps. 109 : 22.)

3. Am I contrite in spirit through a painful sense of sin ? Do my sins oppress me ? Are they burdensome ? Do I experience in my inmost soul sorrow for sin, proceeding from love to God and true excellence, and from hatred and aversion to sin, in its shamefulness, loathsomeness, and deformity ; and because committed against so holy, good, and righteous a God ; together with a purpose of heart henceforth to live according to the will of God ? Oh ! how distressed, straitened in spirit, and dejected, are those who have obtained a proper sight and sense of their sins, multiplied transgressions, and spiritual need !

4. It is natural to the poor to endeavor to obtain a supply of their wants, and to seek means suited to that end. You should therefore inquire whether knowing and feeling your need, you have become desirous of the holy Jesus, so that you crave naught, long for naught, but to be enriched through Jesus Christ, with spiritual blessings—with knowledge, faith, love, and holiness, that you may live to the glory of God—whether the chief thing for which you look and long, and for which you most labor, is indeed, the blissful fullness and riches which are in Jesus; and whether all the means of grace, as the hearing and reading of the word of God, and prayer, are used by you to this end; that in and through them, your spiritual need may be supplied, and especially, that you may become truly sanctified.

5. Ask yourself also, do I find within me a trembling at the word of God, so that I have high reverence for it? Do I take delight in searching it, and meditating upon it? Have I an earnest solicitude not to sin against it? and do I desire to regulate my life in accordance with it? Having proposed to yourself these inquiries, and being convinced that such is not your experience—that you are not poor, contrite in spirit, and do not tremble at the word of God—that you are not thus deeply and painfully affected by your sins, condemned state, and helplessness, judge, I pray you, whether you can rightfully conclude that you are in covenant with God. Most certainly not: if these things be not found in you, suffer not yourself to be persuaded by Satan, and your own deceitful heart, that you may, notwithstanding, approach the Lord's table. Will the Lord look to the poor, contrite in spirit, and those who

tremble at his word? then will he not look to those who are not such; nor be favorable to them. Surely, you have not this frame of mind; you are not in covenant with God; you have no right to the sacraments—you who go on your way at ease, without inward concern respecting the state of your souls; you ignorant ones, in relation to the mysteries of the Gospel and the institution and import of the Lord's supper; you who are not heartily humbled on account of your sins, but can live contentedly without seeking reconciliation through Christ, and who have no desire after a sense of pardoned sin, comfort, sanctification, and assurance of salvation; you, who with those of Laodicea, are spiritually rich in your own eyes, and imagine that you have need of nothing, (Rev. 3 : 17;) you, who have never had a clear view and lively sense, have not been dejected and despondent on account of sin and helplessness, and have never been at a loss in yourselves on account of them; you that are strangers to the exercise and acts of faith, and are not found choosing Christ as surety, longing after and looking for him, pursuing him with prayers and supplications, and receiving him for justification and sanctification; you, who are not marked by profound reverence for, and trembling at the word of God—you all, I say, of whom these things are true, are not in covenant with God, but unconverted; and therefore, we most solemnly warn you, that you presume not to appear at the table of the Lord; for you have no part in Christ and his benefits—the Lord's supper is not for *you*. But if, notwithstanding, you approach, we declare to you that you will incur a heavy judgment, and make yourselves guilty of the

body of the Lord—the most dreadful of all sins that can be imagined.

I know, indeed, that you will be unwilling to believe that you have no right to come to the Lord's table, although you clearly perceive that you are not of the number of the poor, contrite in spirit, and such as tremble at the word of God; but, I also know, (you may believe it or not,) that according to the word of God, you have no right; and that if you do, you will seal your condemnation. Oh! that you saw how necessary is such frame of mind!—that no one can be found in favor with God, unless he be poor, and contrite in spirit. Seek then, after this frame:

1. Labor to be fully convinced that the only riches of the soul are found in communion with God and the Lord Jesus, that thus you may become small and empty in yourselves.

2. Learn to entertain an humble opinion of all that is your own; to hold your own righteousness and capacity for that which is good in no esteem; and much to aggravate your sins and helplessness in your own estimation: seek to obtain a knowledge of your spiritual need.

3. Contemplate yourself much in the light of the holy majesty of God, and thus you will become poor, contrite, and trembling, like Job, 42 : 5, 6, and Isaiah 6 : 5.

4. Seek to acquire deep reverence for the word of God.

Those, on the contrary, who are poor, contrite in spirit, and who tremble at the word of God, may approach the holy table—those:

1. Who realize themselves wholly lost; feel their sins a burden; are filled with sorrow, shame, and regret on account of them, and therefore desire an interest in Christ, that through him they may obtain forgiveness, and also sanctification; that they may live holily and unblamably.

2. Who, under a realizing sense of their entire misery and need, betake themselves for refuge to Jesus—look for, long after, and call upon him—yield themselves unto him, receive him, to be justified by his blood, and sanctified by his spirit.

3. Who are conscious of hatred and aversion to sin, sorrow when they sin, and a constant rising from their falls, and having recourse to the blood of Jesus for reconciliation, and desire and delight to live in a manner well pleasing to the Lord, according to his commandments; such, I say, as truly experience these things, and only such, may and must partake of the Lord's supper.

But to appear profitably at the Lord's table, we should previously make careful preparation; for each one will be narrowly inspected, that it may be seen whether he have on a wedding garment, that is, whether he appear in a suitable frame of mind. This is a work of extraordinary importance. It is also solemnly commanded. In order to such preparation there is required an adorning. Is it our design to appear at a marriage, we carefully adorn ourselves; much more should this be done, when we are about to appear at the Lord's table. The guest without a wedding garment was readily detected and cast out. (Matt. 22 : 11.)

To this adorning, it appertains that we be found in

a condition to be the objects of sovereign grace—that we view ourselves in our nothingness and sinfulness, that we may be rendered small in our own esteem; for such are proper objects of divine favor—that we meditate upon and be sensible of our unworthiness, saying in our hearts, Who am I unworthy one, that the Lord should at all think upon me? I am entirely naught. In me is nothing but sin. I am by nature destitute of the image of God and a child of wrath. What abominations do not proceed from my evil heart! What sins have I not committed in thought, word, and work! How heartless am I in the service of God! Truly, I am not worthy that God should look upon me, or show me the least favor! Here we should pause, until we acquire the requisite frame of mind, consisting of 1, a low esteem of ourselves, (Gen. 32 : 10;) 2, heart-felt shame, (Ezra 9 : 6;) 3, sincere compunction and sorrow for sin; 4, humiliation and self-loathing, (2 Sam. 24 : 10;) 5, fear of the chastising hand of God, (Ps. 6 : 2;) 6, ingenuous and full confession of sin with acknowledgment of its hatefulness and ill desert, (Ps. 32 : 5;) 7, hearty prayer for reconciliation and peace, (Ps. 51 : 3, 4;) 8, elevation of heart by faith, to the promise made to those who confess their sins, (1 John 1 : 9.) To a requisite adorning appertains, also, a desire after Christ, and a firm purpose to lead a holy life, (Ps. 119 : 5;) as well as a heart going forth in love to all the children of God, and expanding in love to all mankind. (2 Pet. 1 : 7.)

Happy are they who possess this frame—are thus poor, contrite in spirit, and tremble at the word of God—to such God displays his sovereign grace, here in its beginnings, and hereafter in the perfection of glory.

II.

The Acceptable Communicant.

1 COR. 11 : 29.

“FOR he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

30. LORD'S DAY OF THE HEIDELBERGH CATECHISM.

Ques. 81. For whom is the Lord's supper instituted ?

Ans. For those who are truly sorrowful for their sins, and yet trust that these are forgiven them for the sake of Christ ; and that their remaining infirmities are covered by his passion and death ; and who also earnestly desire to have their faith more and more strengthened and their lives more holy ; but hypocrites and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Ques. 82. Are they also to be admitted to this supper, who by confession and life declare themselves infidels and ungodly ?

Ans. No ; for by this the covenant of God would be profaned, and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation ; therefore it is the duty of the Christian Church, according to the appointment of Christ and his apostles, to exclude such persons, by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, till they show amendment of life.

UNDER the Old Testament, a law was given by God, by which strangers, the uncircumcised, and the unclean were forbidden to approach to the sanctuary and the sacred things. (Ex. 12 : 34, 35 ; Lev. 22 : 3.)

And not only might not the children of Israel suffer

aught that was unclean to approach the sacred things, but they were required not to suffer it in their midst; and were strictly commanded to remove all that was unclean from the camp. For this the Lord gave the following reason, namely, that they should not defile their camps. (Numb. 5 : 2, 3, and 19 : 13, 20.) And so extensive was this command that when the children of Israel suffered but one unclean person in their midst, and had fellowship with him, although they themselves were free from guilt, nay, not aware that such an one was among them, punishment came upon the whole of Israel; as we see in the case of Achan, Josh. 6 : 17, 18, and 7 : 12. And further; God the Lord instantly departed from the whole congregation, when but one unclean person was found in their midst: "Neither will I (said he) be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed (the guilty Achan) from among you." (Josh. 7 : 12.) These things were our examples. (1 Cor. 10 : 6.) We also have a sanctuary under the New Testament—the Lord's supper, which has come in place of the Passover, and which, it is explicitly and solemnly declared, that none of the unconverted, who are still in their natural and unclean state, because not sanctified by the Holy Ghost, should approach; for the Lord has denounced a severe punishment upon all who unworthily approach this sanctuary, and partake of these holy things. He has at the same time enjoined upon the overseers of the church, that they debar strangers and the ungodly, and put them from among them; that the covenant of God may not be profaned, and his wrath stirred up against the whole congregation, and the Lord remove with his blessing spirit and grace from his Church. This is what is taught in this Lord's day.

Two grand subjects are here suggested (by the Instructor) for our consideration :

I. Who may, and who may not approach the Lord's table.

II. That the Church should debar those that lead offensive and wicked lives.

In relation to the first point the Instructor asks: "For whom is the Lord's supper instituted?" It is not instituted for the dead; for they are already in their place, where they shall remain for ever. It must also not be administered to the dying, for they are not in a state to receive it; nor to children, because unable to examine themselves, but to living adults; yet not to all who are partakers of corporeal life; since it is instituted only for the regenerated, who are possessed of spiritual life; for it is spiritual food that spiritual men only can partake of, to their invigoration. It is a sign and seal of the covenant of God; so that it naturally follows that all truly in covenant with God are entitled to it. "Christ hath ordained this meat only for his believing followers," says the form; and he accordingly kept it only with his disciples, who were renewed persons. That this is the general sense of the Reformed Church, appears not only from what is here stated by our Instructor, but also from the Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, which reads as follows: "We believe and confess, that our Saviour Jesus Christ ordained and instituted the sacrament of the holy supper to nourish and sustain those whom he hath already regenerated, and incorporated into his family, which is his Church." (Art. 35.) And that no others may approach, the Instructor presents

some characteristics of those who *may*, and of those who *may not* come to the table of the Lord :

1. "Those" (observes the Catechism) "who are sorrowful for their sins"—who are convinced of, and suitably impressed with them—who discern their grievous ill-desert, their criminal, condemned, and miserable state, and are affected with grief, concern, shame, self-condemnation, and loathing, and thus mourn over their wickedness, saying, "What have I done?" (Jer. 8 : 6.) We see this in Ephraim. (Jer. 31 : 19.) This sorrow is that hearty penitence, through which a believing sinner is truly humbled on account of his sins, and bitterly laments and mourns over them, from love to God and hatred of them. For such the Lord's supper is instituted ; for these are they who are in covenant with God, to whom it is given, by virtue of the covenant of grace, "to think on their evil ways and their doings that were not good," and thus to loathe themselves on account of their iniquities and abominations, according to the Lord's promise, Ezek. 36 : 31. Such are proper objects of the grace that is here sealed ; for the poor in spirit, and those that mourn, are pronounced blessed. (Matt. 5 : 6.) The Lord promises to look with favor upon such. (Is. 5 : 7, 15, 18 ; 66 : 2.) Mere sorrow is not of itself sufficient ; for Cain, Esau, Saul, and Judas, also experienced conviction and sorrow for sin. To this must then be united,

2. "*Trust*, that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake ; and that our remaining infirmity is covered by his passion and death." This trust is no self-created impression ; but that act of faith, by which the soul regarding with complacency the divine plan of reconcil-

ing and saving sinners through Jesus Christ, as surety, with entire satisfaction, acquiesces in that plan—esteems and approves of it as good, wise, and holy; desiring to be sanctified and saved in that way, and in none other; and, hereupon, through a painful sight and sense of its sins, turns to that surety and mediator, desiring to be found in Him only; and, therefore, with an abandonment of every thing in itself looks for, and longs after him with restless desire, seeking all its salvation only in him; withal, desiring naught besides him, discerning in him a suitableness and sufficiency, capable of swallowing up all its need. Hereupon, the soul goes forth in operative desire after him; chooses him alone, as its portion; engages in inward dealings with him, and resigns itself wholly and unreservedly to him, on the ground of his gracious invitation and offer, and intrusts itself and its salvation to his hands; reposing with entire confidence in him; thus receiving the testimony of God, and setting to its seal that God is true. (John 3 : 33.) Such are entitled to the Lord's supper; for the hungry and thirsty are invited and promised that they shall be filled. (Is. 55 : 1; Matt. 5 : 6.) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," (John 3 : 36;) to wit, here in grace, which is spiritual life, the commencement of life eternal. To this is to be added that,

3. "They desire," observes the Instructor, "to have their faith more and more strengthened." It is the nature of spiritual life to cause a desire for progress: the cry of the weak believer is, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," (Mark 9 : 24;) "Increase our faith." (Luke 17 : 15.) Hence it appears that this meat is also

intended for the weak in faith; for the Instructor does not here demand the highest degree of faith, namely, full assurance. He, however, who is favored with the full assurance of faith, is prepared with great profit to partake of the supper; inasmuch as he is able freely to approach, as an accepted guest, discern the Lord's body, and receive the emblems, as a seal of the forgiveness of his sins. That, however, it may be manifest that this trust is not a mere delusive impression, the Catechism also states as a pre-requisite,

4. "A desire to live more holy." Believers directing their attention to themselves, perceive their constant wanderings, with sorrow and regret, and heartily hate sin, and strive against it. They are therefore, exceedingly desirous of growing in holiness; nay, even of attaining to perfection. They know, indeed, that they can not fully attain to it in this life; but are aware that they can approach more nearly to it. They therefore follow after it, and reach forth unto it, if so be they may apprehend it. (Phil. 3 : 12, 14.) Sincere desire after holiness is necessary to those who shall approach the table of the Lord, for all here is holy; and by the use of this seal of the covenant, we declare not only, that the Lord is our God, but that we are his people, and will keep all his commandments. The sacraments are also means of sanctification, and tokens laying us under obligation to show forth the Lord's death, (1 Cor. 11 : 26;) which can not be done except by holiness of life.

It is for these only that the Lord's supper is instituted—for those who are partakers of these things: who, to wit, have these evidences of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, namely, the godly sorrow of a penitent

mind, a living faith in Christ, as the only author of life ; and unfeigned love to God and their neighbor ; united to a firm resolution to lead holy lives, in all things to glorify God, and live according to his commandments. Hence plainly follows, that those who do not possess these things, have no warrant to partake ; as is shown by the Instructor when he declares for whom the Lord's supper is not instituted : as,

1. Hypocrites, and dissemblers, and deceivers—who having a form of godliness in a profession of it and an outward unblamable walk, seem to be something ; and by their gestures, sighs, and other assumed ways, seek to impose upon those around ; especially, accommodating themselves to the ideas of pious ministers ; but withal, are not everywhere, and at all times of a piece, but now, thus, and then, so, as can be perceived from their conversation and deportment ; for the majority are so gross, that whosoever examines them, readily becomes aware that they are not acquainted with, much less partakers of the power of godliness ; but that their object is to secure the name of good Christians.

These may not approach ; because their hearts are not right with God. They are not in reality possessors of grace ; but still enemies and haters of God, and those upon whom Christ so frequently pronounced a woe. It is not these only who are required to abstain ; but also,

2. “ All such,” observes the Instructor, “ as turn not to God with sincere hearts.” He says, that the unconverted or those who do not turn to God, have no right thereto. And is it asked, who are the unconverted ? I answer, all natural men, who are still alienated from the life of God : as,

1. All ignorant persons, who are unacquainted with the fundamental truths of religion—with the mediatorial office of Christ, the nature of regeneration and faith; and who do not know how we are incorporated by faith into Christ; who have no knowledge of the justice of God, and the ill-desert of the sinner; who do not understand the nature of the Lord's Supper—can not associate the sign with the thing signified, and are ignorant of it as a seal.

2. Such as are not truly humbled on account of their sins, but live at ease and unconcerned respecting the state of their souls.

3. Those who are strangers to the exercise of faith, and are not engaged in choosing Christ as surety, longing after and looking to him; in following after him with prayers and supplications; in receiving him for justification and sanctification, and surrendering themselves to him, to live in union with him;

4. Those who are earthly minded: whose delight, longing, seeking, concern, love, satisfaction, and fear, have reference to the things of the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—in a word, the unconverted are those, who willfully and wittingly cleave to any sin, without striving against it, and content themselves with external propriety, and an outwardly religious character, and have never realized their lost state out of Christ; have not become inwardly changed and sanctified, so as through union to Christ to lead a holy and self-denying life. Such are the unconverted, and these, the Reformed Church, in accordance with God's word, decides may not approach; and with manifest propriety, for,

1. A stranger, and uncircumcised, and unclean person, might not eat the Passover. So also now, the unconverted, who are uncircumcised in heart, and not washed in the blood of Christ, not sanctified by his Spirit, but still lie in their natural uncleanness, may not eat of this bread; nor drink of this cup.

2. An unconverted person has no title to the promises, and consequently not to the sealing of them. An unconverted person has not the Spirit of Christ, and therefore is none of his; and hence can not have sealed to him by the Spirit, an interest in Jesus and his benefits. (Rom. 8 : 9.)

3. Unconverted persons are destitute of spiritual life—dead in trespasses and sins. Now those who are spiritually dead, can not partake of spiritual food.

4. Unconverted persons are destitute of faith, which yet is the mouth of the soul, and therefore can not with real benefit, eat of that bread which is prepared only for believers.

5. Unconverted persons are servants of sin—members and bond-slaves of Satan. Now, how dreadful, that the unholy should be members of Christ, who is so holy! (2 Cor. 6 : 14, 15.) If however, notwithstanding, they approach, as alas! they too often do, they must be informed, that they eat and drink judgment to themselves; as the Instructor observes, from the mouth of Paul, 1 Cor. 11 : 29. They aggravate their condemnation; for “judgment” is a condemnatory sentence, or (by implication) punishment; and must be understood of everlasting punishment, in the case of the hypocritical and unconverted, who eat to their condemnation. Nor is it strange; for partaking unworthily, they make

themselves guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (1 Cor. 11 : 27.) They mock and crucify Christ anew, with the Jews. (Heb. 6 : 6.) They profane this sacrament, which is a token of the body and blood of Christ ; and thus make themselves chargeable with great sin against Christ, and likewise liable to punishment both temporal and eternal. Therefore such are little better than Judas, who betrayed Christ ; and the Jews and Romans, who crucified him, and shed his blood. "Who-soever," says Theophylact, "shall receive this sacrament unworthily, is as guilty as if he had slain the Lord himself ; and shed the blood of Christ. O horrible wickedness !"

But it might be said, if the hypocritical and unconverted may not go to the Lord's table, why then was Judas suffered to partake ? Now, although we admitted that Judas actually ate of the Lord's supper, it would not follow that he was entitled to the privilege : as now also, many unconverted persons are permitted to do, who still are not authorized ; as we have already sufficiently shown. But we maintain, with many distinguished divines, that Judas did *not* partake of the Lord's Supper. This may be inferred from the narration of John, in his gospel, Chap. 13 : 26, 27, 30 ; who expressly says that as soon as Judas was exposed, and had received the sop, and the devil had entered into him, he immediately went away : "He, then, having received the sop, went immediately out," (vs. 30 ;) and this took place previously to the Supper. Christ would have spoken a lie, had he afforded Judas the Supper, saying, "This is my body broken for you ;" "this is my blood which is shed for you ;" which may not even

for a moment be supposed of the Truth itself. It therefore remains established, not only that the unconverted may not approach, but also that the rulers of the Church should debar and prevent them. The Instructor therefore inquires :

II. *Ques.* 82. "Are they also to be admitted to this Supper, who by confession," etc.? *Ans.* "No;" etc.

All those who by confession and life declare themselves unbelieving and ungodly must be debarred. Such are those who have erroneous conceptions of the truths of the Gospel—all ignorant persons, who have no correct knowledge of themselves, or of Christ, or of the import of the Lord's supper; for such are unbelievers; since without knowledge, there can be no faith. (Rom. 10: 14.) Such are not capable of discerning the Lord's body. Solomon accordingly says, "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good," (Prov. 19: 2;) all such as lead scandalous and offensive lives; such as drunkards, profane swearers, whoremongers, and contentious persons—all who live in open sins, of whom the Form presents a catalogue. When these are permitted to come, "the covenant of God," says the Catechism, "is profaned," since the seals of the covenant, and thus the covenant itself, is dishonored, nay, "the wrath of God is stirred up against the whole congregation." For God is displeased with and will punish the desecration of his covenant, not only in those who are themselves guilty of it, but also, in those who do not seek to prevent it. Saith God to the wicked: "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth?" (Ps. 50: 16.) Such was the case with the Corinthians, who were so

careless with respect to the Lord's supper; when many of them were punished with weakness, with sickness, and with the sleep of death. (1 Cor. 11: 17-34.)

But by whom must such be debarred? "The Church of Christ," says the Instructor: the rulers are under obligation to do it; according to the command of Christ, Math. 7: 6; and of the Apostles, 1 Cor. 5: 2, 11, and 2 Thess. 3: 6—these are bound to "exclude the unworthy by the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that is, Christian discipline, "until they show amendment of life." But on this we must dwell on the following Lord's day.

Behold, hearers, the doctrine of the Reformed Church in relation to those who are entitled to the Lord's supper, and those who lead offensive and wicked lives. Such also has in all ages been the practice of those who have sought faithfully to discharge their duty in relation to the administration of the Lord's supper. The pious of former times, were characterized by exceeding great care and circumspection, in admitting to the holy supper. Of this, Calvin, that distinguished man of God, gives a clear proof, when he says: "We must here be careful, that by a promiscuous administration of the Lord's supper, without reference to character, that ordinance be not polluted; for it is absolutely certain that he upon whom the administration devolves, if he knowingly and intentionally admit the unworthy, whom he might have excluded, is guilty of as great sacrilege as if he cast the body of the Lord to the dogs. Therefore, Chrysostom resolutely exclaims against those presbyters, who through fear of the great, dared not exclude any who presented themselves. "Blood," says he, "shall be required at your hands. If ye fear

man he will deride you ; but if ye fear God, even men will hold you in esteem. Let us not fear sceptres, nor purple robes, nor imperial crowns ; we have here a greater power. For myself, I would rather deliver my body to death, and suffer my blood to be spilt, than be partaker of such guilt." (Calv. Inst., book 4, chap. 12, Art. 5.) The writers of our own time also insist upon the same thing. Thus speaks that illustrious and learned man, J. D'Outrein, in a small book entitled, "The Proper use of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, in relation to the Sick," page 108: "It is truly no small thing to open to one the door of the kingdom of God ; to declare him a child of God, a member of Christ, a partaker of his merits and benefits, and to admit him to the reception of the seals and pledges of communion with the crucified Redeemer ; to which properly no one is entitled who is a stranger to faith and regeneration. This is an acknowledged truth, and one which must be admitted by all the Reformed ; for when in the 81st Ques. of the Heid. Cat. it is asked, 'For whom is the Lord's supper instituted?' it is replied, 'only for those who are sorrowful for their sins, etc. ;' whence it appears that only penitent, believing, upright, and converted persons should be admitted to that holy seal of the covenant." Who will take it ill of a minister of the Gospel that he endeavors to preserve this sacred ordinance from profanation? None, but the formal, blind, nominal Christian, who desires to be dealt with not according to the word of God, but his own distorted conceptions. When it is considered how awful is the sin of partaking unworthily, (for thus Jesus is greatly dishonored, as if he were the head of ungodly and unholy men ; the covenant of God is profaned ;

the wrath of God is kindled against the whole congregation; the unworthy partaker rendered liable to a severe doom,) what minister, if he fear God, and love his neighbor, would not carefully watch as well that God's sanctuary should not be profaned, as that none of his hearers should approach unworthily, and eat death and destruction? Yourselves, I pray you, decide: should not one who is zealous for the honor of Christ and the welfare of his neighbor, rather, after the example of Chrysostom, that pious Doctor of the ancient Christian Church, prefer losing his life to making himself chargeable with so great a sin? But alas! how far have we departed from the purity of the primitive churches. Oh! how far do we yet daily depart! for not only was this the sentiment of the early reformers, but it is still the confession of our whole Church, that when but one is admitted to the Lord's supper, who by doctrine and life shows himself to be unbelieving and ungodly, the covenant of God is violated, and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation; and therefore rulers are under obligation to debar the disorderly by Christian discipline. But where is now the faithfulness that is required in a steward of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4 : 2? Truly, it is manifest that the Lord's supper is now frequently thus desecrated; for not only does one unworthily approach; but how many of those who receive the sacred elements are either ignorant, or ungodly; as drunkards, slanderers, backbiters, profaners of God's name and day, vain and worldly-minded, or merely moral persons who do not possess, but hate true godliness! It is an undoubted truth (declared by the Rev. D'Outrein, in the work just quoted) that "when we attentively consider the mode of procedure in our

churches, we are compelled to acknowledge that this weighty business is by many not correctly viewed; much less, properly attended to. Members are admitted who do not possess a definite knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness; nay, who have not a correct idea of the design of the Lord's supper; of the duty to be there performed, and the things signified and sealed by the outward circumstances. And where things are conducted in the best manner, the members who present themselves for admittance, are indeed examined somewhat respecting their knowledge of fundamental truths, and their external deportment; but by many scarcely an inquiry is made in regard to true repentance, faith, and holiness of life; not to mention the fact that none but those in whom these things are at least hopefully found, should be admitted to a participation in this holy meat and drink, which, to employ the language of the Form, Christ hath ordained only for the faithful." It is the doctrine of the Reformed Church that no unconverted persons may approach; but that the ungodly must be repelled. How happens it, then, that this sacrament is so lightly extended to all who but ask it, and bear the name of members, though often as ignorant as heathen, openly living in gross sins, and not marked by the least morality; not to speak of true godliness? With what reason may we exclaim, with the holy Polycarp: O good God! To what evil times hast thou preserved me! for it has now come to this, that many may be found who bear the name of the Reformed, and yet are ignorant of the Reformed doctrines, and oppose, calumniate, and practically deny them. I have three times (it is now the fourth time) administered the Lord's supper and

urged this point, that the unconverted may not approach, and that the wicked must, according to our doctrine, be debarred. But what murmuring has this excited? how many tongues, set on fire of hell, have uttered their slanders? Yea, such as it least became! I would ask you, who have been, and perhaps still are so greatly displeased on this account? Is not this the doctrine of the Reformed Church? I imagine that no one will deny it, (for whosoever has not willfully closed his ears must have sufficiently heard it.) Why, then, disobey the truth? Why make yourselves guilty of such slanders and backbitings? Say you that I speak too hard and sharply? must I not speak in accordance with the word of God? Does not the spirit of God say by the mouth of Paul, 1 Cor. 11 : 29, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself?" Can a more awful denunciation be conceived of? Does not our Catechism declare that if we grant access to the ungodly, the covenant of God is profaned, and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation? Could any thing harder than this be said? Truly, you can not do otherwise than condemn yourselves; and were not your consciences insensible; did you but see and know what you have done, you would tremble in view of God's wrath! But upon this I may no longer dwell. As far as I myself am concerned, I little care what is said behind my back, by ignorant, carnal men, who desire to substitute their own perverted ideas for God's truth. They are greatly deceived, if they imagine that they will thus put me to silence; for I would sooner die a thousand deaths, than not preach the truth.

Much-loved hearers, who have so often been at the Lord's table, do you know that the unconverted may not approach? Have you then, with the utmost care examined, whether you be born again? Were you aware what is required in order to an acceptable observance, when you so composedly approached? Or did you go blindly forward, not only without a wedding garment, but even without concern respecting it? not examining whether you were of the number of those who are invited? Say you, I was not aware that so much is required? You should have known it; you should at least have been acquainted with your Catechism. Is it so dangerous a thing unworthily to partake of the sacred supper; since, by so doing, guilt so great is contracted and a fearful judgment incurred? How then is it possible that Satan should so blind men, as to cause them so lightly to esteem it; so little to fear God's judgments, and so thoughtlessly to lay hold upon that food, which instead of eternal life, may seal to them eternal death? How is it possible that in a matter of so great importance, men should act in so inconsiderate and trifling a manner?

Remain, I beseech you, my hearers, no longer, ignorant respecting this truth, but at length lay it to heart; for, if there be aught concerning which we should be circumspect, it is this. Let us then here be careful, if we would anywhere be so! He who loves danger, deserves to fall into it: nowhere is danger so great as here! here, by a morsel, and swallow, can the covenant of God be desecrated; his wrath brought upon the whole congregation; and ourselves made liable to temporal and eternal punishment. Reflect, therefore, upon,

and bear in mind this truth ; and remember, that though moral and outwardly religious, if still you be unregenerate and destitute of spiritual life, you have no warrant for an approach to the table of grace. Ye ignorant, worldly minded, and ungodly persons—who live in your sins, know that we dare not grant you access, but are under obligation to debar you ; not to your destruction, but for your good ; that you may thus amend your lives, and turn to the Lord ; and if you give evidence of real amendment, with good conscience, and the utmost cheerfulness, will we admit you.

Remember also, that each member is bound to subject himself to the examination of the minister of Christ, and thus give a reason of the faith and hope which are in him ; but with meekness and fear. This is God's command. (1. Pet. 3 : 15 ; Heb. 13 : 17.) Who dares resist the command of God ? Although the knowledge and persuasion of one's conversion is not the ground upon which he is to be admitted, (as the Labadists erroneously maintain,) it is yet the duty of a minister to examine members, according to Prov. 27 ; Ex. 44 : 23 ; for the ministers of Jesus are the spiritual fishermen described in the parable, Matt. 13 : 48 ; who sitting down upon the shore, gather out of the fish drawn up by the net of the Gospel, the good into vessels, but cast the bad away : which act is declared by the Lord to be significant of the severing of the evil and the just. They are (figuratively speaking) the angels in the gates of the new Jerusalem, who determine who may enter into the city. (Rev. 21 : 27.) Very fitly is the duty under consideration described by the distinguished Mr. D'Outrein, in the work previously adduced, page 109 :

Ministers (he observes) to whom especially is intrusted the duty of receiving members, must not only with the utmost care previously instruct those whom they receive, in the principles of the doctrine of Christ; or if they have been instructed by others, test their ability to make confession of the truth; but they must also examine whether they be marked by true repentance, sincere saving faith, and heart-renewing conversion. The necessity for these things they must earnestly impress upon their minds: and examine whether they be in possession of them, with cautions against self-deception; for if without carefully examining them, and faithfully warning them, they admit any, and thus afford them occasion to eat and drink judgment to themselves, is it possible that the guilt should not, to some extent, rest upon them? (Ezek. 33: 7, 8.) Shall then an overseer with good conscience receive, or admit one, he must see to it that he make a good confession of the truth, of his sins, of his faith in Christ, his purpose of leading a holy life; and that his walk be not at variance with this his confession. Such is the requirement of the Constitution, Art. 61: "No one shall be admitted to the Supper of the Lord, except he have made confession of the Reformed religion, according to the custom of the churches with which he connects himself; having at the same time the testimony of a godly walk; without which also those who come from other churches, shall not be received." But this is not sufficient for the communicant himself, who must be a true believer, sorrowful on account of his sins, seek salvation and forgiveness in Christ, and aim to lead a holy life, in order properly and profitably to observe the ordinance.

Therefore, examine whether you have a right to the Lord's supper; whether these things be found in you. Prove yourselves, says Paul, 2 Cor. 13 : 5; for it is an undoubted truth, which has been in the clearest manner shown, that none other may approach. But he who is really possessed of these properties of the divine life, not only *may*, but *must* approach. He should, therefore, remember that he engages in an important undertaking, who proposes to repair to the Lord's table, and should accordingly make personal and particular preparation: upon which, however, we shall not now enlarge, but conclude with the words of the Psalmist: "Whoso is wise, let him observe these things; and so shall he understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." (Ps. 107 : 43.)

III.

The Church's Duty to her Members.

M A T T. 16 : 19.

“AND I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

31. LORD'S DAY. QUES. AND ANS. 83, 84, 85.

Ques. 83. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Ans. The preaching of the holy Gospel, and Christian discipline, or excommunication out of the Christian Church: by these two, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers.

Ques. 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy Gospel?

Ans. Thus: when according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, that, whenever they receive the promise of the Gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted: according to which testimony of the Gospel, God will judge them both in this life and the life to come.

Ques. 85. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by Christian discipline?

Ans. Thus: when according to the command of Christ, those, who under the name of Christians, maintain doctrines or practices inconsis-

ent therewith, and will not after having been often brotherly admonished renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the Church, or those who are thereunto appointed by the Church; and if they despise their admonition are by them forbid the use of the sacraments; whereby they are excluded from the Christian Church, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendment, are again received as members of Christ and his Church.

IN extolling the beauty and endowments of his spouse, the Lord Jesus among other things says, "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." (Cant. 4 : 12.) By the sister and spouse of Christ must be understood the true Church, consisting of elect and called saints as his body and congregation; and they are thus denominated because they are in the most intimate manner united to him by a spiritual espousal, are loved by him, and enjoy his love; and because he dwells in them, and rules over them; and is in return loved by them. They are also here denominated, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, with respect to the administration of the Gospel, which God has committed to the Church; from which, as from a spring and fountain, the living waters of consolation flow forth, quickening and refreshing the sorrowing in heart. (Ps. 33 : 2.) This is shut up and sealed to the unbelieving and unconverted, who have neither lot nor part in this matter, (Acts 8 : 21;) for the water of grace is the property only of the penitent and believing.

Again: the Church is here denominated an inclosed garden, because the Lord preserves it from its foes, and because it not only is pure and chaste as a virgin, (2 Cor. 11 : 12,) but also, since by ecclesiastical discipline, it excludes the ungodly as filthy and impure; in accord-

ance with the command and authority given it by the Lord Jesus, with the key of God's word to open the kingdom of heaven to believers and shut it against the unbelieving and impenitent; and by means of Christian discipline to cast out those members who lead grossly offensive lives. Of this article of faith we must at present speak in the order prescribed by our Christian Instructor.

This Lord's Day is connected with the preceding, in which the Instructor teaches who are entitled to the Lord's supper, to wit, the penitent and believing, and who must be debarred, namely, such as exhibit themselves in doctrine and life, as unbelieving and ungodly; and that, by the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In this Lord's Day he declares what these keys are, and how they must be employed.

Three principal points here require our attention:

I. In general: what the keys of the kingdom of heaven are.

II. How the key of the preaching of the Gospel should be employed. *Ques.* 84.

III. How that of Christian discipline is to be used. *Ques.* 85.

As to the first point the Instructor inquires: "What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?"

By the kingdom of heaven is frequently, as here, to be understood the kingdom of grace, to wit, the Church of the New Testament, (Matt. 13: 11,) in which all is heavenly: a heavenly king, the Lord Jesus; heavenly subjects, the elect, called, saints; heavenly blessings, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, (Rom.

14 : 17;) heavenly laws, according to which the subjects are required to serve their king; heavenly power to admit and exclude.

This heavenly kingdom is closed to the sinner: in his father Adam, he was sent forth from Paradise; but in establishing this kingdom of his Son upon earth, the Lord God affords an entrance into it, that his Son may have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. (Ps. 2.) For this purpose he has committed to his servants the keys of that kingdom. This term is metaphorical—they are not literal, but figurative keys, to wit, ecclesiastical and spiritual authority, upon the command, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, to administer the affairs of the Church; and open it to the penitent, and close it to the impenitent. Thus, says the Saviour, Matt. 16 : 19, “I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” that is, the power to admit and to exclude; as in our ordinary affairs, when committing to another the care of a house, we deliver to him the keys, to admit the members of the household and afford them the comforts of the house and to exclude strangers, and place its contents beyond their reach: thus civil authority is also expressed by keys. (Isa. 22 : 21, 22.)

The keys of the kingdom of heaven are then, the power of church government, which is two-fold; the first, being the supreme, absolute jurisdiction, which belongs to Jesus only, as Lord and King, (Rev. 3 : 7; 1 : 18;) and in the second place, that subordinate, or ministerial authority, which he has conferred upon his servants.

These keys are two in number: the Word and Christ-

ian discipline. The first key is the preaching of the word, which the Lord has committed to his Church, to be proclaimed by his servants, in his name, adding: "Whoso heareth you, heareth me; and whoso despiseth you, despiseth me." Thus authorized, they proclaim to the penitent and believing forgiveness of sin and eternal life: with the same authority they shut the kingdom of heaven against the unbelieving and unconverted, as long as they remain in their unbelieving and impenitent state. The second key is Christian discipline; which is the ministerial power, committed to the Church to exclude the disorderly and ungodly from the kingdom of heaven, and to open it again to them, upon repentance, and the promise and actual exhibition of amendment of life.

Here now the question arises, is the Church possessed of such jurisdiction? This is denied by the Remonstrants, who, perceiving that they could obtain no indulgence for their doctrines in the Church, sought the assistance of the magistrate, to whom (to secure his favor) they conceded power over the Church; saying, that the authority possessed by the Church is dependent upon that of the magistrate, who exercises it through the overseers of the Church, as its servants and deputies. We, on the contrary, affirm and maintain, that the Lord has committed such power to his Church, and that it is entirely distinct from that of magistrates, and independent of them, and to be exercised in the name of Christ, and not in theirs. This appears:

1. From our text, Matt. 16 : 19, in which Christ confers the power of the keys not upon magistrates, but upon his Apostles. (Matt. 18 : 17, 18.)

2. In the Old Testament, there was such ecclesiastical, distinct from the civil power. God commanded to cast the offensive out of the Church, and to cut off their souls from among their people; that is, to erase their names from the genealogical register of the children of Israel—the Church—not to reckon them among the seed of Abraham, but count them heathen and publicans.

3. Very distinctly is the existence of such a power taught by Paul, 2 Cor. 10 : 8: "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us." The Church then is possessed of power derived, not from the magistrate, but from the Lord. The same Apostle observes, that, according to this power, he could use sharpness. (2 Cor. 13 : 10.)

4. The Lord himself has appointed certain offices in his Church, which imply authority to govern the Church; as those of "ministers and steward," (2 Cor. 4 : 1; Tit. 1 : 7;) "governments," (1 Cor. 12 : 28;) "rulers," (Heb. 13 : 17; Tim. 5 : 17;) those who are "over" others, (1 Thess. 5 : 12;) "ambassadors," (2 Cor. 5 : 20;) "overseers," (Acts 20 : 28;) whose business it is "to rule." All these appellations are expressive of authority to do thus and thus. There is then power vested in the Church, and this is exercised by its overseers, as ministers of Christ.

5. This is taught by the very nature of the case. The power of the magistrate barely extends over the kingdom of nature: the power of the Church over the kingdom of grace. The power of the magistrate extends only to the temporal state of man: the power of the Church, to the spiritual state of its members. The power of the magistrate is absolute: that of the Church, minis-

terial; not under the magistrate, but under Christ. (1 Cor. 4 : 6.) This has been the uniform practice of the Church in all ages, and the unwavering confession and practice of the Reformed Church, from the period of the Reformation; as appears from the form for the ordination of the ministers of the word.

6. And, finally, it is the duty of the ministers of the word, to keep the Church of God in good discipline—to govern it: according to the form for the ordination of elders, and our Heidelbergh Catechism.

Have then magistrates no power whatever over the Church? They have not power *in* the Church, but in relation to the Church. Ecclesiastical personages are as citizens, subject to the magistrate: they may be punished for any civil crime; as Abiathar was thrust out by Solomon, for his conspiracy with Adonijah. (1 Kings 2 : 27.) Magistrates may also inquire whether the truth is preached, and extirpate errors; and preserve the Church from all molestation, within and without. They have also power in relation to the external circumstances of public worship; as well as a compulsory power, in relation to ecclesiastical subjects, namely, to cause ministers, elders, deacons, and others, carefully to perform their duty. But to whom is this power committed? Surely, not to the Pope of Rome, who is not the head of the Church; not to each member of the Church, which would create great confusion, whilst on the contrary, it is the will of the Lord, that all things in the Church should be done decorously, and in order. (1 Cor. 14 : 40.) Much less is this power committed to women, as some enthusiasts maintain: for it is forbidden women to speak in the church, (1 Cor. 14 : 34, 35; 1 Tim. 2 : 12;)

but, to the rulers of the Church, who are either extraordinary, as Apostles and Evangelists, who were called by the Lord himself in an unusual manner, and endowed with the gift of preaching the Gospel in all languages, and to all people, and of confirming it with miracles, (Matt. 10;) or ordinary, common to all ages of the Church, denominated Elders. These are distinguished as Elders who teach, and such as do not teach, but rule, (1 Tim. 5 : 17;) and those who only rule, are called governments, (1 Cor. 12 : 28:) taken together they are denominated the Presbytery. (1 Tim. 4 : 14.) To these has been committed the power of the keys, by the Lord Jesus, as king of his Church; as appears, from Matt. 18 : 17, where the rulers are called the Church, and vested with the powers of casting out the incorrigible. These rulers assembled together, constitute consistories, classes, and synods. This is necessary to preserve good order—that all things may be done decently and in order—that divine worship may be performed in a manner becoming, and without distraction; that offenses may be prevented, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven—Christian discipline, exercised towards the offending. Thus the authority to preach the Gospel, and exercise Christian discipline, is as two keys, by which the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut to unbelievers.

The first key, to wit, authority to preach the Gospel, is committed to those lawfully called and sent. (Rom. 10 : 15; 2 Cor. 5 : 19, 20; Heb. 5 : 4, 5, 6.) By sin, access to the kingdom of heaven, and all its privileges, is barred to the sinner: he is held captive in the snare of the devil. (2 Tim. 2 : 26.) He is kept and shut up

under the law. (Gal. 3 : 20.) Through the power of depravity, the weakness of faith, and the hidings of God's face, it is frequently cut off, even to believers—doubt of their interest in the blessings of the kingdom, fills them with darkness and fear. (Job 19 : 6-8; Psalms 31 : 23; Lam. 3 : 7.)

But the kingdom of heaven is opened to them, by the preaching of the Gospel, by which is not declared, that Christ died for all men, and that every one has but to imagine that Christ is his Saviour, as Arminians maintain, (for this is in direct opposition to the word of God, as is shown in the 7th Lord's Day,) but, that God has set forth his Son as a propitiation, through faith in his blood, that upon his invitation and call, the sinner may be moved to him; receive him as mediator; surrender himself to him; through him go to the Father, and be admitted into his kingdom. Thus was the kingdom of heaven opened by Paul. (2 Cor. 5 : 19, 20.) But especially, is the kingdom of heaven opened to the penitent and believing, who mourn over and strive against sin, by the proclamation and testimony that all their sins are truly forgiven, for the sake of Christ's merits. This duty is enjoined upon the ministers of the Gospel: this is termed the remitting of sins, (John 20 : 3;) and preaching the forgiveness of sins in Christ's name. (Luke 24 : 47; Acts 10 : 43, etc.)

To well perform this duty, it is not enough merely in general to state the promises, but evidences should be proposed, that it may appear who are and who are not entitled to them; as was frequently done by the Apostles, as in Rom. 8 : 13-19; James 2 : 14-26; 1 John 3-14, and 4 : 13. This is done either in the public assembly, in which the Gospel is preached, (Acts 13 : 38,

39,) or in private, when a minister personally addresses a concerned believer, or is addressed by him; applies to him the promises, addresses to him words of encouragement, and removes his difficulties and occasions of concern; which is to be done whenever with true faith he apprehends the promises of the Gospel, and gives evidence of his faith and repentance; as was done by David to Nathan. Thus, Matt. 9 : 2 : "Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the sick of the palsy : Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." When the forgiveness of sins is thus proclaimed to any one, the kingdom of heaven is opened to him, and he assured that he is made to sit with Christ in heavenly places. (Eph. 2 : 6.)

Ministers of the Gospel are, however, not only bound to say to the righteous, it shall be well with him; but to denounce a woe upon the ungodly. (Is. 3 : 10, 11.) The Instructor therefore says, that, by the key of the preaching of the Gospel, "it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not heartily turn to the Lord, that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abides upon them, as long as they remain in their unconverted state." Thus is the kingdom of heaven shut against unbelievers; "for he that believeth not shall be damned," (Mark 16 : 16;) and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, (John 3 : 36;) and again of the unconverted, Luke 13 : 3, and hypocrites, Matt. 23 : 13-29 : "Woe unto you hypocrites!" To shut the kingdom of heaven against such, is, in general, to declare that they have no part in the kingdom of grace or of glory—that they can not enter heaven, but are bound under their sins and the wrath of God; and that thus

their sins are retained, according to John 20 : 23 ; and that they are treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, (Rom. 2 : 5 ;) also to declare it to them in particular, and to seek to cause a sense of it to penetrate their hearts. Thus Peter employed this key against Simon, the sorcerer, (Acts 8 : 21-23 ;) and Paul in relation to Elymas. And that it may have greater effect, it is associated with a denunciation of the divine curse upon the sinner. (1 Cor. 16 : 22.) Any one, it is true, possessed of the requisite knowledge, can make these declarations respectively to believers and unbelievers, according to the word of God ; but not as ambassadors in Christ's name, as ministers of the Gospel can, and are bound to do. (2 Cor. 5 : 19, 20.) It differs much, whether a private individual, or ministers of Christ, in his name, be it in public or in private, say to one, Thou believing, seeking soul ! Thou art an heir of eternal life ! thy sins are forgiven thee ! Or, on the other hand : Thou ungodly ! I declare to thee, that the wrath of God abideth on thee ! and thou shalt be damned, if thou do not repent ! This being addressed by a minister of Christ, and in his name, should in both cases so impress the mind, and excite such emotions in the one of comfort, and in the other of conviction and terror, as if uttered by the Lord Jesus himself. He sadly mistakes, who regards this opening and shutting of the kingdom of heaven by the preachers of the Gospel as vain, and without force ; since it is to be recognized as the voice of God, and not merely of man ; for "according to this testimony," says the Instructor, "God will judge both in this life, [he himself saith, he confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the

counsel of his messengers, (Is. 44 : 26 ;) and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven, (Matt. 16 : 19 ; John 20 : 23,)] and in the life to come ;" and therefore, saith an Apostle, Rom. 2 : 16 : " In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel."

III. The second key is the Christian ban or ecclesiastical discipline. This is a ministerial power, committed to the Church, to exclude the scandalous and ungodly from Christian communication, and to readmit them, upon repentance, and the promise and manifestation of amendment of life. This key is to be employed, not with respect to those who are without, but those who are within the Church—offensive members, admitted to the holy supper, and bearing the Christian name : " Ye shall not keep company, namely, if any man that is called a brother, etc." (1 Cor. 5 : 11, 13.) Those who are within—who have united themselves to the Church by a profession of faith, are objects of Christian discipline, when, under the Christian name, they are unchristian in doctrine or life ; and though admonished, persist in the same. A heretic, reject ; saith Paul, Tit. 3 : 10 ; 2 John 10 : 11. We may also not keep company with a brother that lives ungodly. (1 Cor. 5 : 11 ; 2 Thess. 6 : 14.) Such, then, the Christian ban excludes—acknowledges them no longer as members of the Church ; and debars them from the table of the Lord. This, Paul denominates a delivering to Satan. (1 Cor. 5 : 5.) Thus he delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan ; not that he gave them over to Satan bodily, to

possess and torment them ; but it is equivalent to ejecting from the Church, as he himself explains, 1 Cor. 5 : 13 : " Put away from among yourselves that wicked person ;" for without the Church, Satan reigns. He then, that is cast out of the Church, is delivered to Satan, and is thus shut out of the kingdom of heaven --the sacraments are forbidden and denied him, and he is retained under his sins and destruction. This result is arrived at by various gradations ; for as the overseers of the Church should not be slow to perform their duty in this respect, neither should they be precipitate, but proceed with all equity, without respect of persons, with great prudence and meekness, with great gravity, in all humility ; showing that they do it, not to gratify a lust of power ; but with sorrow and compassion, and because required to do it for their good, and that of the congregation. This must be done, saith the Instructor, when, " after having been made the frequent objects of fraternal admonition, they will not renounce their errors and wicked course of life, but despise the admonition of the Church."

In this work of exclusion are comprised four steps :

1. Admonition, warning, reproof, either in private, or (if this be not regarded) in presence of consistory.

2. To forbid them the table of the Lord.

3. To propose to the congregation those who proceed in their erroneous and wicked course ; that it may be known that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are used ; that the erring may be prayed for, and made ashamed, and turn to the Lord ; and this must be done first, with the withholding of the name, and upon continuance in obstinacy, with an announcement of it ;

that a deeper impression may be made, both upon the offender and the congregation. All this proving ineffectual, we are conducted to the

4. And last step. The offender is cut off—he is interdicted all fellowship with the Church, and no longer recognized as a brother or sister; but regarded as a heathen and publican. This is the Apostle's command, 1 Cor. 5 : 13 : "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

These four steps are included in the command of Jesus, which requires, that I declare to my offending brother his fault in private; does he disregard my word? that I seek to restore him in the presence of one, and another; does he remain unreformed? that I complain of him to the rulers of the Church; does he yet remain obstinate? I must count him as a heathen and publican. (Matt. 18 : 17.) With this corresponds the requirement of the Constitution; which enjoins, that we first admonish; then forbid the Lord's Table; further, that he be proposed to the congregation, without and by name, that each one may exhort him to repentance, and pray for him; if all this be unavailing, that he then be completely and publicly cut off, that he may be ashamed and repent. The end and object of the ban is not any corporeal infliction, but,

1. To render ashamed, and bring to reflection. (2 Thess. 3 : 14.)

2. That being led to regard the exercise of authority towards him as an indication of the displeasure of the Lord Jesus, the offender may turn from his evil ways. (1 Cor. 5 : 5.)

3. To cause others to fear divine inflictions.

4. That offenders may be removed from the Church ; as well for the sake of those who are within, as for those who are without, who hence take occasion to blaspheme God and his worship. (Rom. 2 : 24.)

5. To preserve the whole Church from judgments ; for when the wicked are admitted to the Lord's table, the covenant of God is profaned, and his wrath excited against the whole congregation. (Jer. 5 : 25, 26 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 30.) "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

If one who has been excluded repent, he must again be received and permitted to approach the table of the Lord ; his offense forgiven, and he be comforted, lest perhaps he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (2 Cor. 2 : 6, 7.) Haste in this matter is however to be avoided ; for he should first afford satisfactory evidence of repentance. The incestuous person was not received until he had become affected with vehement grief, and stood in absolute need of consolation. The Instructor therefore, also says, that the excluded are to be again received, when they promise and show real amendment.

The first Christian Church was exceedingly faithful and strict in the discharge of this duty. When, without sufficient reason, such as sickness, or other unavoidable cause, a member absented himself from the public assembly, he was sharply rebuked : when one residing in a city, for three Lord's days absented himself from the church, he was for a time suspended from the Lord's supper ; that it might be manifest that notice was taken of his fault. They exercised Christian discipline for all offenses against the divine law ; for every depar-

ture from good morals, which was either manifest of itself, or made known and confessed to the Church; for the good Christians of that period were beyond measure zealous for the honor of their religion, and hence sought to suppress all sins in their first rising. For this reason, they kept a watchful eye upon each other; pointed out to each other in private, their faults and errors; and when this was ineffectual, presented the matter for investigation. No offense was overlooked.

They were equally careful in reādmittig: they did not receive those who had departed from the path of duty, again into the Church, until they had given various evidences of repentance. To this end they divided penitents into four classes. The first were such as stood at the door of the church, clothed in sordid and negligent garments, and with sad countenance and tears bewailed their transgressions, and besought the prayers of those who entered the church. At this time also, it was customary to make public confession of sin.

The second class were denominated hearers—who were permitted, at the entrance of the church, to listen, with the catechumens, to the reading and exposition of the word of the Lord, but were required to retire before the administration of the Lord's supper.

The third class were those who humbly prostrated themselves upon the floor of the church, and confessed their sins before the whole assembly; but being kindly raised up by the overseers, were placed near the desk, at which the word was read; yet, were compelled to retire with the catechumens.

The fourth class consisted of those who did not withdraw with the catechumens, but continued standing

with the assembly to hear the word, and engage in prayer and singing; and were permitted to behold the administration of the Lord's supper, but yet, not to partake; although they were soon advanced to this privilege. Such severe expiation every one, whether high or low, was compelled to make! The Emperor Theodosius the Great himself was not excepted, but for his bloody and cruel slaughter of the Thessalonians, was forbidden the Lord's table, by Ambrosius, Bishop of Milan; required openly to confess his sins, and compelled for eight months, to make satisfaction! which, as it was with the utmost strictness imposed, was as readily and willingly rendered; so that, he habitually prostrated himself in the church, as unworthy to stand or kneel, and exclaimed in the words of David: "My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken Thou me according to thy word;" and having many times plucked off his hair, and smitten his countenance, deluged his face with tears, and humbly supplicated peace and forgiveness, was absolved and restored to communion with the church! (Cave's Early Christianity.)

Behold, beloved, the true doctrine of the Reformed Church, in relation to the power conferred upon its rulers, with respect to the preaching of the Gospel and the exercise of authority! With such fidelity and strictness were these practised in the primitive Church, whilst religion still existed in its power, and its rulers were faithful, and the pious zealous for the honor of God, and the well-being and salvation of those committed to their care.

There is no one who is possessed of a knowledge of these facts, and acquainted with the present state of the

Church, who will not be compelled to allow, that the Church has become in this respect exceedingly corrupt, and greatly departed from its pristine purity. Every one indeed, must perceive there is too much slackness at present in relation to the great duties that have been considered; for how many ignorant members may there not be found in the Church, who are unable to discern the Lord's body! how many who make no exhibition of the image of Christ—who neither know nor follow after holiness! [Understand me well, and let no one wrest and misapprehend my words! I speak now of the Church in general, and not of this, or that church in particular.] The Lord complains, Jer. 5: 26, "Among my people are found it is wicked men." So truly in these days also. Oh! how many ungodly are to be discerned in the Church of God! But what is done in relation to it? Where is Christian discipline exercised for their exclusion? and where do we find those, thus excluded? The forms generally, are used, but that in relation to the exercise of discipline is treated as if it had no existence. Are there those who are inclined, in this respect, faithfully to discharge their duty? they are not assisted; but hear the slander of many, and meet with much opposition: as if the Lord had not committed these keys to the rulers of the Church; or they were not under obligation to be faithful, and cry aloud, and lift up their voice like a trumpet, and not required to love their neighbor and seek his conversion and salvation! It is as if the key of Christian discipline were lost: so little is it used. This confirms the ungodly; saddens the pious; withholds the blessing of God from the Church; and excites his wrath. But still

more lamentable is it, when the offensive are left undisturbed; and the authority of the Church is unlawfully directed against the pious. To this Rev. William Brakel in "Reasonable Service," part First, p. 672, alludes: "Is," says he, "a church so degenerate, and its rulers so wicked, that they suffer offenses to go unpunished, and assail those who are distinguished for soundness of doctrine, and excellence of life? their acts are not to be regarded, either by those who are thus unjustly censured, or by other godly persons; for they are not in accordance with, but contrary to, the ordinance of Christ. 'The curse causeless shall not come,' (Prov. 26 : 2,) but redound upon their own heads, who with lies have made the heart of the righteous sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked."

Great reason have we to shed a flood of tears over the sad state of the Church, and to say with Jeremiah: "Oh! that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. 9 : 1.) But to indulge in lamentation, without putting our hands to the work, will be of little avail. It is therefore necessary, and will be more advantageous, that I endeavor to stir up myself, the elders, and all, without exception, to the proper use of these keys.

The duty of magistrates and those who are placed in authority over others, is, humbly to submit themselves to the King of kings, and Lord of lords, in his supreme authority. To these the Lord says: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son," etc. (Ps. 2 : 10, 12.)

Their authority and influence, it is their duty to employ for the good of the Church; by cherishing it, maintaining its rights, protecting its ministers, defending its truths, restraining its enemies, and with force and authority rectifying the corrupt manners of society. Magistrates do well, when they enact laws against the profanation of the Sabbath, cursing, swearing, drunkenness, and other sensual and similar excesses.

The duty of ministers is exceedingly great and weighty, as I shall briefly show. But wherefore? because it flows from my subject—to rouse myself to faithfulness and that no one might take offense, should I, with divine assistance, discharge my duty; and that each one may be led in accordance with his duty, to pray for his minister. Should now any one misinterpret my meaning, let him bear the responsibility!

Would we not be blind watchmen, dumb dogs, slumbering and carnal men, we must employ the keys of the kingdom with respect to ourselves: "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? (Rom. 2 : 21.) We are required to exhort the people to examine themselves, (2 Cor. 13 : 5,) and should we then fail to perform this duty towards ourselves? or should we entertain the vulgar conceit, that all ministers are certainly believing and pious, because able to preach and pray? We know this is not the case, from Judas, Demas, and the false brethren, who preached Christ from envy; of whom Paul so frequently complains. Ministers, as well as others, must be regenerated and converted. Neither a finished education, nor our elevated calling, imparts grace. Have we and do we acquire naught else? how dreadful will be our fall, from the pulpit into perdition!

It therefore becomes us to judge ourselves, and flee for refuge to the Saviour; that we may save ourselves and others. We, whose office it is to call others to the enjoyment of the favor of God, and to repentance, are also ourselves called by God to be reconciled to him. Each minister may with propriety propose to himself the following questions, stated by a pious writer: "What is the character of my teaching and life? Am I not one of those who sew pillows under all arm-holes? who through my manner of preaching and life, make sad the heart of the righteous, and strengthen the hands of the wicked? Have I ever seriously considered what it is, to watch for souls? what it is, to deliver out of the snare of the devil? Have I so studied the devices of Satan, and the artifices of the human heart, as to be able by a holy cunning and craft to delude Satan, and the hearts of men, and thus catch men with guile? (2 Cor. 12:16.) Have I ever considerably weighed the awfulness of that doom which I must expect, if I be one of those dumb dogs that can not bark? (Is. 56:10,) and if, through my unfaithfulness in warning sinners, they should sink into hell, and call for vengeance upon me? Has it been my grand concern to take the precious from the vile, that I might be the mouth not of the devil, but of God? (Jer. 15:19.) Have I also been particularly careful to comfort the mourners, and speak a word in season to the weary? (Is. 50:4.) Have I, as a faithful physician, sought to understand spiritual diseases, that I might the better heal them? that the wretched might not sigh, and cry to God, the heavenly Physician, against me, 'O God! our teacher lays not our misery to heart! He wounds our souls instead of

healing them! He is tenfold more occupied with preaching things which gratify the fancy, which permit the carnally secure to continue in their security, and the sorrowful in their sadness, than in endeavors to discover men to themselves, and to strengthen the weak! He is anxious to learn whether his preaching is productive of gratification, but is never heard to inquire whether souls are converted; nor is there any thing at which he less aims, than to cause it to appear in all his conduct, that his object is the pursuit of a holy life." Let these inquiries, I say, be proposed, and let those who do not approve of such self-scrutiny, and who live at ease in the neglect of it, be assured that a time of reckoning will come, when the condition of many will be found directly opposite to their present imagination. O wretched! who shall then be cast out as slothful and unfaithful servants! (Matt. 25 : 26.) Happy they on the contrary, who, by careful investigation, discover that they are inwardly called; and are conscious of the leadings of the Spirit of God in their hearts. Such can apply to themselves all the promises; and be assured that the Lord shall be with them. Thus did Paul, (1 Tim. 1 : 13, 16; 2 Tim. 1 : 12.)

Precious, immortal souls, committed to our care, should weigh heavily upon our hearts: we should accordingly be diligent to know the state of our flocks, and look well to our herds. (Prov. 27 : 23.) When we direct our attention to an assembled audience, we should remember that each one has an undying spirit; that by nature all pursue the broad road that leadeth to destruction; and that if suffered to continue in that course, they shall be for ever lost! Whose soul should not be inflamed with desire to afford them help? Has

one but fallen into the water or into the fire, every one cries out in alarm! each does what he can, to render assistance. Should we not then be alarmed respecting the eternal destruction of men, as to both soul and body? Should not then we, who are called thereto by God put forth all our energies for their rescue, by instructing, exhorting, and reproofing them? Should not all our powers be called into requisition, to pluck sinners out of everlasting fire? to bear away their souls as a prey from the mouth of hell, and place them at the feet of Jesus? Sad will it be for us, if through our negligence, a sinner be lost! The Lord will require that blood at the hand of the watchman. (Ezek. 3 : 18, 20.) It is not matter of indifference how the keys of the kingdom are employed. This duty must be discharged with discretion. We may not open when the Lord shuts, nor may we shut when the Lord opens. What minister that fears God, and loves his neighbor, dares make sad the heart of the righteous, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, (Ezek. 13 : 22,) that he should not return from his wicked way? Would a minister proceed wisely and according to the word of God, he must, as Jude directs, verses 22, 23, "Of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire"; to be the mouth of God, he must with Jeremiah take the precious from the vile; rightly divide the word of truth, (2 Tim. 2 : 15,) and give every one his portion in due season. (Luke 12 : 42.) The best mode of catching souls, is to seize the sinner by the heart, and discover to him the profound deceptions of his dreadfully deceitful self; that he may awake, become concerned, and betake himself to Christ. In

accordance with this, were the directions given at the National Synod, held at Wesel, A.D. 1568: "All things," said they, "should be directed to these two principal objects of the Gospel, namely, faith, and the conversion of the soul to God. To this end, the preachers of the Gospel shall make it their only aim to promote the true mortification and vivification of man: they shall labor in their discourses, as far as practicable, to penetrate into all the hidden recesses and refuges of the souls of their hearers; and not content themselves with dwelling upon gross improprieties; but seek to expose, to expel, and in the most effectual manner extirpate, the secret hypocrisy of the heart—that seed-plot, and foul pool, of pride, ingratitude, and all ungodliness.

"The sacraments they shall administer with great reverence and care, that the covenant of God be not profaned."

Not to enlarge: in all this, as also in the exercise of Christian discipline, they should be exceedingly faithful, considerate, and resolute. Continually should they bear in mind, that this trust is committed to them, and that as ambassadors of Christ they are to discharge it in his name; that they are occupied with business, not their own, but Christ's. Continually should they call to mind, that the Lord Jesus looks upon them, and carefully notices in what frame and with how great zeal they discharge their duty. Continually should they propose to themselves for contemplation the fact, that upon the use of these keys depend the salvation and condemnation of precious souls. In a word: the rulers should in their walk and their words, be examples to the flock, (1 Pet. 5 : 3;) should love the truth,

and diligently exercise themselves unto wisdom, that their profiting may appear to all. (1 Tim. 4 : 15.) Surely, if we attentively consider the importance of these duties, we find the greatest reason to exclaim: "Who is sufficient for these things?"

But ye, brethren elders, know that your office is, in like manner, weighty, and your duties great. Your office has been instituted by God, in his Church, as well as that of the ministers of the word. Ye, as well as they, have been called. But would you faithfully discharge the duties of your office, not only should you have your senses exercised in the word of God, and the government of his Church, but you must above all be sanctified and endued with divine grace; for an ecclesiastical office without spiritual life, tends neither to our own salvation, nor to the edification of others. It is therefore your duty to employ the key of God's word with respect to yourselves, and carefully to investigate your spiritual state. It is your duty to take heed to the whole flock, and to feed the same, (Acts 20 : 28;) to have special regard to the conduct of the members, and to be continually extending your view over the whole congregation—to warn the unruly, to instruct the ignorant, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and to be patient toward all men. (1 Thess. 5 : 14.) It is also your duty carefully to see to it, that ecclesiastical discipline be properly exercised against the wicked and offensive. Your duty is to aid and sustain your minister. Upon this I shall not now enlarge: these obligations you assumed when you were ordained according to the Form. Frequently peruse that Form, I beseech you, and be assured that you, as well as I, must give account at the last day.

The congregation must conduct properly in relation to these keys. My hearers, it is your duty to acknowledge this authority, as bestowed by the Lord upon his servants, and submit yourselves to them. We pray you with Paul: "Know those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." (1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13.) You must regard with seriousness the opening and shutting of the kingdom—the remitting and retaining of sins. Attend carefully to the description of the state and characteristics of those to whom heaven is opened or closed, and consider to which class you belong.

It is the duty of members not only to warn and exhort one another, (Heb. 3 : 13; 1 Thess. 5 : 14,) but also, to inform of the unruly who refuse to listen to the exhortations of the rulers of the Church: for this is expressly commanded, Matt. 18 : 17: "Tell it unto the Church." Those who are suspended from the table of the Lord, should be tender and penitent, to wit, provided the ecclesiastical act be lawful. No one should resist and evil entreat the rulers of the Church on account of it; for it is the act of the Lord Jesus; is performed in his name and by his command. He who resists it, resists the Lord Jesus: truly, a dreadful sin!

To conclude: my hearers, be informed that by nature ye are subject to sin, the curse and the wrath of God; and that the kingdom is shut to you! but lo, I open to you the kingdom of Heaven! God has provided his Son as a surety. He proposes him to you, as a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness. He can save them to the uttermost who come to God by him. I invite you to come to the Lord and

his goodness; and to experience his grace, peace, and mercy. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5 : 20.) Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why should ye die? If ye turn to Jesus, come to him, and receive him to be justified and sanctified by him; he will not reject you, for whose cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out. (John 6 : 37.) But will you not come to him? Do you continue ignorant, and at ease in sin, unconverted and unholy? In the name of the Lord I declare to you, ye shall die! God's wrath abideth upon you! you shall find yourselves thrust out! (Luke 13 : 28.) But to you, who are sensitive and humble in view of your sins; who mourn on account of and strive against them, and would fain be delivered from them, and for this purpose flee to Jesus and also follow after holiness, to you, I announce in the name of Christ, that your transgressions are forgiven; that the Lord will no longer be wroth with you nor rebuke you. Do you fear and dread, lest at last you shall find yourselves deceived, and the door shut against you? Jesus will never shut the door which he has opened; but administer to you an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom, where you shall ever be with the Lord. *Amen.*

I.

The Righteous Scarcely Saved.

“And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?” 1 PET. 4 : 18.

“THINGS of value are not to be procured without difficulty,” is a proverb of the ancients. The truth of this is evident as to things natural, as diamonds and pearls; but is equally so in relation to things spiritual, as wisdom and virtue, of which the more we possess, the more lovely are we in the eyes of God, of angels, and of men. They are therefore by Solomon so highly extolled, Prov. 3 : 13, 19. Nothing certainly is there more beautiful, more valuable, more lovely, than those spiritual and heavenly things which are with God in Christ. But how great the difficulty with which they are to be obtained: it is not to be done without a conflict: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.” (Matt. 11.)

We have likewise an impressive illustration in the merchant, who went and sold all that he had, to purchase the pearl which he had found; and in him who,

having found a treasure hid in a field, went and sold all that he had and bought that field. The same is taught by the language of Paul, "Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." And what is the prize to be contended for? the incorruptible crown of glory suspended at the end of the course—the salvation in reserve for the children of God in heaven. This is compared to a crown, because victory is there given them over all their enemies, and they are delivered from all conflicts, toil, and pains: but while here upon earth they find themselves in a vale of tears, a way of tribulation.

This plainly appears at a glance from the inspired words which form the text, in which the Apostle declares that the righteous are saved, although "scarcely," that is, with many conflicts, through much difficulty. In the words which immediately precede, he had declared the doleful end of the ungodly, unbelieving, and disobedient. But in order to hold up to view the righteous and the wicked in the difference of the states which await them, he declares, in the words of the text, that such shall not be the lot of the former, but that they shall, although "*scarcely*, be saved," while the ungodly and sinner shall perish; and therefore he connects these words with the foregoing by the particle "and:" "And if the righteous scarcely be saved," etc.

Two subjects here present themselves for consideration.

The state of the righteous: That they are saved, yet scarcely.

The wretched state of the ungodly and sinners.

At present we shall occupy ourselves with the first part, to wit, That the righteous are scarcely saved: in which Peter shows with what difficulty a child of God attains to salvation; and here three points claim attention.

I. The persons, who are the righteous.

II. What is declared of them: That they are saved.

III. The manner in which, to wit, scarcely.

Among the various honorable titles conferred on the children of God in his word, is also found this of the righteous. This is true not only of Moses, Job, Abraham, Zacharias and Elizabeth, and others, who are denominated righteous; but of every child of God, according to the language of Isaiah 26 : 2; and they are therefore in their collective capacity termed "the generation of the righteous," (Ps. 14 : 5;) and "the righteous nation." (Is. 26 : 2.) The righteous of whom Peter here speaks, is not one who is entirely perfect and without sin. Oh! no: for such one is not to be found among all the descendants of Adam; and therefore Solomon says, Eccl. 7 : 20: "There is not a just man upon earth." This every righteous person must from experience confess, with shame, grief, and sorrow. (Prov. 20 : 9.) This is the sad truth complained of by Paul, Rom. 7 : 21: "I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me." Such is also the lamentation of the Church, Is. 64. To be so is the prerogative of the second Adam only "who knew no sin." (2 Cor : 5 : 21.)

Nor is the righteous here, one who is such through compliance with the requirement of the law, "Do this and thou shalt live." Oh! no: for "by the works

of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. 3 : 20.) Therefore Job says, How should man be just with God? (Job. 9 : 2;) and David, (Ps. 130 : 3,) "If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Much less are we to understand by the righteous such as justify themselves, and regard themselves righteous; as was the case with the Pharisees, Luke 18 : 9 : but by the righteous are here to be understood—

1. Such sinners as are in themselves indeed, ungodly and destitute of that righteousness though which they could stand in the judgment, but yet have received by faith, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus proffered in the Gospel, through which they stand acquitted at the divine tribunal, from the guilt of their sins, and liability to punishment, and are entitled to eternal life.

2. The righteous are such as also conduct themselves agreeably to this righteousness, and do what is right and proper according to the law of God; and thus are "filled with the fruits of righteousness." (Philip. 1 : 11.)

3. They are such as are hereupon also justified in their own consciences through their good works, and that holy frame of mind of which they are conscious, as a fruit of their uprightness and faith; nay, with whose spirit the Spirit of God beareth witness, that they are the children of God. (Rom. 8 : 16.)

4. Who also show by their holy lives that they are righteous, and thus are justified in the consciences of others, and recognized as such. These now, are the children of God—believers and such as are in covenant with God: these are spoken of in the text, in contradistinction to the ungodly, and "are scarcely saved."

The expression *to save*, signifies in general, to preserve, to free, to deliver from any evil, and bring into a state of security and happiness. This may refer either to temporal deliverance, as in Matt. 8 : 25, when the disciples said, "Lord, save us : we perish ;" or to some mortal disease, as in James 5 : 15, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick ;" or to severe persecution and great affliction. (Matt. 24 : 22.) Ordinarily, however, in the New Testament, it is significant of the salvation of the soul, and eternal life ; whence Jesus is denominated the Saviour. In the present passage, however, there is no reference to temporal welfare, or corporal deliverance ; of which the righteous are sometimes partakers, as Noah amidst the waters of the flood ; Lot at the destruction of Sodom ; the three companions of Daniel in the fiery furnace ; Daniel himself in the den of lions, and Peter in prison, who were all delivered from danger, as examples and in accordance with the promise that, "the Lord delivereth them out of their afflictions." (Ps. 34 : 19.) But by it, is here to be understood a spiritual deliverance—an eternal salvation, as to body and soul, as opposed to damnation. (Mark. 16 : 16.) As now damnation includes in it the highest evil, so does salvation comprehend in it the highest good, which is communion with God, enjoyed by the righteous here in grace, and hereafter perfectly in glory. It is that salvation—that great good, which no pen can describe, no tongue express, and of which, therefore, we can but say : "How great is that good, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee." (Ps. 31 : 19.) This salvation the Apostle here assumes it as certain that the righteous shall enjoy : and this is so in truth ;

for to be righteous, is the way to salvation; and this appears—

1. From the fact that he is acquitted from guilt and exposure to divine wrath, and made heir of eternal life, and thus saved in hope. Such is the import of the language of Paul, Rom. 8 : 33, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth," etc.; and thus David pronounces the man blessed, to whom the Lord "imputeth righteousness, without works." This is a perfect righteousness, which can stand in the divine judgment; and therefore the Church exults, saying, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord." (Is. 61 : 10.)

2. The righteous are such as are in Christ by faith, and are justified in him; and "the just shall live, by his faith." (Hab. 2 : 4.) Consequently, it is believers only who are justified; for "he that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life." (John. 3 : 26.)

3. The righteous are those who are sanctified by the Spirit of God—"who do righteousness," (1 John 3 : 7;) follow after it, (1 Tim. 6 : 11;) walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord. (Luke 1 : 6.) Inasmuch now, as without holiness no man shall see the Lord, (Heb. 12 : 14,) it necessarily follows, that those who are partakers of holiness, shall certainly see the Lord.

4. The righteous are likewise godly persons; and godliness has the promise not only of the life that now is, but of that which is to come—eternal life. (1 Tim. 4 : 8.) It is then certain that the righteous are saved, and they only.

Although the righteous are saved, they are but

scarcely saved. The word *scarcely* is not to be understood, as if the righteous could fall from that state, and come short of salvation, as the Papists and advocates of free-will seek hence to show. *Scarcely* is expressive not of uncertainty but difficulty; for the salvation of the righteous who are justified by faith in Christ and sanctified by his Spirit, is according to God's promise, secure, certain, and unchangeable, (Rom. 8 : 33;) since they have been elected from eternity. Therefore Paul says, 2 Tim. 2 : 19, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." Neither is it to be understood, as if believers were always in doubt and uncertainty with respect to their salvation. No; for the righteous can be assured of their salvation, as Paul said, 2 Tim. 1 : 12, "I know whom I have believed;" and Rom. 8 : 38, 39, "I am persuaded that nothing shall separate us from the love of God;" and they are therefore exhorted to make their calling and election sure. But according to the force of the original, *scarcely* here signifies with difficulty. Such is its acceptation in the Greek, and in this sense it is employed Acts 14 : 18: "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them"—'it was only by means of a great effort—by a resolute refusal of the proffered homage, and every manifestation of disapprobation, that Paul and Barnabas prevented them from sacrificing to them, as gods.' Such is also its import Acts 27 : 16: "And running under a certain island, we had much work to come by the boat;" that is, 'we obtained it, but by a desperate effort.' And thus we ordinarily speak of any object as *scarcely* obtained, which is secured only

by much trouble, labor, and pains : thus it is also to be understood in our text. The righteous then are saved, but scarcely, that is, with great toil and effort—through many conflicts, and afflictions, distress, extreme agonies, temptations, and chastisements. This the Lord Jesus teaches, Luke 13 : 14 : “ Strive to enter in at the straight gate ; ” where he speaks first of the gate, which is straight, and through which we can not enter except by striving—through which we must press with violence. Direct your attention also to that remarkable passage found Matt. 7 : 13, 14. The way of life heavenward is exceedingly narrow, inasmuch as the whole life must be regulated by the law of God, which demands a strict and precise service. We are now prepared to perceive how the righteous are *scarcely* saved.

1. The righteous are scarcely saved, inasmuch as they must be born again. (John 3 : 3.) God can not save, unless he first make spiritually alive those who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph. 2 : 1.) Truly, there is need of that same power, for the regenerating and re-creating of the sinner, which was requisite for the creation of the whole world : nay, much more ; for at the creation, there was naught opposed to God ; but now all that is in the sinner is enmity against God : (Rom. 8 : 7 :) “ the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

2. Shall they be saved they must believe ; and that is the work of God alone, (John 6 : 29.) And what does it not require to bring to God one who entertains such exalted imaginations with respect to himself, and in all his words and acts conducts as if he were God himself ? What is not required to render proud, high.

minded man, humble and small in his own eyes, and to cause him to prostrate himself before God as a beggar; to lie in the dust as a worm, and thus to supplicate his grace. Judas chose the halter rather than believe! Oh! what is not requisite to remove from his false dependences, one who builds upon his own righteousness, and reposes so securely in it; and to drive him thus naked and bereft of all things out of himself, as one helpless, lost, and in a desperate state, to Jesus, through him to be reconciled to God, and by his perfect righteousness only, to be rescued from destruction and eternally saved? It is hard to desire Christ and naught but Christ. It is toilsome the whole day to follow after Christ, and not to rest until we find him; and therefore shall a person believe the arm of the Lord must surely be revealed, (Is. 53 : 1;) and therefore Paul says, that the work of faith is the exceeding greatness of the power of God, "according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead:" and therefore are the righteous scarcely saved.

3. Shall they be saved, they must exercise repentance; in accordance with Luke 13 : 3; and what does not this act of the soul include? It includes a turning from sin to holiness; from Satan to God; from ourselves and all creatures unto Christ; and how great a work is this? for one who is so in darkness, nay, is darkness itself! who can not find the way of life; who is unable and unwilling to return; who is so blinded by self-love that he regards his evil heart as good; who so cherishes his delusive hope, that he neither can nor will abandon it; who is so caught in the snare of the

devil, who holds him captive at his will; who is a child of wrath and an enemy of God! Oh! what does it not require to arrest such ungodly, heedless sinners, in their way, and to arouse them from their lethargy? Oh! what does it not require to bring one who has forgotten and contemned God; who has made God his enemy; who has naught to expect but his eternal wrath, again to God, and cause him to realize and enjoy his favor and love? Will not the thought naturally arise in his breast, How can I, who am an enemy and hater of God, become reconciled to him? Should I appear in his holy presence, would he not immediately thrust me away, and cast me into hell? Could God take delight in saving a sinner such as I? It is, therefore, a work of great difficulty to cause a sinner to entertain that confidence in God, without which he can not be led to repentance: thus he is *scarcely* saved.

4. Shall he be saved, he must be made holy; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. (Heb. 12: 14.) And what does not this include? What energy and skill must not the Holy Ghost employ to sanctify the elect sinner? for within and without, he is wholly unclean and loathsome, and from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, there is no soundness in him. Thus he must not only be sanctified in all that he does and leaves undone, and yield his members as instruments of righteousness, and to this end forsake all things—cutting off a right hand and plucking out a right eye, (Matt. 6,) that is, abandoning his dearest bosom-sins; but he must be also inwardly sanctified—his heart must be changed—be entirely transformed—the image of God be impressed upon it—he must be

holy in all his motives, in order to glorify God in all things. And oh! how great the work to sanctify a heart so habituated to sin, to vanity and folly; and to impart to it true wisdom! an effect this, to the production of which naught less than divine power is adequate: therefore is he *scarcely* saved.

5. He is "scarcely saved," inasmuch as he must deny himself: (Matt. 16 : 24 :) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me;" that is, in general, the old man, the flesh, with its affections and lusts, must be crucified, (Gal. 5 : 24)—he must yield his understanding a captive to the obedience of Christ, (2 Cor. 10 : 5;) he must renounce his own will; he must abandon his sinful inclinations, lusts, and pleasures, (1 Pet. 2 : 11; Eph. 4 : 22; and 5 : 11;) also reputation, possessions, and friends; nay, be willing for Christ's sake, to lose even his life, (Luke 14 : 26 :) "If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple" How hard this for a sinner, whose heart is as a stone, and it yet must take place and therefore is he "scarcely saved."

6. Inasmuch as he must be heavenly-minded, and willing to part with all that is seen, for that which is unseen; and with Paul count all things loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, (Phil. 3 :)—despise the favor of men, the treasures, riches, and delights of this world; and seek only those things which are above, where Christ is; and thus exalt the Lord Jesus above ten thousand, and so proclaim him to the world. But oh! the magnitude of such a work! therefore is he *scarcely* saved.

7. He is "scarcely saved," inasmuch as he must love God above all, and his neighbor as himself, (Matt. 22 : 37, 40)—he must bless them that curse, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that persecute him, (Matt. 5 : 45.) But how difficult to love even our enemies : therefore is he *scarcely* saved.

8. He is "scarcely" and with great difficulty saved, as regarded in himself; seeing it is with the greatest difficulty that one who is deadly sick can begin or accomplish any undertaking; yea, no more readily than an Ethiopian can change his skin, or a leopard his spots, can they do good, who have been accustomed to do evil. (Jer. 13 : 23.) They are as the dead, and can contribute nothing to their own restoration to life; so mortally helpless are they. Therefore, Paul says, Rom 7 : 14, "I am carnal, sold under sin."

9. To this is to be added the fickleness and inconstancy of man, who, when convinced by God, resolves to change his conduct and no more pursue his sins; yet proves unfaithful to his resolutions, and does not continue steadfast and believing, but turns again to folly: thus is his sorrow like a morning cloud, which soon passes away, and therefore is he *scarcely* saved.

10. "Scarcely" and with great difficulty are the righteous saved, inasmuch as God sometimes forsakes them; though not for ever, but for a moment; and not entirely, but as regards his sensible and consoling grace. Thus the Church complains, Is. 49 : 14, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." To this is to be added that the Lord, their light, and the strength of their life, at times withholds for a period his wonted assistance; permits them to be sub-

jected to the assaults of their enemies; hides from them his lovely countenance; appears to be angry with them, to write bitter things against them, and turn to be their enemy; so that it becomes to them a season of complaining and lamenting, of asking and seeking, of conflict and wrestling. This we see in Job 6 : 24, and 13 : 24; in David, Ps. 13 : 2-4; in Asaph, Ps. 77 : 4-10; and in Heman, 88 : 17, 18. Of these things, an unconverted man knows nothing—nothing of the loss of communion with God, and nothing of the sweetness of that communion, since he has never enjoyed it.

11. "Scarcely" are they saved, inasmuch as they are called to endure many temptations and conflicts with Satan, for the devil, their adversary, goeth about as a roaring lion. (1. Pet. 5 : 8.) He is dexterous and deceitful, and is ever plotting their destruction and laboring to draw them from God. To this end he shoots at them his fiery darts, in order to lead them into sin, and prevent or mar that which is good; or fills their minds with blasphemous thoughts, in order to sift their faith; to extinguish their love; to weaken their hope, and reduce them to despondency and doubt. How they should arm themselves against him, can be seen Eph. 6 : 10-18. It is then *scarcely*.

12. Add to this, the world that lieth in wickedness, (1 John 5 : 19;) that is, evil men, with their sinful associations, who are the instruments of Satan. For what he can not himself do, he does through them, as his organs; for he rules in the children of disobedience, and urges them on to the destruction of the godly, now by perfidious flatteries—by representing in such fair colors

the beauties, pleasures, honors, and riches of the world, to entice their souls; and now by assailing them with vile slanders, invectives, lies, and malicious threats. Thus are the righteous called to suffer much at the hands of the ungodly; and that for Christ's sake, (Matt. 5 : 11; 1 Pet. 2 : 19, 20;) and hence pass through evil report and good report, and to all this they must rise superior; as they can not without conflict.

13. In addition to this; they still have a deceitful, seductive, wicked heart—that evil and depraved nature, which continually leads them astray; for “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” (Jer. 17 : 9;) and “thus is every one tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” For the heart which is a sink of iniquity, tends continually to sin, nay, continually sends forth sin; and therefore the heart must be kept diligently. (Prov. 4 : 23.) The old man must be crucified, and our members which are upon the earth, mortified. (Col. 3 : 5.) The body must be brought into subjection, and provision not made for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. (1 Cor. 9 : 27; Rom. 13 : 4.) Hence their wrestling, their watching, their praying against sin, their tears, sorrows, and complaints, with Paul, Rom. 7: “Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” and all this occasions a constant strife.

14. And lastly, are to be mentioned all the afflictions and adversities which so frequently and grievously assail the righteous; (for “many are the afflictions of the righteous,” Ps. 34 : 20;) through which it is de-

clared, they must enter into the kingdom of God. (Acts 14 : 22.) Who can enumerate all the calamities which they experience in this vale of tears, in person, family, estate, and calling, honor, good name? What sickness, poverty, disquietude, dishonor, violence, slander, and persecution? Scarcely often, has one evil passed, before another is experienced ; so that innumerable evils compass them about, (Ps. 40 : 13 ;) and how hard is this for the flesh !

Add to all, that deep distress and bitter agony of soul on account of sin, which is the greatest evil they are called to endure, (Ps. 25 : 17 :) “ The troubles of my heart are enlarged : oh ! bring thou me out of my distresses.” Wherefore, also the word of God, speaking of the attainment of salvation, employs all such modes of expression as are significant of toil, labor, and concern : as, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, (Phil. 2 : 12,) to seek, (Matt. 6 : 33,) to strive, (Luke 13 : 14 ;) which form of speech is drawn from a warrior, who has many and mighty foes with whom to contend. Thus also must a child of God, in the work of his salvation, strive against enemies so numerous, and thus with violence assault the kingdom of heaven, (Matt. 11 : 12 ;) run in the Christian race, (1 Cor. 9 : 24 ;) follow after perfection, (Phil. 3 : 12 ;) and exercise himself, (1 Tim. 4 : 7 :) “ Exercise thyself unto godliness.” This last, literally expressed, is wrestling, and the similitude is drawn from the combatants in the ancient games, and implies the greatest intrepidity, as that of a hero armed from head to foot, that he may prove victorious in the conflict, and bear away the crown of life. It is also required that we watch, stand

fast in the faith, quit ourselves like men, and be strong, (1 Cor. 16 : 13 ;) fight the good fight of faith, (1 Tim. 6 : 12 ;) and be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. (1 Cor 15 : 58.)

All these forms of expression intimate that those who are saved, are saved not easily, but through great conflict, and with much effort and wearisomeness ; and this by reason of the unworthiness of their best works ; the contest between flesh and spirit ; the depravity of their hearts ; the narrowness of the way to life ; the difficulties attendant upon required duties ; the insufficiency of their righteousness ; and the strict demands of the righteous Judge.

Is it true, my hearers, that the righteous are scarcely and with so much difficulty saved ? It becomes us then, not to esteem salvation so lightly and of such easy attainment. Unless we would directly oppose the word of God, we must acknowledge salvation to be a quite different thing from what is supposed by most men who yet hope to be saved ; for they imagine that it is entirely well with them, and that they shall be saved, provided they avoid outward and gross sins ; live honest and correct lives ; perform the external duties of godliness, and diligently pursue the business of their calling. O wretched men ! can that be true godliness, and the narrow way of life ? Oh ! no : outwardly to forsake sin, pursue virtue, and live correctly, is only in accordance with the practice of the heathen : as said the Saviour : " Do not even the publicans so ? " (Matt. 5 : 4, 7.) Although God has expressly declared in his word, that something more is necessary to salvation, and that the way to heaven is exceedingly narrow, men

notwithstanding form so light an opinion of salvation, and imagine that they shall so easily acquire it. They do not carefully examine whether they be righteous, and are not concerned whether they be in a state of grace, and have an interest in Christ; but satisfy themselves with a bare and unfounded persuasion, and place dependence upon the external propriety of their conduct—they rely upon the fact that they are baptized; that they have made confession of their faith; that they partake of the Lord's supper; that they attend the house of God, and read his word—upon these things, I say, they rely, and in the mean while are grovelling as very moles, and this, but to acquire some earthly good; and entertain not the slightest doubt that they shall be saved: this, they regard as certain. But know, O vain man! that thou shalt not thus attain salvation! These things must indeed be done, but are not of themselves sufficient. The Spirit of God declares by the mouth of Peter, that "the righteous are but *scarcely* saved," and do you expect so easily to secure it? Oh! no: you lamentably deceive yourself and greatly err: "The god of this world hath blinded your mind and holds you captive in his snare," (2 Cor. 4 : 4;) and whilst you promise yourself heaven, let me freely assure you that you shall obtain hell. Listen, I pray you, to the declaration of the Author of all truth, Matt. 7 : 21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

O careless and unconverted sinners, who have no concern respecting the state of your souls, and imagine that you will be saved! Who, I pray, persuades you,

that you will so readily obtain heaven? I entreat you, judge for yourselves, would not then Peter, without reason, have said that "the righteous are but scarcely saved"? Would not the Lord Jesus have improperly described the way of salvation as so narrow? Should you be saved in your carnal, vain, worldly, and careless state, and through so superficial a service, it were not true that we are saved scarcely, but without difficulty. Your manner of life is surely not one of strict conformity to divine requirements; and would not the disciples, the martyrs, and the most eminent saints have acted foolishly in doing so much, and living so precisely? These withal were greatly concerned respecting their salvation; and could you pursue so heedless a course and yet be saved? Oh! let not your deceitful heart thus lead you astray. Close not so willfully your eyes and persist in imagining that you can so easily be saved! Most certainly, believe me, your deceitful heart turns you aside: you feed upon ashes, and you are hastening to eternity with a lie in your right hand! Must a regenerate Christian daily pour out before God so many ardent prayers, and utter so many agonizing supplications; shed so many bitter tears; be so distressed and concerned respecting his sins; find it necessary to strive so manfully against them, and, in addition, be compelled to endure so many temptations and afflictions; and can you, by one heartless sigh to God and a little superficial service, become an heir of salvation? Oh! no. But do you ask, are there none then saved, who do not experience such a conflict? No: none other. This conflict is the lot of one, more; of another, less; but there is not one, who has not some

experience of it. Such an one will, I doubt not, find the workings of his heart described in the foregoing exposition. Let it not be supposed, however, that this conflict is the meritorious cause of the salvation of the righteous. Oh! no: that is to be attributed to pure sovereign grace; but it is the way to salvation; for God leads his children through conflict to conquest.

You will possibly say, if this be so narrow a way, I should dread to enter upon it; for who could always live thus? But know, O man! that it is but for a time, and that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared to the glory which shall hereafter be revealed to the children of God. Is the labor great? the reward is still greater. Is the contest severe? the victory is glorious! and though it endure for awhile, the glorious issue is notwithstanding certain. If therefore you desire your salvation, let not these things affright you! Oh! no; were you but aware, what joys are still to be found in that way, you would, with Moses, esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. It is not at all times a season of distress and difficulty. Oh! no: the anger of the Lord endureth for a moment, but there is a* life in his favor. (Ps. 30 : 6.) Herein the children of God sometimes exult, that they have more joy in their hearts than the ungodly when their corn and their wine are increased, (Ps. 4 : 7;) and "I delight in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches." (Ps. 119 : 14.) Ask a child of God, and he himself will inform you that in the midst of all his tribulations, he would not barter his condition for thousands of worlds! Oh! no: he would say, Though a man

* Dutch translation.

gave me all the substance of his house for this love, (to be a child of God,) I would utterly contemn it. Would you not then rather be found in this way? or will you still continue to pursue your sinful course, and imagine you will notwithstanding be saved? Entertain not such an expectation! abandon that soul-destroying delusion! no longer deceive yourself with a false hope, but awake I beseech you! awake, ere to your sorrow you find it too late, and then first discover that you have deceived yourself. It is certainly cause of astonishment that you can go on so securely, and indulge so little fear, whilst yet the righteous are scarcely saved! or do you imagine that you are righteous? Tell me, I pray you, what reason you have for such supposition? The Pharisees imagined the same, but were mistaken. There is also a civil righteousness consisting of this, that we live in accordance with the laws of the land, reputably—without injuring or wronging any one—giving to every one his own, and doing what is equal and just. These things are indeed good, and constitute an honorable man, but not a righteous Christian. You must certainly acknowledge, that you are by nature, through original and actual sin, deserving of condemnation; and that you daily increase your guilt and therefore are a child of wrath; in addition, that you are unable to deliver yourself; nay, that you also “will not,” because you are an enemy of God. The inquiry now is—

1. Whether you realize and contemplate these facts with sorrow and concern or not.

2. If this has filled you with anxiety, and led you to despair of effecting your own salvation. Have you

been so convinced of the holiness and justice of God? have you had such views of your own ill-desert, that you could justify God, should he cast you into hell? Have you seen that God can not forgive your sins, without the endurance of the threatened punishment? Has this caused you to hunger and thirst after the righteousness of the Lord Jesus? Has your heart gone out after him? Has he become precious in your eyes? Have you desired him and naught besides? and become convinced that you are in absolute need of him?

3. Have you become supremely concerned respecting Jesus—that you might be reconciled and made at peace with God through him, and thus attain the favor of God and live in communion with him? Have you, to this end, fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus, and surrendered yourself to him?

4. Are you also desirous of sanctification by virtue of the merits of Christ, that you may lead a holy life? Have you experienced this, and do you still daily experience it? Has it been and is it still daily true, that you thus seek reconciliation on account of your sins, and betake yourself to the Lord Jesus by prayers and supplications?

5. Do you labor to glorify God in all your conduct and by a correct deportment to edify your neighbor and thus work out your own salvation with fear and trembling? Is this the ground of your persuasion? Then you are happy indeed. But ah! how far is this from being true? How do ye show the contrary by your actions?

1. Ye, who still adhere to your own righteousness—who depend for acceptance upon the goodness of your

hearts or your good intentions; who still rest upon the external duties that you have performed, and your doing your best, [to speak in Arminian style.]

2. Ye also, who so securely pursue your course; put far off the evil day and therefore walk according to the course of this world, in the indulgence of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life; which are not of the Father, but of the world.

3. Ye also, who refuse to acquiesce in the appointed way of salvation marked out by God, because ye are unwilling to live so strict and careful a life, and walk in this way of tribulation; and who say, "The way of the Lord is not equal," (Ezek. 33 : 17 ;) "Therefore let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," (Ps. 2 : 2 ;) for what profit is it, that we should serve God, and keep his ordinance, and walk mournfully before him? (Mal. 3 : 14.)

4. Ye, who are disposed to ridicule distressed souls, denominating their experience idle fancies; and regard it unnecessary to live so circumspectly.

But consider at length, I pray you, how miserable is your state! Oh! that you beheld the awfulness of your condition! As long as you are not of the number of the righteous, you are still subject to the wrath of God and the curse of the law; God is to you an angry judge; and, continuing in this state, you shall certainly be lost; for if the righteous be but scarcely saved, thou shalt not be saved! O sinner! Canst thou think or hear of this without concern? Think, I beseech you, how lamentable will be your condition, when you shall lie upon your expiring bed, with pale death in view, and conscience shall awake and declare to you that you

are not one of the righteous. Then shall you open your failing eyes, and with broken utterance exclaim: Oh! how am I deceived! Now alas! I find by sad experience the way to heaven a narrow way! Oh! how can I enter upon it? It now is and seems too late! The door seems closed, and there is now no hope. Ah! wretched me, so to have contemned the way of salvation! Now shall I be compelled to learn by sad experience what before I was unwilling to believe. O dread eternity! Let me therefore prevail with you, ere this sad experience be yours.

Do you ask what shall I do? I answer, seek a correct, clear, and affecting knowledge of your sins, and your lost state before God, as well as of your entire helplessness, and your inability to deliver yourself, and that, this being the case, you must perish, unless the Lord prevent you with his sovereign grace. Pray God also that he will impress this upon your mind; that you may be dismayed and concerned respecting it; and thus as one lost be driven out of yourself to the Lord Jesus; flee for refuge to him, and surrender yourself as ungodly, and in danger of damnation, with hearty self-condemnation, to him, to be justified, sanctified, delivered from sin, and glorified. Oh! rest not, until you have arrived at this point. To this end, you must earnestly call upon God by prayer and supplication; you must, with Paul, (Phil. 3,) count all things but loss and dung that you may win Christ; you must forsake all the vanities and sinful associations of the world; (for evil communications corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. 15 : 33;) you must be diligent in the use of all means, as the reading of the word of God, and the hearing of it

preached ; you must, withal, have a deep impression of your helplessness, that in the use of the means you may be led to look to the Lord for his Spirit. Thus proceed, and, I beseech you, rest not until you be found in Christ. Contemplate also much your miserable state ; in addition, how speedily you may be overtaken by death ; that you must then appear in the judgment, and that if in this life you have not been converted, you must be lost ; also, that the Lord is willing to help poor sinners who in uprightness come to him. Oh ! in Christ's stead I beseech you, lay this to heart, that in the day of judgment, it may not be a testimony against you. And oh ! that the Lord would impress it upon your mind, by his Spirit, that you might thereby be converted.

But how blessed are the people of the Lord, who are truly righteous ! Of them we may say, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord ; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," (Ps. 33 : 12 ;) for, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ?" (Rom. 8 : 33.) They have a great good in expectation ; they are partakers of the triune God. Of them we may say, "Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord !" (Deut. 33 : 29.) Truly so great is their happiness that it can not be expressed, although it is as yet not known nor fully experienced. They can, notwithstanding, exult, saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3 : 2.) It is true that they are here but as lamps despised in the eyes of those

that are at ease, (Job, 12 : 5 ;) but they are precious in the eyes of the Lord. Their portion is not in this life, but they have a better good in prospect. They must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. It is with them now, as it was with Israel in the wilderness : this world is also a wilderness and a howling wilderness, to them, to lead them to the heavenly Canaan. Therefore, O children of God ! let it not appear strange to you that many afflictions come upon you. You have heard that the righteous are *scarcely* saved. Oh ! let this sustain you under your crosses, whether as to body or soul ; since this is the Lord's ordinary method with his children. For how otherwise could it be said, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God : speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say to her that her warfare is accomplished ?" Did the people of the Lord experience no sorrow and conflict, what need were there of comfort ? Yea, what else is the import of that recorded Rev. 7 : 17, of those that serve God before the throne day and night—that "God shall wipe all tears from their eyes ;" but that here they suffer sadness and sorrow and shed tears of distress ! Be then of good courage : the Lord will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation, make a way to escape. Consider that the Lord does what is for your highest good, when he suffers you to be afflicted ; for whom he loves he chastens, that they may be partakers of his holiness. Reckon with Paul, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed. Bear in mind that the time is short ; for these light afflictions, which are

but for a moment, shall work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and the Lord will at length deliver you from all afflictions, when through death he shall translate you to his blissful fellowship, where you shall be for ever with him, and experience no separation, and where all your sorrow shall be changed into joy; for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you to fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe all tears from your eyes.

Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart! AMEN!

II.

The Miserable End of the Ungodly.

“WHERE shall the ungodly and sinner appear?”—1 Pet. 4 : 18.

EXCEEDINGLY diverse are the unregenerate and the truly regenerate, as well in their nature and disposition as in their life and walk, and especially in their death. They differ exceedingly in their nature and disposition: the unregenerate are darkness, the regenerate light in the Lord. (Eph. 5 : 8.) They are also different in their conduct and walk. Paul, speaking of the unregenerate, Phil. 3 : 16, says some “walk differently” *—differently from the renewed and ungodly; for he soon after adds: “But our conversation is in heaven.” The way in which the godly walk, is the straight and narrow way, which is indeed a toilsome way, but notwithstanding a way of righteousness—a holy way. “The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath;” but the ungodly walk according to their own fancy, desire, and the imagination of their hearts, in the way of perverseness. This is a broad way, and

* Dutch translation.

easy to the flesh, and therefore appears good in the eyes of the ungodly ; but is, notwithstanding, the way of death, the end of which is destruction.

This diversity appears also in seasons of adversity and affliction. The ungodly called to the endurance of divine judgments, murmur against the Lord, saying his ways are not equal. (Ezek. 18 : 25.) The righteous, on the contrary, humble themselves under the Lord's hand ; are silent in affliction, justify God and praise him : " I was dumb I opened not my mouth ;" (Ps. 39 : 10,) and Mic. 7 : 9 : " I will bear the indignation of the Lord."

But most dissimilar are they in their death. Oh ! how vast the contrast between the righteous and wicked, when called to die ! They have both an end, but a very unlike one. The end of the righteous is joy and eternal glory ; the end of the ungodly woe, wretchedness, and condemnation. (Ps. 37 : 38 and 1 : 6.) This also Peter declares in our text. Upon the first member of this verse, we have already dwelt, namely, that which sets forth the state of the righteous : now follows the miserable end of the ungodly : " Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear ?"

In the explanation of these words we must dwell upon two distinct points.

I. The persons : " the ungodly and sinner."

II. Their miserable state : " Where shall they appear ?"

I. The Apostle speaks of the ungodly and sinner, by which two words some divines suppose that two classes of persons are to be understood. Some conceive that

by the ungodly are intended all those who are without God, as unbelieving heathen who live without God in the world; without the God of the covenant; strangers from the covenant of promise. By sinners they understand, unholy, nominal Christians, who confess God with the mouth but deny him by their works. By the ungodly, others understand, such as sin against God; and by sinners, such as sin against their neighbor. This distinction, however, has no sure foundation, since the words ungodly, and sinner, are often interchanged, to express the same class of persons. By the ungodly are to be understood, all sinners, (Rom. 4 : 5,) and by sinners, frequently, the extremely ungodly, who are therefore coupled with publicans, (Luke 15 : 1;) nay, the heathen are thus denominated, Gal. 2 : 15 : "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the gentiles;" and sometimes all who do not serve, honor, and obey God : (John 9 : 31,) "We know that God heareth not sinners : but if any man worship God and do his will, him he heareth;" so, that we may here properly understand by the ungodly and sinners, one and the same description of persons, to wit, all the unregenerate; who are still in the state of nature, in which one indeed sins more, another less, but yet all, as long as they live in that state, according to the desires of their unrenewed hearts, are ungodly and sinners.

An ungodly person then, according to the force of the original word here found, is one, who does not know and serve God, but lives without God : as we are wont to denominate one who is without concern, *unconcerned*; one not just in his dealings, *un-just*; one a stranger to happiness *unhappy*. An ungodly man then, taken

in this sense, is one who is still in his natural state, and consequently such as Paul describes him, Eph. 2 : 12, "Without God in the world:" as he also more particularly explains, chap. 4 : 18: "Darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God," that is, not having spiritual life, but actuated only by depravity, as it is to be found in the corrupt workings of the heart, through which he is deprived of inward peace and quiet, and by means of his constant propensity to evil, is tossed about, and subject to constant perturbation and commotion of mind. It is the description given by the Holy Ghost himself of the ungodly. (Isa. 57 : 20.) By the same manner he also injures, disturbs, pollutes, and corrupts others: according to the proverb in Israel, 1 Sam. 24 : 13, "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked."

From all this it is manifest that such an one is destitute of a title to life, and condemned as unrighteous; for to have a title to life is also to be partaker of the spirit of life, and therefore an ungodly person is not only without God, but also without Christ, as Paul represents, Eph. 2 : 12. All this is included in the word ungodly or wicked; and since there are so many misapprehensions in relation to this point, of which Satan well knows to take advantage, (for however common is the word in the Scriptures, the force and meaning of it are not understood, and it is commonly regarded as designating others than those intended,) therefore, it will be necessary that we show from the word of God, who are here intended by the Holy Spirit.

1. A graceless person—one who is not acquainted with God in his supremacy, and in his glorious and

amiable perfections, and consequently does not admire or love him. Thus a wicked person is represented, Jer. 12 : 1. "Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?" is there asked, and the character of those spoken of is immediately shown: "Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins," that is, they are not sincere—they have no real love to thee—they know thee not—they do not act from an inward and spiritual principle. Hence all the unregenerate, who are not renewed and changed by the spirit of life, are ungodly.

2. A disquieted and perturbed one: "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." (Isa. 57 : 21.) They are under the influence of the lusts that war against the soul, (2 Pet. 1 : 11 ;) and inasmuch as they are borne forward by those lusts, they are brought into great disquietude, and the more because this happens in a manner which convinces them that such course must end in destruction. Their sins, however, are too agreeable to them ; evil is too powerful for them, and hence results frequently, that disquietude, that perturbation and distress which are occasioned by the convictions and admonitions of conscience ; and they experience fear and terror in view of death, and the last judgment. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," (Prov. 28 : 1 ;) "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." (Ps. 32 : 10.)

3. An ungodly person is also one who disturbs good order, who occasions perturbation and disquietude, defiles and injures others: "They sleep not, unless they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall." (Prov. 4 : 16.) What can not an ungodly man effect by his bad example! How polluting and corrupting are his words! "Evil

communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. 15 : 33.) How by their vile and contaminating discourse do they frequently excite the passions, and stir up evil emotions in those who hear them : " Their tongue is set on fire of hell ; full of deadly poison." (James 5 : 8.) Hence David says, Ps. 6 : 8 : " Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ;" (Ps. 119 : 115.) " Depart from me, ye evil-doers : for I will keep the commandments of my God."

4. But especially is an ungodly man one who is condemned—who can not stand in the judgment. Thus it is taken Ps. 109 : 7 : " When he shall be judged, let him be condemned." An ungodly man is opposed to a righteous one, and a righteous man is one, who, by virtue of the merits of Christ, is exempted from guilt, and the punishment of sin, and has in Christ a title to life, and is sanctified by his spirit : therefore, an ungodly person is one, who according to God's law, has no title to life ; is not united to Christ by faith ; has hence no interest in his sufferings and obedience ; and is therefore guilty * before God, (Ps. 5 : 10 ;) for the mouth of truth says, " He that believeth not the Son, is condemned already, (John 3 : 13)—he has part in the righteousness of life in Christ.

Such ungodly persons are all men in a state of nature : who have not yet become partakers of spiritual life through regeneration, but live after the flesh and their own corrupt desires, are not united to Christ, and do not live to his glory. Thus, says Paul, Rom. 5 : 6 : " In due time Christ died for the ungodly." All these,

* Dutch translation.

however, differ from each other, for there are various classes of ungodly persons, as—

1. The openly and entirely wicked—monsters in human form—dead weights to the world—men who are continually immersed in their wickedness, who glory in it, and declare their sin as Sodom. (Is. 3 : 9.) Paul describes these, Rom. 3 : 13–18 ; 1 Cor. 6 : 10 ; and they also by their fleshly works, sufficiently show that they are ungodly. (Gal. 5 : 21.)

2. The wicked, at the same time marked by external propriety of conduct: who avoid gross sins; live outwardly correct, moral, and unblamable lives, and therefore do not suppose that they are ungodly; for such imagine, however contrarily to God's word, that fornicators, whoremongers, drunkards, thieves, and such alone are ungodly and profane men. Now, from these sins they are free, and therefore conceive they are not the ungodly: as the Pharisee, Luke 18; whilst one who knows and fears the Lord, can readily perceive from their conduct that they are ungodly: "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes," (Ps. 36 : 1;) as if he had said they may think of themselves what they please, I am satisfactorily convinced they are wicked; their life and walk testify there is no fear of God before their eyes.

3. There are also ungodly persons, who refuse to believe they are such, flattering themselves that they are righteous; of whom the Redeemer speaks, Matt. 9 : 13: "I am not come to call the righteous." These take it ill that they are regarded as ungodly, whilst yet in the language of the Holy Ghost, this is their proper appel-

lation. Such were the Jews, who said, that God was their Father. The Lord Jesus demonstrated to them that they had no part in God, but were ungodly, and of their father the devil: at which, they were so offended, that they sought to stone him. (John 8 : 41—44.) When the Lord said to them, that they were still in their natural blindness—knew not God, and were consequently alienated from the life of God, they in the most resolute manner repelled the intimation, saying: “Are we blind also?” (John 9 : 40.) Ignorant, nominal Christians regard those as destitute of charity, who suffer it to appear that they consider them not in fellowship with God and Christ, and thus ungodly, though by their actions they make no exhibition of the life of God.

4. There are still those who are regarded by men, not as ungodly, but as righteous—who have a name to live, although dead, (Rev. 3 : 1.) These are outwardly changed; have escaped the pollution of the world; live externally godly; conduct before men as God’s people are wont to do, (Ezek. 33 : 31;) and yet in reality are ungodly, having no title to life in Christ, without the Spirit, and strangers to communion with God: in a word, hypocrites. We must therefore understand by the ungodly, not only such as live in open and gross sins, but all unconverted, natural men: who, however much adorned with civil virtues and propriety of conduct, are not yet united to Christ; and therefore have no title to life, and are not sanctified by his Spirit.

And hence is added, “and sinner:” not as if an ungodly man were not a sinner, but the better to express the nature of man. All men are sinners, because trans-

gressors of the divine law, and destitute of the holiness required by God in his law. But there is here intended an impenitent sinner: who takes pleasure in sin, and continually wanders from the right way; lives in sin, and has contracted a sinful habit; whose calling, as it were, is sin, and who is therefore deservedly denominated a sinner. This is true of every unconverted person: who does naught but sin, since in all that he does, he proposes not to himself a right end, namely, the glory of God; though he be not chargeable with all sins, and does not always sin, he yet does not hate sin. Does he avoid some sins? it is not from love and fear of God, but because he has no opportunity—his disposition, or means, or calling, do not permit them. The sins which he commits, rule in him—he lives with delight in them, and is thus, with Ahab, sold to do evil. (1 Kings 21 : 20.)

II. Of these ungodly and sinners, Peter adds: “Where shall they appear?” When the Apostle thus inquires, we must not regard him as doubting, much less denying that the ungodly and sinners shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; nay, he presupposes this, (vs. 5;) for this appearance is general, as the Apostle Paul teaches, 2 Cor. 5 : 10: “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” So also says the Apostle Jude, in his epistle, vs. 14, 15: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them.” When then, the Apostle inquires, “Where shall they appear?” he intends thereby to express the sad and awful end of the ungodly: as is said in the former, the 17th vs. It is a similitude

borrowed from a criminal, who, being summoned before a tribunal, is examined, convicted, and condemned. Thus it is also here, and therefore holy Peter asks, "Where shall he appear?" that is, where shall he appear as the righteous, to be saved? He shall not be able to stand in the judgment, but be judged and condemned: as is also taught by David, Ps. 1 : 5: "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Such is the miserable condition of the ungodly and sinner, that, not only in the divine judgment hereafter, but not even in this life, can he anywhere appear with comfort or boldness; for Solomon in his Proverbs, from which Peter adduces these words, presents to view his calamitous state as general, (Prov. 11 : 31 :) "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner:" so that the ungodly and sinner, even here upon earth, can appear nowhere but with fear and terror.

1. The ungodly and sinner can not appear with boldness and filial confidence before God in prayer; for "we know that God heareth not sinners." (John 9 : 31.) His sacrifice is "an abomination to the Lord," (Prov. 15 : 8;) "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination," (Prov. 28 : 9.) And though he make many prayers, yet being offered formally—from mere custom, and not through the spirit, they are not acceptable to God: "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear;" nay, "his prayer becomes sin." (Ps. 109 : 7.)

2. Does he appear in the house of God to hear his

word? that also is not profitable to him, nor pleasing to God: (Isa. 1 : 12 :) "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" since his heart is filled with filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and prejudice against the word of God. (James 1 : 21.) He comes not to do what the Lord shall say, but to find fault, or to harden his heart. Hence, said the Lord to the prophet Ezekiel: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them." (Ezek. 33 : 31.)

3. Does the ungodly and sinner appear at the Lord's table? (as alas! he may be found doing,) O wretched! The seal of grace becomes to him a token of condemnation—his table becomes a snare—he eats and drinks judgment to himself, because he discerns not the Lord's body, (1 Cor. 11 : 29 ;) for he approaches unworthily—without real spiritual life, without suitable examination and preparation.

4. But when death arrives, where then shall the ungodly and sinner appear? How shall he be able to stand? Death will be to him the king of terrors, who will bring his state to a consummation, through which every thing desirable shall cease to him, and all that can be dreaded come upon him. Having lived ungodly, he shall die accursed! Oh! how fearful must be the thought of death to him whose portion is in this life! Oh! how dreadful for him, when death shall seize upon him! Even as for Belshazzar, when he saw the fingers of a man's hand, writing upon the wall: (Dan. 5 : 6 :) "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

5. But, where shall he appear in the day of the last judgment? It is true, he shall rise again; but it shall be to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan. 12 : 2.) He shall also appear in the judgment; but shall be placed as a goat at the left hand, where he will be unable to endure the strict scrutiny of the omniscient Judge, and the just judgment of the Almighty. When called to give account of every idle word, his mouth shall be stopped, and the Judge shall pronounce upon him the fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" which shall also be actually executed: he "shall go away into everlasting punishment." (Matt. 25.) Hell, the place of the damned, is his own place; which is prepared for him, that he may appear there for ever; but not be able to stand, on account of the vindictive justice of God, by whom he shall be punished. O awfully miserable one, who must there appear! How shall his laughter be turned into mourning, his brief prosperity be recompensed with a never-ending curse! When he shall appear there, alas! then shall he howl for sorrow of heart; gnaw his tongue, and in inexpressible anguish and pain, gnash upon his teeth, and say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us." (Rev. 6.)

And this is a necessary consequence; for if the righteous be but scarcely saved, the ungodly and sinner shall certainly perish: as the Apostle well concludes. A righteous person differs as much from the ungodly and sinner, as heaven from hell; as light from darkness. Their ends therefore, are exceedingly different. Must a righteous person endure so much affliction?

what then, shall not come upon the ungodly, who still lives in his sins? Must he that loves God experience so much suffering and sorrow? what shall not he suffer, who hates him, and is his enemy? If it pleases God so sorely to visit and chastise his children, the objects of his favor, for their infirmities, oh! how shall he not avenge himself upon his adversaries, for their sins and evil deeds committed all the days of their lives? Such also is the inference of the wise king Solomon: "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." An ungodly person is without God—alienated from the life of God—neither fears nor serves him: there is then, for him, no consolation nor salvation. A sinner living on in sin, shall have no part with the righteous; for "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. 6 : 14, 15.) Where then shall the ungodly and sinner hereafter appear, since upon earth he refuses to come to God? God calls him to his blissful communion in Christ, but he says by his deeds, if not by his words, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," (Job. 21 : 14;) "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." (Isa. 30 : 11.) The holy Jesus invites him to come to him; but he will not come, (John 5 : 40;) he has greater love for sin and the world. God calls him to repentance, but he continues averse to God. He calls him to tears of sorrow, but he remains at ease in his vain delights; and since he does not strive he can not enter in—since he does not assault the kingdom of heaven with violence, he can not take it. But since with full strides he pursues the broad way so de-

lightful to him, he has naught to expect but everlasting destruction. This then is sure. It follows also from the vindictive justice of God, who will by no means clear the guilty, and who can have no communion with the sinner, and therefore must condemn and punish him. Thus said David, Ps. 5 : 4, 5, 6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." Is then the righteous scarcely—narrowly—with much toil and labor saved? then has the ungodly and sinner naught to expect, but eternal condemnation.

From all these things, we see the sad and wretched end of all the unconverted, ungodly and sinners. And hence also, it is plain that though the ungodly may be prosperous, their prosperity is, notwithstanding, vain, and but for a time. Their happiness is short, and their joy but in appearance, and ends in everlasting anguish and grief. However well they seem fortified against calamities of every kind, there is suspended over them an unexpected and most awful desolation, through which they shall perish. David may therefore well say: "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." (Ps. 37 : 12.) Are their worldly rank, reputation, power, and wealth great? yet if we contemplate the conclusion of their course—go into the sanctuary and consider their end, we perceive that "God sets them in slippery places, and casts them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as

in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.”
(Ps. 73 : 17-20.)

Behold then, the awful state of the unconverted! Approach, ungodly sinner, who find your pleasure in sin, and are without fear and concern: behold here, the awful and miserable state in which you are before God! You who have never yet realized yourself lost—have never yet been expelled from your own righteousness, your own strength, and good works, and therefore have not yet become a partaker of the righteousness of Jesus Christ—sinner, who are not yet born again—have not experienced a saving change in heart and life; but continue in the old man—the old, corrupt nature, and therefore still live in sin, hear a sad message: Wo unto thee! it shall be ill with thee! If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shalt thou appear? It is true thou shalt appear in judgment, before the great God—the omniscient, almighty Judge, but shalt not be able to stand in the judgment, but be condemned. Oh! consider, I beseech you, when your Judge shall rise up, what will you answer him? (Job 31 : 14.) Wherewith will you vindicate yourself against all that shall be preferred against you? All things shall witness against you—all the means of grace; all the sermons you have heard; the numerous warnings, exhortations, instructions you have enjoyed, shall condemn you, and deprive you of all excuse! All the mercy and long-suffering of God; all his benefits which should have led you to repentance, will aggravate your sins. The law will curse you! (Deut. 39 : 26.) The Gospel also will curse you! (1 Cor. 16 : 22.) To these shall be added your own conscience, which will be compelled to assent to all these

things, and shall set your sins in order before your eyes! nay, the Spirit of God, whose motions and strivings you have so long resisted, shall then turn to be your enemy! Ah, sinner! Where shalt thou appear? What wilt thou reply to all these accusations at the judgment? Think for a moment what will be your condition when required to give account for every idle word. (Matt. 12.) When condemned you shall immediately be banished from the presence of your judge. You will not be able to stand before God; for he hates all workers of iniquity. (Ps. 5 : 5.) Therefore shall he publicly say to you, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity!" (Matt. 7.)

Ah! how little do you now realize how dreadful it is to be separated from God, the greatest good! The enjoyment of the gracious presence of God which the saints experience in this life, is more precious to them than all the world. Are they now favored with but a glimpse of his countenance, they exclaim: Lord, in thy favor is life! (Ps. 30 : 6.) Nay, however precious is life, they notwithstanding can testify that, "The loving kindness of God is better than life." (Ps. 63 : 3.) Are they deprived of this, they are perplexed, disquieted, and troubled: "Thou hidest thy face and I am troubled." (Ps. 30 : 8.) Think, then, how fearful it will be to be for ever deprived of the perfect communion of that ever blessed God. Oh! the loss of the divine favor! how dreadful! Where will you appear when you shall be delivered to devils? When they shall drag you away to hell, no one will there be able to help you! Every thing will forsake you! Then it will be in vain, and too late to look for help! Oh! my heart

shudders as I imagine in what condition—in what distress, and hellish agonies, the poor sinner will be, when he perceives that he is now for ever forsaken by God, by Christ, by angels and saints, and finds himself in the assembly and power of devils, who will torment him. Before him, he shall perceive an angry judge; around him, devils who will stand ready to execute the divine vengeance; within him, he will find a gnawing worm; above him, a closed heaven, which shall refuse him entrance; beneath him, a gaping hell, that shall devour him. This will be the place where the ungodly and sinner shall appear, and for ever remain. Oh! wretched eternity! Oh! eternal wretchedness!

O hearers, how is it that your hearts are not more affected hereby? When David, a man after God's own heart, thought upon the judgment, he exclaimed: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." (Ps. 119 : 120.)

And can you hear this without a holy emotion and concern? Are you not impressed by a subject of eternal moment, which so intimately concerns you? I am not ignorant of the reason of this strange phenomenon. So deluded are mankind, that when they read in the word of God of the ungodly, although in the text, and in many other passages it stands associated with the word sinner, they suppose that only the openly and abominably wicked, as blasphemers, profane swearers, murderers, thieves, whoremongers, drunkards, and similar persons, are to be understood. Those who are free from such gross sins, and are somewhat characterized by orderliness and external propriety of deportment, although not affording the slightest indication of

grace and spiritual life, such they suppose to be good Christians, and godly persons. It is true, in the ordinary associations of life, they are honorable in their character, but they are notwithstanding, in the divine estimation, ungodly and sinners. The Spirit of God, whose decisions should certainly be the guide of our judgment, denominates all unconverted, natural men, who are not in communion with God, nor united to Christ, nor sanctified by his Spirit, though distinguished for morality and propriety of demeanor in their intercourse with mankind, nay, though attentive to the outward forms of religion. All still in their natural and unregenerate state, are, without distinction, ungodly and sinners, as we have shown in the explanation. Oh! that it were suitably felt! It is a device of Satan, to deceive and persuade the unconverted, that they are not so wicked; that others are far more evil and sinful than they; that their works are not so corrupt; that it is not they who are reproved and threatened by the preacher; that they possess many virtues; that their state is not so miserable; that ungodly persons are only abandoned wretches, who are guilty of open and gross crimes, who are punished by the magistrate. They are not such; and by this vile deceit of Satan the edge of the sword of the Spirit is blunted, and prevented from penetrating, and effects no saving change, and hence it is,

1. That men are not brought to reflection and a knowledge of themselves. Do they read in the word of God, or is it said to them, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth?" (Ps. 50 : 16;) "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,"

(Prov. 15 : 8,) and similar expressions, they are not at all affected—do not regard themselves as there intended, but only the rudest classes of mankind; they do not apply them to themselves, and hence remain insensible.

2. This also holds back from repentance.

Portions of Scripture, however affecting in themselves, such as the following, Ezek. 33 : 11, “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? And Rom. 4 : 5, that God “justifieth the ungodly,” together with Isa. 55 : 7, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him,” etc.; these they can hear and read without being moved. They believe not, they feel not, that they are ungodly and sinners, and therefore remain unconverted and unjustified.

3. Hence also it is, that they go on securely and unconcerned in sin, in opposition to all warnings, threatenings, and divine judgments, however fearful. Let it be said, “Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him,” (Isa. 3 : 11;) let the fearful declaration thunder in their hearing, “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked,” (Prov. 3 : 33;) “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil,” (Rom. 2 : 5–9;) they are not disturbed—they do not fear—they have no compassion on themselves—because, alas! they entertain an incorrect idea

of an ungodly person, and refuse to acknowledge themselves to be such.

O sinner! that this truth were now revealed to your soul, who now so composedly and comfortably proceed in your way; and what fear and concern would then be excited in your breast! How would you day and night call out and cry to God to be merciful to you!

Should we now indulge in flatteries, and say to you, it shall possibly yet be well with you—you have performed many good acts; there are undoubtedly many worse than yourself; you are baptized; you have made a profession of religion; you attend the public service of God's house: be of good cheer—could that make you happy? Oh! no: that were to daub with untempered mortar. (Ezek. 13 : 14.) The word of God declares that natural men, having not the Spirit, alienated from the life of God, and strangers to communion with Christ, are ungodly and unconverted sinners. Shall his word be of no force with you? What advantage would it be to you that we deceived and destroyed you? Oh! how will he who is so misled and deceived at length and for ever reproach and curse him by whom he has been thus dealt with! "He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse." (Prov. 24 : 24.)

You admit the truth of the word of God, and that by it we shall be judged. And in this word now, are stated many characteristics of the ungodly and sinner, by aid of which we are diligently to examine ourselves, to determine whether we be such, and in such state.

1. An ungodly and sinner is one who commits sin, as is shown 1 John 3 : 8, 9 : "He that committeth sin

is of the devil; whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." He that is of the devil is certainly ungodly, and is known by this, that he commits sin. Now it is certain that you who commit sin without inward opposition, struggling and conflict; who find your satisfaction and delight in sin, and after the commission of it are not humbled on account of it, and ashamed before God; do not sincerely mourn over it, and are not tenderly affected, saying, Oh! what have I done! (Jer. 8.) Wo unto me that I have sinned! and not desirous of reconciliation and sanctification—it is certain, I say, that you are ungodly and unconverted sinners, although exempt from gross transgressions.

2. An ungodly person, however externally correct in his conduct, is not united to Christ, is a stranger to communion with him, and therefore has no title to life. Apparent is it, then, that you whose choice is not fixed upon Christ as surety, who do not receive him for justification and sanctification, do not long after him, and look unto him, who are not occupied with addressing him by prayer and supplication, that you may be justified through him as ungodly and condemned—that you are an ungodly, unconverted sinner.

3. An ungodly person is one who is graceless—destitute of spiritual life, and therefore unregenerated, and not partaker of a divine nature. Now it is certain that you who are not really changed without and within—are not effectually loosened from things here below, and attached to things divine and heavenly, are an unconverted sinner, however fair your exterior.

4. An ungodly person is one who has no real peace with himself or with others. It is the very token spe-

cified by the Holy Ghost, Isa. 57 : 21, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked;" and Prov. 28 : 1, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth;" for they have no peace with God, nor with conscience, nor with creatures. Whence, I pray you, proceeds that disquietude, that commotion and fear of the elements; nay, the movement of a leaf, and other dangers from men or beasts, a threat, a fierce look, causes the ungodly to fear; a worm, an insect, inspires with terror; a contagious disease causes them to flee. And how disturbed are they in danger and fear of death! how disquieted under God's afflicting hand! Thus they also live at variance with others, and corrupt them—now, by their wrath; now, by their impurity; now, by their slanders and backbitings; now, by their covetous desires; and in many other ways, as opportunity offers. These are true marks of the ungodly.

5. The ungodly, however distinguished by what is proper in visible deportment, are at heart haters and opponents of the narrow way of godliness. "They that forsake the law praise the wicked," says Solomon, Prov. 28 : 4; and although they may practise some virtues, it is not from real love to virtue; for true excellence is in reality an object of their aversion; for it is a joy to the righteous to do good: it is a burden to the ungodly, so that their language, with that of the ancient Jews, is, "What a weariness!"

Oh! that at length you did but believe and know and see how wretched is your condition, and what must follow upon it! Had you a correct view of your corrupt and wretched state, what a loathing and aversion would you have to yourselves and your sins! If, there-

fore, you desire part in salvation, be entreated to forsake the broad way you have hitherto pursued, and the manner of life followed by the mass of mankind. Forsake all ungodliness. Let the time past of your life suffice you to have wrought the will of the flesh, in the indulgence of all your sinful lusts. You must now cease from sin and seek to frame your lives, for the rest of your time, according to the will of God. To this end we must attend to the following duties :

1. We must lament, hate, and flee our former sinful and ungodly lives. The sins that were agreeable and a source of satisfaction to us, must be bitter to our souls—they must be a source of grief and sincere sorrow; with tears of agony we must lament them, and thus manifest real regret that we have so provoked God by our manifold sins; with a hearty confession, we must acknowledge and lament them before the Lord, saying with David, “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.” (Ps. 32 : 5.) Oh! that our sins lay as a heavy burden upon our hearts, so that being penetrated with sincere regret for them, we supplicated forgiveness from our judge: as David, Ps. 51 : 1, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.” This sorrow must, however, be sincere, and for sin as sin, and because at variance with the holiness of God and his law; and thus it must work in us great carefulness, clearing of ourselves, nay, indignation, fear, nay, vehement desire, nay, zeal, nay, revenge. (2 Cor. 7 : 11.)

2. But it is not enough not to be ungodly. He that

will show that he hates ungodliness, must also be religious and godly—he must perform that which is good. These two things are inseparably and invariably united: as the Apostle Paul says, Tit. 2 : 11, 12, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” But, since we are helpless, and can not of ourselves overcome our evil and depraved nature, we must pray God for the grace of his Holy Spirit, and make use of all means to obtain a clear view, opened eyes of understanding to behold the exceeding evil of sin; for, however specious it may sometimes appear, it is in reality naught but deformity. Its origin is in the devil: “He that sinneth is of the devil.” It exhibits his lineaments, bears his image, and is a child of darkness. Sin contemns God’s majesty, and is at variance with his holiness; despises his goodness; denies his authority; questions his omniscience; resents his justice; in a word, hates God, and merits eternal condemnation. It is impossible that he who contemplates sin in its proper abominableness and deformity, should not regard it with hatred. We must watch against the very beginnings of sin. Since sin acquires the mastery by degrees, we must shrink back with horror from its fast approaches. We must avoid the least, and the smallest sins, would we escape the greatest. We should therefore propose God to ourselves as omniscient—seeing, and hearing, and noting all things; and bear in mind a coming judgment, at which we must all appear and give account.

Is any one convinced, that to the present time, he

has been ungodly and unconverted? let him not think that it is too late; let him not yield to despair! Such state is better than that of the moral, the careless, and secure. All who have ever been saved, were ungodly and sinners. It is God that justifieth the ungodly. (Rom. 4.) Whosoever shall be justified, must first perceive that he is ungodly: as God also demands of such that they forsake their wickedness, and return to him. (Isa. 55 : 7.)

How pathetic the testimony of God in relation to the wickedness of the wicked, Ezek. 33 : 14, 15: "If he turn he shall not die!" How can you hear this without emotion? Why are you not led to cast yourself upon your knees, in humble confession with Israel, Ps. 106 : 6, "We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly"? Why are you not driven by it to the Lord Jesus, who in due time died for the ungodly, (Rom. 5 : 6,) with desire to be justified by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit? He is possessed of a fullness adapted to all the need of a sinner, and is exceedingly gracious and willing to communicate it to penitent sinners. He stands for this purpose with extended arms; he invites and calls sinners and the ungodly to repentance. Oh! let him who is thus sensible of his sins and state of condemnation before God, and his helplessness and unwillingness; who is convinced of Jesus' all-sufficiency and willingness, and realizes himself lost, and desires to be reconciled to God only through the merits of Christ, and to be sanctified by his Spirit, to the praise of the free grace of God—let him surrender himself to the Lord Jesus. "Him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out." (John 6 : 36.) I conclude with the

words of the Prophet Isaiah, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55 : 6, 7.)

Second Collection.



A SMALL COLLECTION OF SERMONS
FROM THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

FIRST PRINTED A. D. 1773.

PREFACE TO THE DISCERNING READER.

WORTHY reader, you possibly imagine that the author of the following Sermons might have spared his pains, since the Church already groans beneath the burden of a multitude of printed discourses. Of this he is well aware, but in this portion of the world there are few in the possession of the ordinary reader; besides, he is the man of whom every one talks; beloved by many, hated by many more. Why, then, should not his friends be permitted to bring to the light that which he teaches? To this is to be added, that these discourses were delivered after he had been graciously restored from a severe affliction, through which, for a considerable time, he could not discharge the duties of his office. Let it serve as no offense to you, that they are not written according to the rules of the art; much less according to the new, and highly-wrought, and fashionable style. He is not ignorant how classic is the present age; and that he is not writing for the learned, but for the plain and unlettered. It shall suffice him if he express himself according to the style of the Holy Spirit, in a clear and simple manner, and so that he can be understood by all. The distinguished Witsius, in his "Controversy of the Lord," enumerates this among the reasons why, at the period of the Reformation, discourses were more productive of good than they are at present: because the preachers, being frequently uneducated men, and not knowing how to gratify their hearers with far-fetched or inflated words of human wisdom, sought to reach the heart by speaking the words of God, in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. It is hoped that the spelling will be an objection to no one, for the author is not a Hollander by birth. That he began to preach in the Netherlands language, was in consequence of the advice of the Rev. Otto Verbrugge, late Professor of Theology and the Orien-

tal Languages at Lingen, (then his esteemed instructor,) now located at Groningen. Some of these Sermons are upon texts suggested to him by friends, with the request that he would treat them. For the most part they have been composed when he was not at home, but at North Branch or Raritan; hence there will have crept in some things which will demand an indulgent eye. But there will, also, probably be found in them some things that will be edifying, (for "who hath despised the day of small things"?)

Be they, however, as they may, they will be obtruded upon no one; he that is not pleased with them, may lay them aside. Truly we live in times so sorrowful that the discourse, Hosea 4, may well be regarded a word spoken in season. The fear there expressed may appear to many as unfounded, but has already, to a great extent, been realized; for since that time judgments have been multiplied, so that he may say, the thing that I feared is come; and what the future shall still disclose, is known to the all-wise God alone. It will be nothing desirable unless there be a general turning to the Lord. Oh! that we were wise, and heard the rod and Him who hath appointed it, and submitted to divine chastisements, that the Lord might not withdraw his blessing from us, and make us desolate, and a land not inhabited. (Jer. 6 : 8.)

Farewell, reader. Peruse these discourses without prejudice and for edification: to which end, the Lord graciously vouchsafe his blessing. I seek not praise, I fear not blame.

March 2, 1733.

I.

The Sins of Youth Lamented and Deprecated.

“REMEMBER not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord!” Ps. 25 : 7.

It is recorded in ancient Grecian history, (which, although to an extent fabulous, is calculated to convey many useful moral lessons), that Hercules, so distinguished for his heroic deeds, being in his youth in doubt what course to pursue in order to arrive at happiness and renown, was accosted by two females. One of them was dignified in her appearance, and modestly attired, and in all respects such as was calculated to excite reverence; the other was of a full and fair countenance, gay in appearance, and decked with ornaments: and each prescribed, and sought to commend to him a different mode of life. The one was Virtue, the other Pleasure. Hercules, actuated by a noble principle, determined to follow Virtue; and by this means arrived at such a pitch of distinction, and performed such illustrious deeds. Let no

one regard this a narrative of facts ; it is but a similitude—the production of some fertile imagination, designed to represent the young as standing at a point where two ways meet, one of which is that of pleasure, in which they are invited to walk according to their natural desires, and the other that of virtue ; and that the way chosen in youth is generally persisted in. Truly wise, therefore, are those young persons who, refusing to listen to the voice of pleasure, choose the path of virtue. The contrary, however, is too frequently the case. The majority choose the way of pleasure, who, when they come to themselves in manhood, or even in old age, are frequently compelled to indulge in lamentation, and to pray with the Psalmist in the words of our text, “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!” In the preceding verse, David prayed in general for the tokens of God’s mercy and kindness. He now expresses in particular, in what respect he desires to experience those tokens. “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!” Three topics here present themselves :

I. The deprecation, “Remember not my sins.”

II. The supplication, “According to thy mercy remember thou me.”

III. The motive presented, “For thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!”

As to the first, we are to consider that of which he speaks, to wit, youth. By this we understand, the

earlier years of man, commencing at his birth and extending to full manhood. We hence find it employed to express all stages and degrees of human life, under old age. It is applied to a small, speechless child, as to Samuel when first weaned. (1 Sam. 1 : 24.) It is elsewhere, however, applied to those more advanced, though having not yet arrived at old age. Thus we read that Saul said to David, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine, to fight with him : for thou art but a youth." (1 Sam. 17 : 33.) The word expresses all degrees of young persons, from earliest childhood to complete maturity ; thus comprehending in itself childhood, youth, and manhood. When David here makes mention of the sins of his youth, we are to understand him as employing the phrase in an extensive sense, to wit, as expressive

1. Of original sin. (Ps. 51 : 7.)

2. The sins of his childhood, "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. 8 : 21.) The first thing discernible in children is sin and depravity ; for example, anger, revenge, hatred, envy, jealousy, pride, avarice, earthly-mindedness, etc.

3. Passing by childhood, we come to youth, and find persons in the state of boys and girls advancing to adult age ; and, if ever, it is in this period of lifetime that foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. (Prov. 22 : 15.) In this stage of life, youth are ordinarily stubborn, trifling, inconsiderate, disobedient, luxurious, haughty, vain, prodigal, wanton, and in similar ways astray from duty.

4. All the sins even of adult years, whether within or without the married state, so long as we are still in

full vigor, and are not to be classed among the aged.

As we find David here lamenting the sins of his youth, we may reasonably conjecture that he composed this psalm in his old age, at least when in manhood and a father; and that, beholding the temptations to which youth are subject, and how much disposed to evil, he reflected upon his own sins. It is true that all youth do not equally launch into excess. Who, however, must not acknowledge that in his youthful days he made himself chargeable with many sins and acts of inconsideration? For this reason the Psalmist here prays, "Remember not the sins of my youth," etc. God is said to remember sins, when he visits and punishes them, whether with corporeal or spiritual afflictions and chastisements. Thus Job, the man of God, complains in the book of his patience, (chap. 13 : 26,) "For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth;" and penitent Ephraim, (Jer. 31 : 19,) "Surely after that I was turned I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." This is here deprecated, "Remember not," in which he prays,

1. That God will not remember his sins by punishing them, whether with corporeal or spiritual judgments.

2. That he would not remember them by causing him to reflect upon them with self-reproach and distress; but, on the contrary, forgive them for the Lord's sake, and inwardly grant him the assurance of the forgiveness of them, and comfort him. (Ps. 51 : 3-11.)

And besides the sins of his youth, he also prays the Lord not to remember his transgressions. Although all sins are transgressions, they may, notwithstanding, be distinguished, and by transgressions be understood, unfaithfulness to solemn engagements, afterwards committed with more or less deliberation and willfulness; so that he here prays for the forgiveness of both his original and actual sins—as well those committed in the rashness of youth, as those of which he might have been guilty through his whole life to the present day, among which he does not deny that there were many committed voluntarily and purposely.

On the other hand, we have his supplication in the second part of our text, “According to thy mercy, remember thou me.” The word mercy has before occurred in the exposition of this psalm. David would say, “According to thy sovereign grace, through which thou canst and wilt show favor to the unworthy—nay, to the hell-deserving—by forgiving their sins, and from the fullness of thine all-sufficiency, granting them grace for grace.” It is said with emphasis, “Remember thou me, O Lord!” that is, O God! whose name is such in its import—thou whose honor it is to be gracious to penitent sinners, nay, thou who alone canst forgive sins. (“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?” Micah, 7 : 18.) He adds as a plea, “For thy goodness’ sake, O Lord!”

Divines are of opinion that there is here an allusion to what we find, Ex. 33, where Moses, after Israel had sinned, and God had expressed his determination to

destroy or to forsake the people, entered for them into the gap, and; as evidence that he had found grace, besought him to show him his glory; whereupon Jehovah answered, "I will make all my goodness [the same word in the original as we have here] pass before thee; and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." (Ex. 33 : 19.) The consequence of which was, that Jehovah proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." (Ex. 34 : 6, 7.) To this Moses afterward appealed, when, on another occasion, he again prayed for Israel. (Num. 14 : 19.) This goodness is wondrously great. (Ps. 136.) It is the ground upon which also believers, after their wanderings and falls, may continually anew approach God. "But I have trusted in thy mercy." (Ps. 13 : 5.) Therefore they denominate the Lord the God of their mercy. (Ps. 59 : 10, 17.) No wonder, then, that the petitioner adds, "For thy goodness' sake." In the 11th verse this is thus expressed: "For thy name's sake."

And with propriety does our Psalmist, in praying for the forgiveness of his sins, appeal to the goodness of Jehovah; for because he is good, he is also ready to forgive. (Ps. 86 : 5.) And we read that when the people had sinned, Hezekiah prayed that the good Lord would pardon them; and it is recorded that the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people. (2 Chron. 3 : 18-20.) "For the hand of the Lord is upon all them that seek him for good." (Ez. 8 : 22.) Which goodness of Jehovah Nehemiah plead: "Re-

member me for good." (Neh. 13 : 31.) Therefore, also, the penitent Jews shall come, fearing the Lord and his goodness, in the latter days. (Hos. 3 : 5.)

From these words we may learn that youth has its special temptations. The young are vain, tenacious of their own opinions, devoted to pleasure, and impetuous in their feelings ; besides, improvident and fickle because destitute of experience. This daily observation confirms. The cause of the destruction of multitudes is to be found in their youth ; and although it is true that all youth do not equally run into excess, (for many are withheld from much evil either by restraining grace or a good education,) who, notwithstanding, must not acknowledge that in his youthful days he was guilty of many acts of impropriety ? Even David himself, although he could testify that he feared God from his youth, Ps. 71 : 5, 6, was yet aware, that in his youth he had been guilty of many sins, by the remembrance of which he was much distressed, and hence found occasion to pray, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions."

In the second place, we may hence perceive, that the elect, who are brought to God, are not only convinced of the sins of their youth at their conversion, but have subsequently such discoveries of them, that they are distressed and deeply humbled on account of them. This appears in the man after God's heart ; also in Job 13 : 26 ; and Jer. 31 : 19, "Surely, after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh : I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

What think ye, my hearers, ye men advanced in years! have the sins of your youth ever been brought to your minds? You will probably say, yes, we have thought of those sins, and spoken of them. But, friends, this is not the inquiry. Have you so felt them, as to repent of them? How clearly are ye here discovered to view—ye, who not only with delight reflect upon the wanton extravagances of your youth, but also speak of them with such satisfaction that it is manifest you have never repented of them, recounting what heroes you have been in fighting and drinking, in card-playing, in horse-racing, in dancing, in acts of licentiousness, and the practice of deception upon unsuspecting females! Oh! were you truly penitent, you would be unable to think of them except with grief, or to speak of them, but with tears; as Augustine in his confession. Ye aged sinners! that which should grieve, is a source of satisfaction to you! Ah! that over which you should weep, you laugh! Not so! Let us rather say with Jeremiah, 3 : 25, “We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

Ye are also here disclosed, who regard as so trivial and small the sins of your youth, disparage and excuse them, and to this end misapply the Scripture which says: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child.” Vile perversion! See the annotations, which say, “The Apostle compares the knowledge we have in this life, with the knowledge of small children.”

Different was the experience of David. Were you so happy as to possess the spirit of true repentance, your experience would be similar; but if you persist in your impenitence, be assured that you will once taste the bitterness of the sins of your youth! God will bring you into judgment. (Ecc. 11 : 9.)

This should also serve for the conviction of you who are aware that you have lived in a dissolute and wanton manner in your youth, but suppose that those sins are forgiven, because you are no longer marked by such gross improprieties, although well aware that you have never been suitably distressed and penitent on account of them. No: God forgives not sin unless we have previously been suitably distressed and penitent on account of them! David, a man after God's own heart, who trusted in the Lord from his youth, Ps. 71 : 5, 6, was in his manhood still affected by the sins of his youth.

Ye aged! both men and women! oh! that ye reviewed your whole lives, that you might perceive with what sins you stand chargeable before God! How desirable that ye so saw and felt your sins, as to be constrained with the Psalmist to pray, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord!" and did not rest before you had found grace in God's sight, and were united to Jesus. Oh! that with Ephraim, in view of the sins of your youth, with shame and sorrow, you smote upon your thigh! (Jer. 31 : 19.)

But it is time that, according to the design of my text, I direct my discourse to you, who are in your

youth. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" (Ps. 119 : 9.) The question is, how shall a young man or woman, by nature inclined to evil, and having constantly before him so many enticements to sin, and youthful lusts, how shall he be delivered from the reigning power of depravity, and so regulate his conduct as to keep himself unspotted from the world, and live a virtuous and godly life? What is the inspired reply? "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." The means to be employed by the young to become sanctified, and lead godly lives, is to take heed to the word of God—to be much occupied with it, and diligently to employ it for all the purposes for which it is profitable. An inquiry, this, above all others, necessary for all men; with which, however, few concern themselves. Especially is it suitable to the young; for youth is the turning point of life, and is subject to many seductions. It is highly pleasing to God, that the young live piously and religiously; this should therefore be their great concern. It is here proposed in general, but ye youth must each one for himself make this inquiry: How shall I cleanse my way? Ye are by nature evil and impure: ye must be changed and purified. How shall ye purify and cleanse your ways? By regulating them according his word. Acknowledge your favored state in being possessed of the word of God, and enjoying so many opportunities of instruction in its truths. How diligently should you read that word and meditate upon it, to advance in knowledge and in wisdom, and in walking according to its directions, in the choice of company, recreation, calling, marriage, etc. But alas!

what reason have we to lament that so many youth are concerned about nothing but how they may live in pomp and pleasure ; neglect attendance at the house of God and catechisings ; profane the Sabbath ; in a word, (according to the description of Solomon, Eccl. 11 : 9,) "Whose hearts cheer them, who walk in the ways of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes ;" of whom we must say with Jeremiah, 32 : 20, "The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth !" Fie ! I am ashamed and distressed on account of you ! Not so, my children ! "Flee youthful lusts." (2 Tim. 2 : 22.) "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." (Eccl. 12 : 1.) Seek the Lord early, now in your youth.

You are certainly, not only by creation, but also by baptism, obligated to the Lord's service. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." (Lam. 3 : 27.) It is a necessary, profitable, honorable, and comfortable good—necessary on account of God's command, "Seek first the kingdom of God," Matt. 6 : 33 ; a profitable good : "Godliness is profitable unto all things," says Paul, 1 Tim. 4 : 8 ; an honorable good : "Them that honor me I will honor, 1 Sam. 2 : 30 ; a comfortable good ; for those who are converted early are preserved from many evils, and can in their old age comfort themselves, and say with David, "Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God ! forsake me not." (Ps. 71 : 18.)

You should also be influenced by the example of saints, who were religious and godly from youth, who are so greatly extolled in the word of God, as Obadiah, Josiah, Samuel, Jeremiah, Timothy, and others. In

addition to those mentioned in the Scriptures we have also on record instances of children, male and female, who knew and served the Lord in their youth. Before concluding we shall resolve some objections, which, as so many stumbling-blocks, lie in the way of youth.

The first is drawn from the unchangeable decree of God. Has not God actually fixed the eternal state of every man? Has he not elected those who shall be saved, and passed by the rest? And who can resist his will?" Answer. We must make not the decree, but the word of God our rule: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God." God has also determined the period of human life. Will any one therefore refuse to eat and drink? The decree has reference not only to the end, but also to the means. At the day of judgment, God will deal with men not according to the decree of election and reprobation, but according to their obedience and piety: "He shall render every man according to his works."

Another cause of offense is that early piety is rarely of any significance: "Those who seek early seldom persevere; the young saint is an old apostate."

This objection is false: it supposes it possible to fall from grace; but when the seed of God is planted in the heart it never dies, it remains in him. Solomon says, Prov. 22 : 6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. It is true a young hypocrite is an old apostate. But where do we find that one who truly feared God, ever forsook him? Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth, 1 Kings 18 : 12, and persevered. David was converted in youth, and was a saint in his old age.

A third obstacle found in the way of youth, is the strictness of religion: "It is a work too severe for youthful days, and more befitting gray hairs. Who sees not how melancholy a thing is religion. It stupefies the mind, and deprives of all pleasure." But consider who they are, that thus change religion. Are they such as are acquainted with it? No: for they who have experience of it, say with Asaph, "It is good for me to draw near to God." O friends! the pious judge far differently of the way of godliness; and they speak that which they know, which they have seen, proved, and experienced: "A day," say they, "in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere." The peace of God passeth all understanding, Phil. 4: 7. Sorrows and humiliations connected with piety proceed not from it, but from the want of it: they are the way to comfort and exaltation.

The fourth obstacle thrown in the way of youth is, the toilsomeness of the work: "The duties which religion imposes are an intolerable burden. The laws are exceedingly strict, and the commands difficult of performance—they enjoin duties that conflict with flesh and blood, as, to deny ourselves, love our enemies, cut off a right hand. These are hard sayings, heavy duties! Who can go in at this strait gate and walk in this narrow way?" It is the way to heaven; and there is no other! if not, then is not the Bible true. But, though grievous for the flesh, it is not for the spirit. The service of sin is much more grievous than that of Christ. How many are destroyed by drunkenness, debauchery, and excess! How great the pangs of hatred, and the torment of envy!

The fifth difficulty which restrains youth is, the scoffs and contempt of the world. Upright professors of religion are a sect everywhere spoken against. By one they are denominated Puritans; by another Scismatics; by a third Hypocrites, and a fourth Pharisees. This is no new thing. Have there not, in previous ages, been in Israel persons of a scoffing spirit? David was the song of the drunkards. Ps. 69: 13. The righteous is ever as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. Job 12: 5. Paul was regarded a heretic, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, Acts 24: 5; Christ a glutton and wine-bibber, Matt. 11: 19. And shall the disciple be above his Master? There shall in the last days be scoffers! And what shall we say if those days are already come? But let not him who can bear no contempt for religion's sake, denominate himself a Christian. But although the pious are despised by the world, they are notwithstanding highly esteemed by God: "If any man serve me, him shall my father honor." Let him who is ashamed of Christ think of the words of Christ, Mark 8: 38, "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

The sixth circumstance which serves as a hindrance to youth is, the number of religions, and the great differences of opinion prevailing among professors: "I would be religious, did I only know which religion is the true one; but how shall I who am young, arrive at a correct conclusion? One pursues this course, and

another that—one professes this belief, and another that, and a third rejects both?” I confess that this is a great evil, of which Satan avails himself. But consider it nothing new; it has obtained in the church in all ages. The word of God also says there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest, 1 Cor. 11: 19—that the hypocritical may be exposed. But all differences are not heresies. All who sincerely receive the word of God agree, that without true repentance, unfeigned faith, and sincere devotion, no one can be saved. Why do you not yield up, and forsake your lusts? They agree in maintaining that it is necessary to fear God, and keep his commandments—to live righteously, soberly, and godly. Tit. 11: 12.

The seventh hindrance to youth is, “What need is there of haste? There is always opportunity for repentance. God is merciful. He will not reject a penitent sinner even in his last moments, as we learn from the thief upon the cross.” This malefactor can, in a certain sense, be said to have done more evil since his death, than during his life. It is an instance without parallel; it is an instance without command; (for where is such command?) it is an instance without promise. It was a case of special mercy, having its reasons in the time of its occurrence. The other continued hardened. The example of the penitent is not followed.

It may be that these, and similar evasions, are sufficient to retain you in your security. But consider, what will you allege in that great day? Will you say that you were not called? That you can not; for

God has called you in many ways. Will you say that you were too young? That also you can not do; for others as young and still younger than yourself have listened to the call. It is your duty, first, above all, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Matt. 6: 33. Will you say that you have had too many demands upon your attention? That were of no force; for there is nothing whatever of such importance as this. Will you say that you expected a longer time for the performance of this duty? But why should you expect that which God has not promised? Why should God lengthen your days, which you spend in the service of sin—you, who refuse to turn to the Lord in the best period of your life? Can it be supposed that you would do it, if your life were prolonged to the age of Methuselah? Can not this affect you? Then consider upon whom will you cast the blame of your destruction? You can not ascribe it to God; for he has sent his Son into the world, and permitted him to be offered to you. You can not impute it to Christ; for he would gather you as a hen does her chickens, but ye would not. Nor, can you ascribe it to the Spirit; for he would convince, convert, and sanctify you, but ye would not! ye have resisted and quenched him! You also can not impute it to ministers of the Gospel; for they have set before you life and death; have represented to you the danger of sin, and the necessity of holiness. Neither can you say that you have not had time; for you have had time for your acts of wantonness, and vanity, and sinful diversions. Therefore your mouth will be stopped, and you will be compelled to take the blame en-

tirely to yourself. O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself! Hos. 13: 9. Up, up, then! Seek the Lord while he may be found! To this you should be excited by the uncertainty of life; for, are you old? You *must* soon die! Are you young? You *may* soon die! *Now*, is the proper time. Can any one too early seek the Lord? No. How often do we find those who in their old age indulge in lamentations over their misspent time! Oh! let us, betimes, bewail our sins, and make our calling and election sure. I conclude with the promise, Prov. 8: 17, "They that seek me early shall find me." *Amen.*



II.

The Way of God with His People in the Sanctuary.

“ALL the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.” Ps. 25 : 10.

OF all the promises made by Jehovah to his people, that is by no means the least which we find, Isa. 65 : 24, “And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” By both these forms of speech is expressed the readiness of God to hear the prayers of his people. “Before they call I will answer.” This may be understood of the desires of the heart which are found in the soul, before there is a word upon the tongue. Since, now, God is he who searches the hearts and the reins, who knows the desires, he frequently answers them by a gracious hearing ere they are yet expressed. “While they are yet speaking I will hear ;” which hearing and answering of the prayers of the pious occurs, on the one hand, by an assurance imparted to them that their desires shall be fulfilled ; and on the other hand, by the actual fulfillment of them ; to wit, by an averting of the evil with which

they were threatened, and the bestowment of the desired good. The assurance of the hearing of their prayers is produced by the Holy Spirit, who first excites desires in the children of God, which desires are of God, according to the will of God, and becoming the character of God. Thus, the Holy Spirit imparts the assurance that such desires shall not be in vain; for, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry;" "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." (Ps. 34 : 15, 17.) Would we behold a striking instance and evidence of this, we have it in the goodly Psalmist, who had but just prayed, in the 2d verse: "O my God, I trust in thee;" when he added, verse 3, his assurance that prayer would not be in vain. Therefore, in the sequel, he presents a three-fold petition: 1. For a knowledge of the Lord's ways, verse 4; 2. For guidance in the same, verse 5; 3. For the experience of the divine mercy, verses 6, 7. But scarcely have the words proceeded from his lips before the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, assures him of a hearing of all those petitions: of the first, verse 8, "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way;" of the second, verse 9: "The meek will he guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his way," (upon which we last dwelt;) of the third, in the words of our text: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies;" for he prayed in verses 6, 7, "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my trans-

gressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord." The words naturally divide themselves into three parts.

I. That which is spoken of: "The paths of the Lord."

II. That which is affirmed of it: "are mercy and truth."

III. The persons of whom the prophet speaks: "unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies."

"All the paths of the Lord." This word has come under notice in treating the 4th verse of this Psalm, where we are to understand by it, the commands and laws of God; but here, by the paths of the Lord are to be understood the works of God and his mode of operation: 1st, His eternal decrees and purposes. Prov. 8 : 22, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old;" otherwise his counsel; also ways, Isa. 55 : 8, 9. 2d, It is also employed to signify his works, both of nature—Job 26 : 14, "Lo, these are parts of his ways," and 40 : 14—and of grace, Ps. 67 : 1, 2, "God be merciful unto us, that thy way may be known upon earth." 3d and lastly, By the paths of the Lord are to be understood his method of acting and dealing with men, that is, his direction of affairs. Thus, we read: Nebuchadnezzar said, "Now I praise and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment," and Ps. 77 : 13, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary." Man also has his purposes, plans and counsels; but in contradistinction to those the Psalmist speaks of the paths of the Lord, (Jehovah,) which name has special reference to the eternal and gracious purposes

of God, and their fulfillment; for he declares in the second portion of our text, that "all the paths of the Lord are *mercy*;" with which word we have just met in verse 6, being the same as grace, and in God, his effectual purpose and powerful inclination to do good to man; and which is manifested in, and accomplished through Christ.

"Truth." Here the word is significant of the faithfulness of God, and the fulfillment of his gracious promises to his children.

When, now, the Psalmist says that "all the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth," we are taught, that God has from eternity purposed to show his loving-kindness, grace and mercy, through the Son of his love; that all his dealings tend to this end; that he has made promises to this effect to his people, in the performance of which he is faithful and true, and that this is discovered by all his methods in relation to his Church, even when to outward appearance it might be difficult. This mercy and truth of God are spoken of more at length, Ps. 89 : 1, 2, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens;" and verse 14, "Justice and judgment are the habitations of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face;" and Ps. 145 : 8, 17, "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." There are theological expositors who are of opinion that there is here an allusion

to Ex. 34 : 6, 7 ; for Moses prayed, Ex. 33 : 13, "If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way;" to which the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee," which name was, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and in truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." But truly, though all the ways of God are mercy and truth, they are by no means such to ungodly and hardened sinners. To these, the ways of God are judgment and justice. (Deut. 32 : 4.) To them his way is in the whirlwind and in the storm: "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies," Nah. 1 : 2, 3; but all his ways are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies; as is taught in our third division.

III. Upon the covenant of God with the elect we shall not at present enlarge: we only observe, that by the covenant must here be understood the conditions and requirements of the covenant: the laws by which those in covenant with God are bound, and to which they say, yea and amen when they give their assent to the covenant of God. Thus we read, Deut. 4 : 13, "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commandeth you to perform, even ten

commandments ; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." This appears from the explanatory clause immediately following :

"And his testimonies."

By testimonies is to be understood the word of God, as being the infallible and only credible testimony of God, and as relating to things which without his revelation could not be known : things, namely, relating to himself, his ways and works ; especially the duty of sinners to him, which they are required to perform ; but especially is it here expressive of that which God testifies in his word in regard to the duties of those in covenant with him, as appears from the word.

"Keep" or observe. This mode of speech is not uncommon, and stands opposed to the annulling or transgressing the commands of God. This keeping or observing the testimonies of God, comprehends the hearing of them with pleasure, reading, searching, understanding, remembering, loving, obeying them. That now, all the ways of God are not only merciful and true, but mercy and truth themselves, to all such as keep his covenant and his testimonies, abundantly appears from the word of God ; for they are the object of God's eternal election, and heirs of the blessings of the covenant of grace, and in time are called into covenant with God, and yield to it their assent ; whence flows the confidence of a good conscience, to expect from God all things that pertain to life and godliness ; among which are forgiveness of sins, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. That all the ways of God are mercy and truth to such is self-evident ; for never can God deal otherwise

with the objects of his favor than is correspondent with his eternal promises. Sometimes, indeed, it appears as if he dealt differently with them; but even then, their afflictions and judgments are sanctified to their souls, and that this is the privilege only of such as keep his testimonies appears hence, that they only are the objects of God's eternal choice—that they only are in covenant with God, and consequently also the objects of his regard, and therefore privileged to assure themselves of his mercy.

All this finds its confirmation in the word of God; namely, that the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth to those who are in covenant with him; that is, upright, believing persons who keep his commandments. This appears from the whole tenor of the sacred Scriptures: as Ps. 32 : 10, "Mercy shall compass him about." (Ps. 36 : 7, 10.) And this applies to all the ways of God to his people; for "all things work together for their good," Rom. 8 : 28; even chastisements are a token of the love of God. (Heb. 12 : 6, 7.) But that this is the privilege only of those who keep his covenant and his testimonies, appears from Isa. 3 : 10, 11; and the Lord Jesus says, John 3 : 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him;" and Ps. 103 : 17, 18, "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

Herein is also included an answer to the prayer of

the suppliant ; for verse 6, he had prayed, "Remember O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses." This is answered by the assurance that all the ways of Jehovah are mercy and truth ; and had he prayed in particular that God would not remember the sins of his youth, he could infer the certainty of an answer from the "mercy" and truth of God. .

This appears sufficiently from Ex. 34 : 6, 7. Therefore Moses prayed, "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, Num. 14 : 19 ; see also Neh. 13 : 22, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy ; and Ps. 51 : 1, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness ; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

And, therefore, the forgiveness of sins is deduced from the loving kindness and truth of God, as in Ps. 103 : 3, 4, 8, 9, 11. Surely, even when God visits the sins of his children by afflictions, he yet remains to them a forgiving God ; and his ways with and towards them are mercy and truth. "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore." (Ps. 89 : 28.) "If his children forsake my law," etc., verse 30, "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him." (Verses 32, 33.) But when it is here said that all the paths of the Lord are mercy, and that this is a consequence of the forgiveness of sins, and is true only of such as keep his covenant and his testimonies to do them. We are taught that God is indeed ready to forgive sins, but only those of the penitent and believ-

ing, who turn to him. (Ps. 30 : 4.) Such is the import of the oracle, Isa. 55 : 6, 7, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." But when men continue in their sins, God refuses to forgive. (Jer. 2 : 9.) When, however, they repent they obtain forgiveness. (Matt. 1 : 4, 15 ; Luke 24 : 47 ; Acts 5 : 31.) Therefore Peter exhorted the Jews, Acts 3 : 19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Read also Acts 8 : 22. It is as if the Psalmist had said, "Although your sins and departures from God in your youth, as well as your numerous other transgressions, are an object of his aversion, and he could therefore justly deny you his favor, there is no anger with him, provided only you lay hold upon his strength." On the contrary, it is a consequence of his name and his eternal purposes, and in accordance with his ordinary method of dealing with his children, graciously to forgive their sins, and grant them the tokens of his love and faithfulness, when they but come to him to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, with the confession of their sins ; with hatred of, and a turning from them ; with a fleeing for refuge to the grace of God in Christ Jesus ; and together with a cordial, believing assent to the covenant of God, not only as to its promises, but also its requirements ; approving them, and desiring sincerely to observe and faithfully to fulfill them. And having the testimony of a good conscience that such

are your feelings, why should you not confidently conclude that Jehovah will not remember your sins, but will remember you according to the greatness of his mercy for his goodness' sake?

Truly hearers, God is good, even to the evil and unthankful; but that is but a common goodness, extending to all creatures. "He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." But this is not so as to afford them real consolation. There is a special goodness having for its object only the people of God. Hence, we should examine whether we are partakers of that special goodness. God himself has accordingly in his word proposed various evidences, of which we shall adduce a few.

We find one stated Ps. 73 : 1, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." Examine then hearers, whether you are clean in heart. Have you ever been so sensible of the impurity of your hearts, as to be affected with loathing, grief, and detestation, on account of it? Have you ever been so desirous of purity of heart, as with the man after God's own heart much to pray, "Create within me a clean heart, O God?" Have you hence ever betaken yourself for refuge to the Lord Jesus, that fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem?

A second mark of an interest in the divine favor we find in Ps. 36 : 7, "How excellent is thy loving kindness O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." Hence examine, whether you have fled for refuge to the grace of God in Christ. Have you ever fled to Jesus, as your

priest, regarding yourself as, not only by reason of gross transgression, but also in view of your best works condemned and helpless, seeking your righteousness and salvation only in Christ; as your prophet, with renunciation of your own wisdom to be instructed by him; as your king, to be in subjection to him on? Do you desire the sanctifying, as well as justifying grace or mercy of God? Have you uprightly betaken yourself to communion with God, desiring it as your highest good?

The third and last characteristic which we shall specify is found in the words of our text, "Such as observe (or keep) his covenant and his testimonies." The same is recorded Ps. 103 : 17, 18. Therefore examine whether by experience you know what it is to enter into covenant with God. Have you broken your covenant with sin, death, and hell? Are you by experience acquainted with covenant dealings with God? Have you actually entered into covenant? Baptism and the Lord's supper introduce no one into the covenant, but are seals for those only who are in covenant. Have you an experimental acquaintance with those special, secret, heartfelt dealings between the Lord and your soul, by which forsaking all things you surrendered yourself wholly, and for ever, and not once only, to God and his service, daily reviewing that surrender? They who have engaged in these dealings well understand the language and meaning of Joshua 24 : 15, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord;" of Asaph, Ps. 73 : 25, 26, 28, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God

is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. But it is good for me to draw near to God, I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works;" of David, Ps. 89 : 15, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk O Lord in the light of thy countenance;" and of the bride, Cant. 2 : 16, "My beloved is mine and I am his;" and of Isaiah, 44 : 5, "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel;" and also of Paul, Acts 27 : 23, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." Are you experimentally acquainted with the import of these inspired declarations? Do you esteem all the commandments of God, without exception, good? Do you choose his commandments to do them? Do you keep his testimonies? Do you observe his requirements? Do you examine and inquire what the Lord will have you to do, with Paul, Acts 9 : 6, and with Samuel, 1 Sam. 3 : 10?

When now you behold yourself in this glass, what do you find to be the case with you? How many are there who do not possess these characteristics—who have never been affected by the impurity of their souls, but still retain their old and corrupt hearts, being impure in heart and life—who have never betaken themselves to that purifying fountain, "opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem," Zech. 13 : 1, but with Moab have always been at ease and unconcerned from their youth, Jer. 48 : 11; who do not know what it is to enter into covenant

with God; have no acquaintance with covenant dealings, or have engaged in them only outwardly, and hence hypocritically, with the Israelites, Ps. 78 : 36, 37, "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant"—who do not keep God's testimonies or commandments, but do that which the flesh, the world, and Satan suggest. Do you not now perceive that you are not a partaker of this special goodness?

Know ungodly, unconverted persons, that all the ways of God are indignation and wrath to every soul that doeth evil—that all your sins are and remain unpardoned, and are treasured up to the aggravation of your condemnation. Woe unto you! To you are God's ways judgment and justice, and the truth and faithfulness of God are a reason for terror; for he will verify to you all the threatenings of his word. Therefore, friends, of what avail will it be to you to experience much of the goodness of God, (it is but for this life,) if in the meantime, by the riches of God's goodness, long suffering, and forbearance you be not led to repentance? for thus you will treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. (Rom. 2 : 4, 5.) Oh! that you were partakers of that special goodness! having betaken yourselves for refuge to the free grace of God in Christ, etc. But that the paths of God are goodness and truth should also serve as an encouragement to the concerned, and support to the despondent.

Thou who art convinced of thy wretched state, and

wouldest fain be reconciled to God, be not I pray thee, deterred from coming to him. If thou be but weary of sin, if thou be sincerely desirous of drawing near to God in the right way, which is only through Christ, then come. The Lord is not unmerciful, cruel, or inexorable, but "good," as he proclaims his name. (Ex. 34 : 5.) He, as it were, runs to meet such, as we learn from the parable of the prodigal son. (Luke 15.) Thus does the unchangeable God still to all who purpose to turn to him. He calls, he invites, he knocks, he presents himself to you, he promises that "those who come to him he will in no wise cast out." (John 6 : 37.) Remain not then, through fear, at a distance !

But these words are a source of consolation and invigoration to you, upright believers and dear people of God. The mercy and truth of God are the foundation upon which, after your falls and wanderings, you may continually summon courage to return to the Lord. (Hos. 3 : 5 ; Ps. 13 : 5.) The Lord is therefore denominated the God of their mercy ; and therefore or what injustice are you guilty towards God, when you regard him as evil, uncompassionate, unwilling to listen to your supplications, and always angry, if he do not immediately deliver you from affliction, threatened or actually endured, and grant your desire, and afford an answer to your prayers !

Shame ! thou dishonorest God with such thoughts. No ; God is merciful and true ; nay, "his ways are mercy and truth." Acknowledge these perfections, and glorify him for them. Have you sinned ? Are you in affliction ? impress it upon your mind that God

is merciful and faithful. Humble yourself before him like David, "as a little child." (Ps. 131 : 2.)

But methinks I hear a poor soul say : How can I believe that the Lord's paths to me are mercy and truth ? I am called to suffer so many afflictions, both in soul and body, that the ways of God to me appears indignation and wrath! *Answer* : I admit that it appears so to you, but it is only in appearance. Afterward, thou shalt perceive that all things have worked together for your good, Rom. 8 : 28 ; that God remembers mercy in the midst of wrath ; that he keeps not anger for ever, but delights in mercy, Jer. 13 : 12 ; chastising those whom he loves, Heb. 12 ; for his wrath endureth for a *moment*, but there is a *life* in his favor : weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. (Ps. 30 : 6.)

Also is the truth or faithfulness of Him who is God, Amen, a source of special consolation to you, O dear children of God, since you can thus assure yourselves that he will never forsake you, but verify to you all his promises. Let this serve as an encouragement to you ; for although we be unfaithful, God remains faithful : he can not deny himself, saith the Apostle. (2 Tim. 2 : 13.)

But I imagine I hear a weak believer lamenting and saying : How should I be able to comfort myself with the faithfulness of God ? I experience no fulfillment of the promises ; I ask but do not receive. *Answer* : Thou must not limit the Holy One of Israel, as did the wicked Jews. (Ps. 78 : 41.) He has his own time : if he tarry, wait for him. Wait upon the Lord

and keep his way ; “ because he will surely come, he will not tarry.” (Hab. 2 : 3.)

Howsoever strange and mysterious the paths of God to you may appear, you shall once upon reflection find that all have been to you mercy and truth ; when you shall have occasion with the Psalmist in whose words we conclude, to say : “ I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever ; with my mouth will I make known thy truth to all generations : for I have said, mercy shall be built up together : thy faithfulness shall thou establish in the very Heavens.” *Amen.*

III.

God's People; Signs and Wonders.

"I AM as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge."
Ps. 71 : 7.

It is a remarkable circumstance recorded in the book of Jonah, [Chap. 4 : 6,] that when the prophet was overcome with impatience, and oppressed with heat, Jehovah prepared a tree or plant for his protection, in the shadow of which he greatly rejoiced. We shall not enter at length into an investigation of the nature of this vegetable growth. The learned are not agreed respecting it, inasmuch as (according to the observations of linguists) the Hebrew word here employed, is nowhere else found in Scripture. Some regard it as having been a wild pompion or gourd; others, a certain plant which rises so high as sometimes even to surmount and cover edifices.

Others regard it as having been a wild vine. The Christian father, Jerome (unable to find an appropriate Latin word) has translated it by one which signifies ivy. It was at least to Jonah an occasion of joy.

This joy however was of short duration; for God prepared, upon the morrow, a worm which attacked the plant, and it withered.

We observe hereupon, that God in ancient times was wont to indulge in such dispensations, and pursue such methods towards the holy prophets and men of God as rendered them signs and wonders. Of this we can adduce examples: "And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia," Isa. 20 : 3; and "I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel," Ezek. 12 : 6; and "I am your sign," vs. 11. This we see also in David, in the words of our text just presented to your attention.

"I am as a wonder unto many." The prophet being in danger of being surprised and attacked, testifies and assures himself of his trust in God alone; of whom he prays speedy deliverance from wily and cruel foes, according to the favor shown him in times past, even from youth; affording him unceasing occasion to praise his name. (Verses 1-7.)

The words of our text include a confession or acknowledgement with respect to himself, and a confession on the other hand with respect to God. It divides itself into two parts.

1. The confession he makes of himself, setting forth the light in which he is regarded by others: "I am as a wonder into many."

2. The confession which he makes of Jehovah, including a thankful acknowledgment of what he has been, and still is to him: "Thou art my strong refuge."

The person herespeaking is expressed by the monosyllable I. Although the name of David is not found in the title, it is our opinion that he is the author of this Psalm; since the contents, style, and phraseology are so agreeable to those of his other inspired songs. Who David was is well known—a son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah, born at Bethlehem, a prophet and king, the sweet Psalmist of Israel: the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was in his tongue; an illustrious type of Messiah, who was therefore also, denominated David. (Ez. 34 : 23, 24.)

Now, what does he testify of himself? “I am as a wonder unto many.” A wonder or miracle is an event beyond the power of man, and contrary to the course of nature. Of such wonders there are many: as, that Aaron’s rod budded, Numb. 17 : 8; that fire fell from heaven, 2 Kings 1 : 10; that the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num. 16 : 30–32; that Balaam’s ass spoke, Num. 22 : 28; that the walls of Jericho fell down, Josh. 6 : 20; that iron was made to swim, 2 Kings 6 : 5, 6; that water flowed from the rock, Num. 20 : 11; that Moses and Elijah fasted forty days, Ex. 34 : 28, 1 Kings 19 : 8, and numerous others; for by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, God bore witness to, and confirmed the messages of the prophets and apostles.

When David here says, he was “a wonder to many,” he would express the fact that God had done to and through him such great things, and that things so strange had happened to him, that he was a wonder to many.

And truly, if we trace the life of David, we shall

find this to be the case; for, was he not a wonder to many, when, being but a youth, he slew the giant Goliath, overcame the lion and bear, and delivered the sheep out of their mouths, 1 Sam. 17; from a shepherd was exalted to be a king, of which Asaph speaks, Ps. 78 : 70, 71; and, having been anointed king, performed so many mighty deeds, that they sung of him, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands," 1 Sam. 18 : 6, 7? Is it not a wonder that he was delivered out of so many dangers and hazards? for, since he had so many and powerful foes as, Saul and his adherents, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Absalom, who pursued him as a partridge, seeking by every means to deprive him of the kingdom, nay, of his life; and yet continued to stand, may he not in this respect be viewed as a wonder of preservation and deliverance?

If one still add to these things, all the distresses of soul and temptations that this pious man endured, so that he was led to exclaim, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me, Ps. 42 : 7; "Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me, Ps. 40 : 13, (so that his afflictions were exceedingly many: yet the Lord graciously delivered him out of them all,) may he not, in this respect, be viewed as a wonder unto many? He might therefore well say, "Many O Lord are thy wonderful works, which thou hast done and thy

thoughts which are to us ward." Surely his manifold escapes, his deliverances from spiritual desertion, his support in mental discouragements, his consolations amid sorrow, his restorations from so many disorders of soul, render him a wonder. (Ps. 4 : 1, 18 : 17.)

And not only as a prophet and king but also as a child of God, was he a wonder of God's sovereign grace ; inasmuch as, notwithstanding his sins and grievous falls in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, he was not finally forsaken, but his sins were forgiven him, upon his repentance and confession. Thus, the annotators observe that David is here pursuing the subject of discourse in the previous verse, applying this to the wonderful deliverances and protections with which, beyond all human conception, God had throughout favored him ; thus constituting him a wonder, by which the people of God might be taught to believe in God, firmly to adhere to him, and not to doubt a similar happy issue of their trials. In this respect Isaiah and Ezekiel are also denominated wonders. (Isa. 20 : 3 ; Ezek. 12 : 6.)

The learned annotators observe that the Hebrew word also signifies a monster. This can also apply to David ; since many of the great in the land, in the time of Saul, looked upon him with astonishment and horror ; inasmuch as, on account of the numerous sufferings he was called to endure, they supposed God must view him with especial hatred. Read verse 11 of our Psalm. This appeared in Shimei. (2 Sam. 16 : 5.) Hear also what he declares of himself, Ps. 31 : 12. But to whom was David a wonder ?

“To many,” to wit, to the *great, especially to those who were godless and graceless, for we frequently find him complaining of the great and the rich as taunting and persecuting him : “They that sit in the gate speak against me,” Ps. 69 : 12 ; for the word of God teaches, and experience confirms the declaration, that such are ordinarily graceless, and have the least knowledge of the way of God with his people.

But whatever he might be in the estimation of others, whatever opinion others might form of him, this was his happiness, that Jehovah was his refuge: for this is the acknowledgment and confession in which he indulges of God in the second division of our text.

“But thou art my strong refuge.” The particle “but” intimates that there is here an antithesis. The person of whom he makes so illustrious a confession he expresses by the word “thou.” Whom we are to understand hereby, appears from the title of strong refuge—being none other than the Lord God, whom he denominated Jehovah in the 1st verse ; my rock, my fortress, in the 3d ; my God, in the 4th ; my hope, the Lord God my trust, in the 5th.

No wonder that he thankfully acknowledges this, with this illustrious confession, “My strong refuge.” Each word here has its special force. A refuge is, properly, a strong and well fortified place, surrounded with walls and entrenchments, to which we betake ourselves for security. For protection against enemies, or against the heat or rising floods, we flee to

* According to the force of the original word, which signifies individual as well as collective magnitude.

castles, elevated places, and rocks. God is therefore frequently compared to a refuge. "Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge." (Ps. 14 : 6.) All is here found that appertains to a refuge: a secure place of resort, a rock, a tower, a shadow, protection, means of causing consternation to foes. Wings are therefore also ascribed to him. (Ps. 57 : 1.) In Isaiah 25 : 4, the language employed is "a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat." And properly is the Lord denominated a refuge, because in him is to be found all that we seek in a refuge, viz., preservation and security—preservation from all danger and evil. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Ps. 91 : 1.)

Hereby David thankfully acknowledges the grace, faithfulness, and preservation that he had always experienced at the hand of God. It is not only a title or attribute of God, but a confession which we find both here and in general throughout Scripture, in the mouth of the chosen heritage, as an expression of their trust in the Lord, (read Ps. 40 : 2, 61 : 4; Isa. 63 : 7-14,) since in all their extremities and distresses they, by prayer, betake themselves for refuge to God, as criminals fled to the horns of the altar, and those who were chargeable with an unintentional murder, when pursued, fled to one of the cities of refuge, to escape the avenger of blood. This act of the soul has for its warrant the divine command, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us." (Ps. 62 : 8.) They may also be assured that with him they shall find de-

liverance and protection. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." (Ps. 50 : 15. Of this the people of God have daily experience, in accordance with Ps. 46 : 1, 2.

He is a sure hiding-place, a strong refuge. He is not only strong, as one of his names (El.) signifies, but also the strength of his people, Ps. 18 : 1, being strong, mighty, nay, almighty—a secure, sure refuge; for God is excellent in counsel and mighty in working; a good ground of refuge, since he exercises his strength for the good of his people. (Jer. 16 : 19.) "O Lord, my strength, my fortress and my refuge." It would be of little avail to any one did he know this but in general; but it is the privilege of the child of God to apply it to himself in particular, as David here does, saying, "my"—no more comfortable word in the whole scripture; for it is, first, a word of faith: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," Ps. 23 : 1; thus said Thomas, "my Lord, my God," John 20 : 28; secondly, a word of approbation and assurance, "My beloved is mine and I am his," Cant. 2; thirdly, of satisfaction and joy—that sweet word *my*, (a pious female being in distress and affliction, read the 18th Psalm, and finding there the word *my* nine times, of which each was sweeter than the preceding, was so comforted and refreshed, that she consumed the whole day in thanksgiving and adoration of the love of God in Christ;) fourthly, a ground of confidence, for since they know that what God is, he is for their good, their strength, for their protection, (Is the Almighty for them, who can be against them?) they can betake themselves to him, and find in him a secure

hiding-place. "My," a special ground of confidence; for they are also assured that their covenant God is likewise willing to help them.

I imagine that as I read my text some of my hearers inwardly said, "Well, thou mayest with propriety apply these words to thyself, for thou also hast been a wonder to many, both in thy sufferings and deliverances; for had not the Lord been a strong refuge to thee, thou hadst long since perished in thy affliction." But of this we shall say nothing, for fear the speaker might be incorrectly regarded as desirous of comparing himself with David. No; he knows full well that he is not a king, nor a prophet, nor a son of the prophets, but a poor servant of Jesus Christ; and should he mention all that has befallen him, and all that he has experienced, where should he begin? where should he end?—and perchance he would mention something as to which he would be a wonder, which many of you would not believe. But what would you say were you informed that the preacher is a wonder to himself?

But it is time that I apply these words more directly to our minds; for not only of David, of Isaiah, or any other eminently pious person, is it said that he is a sign or wonder, but of all truly gracious persons, not only of the Old, but also of the New Testament. (Isa. 8 : 18.) "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel." That these are the words of the Messiah appears from Heb. 2 : 13. Hence we shall point out certain respects in which true believers are signs and wonders.

1. As to the smallness of their number; for, in comparison with the ungodly, the number of the godly is so small, that the disciples of Christ are as signs and wonders in Israel; for they are denominated a "little flock," Luke 12 : 32; and although "many are called but few are chosen," Matt. 20 : 16; but "few names, even in Sardis," Rev. 3 : 4.

2. As to the wonderful displays of his perfections made by God in them, through which they experience a wonderful change—from darkness being made light; from being dead, alive; from being carnal, spiritual; from ungodly, godly—a change as great as when one is raised from the dead, so that frequently they are an object of wonder to natural men, who are led to say, "O how changed a man! How different have I known him!" For those who in spiritual things were fools and know-nothings are made divines, capable of teaching and edifying others. "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?" was once the inquiry of Heman. (Ps. 88 : 10.) Yea, such wonders does the Lord perform to dead sinners: therefore is the state of grace denominated "marvellous light." We may apply to the work of grace what is said by David of the work of providence: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. (Ps. 139 : 14.)

3. As to the manifold afflictions, temptations, conflicts, wrestlings, desertions, falls, and risings again, to which they are subject; in a word, in the diversity of their frames, and the wonderful nature of the dealings of God with them, they being frequently not

only brought into many dangers, but frequently also experiencing numerous and wonderful deliverances and sensible escapes; so that when a pious soul is led carefully to contemplate the subject, he must burst forth, saying, "Wonderfully, O Lord, hast thou borne me! wonderfully, O Lord, hast thou prevented me! wonderfully, O Lord, hast thou stricken me! wonderfully, O Lord, hast thou delivered me! wonderfully, O Lord, should I now conduct myself! wonderfully should I now shine forth! wonderfully, O Lord, should I now please thee! But, alas! how far is it from being the case!" The experience of one in these things may be greater, perhaps, than that of another; but all must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God, Acts, 14 : 22; being compelled to strive, Luke, 13 : 24; to do violence, Matt. 11 : 12; for the righteous are scarcely saved, 1 Pet. 4 : 18.

4. With respect to God's long suffering and sovereign grace; for since he has passed by so many, and adopted them as his children, thus refusing the rich, the noble, the mighty and the wise, choosing the poor, the despised, the obscure, 1 Cor. 1; nay, frequently honoring with his favor the vilest of mankind—harlots, publicans, according to the Saviour's own words, went in before Pharisees and Scribes. (Matt. 21 : 31.) Are they not then a wonder?

5. Inasmuch as they are an offense to the world, and in numerous ways contemned and persecuted by it. Is it not a wonder that the precious children of Zion, precious by reason of the glory with which God has invested them, and worthy of all honor, are so

despised and scoffed at, are made a spectacle, the filth and off-scouring of all things? Thus the words of Isaiah 8 : 16, are taken by the annotators, who say, Christ here comforts and strengthens the prophet against the malice of evil men by his own example, as if he had said, "Am I called in my own person in the discharge of my public ministry to experience contempt at the hands of men? Let it not seem strange to thee, O Isaiah, that the same is experienced by thee!" and upon the words, "the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and wonders." "Many are averse to us, and hate us, because their ungodliness is reproved by us."

Examine, my friends, whether ye are thus wonders? It is true that you may be a wonder to many, without being such as the pious. You are indeed a wonder as regards God's long-suffering; that you have not long since been destroyed; that the thread of your life has not been cut off; that long ere this you have not been cast into utter darkness; that you have not long since been stricken down in the very act; that fire from heaven has not fallen upon you; that the earth has not opened its mouth and swallowed you up alive! But do not the wonderful riches of God's goodness have the effect of leading you to repentance, you will treasure up to yourselves wrath. (Rom. 2 : 5.)

Also do you afford us occasion for wonder in that you remain unconverted under all the means of grace, that you are equally ignorant, that you continue insensible, even amidst all the judgments which for a considerable time have been experienced, especially in this and the neighboring provinces. Have you for-

gotten the earthquake which recently threatened to consume us alive? Is it not a wonder that whilst you almost daily see and hear that persons die, you notwithstanding go forward with equal perverseness in the way of your hearts, as if you had made a covenant with death and hell; so that in this respect you give us much occasion to wonder; but that in which the people of God serve as a wonder, you lack. Alas, that among Christians of the Reformed Church there are those who are monsters, not as David, in the estimation of the wicked, on account of the wonderful dealings of God with him, but of ungodliness in lying, deceiving, fighting, drinking, cursing, swearing, in practising lewdness and other abominations! God grant you the blessedness of experiencing that change for good which would afford us matter of wonder.

Inquire farther. Is the Lord your strong refuge? You will perhaps say, what inquiry is this? Where else should we go? But, my friends, know that it is one thing to say, another to practice. Paul describes believers as those who have fled for refuge to the grace of God in Christ. Have you ever realized yourself, as to your soul, like one on every hand beset by foes, one surrounded by enemies? or have you ever been so affected by your spiritual as they were by their temporal state, who when pursued, fled to the horns of the altar, or the cities of refuge? And have you, in consequence, betaken yourself to Christ, in him to hide and be concealed from the wrath of God? And have you thus laid hold upon the strength of God? Oh, that the wonderful long-suffering and goodness of God constrained you to put your trust in God: "How

excellent is thy loving kindness, O God!" (Psalm 36 : 7.)

But it is time that I direct my discourse to your gracious ones. Be not surprised that you are a wonder to many—that the world regard you as wonderful. Let it not seem strange to you that you are a terror to the evil. You are a wonder to yourselves—a wonder of forbearance, of sovereign grace. That God should have looked upon me so vile, the chief of sinners, of wonderful preservation, care, and deliverance. Yea, yea, indulge your wonder without restraint; extol the sovereign grace of God; show forth his praise who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Be concerned that you be a wonder of godliness. And since it is your ordinary lot to find yourself in many wonderful circumstances, and to experience wonderful events, so that with David you are frequently led to exclaim, "The troubles of my heart are enlarged, bring thou me out of my distresses," be much occupied by betaking yourself for refuge to your strength, your high tower: "Thou art my strong refuge."

Should you not? He is your covenant God; you have never experienced evil at his hands; he has frequently been your refuge, for must you not say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me"? Consider the days of old. To what wants, to what dangers can you become subject in which you can not find help, redemption, and deliverance with him? Is a child in distress, whither does it partake itself but to the arms of its parent? Truly amid such storms and waves the Lord of Hosts is with us.

Whatever your distresses, whatever the dangers you experience, even though all things seem against you, fail not to make him your refuge: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. 18 : 10.) Meditate frequently for your consolation upon former deliverances: "I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of all thy doings. Thou art the God that doest wonders." (Ps. 77 : 11, 12, 14.) And oh! with what wonder shalt thou once be filled, when thou shalt be called to review the wonderful dealings of God. How great things shalt thou have to tell the Lord when thou shalt come to him, and especially when the Lord shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, that is to show his wonderful power and goodness in the glorifying of his believing people, 2 Thess. 1 : 10; and you shall sing with the Psalmist, in whose words we conclude, "Blessed be the Lord, for he hath showed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city: the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Ps. 31 : 21.) *Amen.*

IV.

The Man of Sorrow.

“I AM the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.”
—LAM. 3 : 1.

WE have in the sacred Scriptures a record of many distinguished songs ; as of the song of Moses and the children of Israel, Ex. 15 : 1–19 ; of Miriam and the women of Israel upon their deliverance and the destruction of Pharoah in the Red Sea, Ex. 15 : 20, 21 ; as also of Deborah and Barak, Judges 5 ; of the Virgin Mary, Luke 1 : 46–55 ; of Zacharias, Luke 1 : 68, 69 ; of Simeon, Luke 2 : 29–32 ; although the Song of Solomon alone bears that name. There are also many lamentations in the sacred Scriptures, as those over the death of Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1 ; over the extirpation of the city of Tyre, Ezek. 26 ; over the princes of Israel, Ezek. 39 ; but this book of Jeremiah alone bears the name of Lamentations, which sufficiently gives us to understand the nature of its contents, namely, mourning and lamentation over the devastation of Jerusalem. When it was written is uncertain.

In the foregoing second chapter the prophet lifts up his voice in doleful complaints concerning the miserable state of Jerusalem, and the desolation of the Jewish people, whom he reminds of the causes of their afflictions, and exhorts to sincere repentance for their sins, with earnest prayer. In this, the chapter from which the text is selected, the prophet prosecutes his lamentation over the afflicted state of the Jewish people. In the words of the text he presents to view his own experience, in which we must notice two parts.

I. The experience of the prophet: "I am the man that hath seen affliction."

II. The cause of that affliction! "By the rod of his wrath."

He who here speaks is the prophet Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, who denominates himself a man, "I am the man. The learned are aware that man is spoken of by the Hebrews under various names; now under that of *Adam*, in allusion to his origin; now of *Enosch*, afflicted; now of *Isch*, equivalent in meaning to one of respectability or distinction; now, as here, of *Gebe*, which properly signifies a man—the first, the most eminent, the mightiest of the human race.

The prophet does not here speak of himself under the name of a man, but of the whole Church, which constitutes but one body; the man, by way of eminence, "that hath seen affliction." The original word translated affliction, is derived from a root, which signifies to be humbled, to be oppressed; hence, poor, meek, and afflicted. By affliction we are therefore to understand, trials, distresses, judgments, miseries, and

these of various kinds: 1. Spiritual, 2. Christian, 3. Corporeal or human.

By spiritual afflictions, we understand such as affect the soul, arising from the hiding of God's face, the sense of God's wrath, and of sin, of which Job, He-man, David, and other pious men, so bitterly complain; by Christian afflictions, those which are suffered by one as a Christian for the truth of the Gospel; by corporeal afflictions, such afflictions as come upon us as to the body and the outward man, which the apostle speaks of as (human or) common to man, 1 Cor. 10 : 13, which can be regarded as proceeding immediately from the hand of God, or occurring through the agency of men. Those which proceed from the hand of God are again general and special afflictions; general, such as we are called to suffer in common with the inhabitants of the land in which we live, as hunger, pestilence, war, etc.; special, which concern one's own person, as sickness and infirmities, poverty, and bereavement of husband, wife, children and dearest friends.

The afflictions which come upon us through the instrumentality of men are, again, either common disasters, as war, and the evils which it draws after it; or special, which are inflicted by those whom we are associated in life, as for example, the sufferings and mal-treatment which a husband must endure from his wife, or a wife from her husband, or one neighbor from another. All these afflictions had the prophet seen with his bodily eyes in others and experienced them in his own person, for many were his afflictions and miseries; being called for his faithful rebukes to

suffer much from kings, priests, false prophets, and the common people, so that he was compelled to exclaim, "Woe is me, a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!" (Jer. 15 : 15.) The miseries which he experienced in his own person were many, as reproach, Jer. 15 : 15, calumny, Jer. 18 : 1. Come, let us smite him with the tongue ; he heard the slander of many, so that we hear him complaining and saying, "My sighs are many and my heart is faint," Lam. 1 : 22 ; ridicule, Jer. 20 : 7 ; the Jews meditate his death, Jer. 18 : 22 ; he was more than once punished with stripes, Jer. 20 : 2, and 37 : 15 ; "So Pashur smote the prophet Jeremiah" ; he was beset and apprehended, Jer. 26 : 9 ; in the court of the prison, where he daily received a piece of bread, he was falsely accused, Jer. 37 : 21 ; they said of him, he seeketh not the welfare of this people but their hurt ; he was cast into a pit, where he sunk in the mire, in which he would have died had not Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian, rescued him, Jer. 38 ; when rescued, he was again committed to the court of the prison, where he remained until Jerusalem was taken, when, with the rest, he was carried into captivity. Could he not then say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction" ? He also experienced afflictions of mind, distresses so great that he was led to curse the day of his birth, Jer. 20 : 14. He resolved no longer to speak in the name of the Lord, but his word was in his heart, as a burning fire shut up in his bones, Jer. 20 : 9. Of his death the word of God gives no account, but ancient writers relate that, as a reward for

his faithfulness, the wicked Jews stoned him to death in Egypt.

He also saw afflictions in others : days of trouble, judgments, and grievous trials, to wit, the destruction of the city, the devastation of the temple, and the whole land by the king of Babylon, the carrying away of the people into the seventy years' exile, with all its accompanying evils, privation, suffering, pestilence, and the dispersion of the people ; he therefore said, " If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword ! and if I enter the city, then behold them that are sick with famine ! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about in a land they know not ;" the temple and the house of the king burned with fire ; the walls broken down, king Zedekiah carried to Babylon, his children and the nobles slain, the brazen, silver, and golden vessels of the temple carried away. (Jer. 14.) When in spirit he foresaw these things, he exclaimed, " My bowels, my bowels !" Jer. 4 : 19, 20 ; all of which he describes in a pathetic manner, with profound and bitter grief and mourning in the book of the Lamentations, " Thy breach is great like the sea, who can heal thee ?"

II. The cause of his affliction.

The prophet here speaks of a rod ; *Schevet*, the original word, is sometimes also translated stick, staff, sceptre, and properly signifies a shoot from the stock or root of a tree.

A rod, as is well known, is employed for discipline, punishment, and chastisement. It is here to be taken in a figurative sense, and thus we are to understand by it, punishments, afflictions, and judgments ; and

properly, for as a rod can not inflict a stroke, nor move itself unless lifted up; thus it is with the judgments of God's hand. (Jer. 15 : 2.) As a rod serves for discipline, and amendment, so also judgments. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law," saith the Psalmist. (Ps. 94 : 12.) As a rod hurts and occasions pain—is a cause of uneasiness and distress to those upon whom it is employed, thus also the judgments of God are an occasion of pain and distress to those who are visited by them. (Heb. 12 : 11. Micah. 6 : 13.) As the rod is raised through anger, wrath, and displeasure, so are judgments, punishments, and troubles proofs of God's wrath: therefore the text says the rod of his wrath, or anger, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger," Isa. 10 : 5; "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, Isa. 57 : 17.

This now, may we also say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction," since we live in times of adversity, trouble, and distress, inasmuch as so many die, going to their long home, so that the mourners go about the streets. But while I say this let no one suppose that I would liken myself to Jeremiah. No, I am not a prophet, nor a son of the prophets; yet to some extent I can also say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction." I have seen an awful flood, by which thousands both of men and beasts were destroyed; I have lived in a time of famine; I have beheld fearful hail-storms, by which the windows of houses and churches were broken in pieces, trees shattered, and the increase of the earth destroyed; I have lived in a time of pestilence, in France, and Germany; I have

seen terrible hurricanes, by which churches, houses, barns, and forests, were violently cast to the ground ; I have lived in a period in which villages were burnt to ashes, and desolated by war ; and at present I experience the affliction of beholding so many, not only of the old, but especially of the young, dying of the small-pox and other contagious diseases.

I have also seen affliction in myself, insomuch that for a long time I was so heavily subjected to the divine hand, as to be unable to discharge my ministerial duties. But who without tears can recite his own tragedy ? Should I attempt it, sorrow would overwhelm my spirit. How often have I been compelled to make the complaints of Job my own. But I shall bring these remarks to a close with the words of David, "I am indeed afflicted, yet the Lord thinketh upon me."

But none of us can be found who is not afflicted, and thus subjected to various trials and miseries : there is one event to the righteous and the wicked. But what is your carriage under your afflictions ? Oh ! how insensible ! so that the Lord has just occasion to say, "I have smitten them, but they have not mourned." Ye who have been afflicted with small-pox, where is your amendment ? Amidst drought, destitution of employment, storms, and hurricanes, which for a long time we have suffered, the attention is scarcely directed to the objects so prominently held up to view.

There is also no one who has not been brought into contact with the afflicted, as the maimed, the crippled, the distressed, those who are in conflict of mind, impaired in their mental faculties, poor, and the like ; but where is compassion ? It is with us, as it was

with those who saw the man who had fallen among thieves—with the priest and Levite, we pass by on the other side. (Luke 10.) Who remembers them that are in bonds, as if he himself were afflicted and bound with them? Who weeps with them that weep? (Rom. 12 : 15.) Oh! hearers, that each of us were duly sensible that it is through sin that we have become afflicted; for “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.”

When, then, afflictions come upon us, let us reflect:

1. That we have deserved them. 2. Let us recognise the hand of God, and humble ourselves under it, (1 Pet. 5.) 3. Let us not be insensible, but say with the Church, “I will bear the indignation of the Lord. Mic. 7 : 9. “Be afflicted.” Jas. 4 : 4. Let us not be rebellious, but turn to the Lord; weep and mourn and in view of death; make preparation, regarding ourselves addressed by the exhortation, “Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live.” *Hodie mihi, cras tibi*: To-day me, to-morrow thee.

Oh! that our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears; that we might weep day and night for the breach of the daughters of my people. I conclude with Ps. 41 : 1 :

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. *Amen.*”

V.

The Lord's Controversy with his People.

“HEAR the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

“By swearing and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

“Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.” Hos. 4 : 1, 2, 3.

As a judge does not condemn, nor punish a criminal, until his offense has been distinctly and to his conviction represented to him, thus does the righteous Judge of the whole earth, that only lawgiver, deal with sinners who can not abide his divine decision. Scarcely have our first parents transgressed the covenant, when he cites them before his tribunal, convicts them of their dreadful apostacy, and denounces upon them judgments, and merited punishment. (Gen. 3.) Thus also, with the first world, Gen. 6, and with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. How long and how numerous controversies had the Lord with the children of Israel in the wilderness—at Massa and

Meribah, where they tempted and proved him? How frequently did he convict them of rebellion and murder. For forty years did he contend and plead with them and convict them of sin: so that he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. (Ps. 95.) In the same manner, does Jehovah deal with the children of Israel in the words of our text. First, he cites them before him to debate the cause with them—to sit in judgment, to convict them of their abominations, and to hear their defence: this done, he summons them before his tribunal; and lastly, denounces upon them their well-deserved punishment. In the words of our text a fourfold division naturally presents itself.

1. The preface: "Hear, O Israel."

2. The Lord's controversy.

3. The occasion of it: being, on one hand, their sins of omission—because there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; and, on the other, their actual commission of evil—swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery, together with the multitude and aggravation of their crimes: "They break out, and blood toucheth, etc."

5. The threatened punishment.

As to the first, to wit, the preface, we must here notice the persons spoken of: the children of Israel. Who they were, is well known, namely, the descendants of Jacob, Hos. 12: 3, 4, 5; here the ten tribes in contradistinction to Judah, as appears from verses 15–17. The object proposed to them is the word of the Lord. All exhortations, promises, and threatening, are denominated the word of the Lord, and correctly; be-

cause, having Jehovah for their author ; because, all sure and irrevocable ; because, they serve as a rule to the people of God ; because, Jehovah reveals himself in them as Jehovah, that is, as true, faithful, holy, and just. The duty now required is that they

“Hear.” A common introduction to the message of the prophets ; as if the prophet had said, “Imagine not that I speak from my own impulses or reprove and threaten you with judgments from hatred. No ; I am the mouth and servant of the Lord. Hear then not my word, but the word of the Lord. Hear ye heavens, and give ear, thou earth, for the Lord speaketh. Hear, O my people!” Ps. 81 : 8. “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!” Jer. 22 : 27. The prophet would say that they should hear not only externally, but with attention, reverence, faith, and obedience. The substance of this word as the second division shows, was

The Lord's controversy ; the persons with whom ; the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the children of Israel. Before, as in chap. 2 : 1, 2, the believing are exhorted to contend with their adulterous mother. Nehemiah contended with the nobles ; but here the Lord himself is said to have a controversy, that is, by and through the prophet. The original word, translated controversy, signifies not only a plea or suit-at-law between two parties ; but also an open and just accusation, brought against a criminal before a judge, with a denunciation of deserved punishment, and is thus more than a mere reproof. Not only here, but also elsewhere, God is said to contend with his people, as Gen. 6 : 3 ; Isa. 1 : 18 ; Jer. 2 : 9, 29, by

which is signified his self-justification and determination, by reason of the offense against his majesty, to inflict appropriate punishment; and thus the Lord's controversy is not only one of words, but also of deeds and inflictions, as appears verse 3, chap. 2 : 3. It also appears from 1 Sam. 25 : 39, where David says, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal; and Amos 7 : 4, the Lord declared that he would contend by fire. Thus the Lord is here said to have a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. The Lord would no longer deal with them by exhortations and reproofs through the prophets, but would, on the contrary, enter into judgment with them, and not condemn them without a formal trial and a previous hearing of their defense; for although all offenses are open before him, yet will the Lord never pronounce a sentence or judgment against sinners until he has first heard what they would testify against him. (Isa. 5 : 3; Micah 6 : 2-5.)

Now follows the occasion or reason, consisting of sins of omission; and the sins of omission, or absence of virtues, are the occasion of the controversy. for,

1. Because there is "no truth," the Lord has a controversy. The Hebrew word *emet*, or truth, properly signifies agreement between the judgment and the thing to which it relates. In man it signifies either, in general, righteousness, holiness and uprightness of life, or in particular, that virtue through which our words correspond with the intention of our minds, and through which we are faithful to all our engagements.

2. "Nor mercy;" the word *hesed*, also translated

compassion and goodness, signifies, in general, an earnest love, an inclination to the good of another, that is, an earnest desire to do him good. The pious are hence in the Psalms denominated good, merciful, godly, kind; because they have surrendered themselves to the Lord and his service: Jer. 2 : 2, "I remember the kindness of thy youth;" but especially because they indulge in acts of kindness to their fellow men. Thus said Eleazer, Abram's servant: "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master." Thus David showed kindness to Saul's house for Jonathan's sake. Thus the children of God are kind and merciful persons. They consult the best interest of their neighbor; they do good to the poor and afflicted; they do good even to their enemies.

3. "Nor knowledge of God." It is manifest that no rational creature, much less godly person, who has the word of God, can be altogether destitute of knowledge. We must here, therefore, understand, a correct and truly saving knowledge of God in the character in which he has revealed himself in his word, associated with faith, love, and obedience. A mere knowledge, such as even the devils possess, is not here spoken of; but true knowledge, corresponding with the word of God, and accompanied with faith, love to God and our neighbor. The annotators say, "Understand, correct, true saving knowledge of God, regulated by his word, and coupled with faith, love to God and our fellow man. See Jer. 9 : 24; 22 : 16; 31 : 34; 1 Sam. 2 : 12: 1 John 2 : 4.' Not to know God is, not to acknowledge, reverence, fear and obey him, nor observe his commandments. And these evils ex-

tended to every class of the people. It is therefore said, there is no knowledge "in the land." There was no faithfulness nor truth in the prophets, no kindness between rulers and their subjects; no knowledge of God in priests, people, and the whole land; so corrupt were the kingdom and the priesthood. All flesh had corrupted his way. It is true there were at that time still some, although but few, pious; for in the most corrupt times the Lord has still a holy seed, Rom. 11 : 2, 3; 9 : 5; and therefore these words are designed to teach that the good and merciful were so few that they could scarcely be discerned. (Micah 7 : 1; Ps. 12 : 1.)

Not only were these virtues lacking, but the opposite abominations prevailed. The sins of commission were :

1. Swearing. The original word signifies not only to curse ourselves or others, to wish any evil from God, but also to utter an oath with accompanying imprecations. To swear is then, with settled malice or fierce anger, to invoke any temporal or everlasting evil upon ourselves or others. Acts 23 : 12; 2 Sam. 16 : 56. (More at large when we preach upon the third commandment.)

2. Lying, which is properly to speak against our judgment or better knowledge, whether in things civil or religious. Hos. 7 : 13, "Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me." To lie, then, is for one, contrary to fact and his better knowledge, to declare to another as truth that which is not true. These lies are threefold,

1. Pernicious lies, which tend to the injury of our neighbor.

2. Officious lies, by which we seek to promote our own or another's advantage.

3. Lies of pleasure or inconsideration, devised or uttered for gossip or pastime. But all lies, without exception, are evil. (Ps. 5 : 6 ; Eph. 4 : 25 ; Col. 3 : 9.) Of this more when we treat of the ninth command.

3. Killing ; and that here signifies murdering violently, without authority, and from hatred or evil passion, to assault, wound, or injure the body of another. That this may be done in the thought, word, looks, and deeds we were shown on the previous Sabbath, when dwelling on the sixth commandment.

4. Stealing ; and that is to take from another and appropriate to ourselves, contrary to his will, his property ; forbidden in the eighth command, "Thou shalt not steal."

5. Committing adultery ; and that is to defile the bed of another, to have carnal knowledge of one to whom we are not united in marriage ; forbidden in the seventh command, which we must expound in the afternoon of this day.

All these sins are forbidden by the law of God, under severe denunciations and penalties ; and it is for such sins that the judgments of God came upon the inhabitants of the land. Rev. 9 : 21. These sins were multiplied insomuch that the man of God says, "they break out and blood toucheth blood."

The expression, "break out" also means to increase with violence, and with a sudden, mighty augmenta-

tion to spread forth. Gen. 28 : 14. It is then to say, "They break out without measure with all manner of abominations (as robbers and enemies break through interposing barriers) without fear of God's laws, institutions and regulations; nay, they daily so multiply their evil doings that they cannot be subdued or restrained by laws human or divine, even as floods rising in rapidity and violence burst through dikes and dams, and admit of no control." "Break out," that is, observe the annotators, they increase in wickedness, as a flood which burst forth by reason of the violence and abundance of water; also as robbers and enemies make their irruptions, so they stoutly break out with all manner of abominations, regardless of the laws and ordinances of God. Another application of the word we find verse 10.

"And blood toucheth blood." In the Hebrew, it literally is, "bloods touch bloods." These words have been variously explained. Among the Jewish masters the thoughts of some are directed to murders and the effusion of blood, then common in Israel. Others conjecture that there is reference to sinful and forbidden marriages, with those near of kin. Other learned men understand by blood the various capital offences, which were continually multiplied, and as it were heaped up by the children of Israel, constituting a complication of evils, so that one sin followed another. This opinion has its plausibility, inasmuch as sins are compared to blood-guiltiness, Ps. 57, and effusion of blood is regarded among others as a grievous crime. The blood is the seat and instrument of concupiscence, and thus the cause of sin; for the blood affords matter

and food, as well as through lust, as through wrath and other depraved feelings. But by blood, may also be understood, the shedding of blood and murders; because this word is ordinarily so employed, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness," Ps. 51 : 5, 6 ; 106 : 38 ; and thus this accusation seems a repetition, or rather an aggravation of the foregoing. The meaning, then, is this, "The whole land is defiled and filled with blood : one murder or violent death follows another ; scarcely has one instance of the shedding of blood occurred before another takes place : they have shed blood upon blood."

Upon sins follow inflictions or punishment, which the pulpit denounces in the fourth place, as about to come upon the land and its inhabitants.

"Therefore," saith he, "shall the land mourn." By the land, is to be understood the land of Canaan and its inhabitants. These should mourn : that is, by outward signs and indications, whatsoever they might be, manifest their grief and sorrow. Properly a land can not mourn, but figuratively, may be said to do so, when it is wholly desolated and gives occasion to its inhabitants to mourn ; for, as a land, or the earth, is said to laugh, when through ornament, beauty or fidelity, it stirs up the inhabitants to joy, Isa 35 : 1, 2, so may it correctly be said to mourn when it is desolated, and lies uncultivated and unfruitful, and thus affords occasion for mourning to its proprietors and inhabitants. (Isa 3 : 26-24 : 4 : Joel 1 : 10 : Amos 1 : 2.) And what could follow hence but "languishing," or pining on the part of the inhabitants of the land ? To languish, is, from want of strength, to fail and

swoon away, Ps. 6 : 3 ; Lam. 2 : 12 ; here not only a languishing, but an entire swooning and exhaustion. Not only the inhabitants of the land, but the beasts of the field and fowls of heaven should languish—the brute creatures and fowls of heaven, which often must suffer for the sins of men. The fishes of the sea also should be taken away. It is known that when the waters are dried up the fishes must necessarily perish.

That now these abominations were found among the Israelites, and that the punishment threatened came upon them, can be learned throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles, and the writings of Joel and Amos, fellow-prophets, and cotemporaries of Hosea. What fearful wars were waged by the ten tribes, we may learn from 1 Kgs. 14 : 30 ; 2 Chron. 13 : 17. Thus murders broke out in the land of Israel and blood touched blood ; and beside murder, swearing, lying, and stealing abounded, and with these things they are charged by Amos, 2 : 6, 7.

Truly as this land in many other respects agrees with Canaan, so does it also in its sins. The Lord has therefore also a controversy with its inhabitants.

Not only in the land, but even in the Church, the virtues spoken of in the text are wanting.

1. There is “no truth”—neither words, nor promises, nor bonds, nor oaths, are regarded. Whither has fidelity fled ? On whose word or promise can dependence be placed ?

Truly we live in times to which the words apply which we find Isa. 59 : 14, 15 : “And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off ; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity can not

enter. Yea, truth faileth ; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey ; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment."

2. Where is "mercy," zeal for the honor of God, and the good of our neighbor? There is no exhibition of beneficence, either to the house of God or for the support of the poor and needy. Oh ! unmerciful.

3. There is no "knowledge of God." What profound ignorance amidst all the means of grace! How few are able to give an account of the fundamental truths of religion! Where is true knowledge to be found, which goes in connection with the graces of love, humility, and self-denial? There are those, it is true, who have knowledge ; but it is not sanctified. They content themselves with knowledge, without practice : "If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13 : 17.) They profess God, but they do not acknowledge him : they deny him with their works. (Tit. 1 : 16.) We may take to ourselves the reproach of Paul : "Some (nay, we may say many) have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."

Not only are these virtues wanting, but all kinds of abominations and manifold transgressions prevail :

1. How is the name of God by many profaned, by "cursing and swearing?" What horrible oaths are not belched out? Where are they who fear the Lord?

2. How many give themselves up to "lying" and deception? Lying is so common that no conscience is made of it.

3. That there are also "murders" committed in this

land, sad experience teaches ; if not literally, yet those which are such in divine estimation. What malice, envy, revenge! How numerous the envious Cains, the rancorous Esaus, the morose Nabals, the revengeful Lamechs !

4. How does the land abound with "thieves," with the unrighteous, with the workers of unrighteousness, who practice all that is unrighteous, who employ all their ingenuity, find all their pleasure in defrauding their neighbor, and by crafty devices appropriate to themselves that which is his ?

5. And that there are to be found in this land also many "adulterers," whore mongers, and impure persons, is but too true, and shall be shown in the after part of this day.

Every description of iniquity is practised with an uplifted hand, and daily *breaks out*, so that piety is scarcely anywhere to be found. Who can think upon these things without sighs and tears ? Who can contemplate without sorrow of heart the wounds of the Christian state, and the corruption of its members ? Truly, we have reason with the prophet Micah, to exclaim, "Woe is me ! for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage : there is no cluster to eat : my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth : and there is none upright among men : they all lie in wait for blood ; they hunt every man his brother with a net." (Mic. 7 : 1, 2.)

No wonder that our land and its inhabitants have for a long time been grievously affected with hurricanes, hail storms, dry summers, and severe winters,

through which many beasts have died; malignant, violent diseases; slackness of business; decay of commerce, unfruitful seasons, and unfavorable harvests, so that almost every one complains—but who, respecting his sins? Truly, unless a turning to the Lord takes place, it is to be feared that the land will mourn. Read Zeph. 1 : 2, 3, 4.

There are six circumstances from which we may certainly conclude that there is nothing desirable suspended over either land or Church.

1. Corruption is general.

2. God has for a long time been warning us. If the Lord has visited with punishment so many Christian churches in other lands, have we reason to imagine that we shall escape? God has for a considerable period been pouring out his judgments like phials upon the Church. “If these things be done in a green tree what shall be done in the dry?” Happy is he who by the faults of others learns to correct his own. (Zeph. 3 : 6, 7.)

3. Is not this enough? Have we wandered so far away, that the miseries of others can not teach us wisdom? God has given us still other tokens of his displeasure, and has addressed us by signs in heaven and upon earth. The wonderful God shows wonders in heaven and signs upon earth—blood, fire, vapor of smoke; darts forth lightnings, with terrible thunders; turns the moon into blood, and the sun into darkness. Whosoever is familiar with history is aware how commonly strange events have preceded revolutions in, or the subversion of states. That storm, that tempest, by which many barns and one of our churches were

prostrated; that dreadful lightning and thunder by which many accidents happened here and there to houses, churches, men and beasts; those wonderful lights, seen throughout almost the whole land, so that night was well-nigh converted into day, how wonderful!

I would not hearers, that you were subject to a superstitious fear of the signs of heaven: neither would I have you to be second Duke of Alvas, who when asked by the king of France his opinion concerning the terrible comet, that had made its appearance in those days, replied: "Sire, I have had so much to do upon earth, that I have had no time to look to heaven!" Nor will I undertake to explain these tokens. I however acquiesce in the ancient general, and in a thousand ways established opinion, that such signs in the heavens are premonitions of changes in the affairs of earth; and I accord with the Christian father Tertullian, who observes: "All these things are indications of God's approaching displeasure; which to the utmost, it is our duty to proclaim, preach, and endeavor to avert by our prayers."

4. Lesser are always precursors of greater evils. From the earliest times God has been wont to warn before inflicting the blow. Was it not thus with Egypt and Pharaoh? Was not this his method with the Jews, whom he first smote and then consumed? For confirmation scan that dreadful scroll, Lev. 26: 14-33. Judgments so oft repeated, are to be regarded as if with each one God had said, "If you do not now repent, to-morrow I will smite with sevenfold greater force." For what is the meaning of this failure in the

means of livelihood? What is the language spoken by these contagious diseases? What mean these adverse years, which for some time we have had? now so wet, now so dry! What mean they but to say to us, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN?

5. Since God is withdrawing from us his Spirit, it is to be feared that he is intending something unusual with respect to us both as a people and a Church. It is to be feared that God is preparing to remove the candlestick of the Gospel, and to turn the land into a land of darkness, and the shadow of death! When God was about to resign the first temple to destruction the glory of the God of Israel removed and stood above the threshold, and finally forsook the city; whereupon the prophet was commanded to depart. And since we can clearly perceive the withdrawal of the Spirit, is it not time to awake, and with the two disciples, to seek to constrain the Lord Jesus to abide with us. (Luke 24 : 24.)

Then have things arrived at their lowest ebb, when God says to his people, "Pray not," and withdraws from them the spirit of prayer. The prayers of the pious are the support of the land. No one, now, is expressly forbidden to pray, but zeal, tenderness, and engagedness in prayer are wanting. O New-Netherlands, what will become of thee if the pious pray not for thee!

O Lord, our God, who dwellest in the heavens, thou canst help us by powerfully turning us to thyself; do, we beseech thee, depart not from us, for thy name's sake; be gracious to us.

Oh! my friends, that we awoke! What else shall I say to you than, "Hear the word of the Lord?"

Suffer the word of exhortation and reproof. We warn you for your good. The counsel of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar is our counsel to you: "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." (Dan. 4 : 7.)

Cursing, lying, adultery, licentiousness, stealing, and similar sins, must not be found or named among us. Each one must search his ways, mourn over, and depart from his sins. Each one has done his part toward inflaming the wrath of God: so must each do his part towards extinguishing it. A holy reformation and amendment must take place among us; for these are the only means of sustaining a sinking land. When God says, as with sufficient plainness he does: "I will rend and depart: I will bear away, and there shall be none to deliver: we must resolve like Israel," "Come, let us return." (Hos. 6 : 1.)

I beseech you, beloved, by the mercy of God, by the blood of Jesus Christ; by your spiritual and temporal welfare; I beseech you by the love you bear wife and children; nay, I beseech you by all that you hold valuable and dear, heartily turn to the Lord. Prostrate yourselves at his feet. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, to-day, while ye hear his voice. Why unceasingly to-morrow, to-morrow, and not now, before the decree bring forth. (Zeph. 2 : 2.)

I conclude with the words of Paul, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. (Titus 2 : 11, 12.) *Amen.*

VI.

The Children of God by Divine Visitations preserved from Self-Exaltation.

“AND lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”
2 Cor. 12 : 7.

“*TOLLUNTUR* in altum ut lapsu graviore ruant,” is the language of the poet Claudian; that is, “They are raised on high, that they may be brought down with greater force!” The idea is, that the exaltation of the wicked is preparatory to their more grievous destruction. Of this fact we have many instances recorded in the sacred Scriptures; as, for example, that of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who was not only brought so low as to be torn from his throne, but also to be drowned in the waters of the Red Sea; and of Saul, who being engaged in seeking his father’s asses, was exalted to the station of king over Judah; but subsequently was so far humbled as to be rejected by the Lord, and thus deprived of his kingdom. The same was the lot of the

proud and blasphemous Sennacherib, king of Assyria, who was miserably slain by his sons; as also that of Nebuchadnezzar, who was thrust from the throne of his kingdom, deprived of his glory, and driven from men, to dwell with the beasts of the field. To these may be added the case of his son, Belthazzar, whose kingdom was taken from him and himself slain. (Dan. 5.)

King Herod was so exalted as to sit in royal apparel on the seat of judgment; but so reduced as to be smitten by an angel of the Lord, and eaten of worms, to give up the ghost.

In uninspired or profane history, as is well known, it is recorded that James the Second was elevated from a dukedom to the throne; but subsequently compelled to resign his honors in favor of his son-in-law, William the Third.

Thus it remains a truth, that men are frequently exalted that they may suffer a more dreadful fall; and the greater their elevation, the greater the danger that they should become guilty of self-exaltation. And since the children of God are still encumbered with the flesh, it is possible for them to fall into the aforementioned sin; as we learn from the case of the pious king Hezekiah, whose heart was lifted up. In order now to prevent this, Gods sends upon them some affliction; as appears in the example of Paul, held up to view by the words of the text, which have just been read in your hearing.

In the preceding words, we have an account of an extraordinary revelation and heavenly vision with which the Apostle was favored, verses 1-4, together

with the application of it to himself, and his object, verses 5, 6 ; and in the language of the text the consequence of it, consisting of a grievous visitation upon Paul ; for such was the excellence of the revelation, that to preserve him from the pride by which he was in danger of being carried away, there was given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, (by tempting him to sin,) to buffet him.

To treat our subject then in the natural order of the words, we take notice of the three following points :

I. The grievous visitation : "A thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan."

II. Whence it came : "There was given to me."

III. Its end or object : "Lest I should be exalted above measure."

That of which the Apostle here complains is an exceedingly heavy and painful affliction : "a thorn in the flesh." In the Greek, it is literally a sharp stake, a ragged or thorny fragment of wood, thrust into the bones or flesh, a thistle. Compare Ezekiel 28 : 24, "And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel ; nor any grieving thorn." A thorn is such in its nature as to occasion great pain and uneasiness until extracted. Speaking figuratively therefore, the Apostle intends by the term some extremely painful or disquieting bodily affliction.

"An angel of Satan," or angel Satan. Angel signifies a messenger, or emissary ; Satan, an adversary. Satan is an evil angel at the same time ; by way of eminence, Satan. But when "a messenger of Satan" is spoken of, there is reference to one of the fallen angels, sent forth by this superior or chief ; as we ac-

cordingly read of "the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25 : 41.)

And thus we may fitly understand, that Paul was subjected to a visitation of the devil; or, that the latter was the means or instrument by which, with God's permission, he was brought to experience this affliction. Thus, we read also of David, 1 Chron. 21 : 1.

But especially is this to be seen in the case of Job, 1 : 9, and 2 : 2, 6, 7; and thus the Apostle may be regarded as a second Job. And it can be readily perceived how this work of the devil was to him a thorn in the flesh, namely, inasmuch as it was extremely painful and distressing, as we may again infer from the history and example of Job, especially when we reflect, that Satan may have cast up to him his former ungodly life and conduct; or, that Paul may have been led by means of this affliction to reflect with great grief upon his previous life, still feeling, like the brethren of Joseph, the gripes and gnawings of conscience. (Gen. 42 : 21.) But, that the messenger of Satan buffeted or smote, or should smite him, (with the fist,) can not be understood literally, as in Matt. 26 : 67, 1 Cor. 4 : 11, but figuratively, and thus signifies to treat contemptuously or ignominiously; as to strike one with the fist is truly a great indignity, insult and affront. Compare herewith 1 Pet. 2 : 20. And thus the Apostle would convey the idea that the messenger of Satan, as well by himself as by his instruments, aimed and used his utmost endeavors to bring upon him disgrace and contempt, both in his person and office; (although without success;) for to buffet, is employed by Paul in the

general sense of showing contempt. (1 Thess. 2 : 2 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 20 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 11.)

The terms "thorn in the flesh" and "messenger of Satan" may be used separately or united ; thus, as if the idea intended were, that the messenger of Satan occasioned the thorn in the flesh, or that the thorn was the messenger of Satan.

But let us now see what Paul would have us understand by this thorn in the flesh and messenger of Satan ; that is, what was the thorn in the flesh, and in what manner the messenger of Satan buffeted him. But in relation to this subject there are almost as many minds as men. Truly this text might be classed with those things in the Epistles of Paul, which according to the observation of Peter, are "hard to be understood."

We shall adduce some opinions or conjectures : to advance anything definite is impossible. St. Augustine, accordingly, ingeniously acknowledges that he does not certainly know what Paul intends by this thorn and messenger of Satan. The following things, however, are undoubted.

1. That the thorn in question was something in *the flesh* of the Apostle which was an occasion of constant uneasiness, and even severe pain.

2. That Satan was, by divine permission, the instrument in causing this affliction ; or at least, by divine ordination, constantly aggravated it. But what this thorn or affliction was, it is difficult to determine.

Some understand by it a bodily weakness ; as pain in the head, or weakness of the kidneys. Others conjecture that the Apostle, like Timothy, was afflicted

with a weak stomach. Basil and other fathers conjecture that it was some disease inflicted by the devil, as in the case of Job. Others dissent from these, on the ground that the Apostle nowhere complains of sickness.

3. In the opinion of others it was the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit by reason of the remains of his corrupt nature, which he so dolefully laments. (Rom. 7.) But this is common to all the regenerate.

4. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others, understood by this thorn special enemies, persecutors, oppressors, backbiters and slanderers of the Apostle—adversaries who continually opposed his holy endeavors, like so many goads and sharp stakes. We accordingly find such ungodly persons in the sacred Scriptures compared to briars and thorns; in Jotham's parable to a bramble. (Judges 9 : 14, 15.) In Num. 33 : 55, it is said that the Canaanites should be as pricks and thorns to the Israelites; afterwards explained by the expression, "They shall vex you in the land wherein you dwell;" and thus our Apostle is supposed to refer to Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim. 2 : 17, 18; to Alexander the copper-smith, 2 Tim. 2 : 14; or Diotrophes, who sought to have the preëminence, 3 John 9, and similar ones.

5. Beza understands by it the heaviest afflictions, both of body and soul, arising from all the opprobrium and injuries brought upon the Apostle by the instigation of Satan, and by him denominated buffeting.

6. Others are of opinion that Paul was literally buffeted by a messenger of Satan.

7. There are still others, both among ancient and modern expositors, and many of the Romish persuasion, who understand by this thorn, the movements of evil desire—temptations to lust. Others reject this, observing that he had the gift of continence; besides, that he would have availed himself of the lawful means of avoidance. They add that he was already old.

8. A distinguished divine understands by it a certain disease, denominated by physicians *Morbus hypochondriacus*; and for this conjecture, he assigns the following reasons: that this disease may, above all others, be denominated a thorn in the flesh, inasmuch as it deeply penetrates the flesh, occasioning much uneasiness, and a thousand imaginary troubles, all springing from physical obstructions, a lack of animal spirits, and impurity of the blood. No disease, truly, which is more afflictive than this! none that renders life more comfortless, nor which has a greater tendency to humble the mind, as alas! they best know who have learned it by experience. It ordinarily arises from numerous cares and anxieties, intense application of mind, and much watching, in which Paul, above others, was exceedingly abundant. He, withal, who is afflicted with this disorder is able (though with difficulty) to pursue his avocation, whilst others have the effect of prostrating the body. This again is manifest in our Apostle, who, notwithstanding this his affliction, continued faithfully to discharge the business of his office. It is also of such nature as daily to exert its influence, and but now and then, by intervals, to afford any alleviation. As often

as this disorder was at its height in the Apostle, the messenger of Satan aggravated his trouble, and buffeted him, or afflicted him with tormenting sensations; as we see in the case of the lunatics spoken of in the New Testament, who, whilst at the time of the full moon they experienced great distresses in consequence of the operation of natural causes, were still more afflicted by Satan, who took advantage of this aggravation of their malady. (Matt. 4 : 24.) That God now should sometimes employ the agency of Satan to visit bodily afflictions upon his children is not altogether new or strange, inasmuch as he did so in the case of Job, who was a man of distinguished piety. (Job 1 : 2.) How this is, or can be effected, we do not know—but all this, subject to correction, for it is conjecture, not demonstration—for on obscure subjects we can do naught but suggest and conjecture. Thus for that learned man.

Let each one select what seems to him most conformable to truth, and should any one declare his ignorance of the real import of the expression, he would not do ill, since the Apostle himself has not revealed it; therefore an expositor of Scripture says, “The things which are manifest let us recognize, and what an apostle has left in obscurity let us leave in obscurity. It will then be most safe to form no definite conclusion on the subject, but to explain it in a general manner, assuming as certain :

1. That since our Apostle was favored with illustrious revelations by which he might have been elated, there is here to be understood a great and especial remedy to preserve him from exaltation; so

that something more is intended than such common temptations as are spoken of. (Numb. 16 : 29 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 13.)

2. That it was a truly grievous visitation ; inasmuch as the Apostle was especially, and above measure, disquieted and distressed by it, and therefore besought the Lord "thrice," that is, many times, in relation to it. (Verse 8.)

It accordingly seems to some divines most correct to regard the passage as speaking in general, of those multiplied and diversified afflictions to which, to his humiliation, he was subjected by persecution, false apostles, care of the churches, and various causes of offense by which he was hotly and constantly pursued ; which he compares to a being pierced with thorns and smitten with the fist, since he suffered not only much vexation and pain, but also contempt ; even as though his flesh had been torn with thorns, and he had been beaten with the fist in his face.

Such phraseology, or that which is similar in meaning, is employed by the Apostle. (Rom. 9 : 2.) We understand, then, a sore evil as here spoken of, which not only affected the body with pain, but the soul with much trouble ; in the production of which the devil had a special agency, or the Apostle was called to struggle with a special corruption of heart, or temptation of Satan ; for, was Christ subjected to this, much more Paul. But whence did this proceed ? This we are taught in the second part of our text.

"There was given to him." He denominates that by which he was humbled and held under restraint, a gift, something given him by God ; because such

things should much rather be reckoned among the gifts of God than occasion be taken from them to murmur against God, as appears from their happy issue, the glory of God and the good of his people. (Phil. 1 : 29.) Truly it is an act of distinguished love on the part of God to bridle, restrain, and preserve his people in a state of humility. "There was given me;" to wit, not by the devil, but by God: not that God was the author of this visitation, but that he permitted Satan to effect it, and so directed it as to subserve his humiliation. This monitor, or tempter, was given to Paul, saith Jerome, to repress his pride. Indeed, all afflictive visitations proceed from the providence of God; for according to his sovereign will, God employs not only the devil, but even ungodly men, for the trial and chastisement of his people. See the example of Shimei cursing David, which did not happen without the controlling agency of God; and if we apply this to the messenger of Satan, it is also found to be true, since Satan does nothing without the permission of God. (1 Kings 22 : 22; Job 1 : 12, 2 : 7; Matt. 8 : 31, 32.) But however grievous this was for the poor Apostle, it was, notwithstanding, for his good; for God chastens those whom he loves. His end and object were to preserve him in a state of humility, as we learn from the third part of our text.

"Lest through the abundance of the revelation I should be exalted above measure," which at the conclusion of the verse he repeats, "Lest I should be exalted above measure." Paul was favored with many illustrious revelations. Now, by nature man is so constituted as to be prone to self-exaltation, especially

when he has received eminent and distinguishing gifts from the hand of God, by which we are usually led to entertain extravagant ideas of ourselves. Especially can even a believer be carried away by pride, when made the object of illustrious divine manifestations; so that he readily forgets himself, and speaks and acts in a manner by no means becoming. Nadab and Abihu had seen the Holy One of Israel, when they shortly after brought strange or unholy fire to the altar, and died in the presence of the Lord. (Lev. 10 : 12 ; Ex. 24 : 4.) And it is immediately added by Moses, "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."

We thus perceive that even eminently pious men fall, that they may be humbled, and be further preserved from pride. Elias, for example, was a distinguished but timid man of God. Moses was a great man, but had his weaknesses. Paul was marked by the distinction of having been caught up into the third heavens, or paradise. By this the Apostle, as a weak man, and yet encumbered with remaining depravity, might be elevated or puffed up, (for knowledge puffeth up,) either by being led to regard himself as more than the other apostles and greater than other teachers, or by an under-estimation of others, regarding them as inferior to himself, or by allowing others to entertain too high an estimation of himself. In order, now, to prevent this in the Apostle, it was the good pleasure of God to visit him with the affliction under consideration, leading him in speaking of it to say once and again, "Lest I should be exalted

above measure." Thus will God prevent and suppress all pride in his children. And no wonder, for it is an evil through which, by the weakness of the flesh, they can easily be overcome. See an evidence of this in the pious Hezekiah, "Whose heart was lifted up, therefore there was wrath upon him." (2 Chron. 32 : 25.) "God resisteth the proud," 1 Peter 5 : 5 ; they are an "abomination" to him, Luke 16 : 15. God accordingly punished this sin in our first parents, in Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar and others, and he will bring it into subjection in his children in whom he delights. A spirit of self-exaltation is in its very nature an act of injustice towards God, because it is an appropriation to ourselves of that which is peculiar to God, upon which we have no claim. For these and like reasons will God so deal with his children that they shall not exalt themselves ; and to prevent this God not only forbids it in his word, but also employs instrumentalities, sometimes of the most grievous kind—heavy and diversified afflictions, as we have seen in Paul. And on him they produced the desired effect ; for he was humbled by them, of which we have the four following proofs.

1. He frequently prayed to God for deliverance. (Verse 8.)

2. He acquiesced in God's answer. (Verse 9.)

3. He was thenceforth inclined constantly to acknowledge his infirmities : "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (Verse 9.)

4. He had now learned not only to bear all his afflictions manfully, but to take pleasure in them.

“The entrance of thy words giveth light.” (Ps. 119: 130.) Whether the exposition of these words have thrown any light upon your minds, we leave yourselves to determine. We hence learn :

1. That all things, either from within or from without, which painfully affect or disquiet us, proceed from the hand of God. This the Apostle plainly teaches : “There was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” This also appears in the case of pious Job.

2. That even the most holy are not exempted from the temptations and buffetings of Satan. Even Christ himself was tempted ; Peter also fell into the temptation of Satan, Luke 22 ; and here, Paul. Therefore Peter exhorts, “Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.”

3. That God suffers this to occur to his children for their good. For Paul expressly says, that the thorn or messenger of Satan was *given* him that he should not be exalted through the abundance of the revelation. Therefore God frequently lays very many crosses upon his people that they may be weaned from the world, prevented from sinning, kept humble, confirmed in holiness, driven to God, stirred up to prayer, and stimulated to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and that their assurance of the love of God may be increased, and they be led to depend only upon his grace. Truly whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, Prov. 3 : 2 ; Heb. 12 : 6 ; Rev. 3 : 19 ; for although this affliction was the source of great trouble

and distress to the pious Apostle, he was notwithstanding contented to bear it with patience when he saw that it was the will of the Lord to employ this as a means of preserving him from exaltation, and thenceforth to hold himself in slight esteem; and this the more because he was firmly persuaded of the love of God towards him, there having, in answer to his twice-uttered prayer, been afforded this assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee." (Verse. 9.) In this respect the Apostle Paul may be regarded as an example and pattern, showing what may be the lot of the whole Church of Christ in general, and of each believer in particular, namely:

1. That there may be given to them thorns in the flesh; that is, that they are liable to tribulations, persecutions, assaults, vexations from the ungodly enemies of the truth. This is among the things to be inferred from the whole Church being compared to a lily among thorns, Sol. Song 2 : 2; to a lily by reason of its fragrance and beauty; but as standing among thorns, because liable to, and called to endure fierce persecution and trying afflictions.

2. That there may be given to them a messenger of Satan to buffet them. That is, although it may now not be with any as it was with Job, and here also apparently with Paul, they are, notwithstanding, subjected to, and called to endure contempt, taunting, mockery, and abuse, by means of word or work from Satan's instruments; and this because they are godly, pious, and believing. Truly such painful and contemptuous treatment is but the buffetings of Satan, proceeding from the old and settled enmity between

the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, Gen. 3 : 15.

It is certain that the children of God, and even those who have much light, much grace and experience, may be led to entertain exalted thoughts of themselves ; nay, fall into pride, illustrations of which we have in Hezekiah, whose heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. 32 : 25 ; in David, who numbered Israel, 1 Chron. 21 : 1 ; in Peter, who was so carried away by spiritual pride as to depend upon his own strength, Matt. 26 : 31. (The Apostle had just then partaken of the Passover and the Lord's Supper in company with the Lord Jesus ; but it was not long before his heart was lifted up by vain glory and pride, and he fell into the sieve of Satan, Luke 22 : 31.) Therefore God visits them with many afflictions, with distresses both spiritual and corporeal.

There is no one among the children of men who is not subject to trouble, perplexity, and adversity ; for, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (Job 14 : 1.) One event happens in this respect to all. These afflictions are common, extending both to the righteous and the wicked, and at all times hitherto have the judgments of God been abroad in the earth.

Friends, there is none among you who is not in one way or another afflicted. But are you humbled, amended, and brought to God by your afflictions ? Alas ! how many are like Pharaoh, hardened by the judgments of God ; and like Israel, who the more they were stricken revolted the more, Isa. 1 : 5 ; and like those who instead of humbling themselves,

and acknowledging their faults, murmur and complain; whom the apostle Jude describes. (Verse 16.) Not so; but humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. (1 Pet. 5 : 6.) Oh! that the judgments and afflictions to which as men we are subject had a desirable issue, as in Manasseh, who, when the Lord brought him into a strait earnestly besought the Lord his God, 2 Chron. 33 : 12; and in the prodigal son, who when reduced to such an extremity, as to be in danger of perishing with hunger, said, "I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." (Luk. 15 : 18.)

To this let me stir you by the example of the pious ;

1. By that of the Church in general : "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me : he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." (Mic. 7 : 9.)

2. Of David in particular : "Before I was afflicted I went astray : but now have I kept thy word. ("Ps. 119 : 67.) They were stirred up to prayer : thus here Paul ; Christ prayed the more earnestly, Luke 22 : 41 ; Jonah slept in the ship, but cried in the belly of the fish—all in accordance with the divine command, "Is any one among you afflicted ? let him pray." (James 5 : 13.)

Children of God, learn what is your lot from the example of Paul, and that of the Lord Jesus, who equally felt the sharp thorns of persecution and enmity, through the instrumentality of the Jews ; who experienced the temptations of Satan, Matt. 4 ; and

who suffered his buffetings; to whose image in this respect also you must become conformed, Rom. 8 : 29. Are you called to endure temptation? Are you brought to experience afflictive visitations? Are you compelled to strive with a special corruption? Cherish not an ignoble or disconsolate frame, but "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into divers temptations," Jam. 1 : 2; for God still remains your friend. His dearest children are daily called to suffer thorns in the flesh. Your trials are not the result of chance, "There was given to me," etc. The Lord God has a good object in view in the infliction of them: namely, the suppression of your pride, and your humiliation. What Christian desires not to be humbled? Truly, how frequently is his prayer, "No greater good be granted me than that I be made humble and little in my own eyes." To this end thorns and buffetings are the way.

I conclude with the words of Paul, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8 : 28.) Amen.

VII.

The Believer's Well-founded Expectation of Future Glory.

“NEVERTHELESS we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Pet. 3 : 13.

“BEHOLD, I make all things new,” said He that sitteth upon the throne. (Rev. 21 : 5.) Whatsoever receives a new essence or form is indebted for it to God—to him who sits upon the throne. The renewal of the earth after a dreary winter, by the arrival of a delightful spring, in which all nature assumes a new aspect, is the work of God: “Thou renewest the face of the earth.” (Ps. 104 : 30.) The renewal of the state of the Church, by the abolition of the old, and the establishment of the new covenant, Heb. 8 : 13, proceeds from him who saith, “Behold, I will do a new thing.” (Isa. 43 : 19.) The renewal of the mind, by which the elect put off the old man and put on the new, and thus become new creatures, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, is from him who has promised, “A new heart also will I give you.” (Ezek. 36 : 26.) The

succession of a new to the old year is also from him who hath said, "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun." (Ps. 74 : 16.) That after the passing away of this earth which we inhabit, there shall be new heavens and a new earth, is also from the Almighty, who has promised it; as we learn from the words of our text.

In what precedes, the Apostle has been teaching the instability, and destruction of the world, which shall eventually be consumed by fire. (Verses 7, 10, 12.) Hereupon he declares, on the other hand, the permanence of believers, who shall remain subsequently to that event; which is figuratively set forth in the words of our text—words altogether appropriate to the present occasion; for through the goodness of God we behold a new year. Oh! that there might be given to us a new spirit, that we might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6 : 4.)

I. The good in expectation: "New heavens and a new earth."

II. A more particular description of it: "In which dwelleth righteousness."

III. The ground of this expectation: "According to his promise."

Peter had taught that the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; thereupon the inquiry might arise in the mind, as it once did in another occasion, "What shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19 : 27.) Is there not something else, something better, something more enduring, in reserve for us? Yes; for you, and for me, namely, "New heavens," and "a new earth." This is

intimated by the word "nevertheless." Although this world shall experience so mighty a change, we, notwithstanding, look for new heavens and a new earth. Although the heavens and earth which now are shall pass away, all things shall not therefore come to an end. "We," namely, those towards whom God is long-suffering, and who shall come to repentance, we, who shall have been holy and godly in conduct, (verse 11,) who, in a word, have obtained like precious faith with true believers, 2 Pet. 1 : 19, we

"Look for." To look for, or expect, is properly to direct the view to a good not yet in possession. (Matt. 11 : 3.) It is associated with patience. When our Apostle here says, "we look for," he does not intend a mere expectation, such as we frequently entertain with respect to that which is of a doubtful nature, upon slight and insufficient grounds; but with assurance certainly to know that what is expected shall come to pass. What is it? The Apostle denominates it, "New heavens and a new earth."

Expositors are not agreed with respect to the meaning to be attached to this phrase. There is a diversity of opinion upon the subject even among the orthodox.

According to some, we are to understand by it the new kingdom of Jesus upon earth before the day of judgment; or the blessed state of the Church upon earth yet to be expected before the end of the world. Others suppose the heavens and earth will pass away as to substance, or essence, by being reduced to ashes, and that a new system will succeed. In the judgment of others, however, they will only be changed and purified in their qualities, and that thus "new" is

equivalent in meaning to a renewed heavens. Lastly, others judge that by this form of speech is simply signified the abode of the glorified pious in heaven—the glory and bliss which will be enjoyed in the enrapturing abode of the saints, otherwise denominated the heavenly country. (Heb. 11 : 16.)

We shall not undertake to test each of these opinions and show which is to be approved, and which is to be rejected; let each enjoy his liberty, since it does not affect the foundation of our faith. The following we conceive, can be confidently asserted :

1. That these new heavens and new earth are set in opposition to the heavens which now are, verse 7—that is, those which shall pass away with great noise—and to the earth spoken of, verses 10, 12. Therefore John says, “The first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” (Rev. 21 : 1.)

2. That the present heavens and earth shall not remain as they now are, but be changed in state and appearance.

3. That this newness of the heavens and the earth is not to be expected before the judgment, that is the coming of Christ to judgment.

These things being premised, we state, as our opinion, that by the new heavens and new earth are to be understood the future state and place of the blessedness and glory of the children of God after this life, and the day of judgment, in their whole persons, that is, as to soul and body; or, the blissful and illustrious condition in reserve for the elect, at the coming of the day of God; in a word, that exquisitely delightful heavenly habitation, here denominated “new heavens

and a new earth; elsewhere called the New Jerusalem." (Rev. 21 : 2.)

"New," not as to substance, or absolute newness; for it has existed from the foundation of the world, Matt. 25 : 34; but new, since the heavens and the earth, delivered from the curse, shall be restored to the state of perfection in which they were created by God; if not more truly, yet more gloriously, Rom. 8 : 21; "new," in so far as heaven will be occupied by new inhabitants, to wit, by saints, in whom the Lord Jesus will be glorified, and believers in whom he will be admired, 2 Thess. 1 : 10; "new," since they shall be invested with new glory and lustre, (thus say the annotators a "renewed" heaven and earth;) "new," by reason of the new occupancy of their new abode; since Christ, when he shall come again, will take them to himself, that where he is, they may be also. (John 14 : 3.)

"Heavens and earth." Because that glory or abode shall succeed our present earthly habitation.

"New heavens and earth." Since the renewal begun in the children of God here, it shall then be completed, by the bestowment of new and far more illustrious qualities and benefits.

1. By their translation to a new habitation—their Father's house;

2. By the reception of a new body, which shall no longer be this vile body, but made like to the glorious body of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 3 : 21.)

3. New society; the innumerable company of angels, in accordance with the promise, "I will give thee places to walk among these." (Zech. 3 : 7.)

4. Participation in a new state of happiness, new blessedness, so great and illustrious that a prophet testifies of it, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." (Isa. 64 : 4.) We may apply to it the words of the Saviour, Matt. 26 : 29, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

They shall then perform a new work, being no longer occupied with the groveling pursuits of this earth, but serving the Lord day and night in his temple, exclaiming with all the blessed, "Unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, be blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, for ever and ever." (Rev. 5 : 13.) These new heavens and new earth are gloriously described, Rev. 21 : 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."

Many curious questions are by some here proposed, as, Whether the earth shall then be inhabited, and whether God will then create other human beings? and similar ones too numerous to mention. It is not credible that the earth shall then be inhabited, for "there shall be no more sea." Yet shall the earth not be in vain; but the glorified, according to the opinion of eminent reformed divines, through the readiness with which they shall be able to transfer themselves from one place to another, shall sometimes visit it, and there delight themselves in glorifying God. This

future good is more particularly described in the second portion of our text :

“Wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Some understand this of the persons, “We.” Although it is true that there is righteousness in the pious, it is more correspondent with the construction of our text to apply these words to the new heavens and new earth which are looked for. In these shall dwell righteousness ; for these shall naught but pure righteousness and glory be found in them, and thus a contrast is here instituted between the present, in which ungodliness and unrighteousness exist, and the future world, in which righteousness alone shall be found. And the Apostle does not say that it is, or shall be, but that it “dwells” there ; thus expressing its substantial nature and its permanence, that it shall be there, not for a time, but without cessation, for ever. Nor is this a vain hope and expectation, but one which is well-founded, as is taught by the last portion of our text :

“According to his promise:” There are promises and prophecies in which such new heavens and earth are held up to view by God, as : “Behold, I create new heavens and new earth : and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind,” Isa. 65 : 17 ; “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I shall make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain,” Isa. 66 : 22.

It is true, that in this promise there is reference to the state of the Church under the New Testament, and that it has begun in these days to receive its fulfillment ; but it shall receive its final and full accomplishment at the end of the world, when all things shall

become new. Thus the learned Annotators say upon, Isa. 65 : 17, "This, indeed, partially took place at the first coming of Christ, by the preaching of the Gospel, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, who was richly communicated to believers under the New Testament, but shall not take place fully, until the second coming of the Lord, when his Church shall be taken up to heaven ! This expectation therefore, is firm, and well founded, resting as it does upon the infallible word of God. The same is the import of the words of St. John, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

Surely, hearers, God's children have a glorious hope and expectation, seeking not only a present, but also, and especially, a future good ; looking on good grounds for new heavens and a new earth, elsewhere denominated the glorious liberty of the children of God, the adoption of children, the redemption of their bodies, the blessed hope of righteousness ; with this difference among others, that according to the order of divine operation, in the work of grace, sanctification is followed by glorification ; whilst here, they are changed from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3 : 19.) Sanctification is the commencement of glorification. What think ye beloved, Are ye looking for new heavens and a new earth ? you will say, yea ! Do you hope to be partakers of this blessedness ? Do you again say, yea ? I then ask you, Upon what do you base your hope ? Shall your hope not make you ashamed ? you must previously, while here upon earth, beneath the heavens, become new creatures. (2 Cor. 5 : 17.) Christ once said : "Men do not put new wine into old bottles ;" so

say we also, these new heavens and new earth are not for those who are still in the old man, that is, in their natural state. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. 6 : 15.)

Examine yourselves. Are you renewed in the spirit of your minds? Have you received a new heart and a new spirit? I shall to this end propose to you this renewal. Employ it then as a glass in which to behold your frame, and consider whether this work of grace be begun in you.

All gracious persons are described by the Spirit of God as renewed ones. They are marked by new light in their understandings, since they are not only instructed in the letter of the word, but have an experimental knowledge of spiritual things, and are as effectually convinced as if they had actually perceived them by their senses: they see him who is invisible, as greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints: they see themselves as the chief of sinners, Jesus as the fairest of the children of men, the whole world as a fleeting show, eternity as near at hand, having respect unto the recompense of reward. So new and wonderful a light arises upon the understanding which before was in darkness. A new bent obtains place in the will and affections, since now as new-born babes, they desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. 2 : 2; they heartily love the Lord as their strength; they labor whether present or absent that they may be accepted of him, hate every false way, or sin, and say to each, "Get thee hence," Isa. 30 : 22; ardently desiring to depart and be with Christ. (Phil. 1 : 23.) This

is termed by Ezekiel, a new heart and a new spirit, 36 : 27 ; a new and purified conscience, Titus 3 : 15, which no longer sleeps as before, but is wakeful and tender, saying in God's stead, seek my face. Do they not heed the divine suggestion, there is an inward remonstrance ; but if they do, the peace of God ensues : thus the blood of Christ purifies their consciences. They are marked by a new and hearty service, being no longer content with the outward discharge of religious duties, of prayer, the hearing of the word, the reception of the sacraments, but desirous of doing these things in spirit and in truth. Are they not moved by the discharge of these duties, they go sorrowfully away ; but are they, on the other hand, stirred up by them to attention and reverence, they praise God with joyful lips. This Paul terms the serving of God in newness of spirit. (Rom. 7 : 6.) They are marked by a new conversation, being no longer, as before, ashamed of Christ and his words, but godly discourse, like a living stream, proceeds from their overflowing hearts ; and they delight in no society more than in that of those who speak to one another to mutual edification. The corn and new wine of divine grace, cause the young men and maids to speak. "They shall speak with new tongues." (Mark 16 : 17.) Finally, they are marked by an entirely new mode of life and conversation, since they show their faith by their works, not from the improper motive of being seen by men, but to glorify God and edify their neighbor.

Friends, this is that renewed mind, that new creature, of which the word of God so frequently speaks,

and which must be found in those who can with reason look for new heavens and a new earth. It is indeed carried forward with greater rapidity, and is found in a higher degree, in one than in another, but all, notwithstanding, who are truly partakers of grace, become partakers of it as to its essential parts, through this renewal.

When, now, you judge of yourselves by this rule, what is the conclusion at which you arrive? Oh! how many are strangers to it! as,

1. Those who are not even acquainted with the nature of this renewal, but represent the preaching of it as a new doctrine.

2. Those who explain it altogether of outward things, or of a change of dispensation under the New Testament, or of mere morality, as if it were but to be free from gross sins, in contrariety to the tenor of the whole word of God, which represents it as a renewal of the mind, the soul, as its seat, in which it takes its rise, proceeding thence without, exhibiting itself, not in mere external conformity to the law of God, but in a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees; nay, (alas! that there should be found, and that even in the Reformed Church, and among those who frequent the Lord's table,) those who deride and therefore oppose this renewal, regarding the inward experience, and thus also the pious discourse, of the people of God, as ignorance and delusion. And are they themselves inwardly wrought upon, they resolutely resist the influence, since they take no pleasure in such manner of life.

Such are, and remain, in the deformity of their na-

tural sinful condition, abominable in the eyes of God, however comely in person and admired by the world. Truly, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3 : 6.) Such can, on no ground, regard themselves interested in the precious merits of Jesus, the power of which always manifests itself in the renewal of the man. (2 Cor. 5 : 17.) And what hope of salvation, and arrival at heaven, and participation in its glory, can be entertained without this renewal? The place, and its inhabitants, must certainly to some extent correspond. Heaven now is denominated New Jerusalem, into which nothing shall enter that defiles, (Rev. 21 ;) for God saves us; but how? In what way? Surely, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Ghost." (Tit. 3.)

Oh! that you were brought to reflection, and that, confounded and humbled, you cast yourself down before God, who alone can produce it in you, supplicating unceasingly, according to Ps. 51 : 10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me." Earnestly strive after it, I beseech you, that you may be renewed, Rom. 12 : 2. Be changed by the renewal of your mind, Eph. 4 : 22, 23, 24. "Putting off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In order to this, you should be influenced by

The necessity of it, for without renewal is no one a Christian; without it can no one entertain the expectation of new heavens.

The new year; and shall you live from year to year

and always remain in your old servitude? Why does God bear with you? Why, like others, have you not died during the past year, and gone into eternity? Man, why are you spared? Is it that you should persist in your old sins? No; but that you should lead a new life. Do you continue without a renewal, and depart thus out of the world, then will your place be, not in the new heavens and new earth, but in Tophet, prepared of old, Isa. 30 : 33, "Make you then a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. 18 : 31.

And since these new heavens are described as those in which dwelleth righteousness, you must be marked by the practice of righteousness and godliness; for the workers of iniquity shall be cast out, Matt, 7 : 23. But he who worketh righteousness shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, Ps. 15 : 1, 2; for such alone are accepted with him, Acts 10 : 35. Up, then, let us follow after righteousness, 1 Tim. 6 : 11, seeking to attain to and exhibit it, by yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Righteousness, godliness, holiness in every form must here first dwell in believers, shall they be reasonable expectants of those new heavens and new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness.

You must also be influenced by the glory of this renewed frame; for happy are they who are partakers of it. What reason have they to exclaim with the Psalmist, Ps. 103 : 1, 5, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." For this renewal is

an evidence that the Lord has in mercy looked upon you, since without his transforming influence no renewal can take place. He who sitteth upon the throne alone can say, "Behold, I make all things new," and they who are renewed can say, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. 2 : 10.

By this renewal are God's children introduced into an entirely new and different state, being brought into actual communion with God by participation in the illustrious blessings of the new covenant, enumerated Jer. 31 : 33. They become possessed of an excellent spirit, as it is denominated, Dan. 5 : 12, being no longer actuated by a spirit of bondage again to fear, but a spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. (Rom. 8 : 15.) They now sustain a new relationship, having the Almighty for their Father, the Church for their mother, believers throughout the world for their brethren, and angels for their preservers. A great change truly, and therefore foretold with such emphasis, Isa. 62 : 2, "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." This renewal is also a source of the highest lustre of character to those who are partakers of it, since by it they are rendered like to God, so far as this can obtain in a creature. "Created after God." (Eph. 4 : 24.) However insignificant and contemptible they may be in the estimation of the children of the world, they are, notwithstanding, the holy and excellent ones. (Ps. 16 : 3.) By this renewal God has made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of

the saints in light: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. 5 : 8.) There, at length, shall the renewal here begun become complete, by the superaddition of new and much more illustrious qualities and blessings, as has been shown in our explanation.

It has from ancient times been customary among all nations, for persons upon the first day of the year to salute one another with good wishes. Thus subjects have done to their rulers, children to their parents, pastors to their flocks, friends to each other. And since, during the past year, so many have gone to their eternal home, so that the mourners have gone about the streets, and it is now my privilege, upon the first day of the new year, with joy to behold your countenances, beloved, among whom I perceive some above, others my equals, and again others beneath me in age, what new year's gift shall I present you? You expect from me no delicacies for the palate, no silver and gold, for of these I have none; but a wish, correspondent with my duty and office, and drawn from the word of God: I wish you, my hearers, old and young, men and women, a new heart and a new spirit, that you may walk in newness of life. Did you obtain this as a new year's gift, how happy would you be!

And, ye children of God, you, I wish, may be strengthened in the inner man, that your profiting may appear, and that ye may go from strength to strength, from virtue to virtue, until ye appear in the heavenly Zion before God, where ye shall sing a new

song: "And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation. *Amen.*"

VIII.

The Announcement of Divine Judgments upon Corrupt Members of the Church.

“AND I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.”—REV. 8 : 13.

WE read of the use of horns or trumpets among the children of Israel, Numb. 10 : 1-10. They not only served the purpose of assembling the people for the joyful observance of their religious solemnities before the Lord, Lev. 25 : 9 ; 2 Sam. 6 : 15 ; Ps. 47 : 5, 6 ; 81 : 3 ; “Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day,” Ps. 150 : 3-5 ; Matt. 24 : 31 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 52 ; but also of gathering together the army, and as a signal for an expedition against, and of attack upon the foe, and of animating them, and thus also tending to inspire terror and forebode destruction. Judges 3 : 27 ; Joel 2 : 1. “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion.” Am. 3 : 6 ; Isa. 58 : 1. When Jericho was taken, the walls fell down, after all the armed men of Israel,

with seven priests, bearing seven rams' horns before the ark, had on seven successive days passed in procession around the city with the resound of trumpets. Thus, also, here in this our chapter, we read of seven trumpets, by which must be understood great, severe, uncommon, remarkable, famous, illustrious, striking, and previously threatened judgments and calamities.

There are in this chapter three parts :

1. The preparation for the sounding of the trumpets at the opening of the seventh seal, vs. 1-6.

2. A description of the trumpets of the four angels: of the first trumpet, v. 7; of the second trumpet, vs. 8, 9; of the third trumpet, vs. 10, 11; and of the fourth trumpet, v. 12.

3. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the three following trumpets, for John "beheld and heard an angel," etc.

In our text it is stated that another angel cried woe, by reason of the plagues of the three following trumpets.

Two points here offer themselves for contemplation :

I. The announcement, "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven."

II. The thing announced: which is expressed,

1. Generally, "saying, Woe, woe, woe."

2. In particular, "by reason of the other voices."

As to him who makes the announcement it is said, "And I beheld, and heard an angel." This was a remarkable occurrence for John, and is in like manner for us.

"*I beheld.*" Holy men, both of the Old and New

Testament, saw many visions ; this was the case with John. "He beheld, and heard an angel." As to angels, their names, appearances and office, we shall not at present enlarge. They appeared to many of the pious, and here to John. These appearances occurred either in the simple contemplations of the mind, or by the bare exhibition of a certain form to the eye, or by the assumption of a human body for the time. How did John hear and behold the angel ?

"Flying." Angels are spirits, and thus are endowed with great quickness of motion. Wings are ascribed to them, on account of their promptness, swiftness, and universal readiness for service ; therefore denominated seraphim, that is, winged ones. (Isa. 6 : 26.) The flying of the angel is significant of his promptness in the discharge of his commission, intimating that in like manner the threatened judgments would be speedily executed. But where did he behold and hear this angel ?

"In the midst of heaven." That there are three heavens has been at other times shown. We here understand by the word, the regions of space immediately above us. The angel exhibits himself in an elevated position, that his voice may be the farther heard. He permits himself not only to be seen, but also to be heard. He speaks with an audible voice ; but what he says is amazing to hear. He cried with a loud voice, summoning the people of God to prepare for the judgments which should follow. Speech is ascribed to angels, 1 Cor. 13 : 1, and thus here, "saying with a loud voice ;" yet not a sound without

meaning, but a distinct, articulate, intelligible sound, characterized by majesty and glory, calculated to excite fear, reverence, and awe.

The thing which he announces we have in the second part of our text, and it is expressed first in general, then in particular.

1. In general: "saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." Woe is an exclamation of one in great trouble and distress. "Woe is me, for I am undone!" (Isa. 6 : 5.) It is also a form of denouncing calamities about to fall upon others: "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him," Isa. 3 : 11; "Woe to the idle shepherd!" Zech. 11 : 17; "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees!" Matt. 23 : 13. It is employed for the purpose of threatening and proclaiming great calamities, as well temporal, "Woe unto them that give suck," Matt. 24 : 19, as eternal: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" Matt. 11 : 21-24.

There is emphasis in the repetition, the word here being three times successively employed. Such repetitions and re-duplicated forms of speech are frequently found in the sacred writings, as,

1. In a twofold form in the Old Testament, as "Sigh, sigh," Ezek. 21 : 6; "Wailing shall be in all streets, and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas!" Amos 5 : 16; and in the New Testament, "Verily, verily," John 3 : 3; "Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Matt. 23 : 37; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts 9 : 4.

2. In a threefold form, Jer. 22 : 29, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord," and here in our

text, "Woe, woe, woe." This mode of expression is employed both by Christ and his inspired servants, and signifies,

1. The earnestness, heartiness, and zeal of the speakers.

2. Their compassion for the poor children of men; and here,

3. The certainty of what they announced, and that when they denounced plagues they would surely occur.

4. The fearfulness and severity of those plagues; one woe or plague would no sooner occur than another would follow; as is said in the following chapter, verse 12, "One woe is past, and behold, there come two woes more hereafter." But on whom are these woes denounced?

"To the inhabitants of the earth." By these we must understand in general, the inhabitants of this earth; for the earth is given to the children of men for a habitation, Ps. 115 : 16; here, the members of the corrupt visible church, which then was diffused and extended over the whole earth. They should be affected by these woes. They are thus denominated, indeed, because they dwell upon the earth, but also, especially, because become now so degenerate, and also so exceedingly earthly-minded.

But this description has still particular reference to the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels. Thrice is a woe denounced; three angels should still sound, and calamities far greater than the four already described would come.

To what this is to be applied can not be definitely

determined. It was a time of woe to the church during the ten persecutions under the pagan Cæsars; but these were now past. The four first trumpets comprehended the fourfold calamity which came upon the Church, after the half hour's silence under Constantine the Great in the fourth century; until the year 606, when the Papacy began to arise, 2 Thess. 2 : 6, 7; "Woe, woe," because then the truth was so corrupted, the pious so fiercely persecuted.

It was a time of woe to the inhabitants of the earth in the days of Noah, when the flood came and destroyed them all; a time of woe when fire came down from heaven, and Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighboring cities, so terribly perished, Gen. 19; a time of woe, woe, at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian. It then happened that a certain man named Jesus, the son of Ananias, for some time previous, about four years, made a circuit around the city exclaiming: Woe to Jerusalem! woe to the temple! and at last, woe also to me!

But the words of the text have especial reference to the Church of the New Testament.

It was a time of "woe, woe, woe," for the primitive Christians, during the ten persecutions by the pagan Roman emperors, when they were in the most cruel manner persecuted and put to death. It was a time of woe, for the seven churches of Asia, when the candlestick was removed from their midst, and the cities themselves destroyed by earthquakes; so that Smyrna alone remains, and all the places at which flourishing churches previously existed, now groan beneath the Turkish yoke. It is true that under Con-

stantine the Great, there was silence for an half-hour, that is, a time of quiet and peace for the Church. "And when he had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of an half-hour;" but it was of short duration, for soon there came a time of woe; for the Pope, the son of perdition, began to exalt himself, as was the case in the eighth century, during the reign of the Emperor Phocas. There is here reference to those woes which were brought upon the Church by the instrumentality of heretics and Antichrist, and they comprehended, first, corruption of doctrine, and secondly cruel persecutions, as occurred some time previously to the Reformation, when the Waldenses were so inhumanly butchered, hunted out of their homes, and compelled to flee as partridges upon the mountains; and when, an hundred years before the Reformation, among the Hussite witnesses for the truth, John Huss and Jerome of Prague were condemned as heretics by the council of Constance, and burned. It was a time of woe, under the Duke of Alva in Holland, when scarce aught was heard of but hanging, beheading, and burying alive in the earth. It was a time of woe in France, in the reign of Charles the Ninth, when, upon St. Bartholomew's day, that fearful Parisian massacre occurred; and subsequently, in the reign of Louis XIV., when so many French exiles became dispersed through the world.

Thus also has it frequently been in Bohemia, Hungary, the Palatinate, and in other places. It has also frequently been a time of woe in Europe, and the other countries of the old world, in periods of inundations, pestilence, famine, scarcity, and war; and to

come more nearly home, it is a time of woe for the inhabitants of this land, on account of the prevalence of numerous contagious diseases, pox, pleurisy, bloody-flux, etc. ; so that the words of Solomon, Eccl. 12, are here verified, "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."

Beloved hearers, we do not, like St. John, see visions ; nor are they necessary, for we have the word of the prophets and apostles, in which our charge and commission are contained : "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him," but "Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him." (Isa. 3 : 10, 11.) This solemn commission the prophets, Christ, and the apostles have discharged. Necessity is laid upon *me* : woe unto me, if I announce not unto you the divine woes ; and that you may not accuse me of seeking to inspire you with vain terror, I shall employ the very words of the Holy Spirit himself. Prepare then yourselves. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men to believe." (2 Cor. 5 : 11.)

1. Woe to you, wicked and unconverted ones ! it shall be ill with you. (Isa. 3 : 11.) You may here for a time prosper in things temporal, but in the day of death, and of the last judgment, it shall be "ill" with you ; for the fruit and reward of your hands shall be given you, saith the prophet ; that is, you shall be rewarded according to your works ; for "tribulation and anguish shall be rendered to every soul of man that doeth evil." (Rom. 2 : 9.)

2. Woe unto you who are careless and at ease in Zion ! (Amos 6 : 1.)

3. Woe unto you, whoremongers and adulterers! God will judge you. (Heb. 13 : 4.)

4. Woe unto you, thieves, unrighteous, slanderers! ye shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10.)

5. Woe unto you, drunkards! (Isa. 5 : 11.)

6. Woe unto you, perjurers, cursers, swearers, blasphemers! The Lord will not hold you guiltless. (Ex. 20 : 7.)

7. Woe unto you, miserly, unmerciful rakers and scrapers, ye rich who put your trust in your possessions and make them your portion! hear the words of Christ: "Woe unto you, ye rich! for ye have received your consolation; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." (Luke 6 : 24; Jam. 5 : 1.)

8. Woe unto you, ye that are proud! God resists you. (1 Pet. 5 : 5.)

9. Woe unto you, hypocrites, dissemblers, who assume a fair appearance before men, but in heart are false and deceitful! Hear Christ's own word, and tremble. (Matt. 23.)

10. Woe unto you, vain children of the world, dancers, gamblers, horse-racers, and sensual persons! "Woe to you that laugh!" (Luke 6 : 25.)

11. Woe unto you, hard and insensible ones! "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. 29 : 1.)

12. Woe unto you, obdurate ones, whom no means whatever affect! "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13 : 3, 5.)

13. Woe unto you, all unconverted ones, who remain

unchanged under the means of grace ! whom some divines arrange in three classes :

1. The entirely ignorant and openly wicked.

2. Those who rest in the external performance of duty ; who despise what they have learned ; the merely moral ; the outwardly religious ; formal partakers of the Lord's Supper.

3. Those who assent to the truth ; who imitate the pious in discourse ; those who have frequently been under conviction, but have returned to a state of carelessness. Listen to the language of Christ himself : " Woe unto you, Chorazin ! Woe unto you, Bethsaida ! " (Matt. 19 : 12.)

These woes, both temporal and eternal, shall come upon you, except ye repent. Oh ! I beseech you, then, ere the irrevocable " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, Matt. 25 : 41, sound in your ears, repent. But with the penitent, godly, upright, righteous, who continue in well-doing, it shall be well. (Rom. 2 : 7.) The Lord bless this discourse to you all, to his glory, and your salvation. Amen. Be it so ! *Amen.*

IX.

The Soul Seeking Jesus.

“BUT Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

“And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

“And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

“And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.”—JOHN 20: 11-18.

“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” Thus is the Messiah introduced as speaking, ISA. 50: 4.

It was in love that the Father sent his Son into the

world ; it was in goodness that he commissioned him to preach good tidings to the meek and poor ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. But the Father knew the nature of the world into which his Son was sent : a world full of wickedness ; a world full of ignorance. The Father also knew the character of those with whom his Son would be called to deal ; he consequently sent him not unqualified, but as the Son here saith, He gave him the tongue of the learned, full of wisdom and understanding, that he might know how to speak a word in season to the weary. Grace was poured into his lips ; on him rested the Spirit of all wisdom and knowledge.

This tongue of the learned, the Lord Jesus in more than one manner displayed in the days of his flesh. He spake in an heavenly manner ; he revealed the secret counsel of God respecting the salvation of lost sinners ; he declared profound mysteries, far exceeding all human science and learning ; he taught as one having authority, Matt. 7 : 29, so that it might be said, "Who teacheth like him?" Job 36 : 22. This he also manifested in the adaptation of his words and wisdom to the state and situation of those with whom he dealt. Did he discourse with opposers, he put them to silence. (Matt. 22 : 34.) Did he address bold, arrogant, hardened sinners, he reproved them ; he threatened them with terrible judgments. Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! (Matt. 11 : 21.) But was he called to deal with weary, sorrowful, dejected and disquieted souls, he refreshed and comforted them, as was foretold of him. (Isa. 42 : 1 ; Matt. 12 : 20.) Thus also he conducted after

his resurrection toward his disciples, the women, and Mary Magdalene, whom he comforted as they mourned his removal from their sight, and showed himself to the seeking, weeping Mary, and thus comforted her, as we see in the words of our text.

It was our intention to dwell next in order upon the 4th verse of the 23d Psalm, and had for the most part made our preparation upon those words, but changed our purpose, because the words of our text are more suitable to Easter, and a more moving subject of discourse upon the occasion of the administration of the Lord's Supper. Oh, that we had Mary's weeping, seeking, loving frame!

In our words there are two points to be noticed:

I. The appearance of the two angels, verses 11, 12, 13.

II. The appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, with the accompanying circumstances, verses 14-18.

After the disappearance of Christ from the tomb, his loving ones, on account of their love to him, which had not expired, desired but to know where his dead body was to be found. They could not be at rest ere they were satisfied. Among these, Mary Magdalene, a known pious woman, was preëminent. She wept in expression of her love. She was comforted first by the appearance of the angels, then by the manifestation of Christ himself, first unknown, and afterwards known by her—an evidence that he is a merciful and loving High Priest, who has compassion on his people. But we have before dwelt upon this narrative at large—we trust that you are not ignorant of it—the words, besides, are clear, and

what occasion to be always chewing the shell? Let us, therefore, proceed at once to partake of the kernel, by passing to the doctrine and application.

We are hence taught,

1. That the soul which seeks Christ ceases not till it find him.

2. That the absence of Christ so disquiets a believer, that all other things, even ministers and angels, can not put him to rest. Believer, canst thou not set thy seal to this? Thus it was with the spouse, the Church. (Cant. 3 : 1-4.)

Behold here a clear proof and testimony to the resurrection of Christ; Christ himself appears to Mary Magdalene, who thus first had the honor of beholding him alive after his death. Oh! how powerful and burning was her love to Christ! How ardent her desire after his presence! This her seeking and asking show. This her overflowing tears prove. Her love found no satisfaction until she saw Jesus; no words addressed to her comforted her, but she continued weeping until she found her Lord: her language was, *My Lord*. We here see as in a glass, the frame and conduct of a seeking soul, who loves the Lord Jesus.

Come, hearers, contemplate with me for a while, the exercises of a soul that seeks and loves the Lord Jesus. Cast your eyes upon Mary, that lover of the Lord Jesus, as she seeks him with bitter tears.

Truly, O communicants! if ye shall with advantage and comfort partake of the Lord's Supper, you must in your feelings resemble Mary.

1. A soul which seeks Jesus beholds in him such

beauty and preciousness that from the heart it says with the bride, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," (Cant. 5 : 10;) for "unto them who believe he is precious." (1 Pet. 2 : 7.)

2. Such an one seeks him from conviction of his misery and need; and since there is in him such fullness, and whilst he is in such absolute need of him, that without him he can not endure it, much less be at ease, he therefore makes him the object of all his joy, of all his rest, satisfaction, and strength; in a word, of all his love.

3. Such soul is not only set in affection upon the salvation that is in Jesus, but upon his person; because so lovely, holy and resplendent: therefore is he so fair, so precious in its eyes; therefore it desires to be with him, and to be united to him; therefore are his sweet presence and communion its life, for so is it enamored of him, that without him it can not rest. And no wonder, for it contemplates him now, as the true God, the highest good, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and as having from eternity, in the council of peace, so willingly presented himself as Surety and Mediator, and in time assumed the nature of man, and permitted himself to be lifted up upon the cross.

It now also contemplates him as sitting at the right hand of the Father, crowned with glory and honor, having received all power, and exalted a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5 : 31, and an Advocate with the Father. In all these things combined, it beholds how glorious a Mediator he is: this stirs up its love, so that it is occupied with constant meditations upon

him, and says with the bride, "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me." (Cant. 1 : 13.)

When also it contemplates the benefits bestowed upon it, and the love shown it by Jesus, when still it pursued the broad road to destruction ; when first he drew it with cords of love, touched its heart ; when he opened its eyes first to behold its lost, miserable state ; when Jesus first manifested himself to it ; when he extended over it the wings of his love ; when it so heartily and freely received him, and surrendered itself to him ; when it wrestled with him ; when it felt his love, and realized as addressed to it the words "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," (Jer. 31 : 3,) oh ! how does this draw forth its affections after Jesus ! Hence it desires his constant presence, so sweet and animating to it. Does it not experience this ? Does it find itself in a state of estrangement, in a dead, dark, sinful frame, it complains, it weeps ; with Mary it seeks ; like Noah's dove, that nowhere found rest, it now has no rest, and is therefore, with a devout poet, inclined to say :

"With Mary early I'll arise,
Visit the tomb with weeping eyes ;
With sadness, sighs, and cries I'll go,
And thus pour forth my heavy woe,
And seek him till his face I see ;
Bedew the tomb with floods of tears,
My way pursue 'midst groans and fears,
Fall down before my Jesus' face,
His precious feet again embrace,
Nor leave him to eternity."

Is such a soul asked, as was Mary by the Saviour, Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she will answer with the Church, Lam. 1 : 16, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me:" and no wonder; for all that is out of Jesus, is to it a burden; in itself it finds darkness, impurity, sin, and helplessness; creatures can not satisfy; and hence Jesus alone can gratify its desires. But how does it seek him?

1. With humiliation: with a contrite, broken, tender, and prostrate mind; for upon such the Lord will look. (Isa. 57 : 15, 18; 66 : 2; Ps. 34 : 18; 51 : 17.)

2. It seeks with confession of its sins, and with condemnation and abhorrence of itself; with shame, sorrow, and regret, like David, Ps. 32; and at the same time with earnest supplications for reconciliation, peace, holiness, and strength.

3. It seeks him with longing and looking for him, as the Church, Isa. 26 : 9, "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early."

4. It seeks him also with submission: "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation," Micah 7 : 7, desiring not to prescribe to the Holy One of Israel as to time and manner.

But where does it seek him? Not in the tomb, but in heaven; employing for this purpose all means. Hence it resorts to the house of God; hence it peruses the Scriptures; hence it is found at the Lord's table; hence it indulges in retirement, and enters into

its chamber, and seeks him by prayer and meditation. Oh! how often does it wrestle with its Lord in prayer! with secret tears, crying out with mouth and heart, "O Lord, I will not let thee go until thou bless me." Oh! bless me, then! bless me! and if thou make thyself strange and speak roughly to me, yet will I, with Mary, seek thee till I find thee. Oh! methinks I hear such soul from the fullness of its heart addressing Jesus in these or similar words: O my fair, my precious, lovely Lord Jesus! in communion with whom alone my soul can find rest; O most lovely fair One! whose love alone can quicken my soul, come, approach to my soul; turn again, my soul's friend, my treasure, and soul-satisfying portion! "I seek thee early; my soul thirsteth for thee." Art thou not he who loveth me? who hath prevented me? Hast thou not first drawn forth my love to thee? Here is my heart, come take up thine abode in it; appropriate it wholly to thyself. I have become enamored of thy service; I willingly resign myself to thee. Oh, that I might live before thee the more holily, the more delightfully! Such should be the exercises of those who approach the Lord's table.

Behold here, my friends, in some measure decribed the frame and exercises of a soul seeking and loving the Lord Jesus.

What think ye? are ye such? Oh! when you consider and compare yourselves with what has been depicted, and will judge of yourselves in truth, if unconverted, you must confess it is not. But such you must be, shall you be welcome guests at the Lord's table. If not, we caution you, approach not unpre-

pared ; for Christ invites his friends, but none besides.

1. Oh, that you could be aroused ! Seek the Lord, I pray you, while he may be found ; call upon him while he is near. Not a moment are you assured of your life. Avail yourself of the present moment. Now the Lord may still be found, but how long, you know not. He suffers you to be invited, and his favor and grace to be proffered to you. He stands as with open arms and waits. Oh ! permit not the season of grace—the time in which he may be found—to pass by.

2. And this he has already done so long, having called you year after year ; and dare you permit him still to call and invite ?

3. To what sad but unavailing lamentations will your neglects give rise in hell, when your opportunities shall have for ever passed away ! If there is aught which will render the gnawing of the worm which never dies intolerable, it will be the piercing reflection that the time for finding the Lord has been suffered to pass unimproved.

4. To find and enjoy Jesus is heaven upon earth. Why then so long willfully procrastinate ? No one who has had experience of it has ever regretted it.

5. You need not shrink from seeking him ; it is not so difficult, so burdensome, so irksome as is by many supposed. Oh ! when engaged in, it is so delightful, that did you commence seeking, you would find satisfaction even in your weeping !

Up, up, then, without delay, to work. Engage in the use of all means calculated to enable you to find Jesus.

Seek him in the assembly of his people, whether in his house or at catechisings.

Seek him by the perusal and searching of his word.

Inquire for him wherever you can.

Seek him in retirement in your private chamber with earnest prayer.

Seek him at such time and manner as you should : at every time in which he may be found ; to-day, to-day ; on the morrow ; early in the time of your youth ; in times of affliction ; with all earnestness and engagedness. (Ps. 119 : 10.) First and most, above all things, seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, (Matt. 6 : 33,) with urgency and with constancy. (Gen. 32 : 26.)

But ye seeking, loving souls, ye are entitled to the Lord's Supper. Seek him there, for there he will be found of you ; there he will sup with you. Conceive that Jesus says to you, what seek ye ? what desire ye ? Be careful that ye bear before him your inmost desires—that you open wide the mouths of your souls. Happy ye, if ye can say in truth, Lord Jesus, it is thee I seek ; without thee naught can afford me satisfaction. "Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is naught upon earth that I desire besides thee." Oh ! that there were weeping, as once in Scotland, among members new and old ; so that the minister, while engaged in the administration, was compelled to say, "Communicants, whence all this weeping among you ?" "Oh !" said some, "we weep with Mary, on account of an absent Christ." Is this the occasion of your weeping, poor soul ? I will say, it may be that you also will experience Mary's consolation. Jesus

may be nearer than you yourself suppose; for when Mary imagined that Jesus had gone away, he said, "Mary!" and immediately she was comforted, and said, "Rabboni!" "Oh!" said another, "I weep with Peter, because I have denied him." Let me then say this to you, it may be that yours will be the happy lot of Peter; the angel said, "tell his disciples and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee." (Mark 16 : 8.) The weeping Peter must be comforted. A third says, "I weep with Christ himself, of love at the grave of Lazarus. The love of Christ causes me to weep." If this be so, may I not then say of you, as did the Jews of Christ, "Behold how, to-day, the people love Christ."

If you come thus, believer, with hearty weeping, with a seeking, loving frame, you shall also find and enjoy; for this is the promise of the faithful God: "Your heart shall live that seek God," (Ps. 69 : 32); and the language of Christ is, "If any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14 : 23.)
Amen.

X.

The Soul Covenanting with God.

“AND Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.”—JOSH. 24 : 22.

BELoved communicants, this day have ye renewed your covenant with God, and chosen God as your portion, promising that you will be his servants and handmaidens, that you will walk in his ways, and keep his commandments. To this you are witnesses. In point, then, are the words of our text; and although I am not Joshua, I may yet adopt his words, and say to you, ye are witnesses concerning yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him. Follow, then, the example of the people of Israel, and say, “We are witnesses.”

In this our chapter, we have a recital of Joshua’s last address, in which he in a moving manner renewed the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, and sought to impress upon their minds the obligations which they had assumed to acknowledge the Lord their God, as

their God, and to serve and fear him: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve," verse 15. It appears that there were among the children of Israel a promiscuous multitude, who had not come to a conclusion whom they would serve. Joshua, perceiving the evil of this, said to them, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve;" no longer defer your determination; I propose it this day for your decision, whom you will serve, whether the God of your fathers, or the gods of the Amorites. Do as seems good to you, knowing that it will be at the peril of your present and future happiness, that you make an improper choice. Would you know my choice? I announce it to you: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," verse 15. Joshua was not indifferent, (the same was the case with the people of Israel in the days of Elijah; when the people would not resolve whom they would serve, "how long," was the language of the prophet, "halt ye between two opinions?" 1 Kings 18 : 21. Come, I pray you, to a conclusion whom ye will serve.) The people chose the true God, repeatedly promising uprightly to persevere in his service; "we will serve the Lord," verse 21. This he now reviews, this he recalls to their minds, urging it upon their choice in the words of our text; "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses," etc.

Two things are here to be noticed:

I. The interrogatory proposal of Joshua to the people of Israel: "Joshua said to the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him."

II. The assent of the people by way of response ;
 “And they said, We are witnesses.”

The distinguished person here spoken of is the pious Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim—Moses’ minister, who, after his death, conducted the people into the promised land ; a man of whom it is said, that he was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him, (Deut. 34 : 9 ;) so that the spirit of Moses came upon him ; in a word, he is that godly and excellent man upon whom the Lord bestowed the honor of being the governor of the people of Israel—of introducing them into the sacred land which the Lord God of their fathers had promised to give them as a pledge of heaven, a type of Christ, and hence called Jesus in the New Testament. (Acts. 7 : 45. Heb. 4 : 8.)

Joshua was first called Oshea, but Moses called him Jehoshua, Num. 13 : 16 ; that is, the Saviour of the Lord, because ordained by the Lord as an instrument in conferring great benefits upon his people, and delivering them out of the hands of the Canaanites, their enemies ; but especially because in achieving this deliverance, he would be an illustrious type of him who with the greatest emphasis would be denominated Jehoshua, or Jesus. (Matt. 1 : 21 ; Heb. 4 : 8.)

Joshua here exhorts the people to serve the true God only. The people promise to do so. Joshua renews the covenant, and appeals to their engagement and assent : “Ye are witnesses concerning yourselves.”

We find that men of God, prophets and apostles,

sometimes not only appeal to heaven and earth, but also to men themselves; and rightly, since they possess a conscience, (conjunct knowledge or feeling,) and thus are conscious of their own acts.

In what precedes, they had chosen the Lord: this he here recalls to their thoughts and reminds them of, saying, "Ye have chosen the Lord to serve him." That God who had led them forth from Egypt; the God of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob, who had solemnly made a covenant with them and proffered himself to them as their God—him they had

"Chosen:" hereby is expressed a covenant transaction in which are to be recognized two parties.

The first is the Lord God, as the all-sufficient one, entering into a covenant with man, who is destitute of all things; as good: "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him," Lam. 3: 25; as almighty, "I am the Almighty God," Gen. 17: 1; as faithful: "Which keepeth truth for ever," Ps. 146: 6; as true and unchangeable, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. 3: 6.)

The second party are the elect, viewed as miserable, condemned, helpless. (Ezek. 16.)

Unequal parties truly, and yet, oh, wonder! these enter into covenant with each other! On the side of God is the demand, the proffer, and the promise: "Thou shalt be to me a people; serve me only; observe my ways, commandments, statutes, ordinances, and I will be a God to thee." On the sinner's side, are the assent and surrender: he receives God as his God and highest good; chooses him, as we find it

here ; engages and yields himself to him. It is as if the Lord said, "Seek my face:" he that enters into covenant with him says, "Thy face, O Lord, I seek," Ps. 27 : 8 ; he solemnly declares that he will be the Lord's, pledges himself to him, Isa. 42 : 5 ; in a word, he saith, "Behold, here are we, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." This is distinctly represented to us, Deut. 26 : 17, "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice;" and verse 18, "The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people." In the covenant the believer chooses God as his portion, the Lord Jesus as his Prophet, Priest, and King ; this is the mutual agreement which constitutes the essence of the covenant. But for what purpose had they chosen the Lord ?

"To serve him." A service is spoken of as belonging to God. To serve one sometimes signifies to perform that for him to which he is himself incompetent. This, however, can not here apply ; for God who made the world and all things that are in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, is not worshipped with men's hands as though he needed any thing ; seeing he giveth to all life, breath, and all things. (Acts 17 : 24, 25.) In this sense we can do God no service. Eliphaz therefore so earnestly inquired, "Can a man be profitable unto God" ? (Job 22 : 2.) Sometimes, it signifies to do that which is acceptable to him ; also to do that which we owe and are under obligation to do. These two significations are here included. God

can and must be served by honest endeavors to perform all that is pleasing to him, and therefore man, as a rational creature, and still more as one who stands in a covenant relation to him, is in the most powerful manner bound to obey the Lord God, and keep his commandments. We hence read of serving God acceptably, (Heb. 12 : 28,) and of serving the Lord, obeying his voice, and not rebelling against his commandment. (1 Sam. 12 : 14.)

This they had chosen—to serve the true God, to do his will, to prefer his worship. This Joshua summons to their remembrance, for the people answer and give their assent in our second part.

“We are witnesses”—we have chosen the Lord; we will never forsake him.

There were doubtless many in Israel who did this only in an outward and feigned manner, according to Psalm 78 : 36, 37; or who rested too much on their own strength; and therefore Joshua warned them with respect to the nature of the service which God requires: “Ye can not serve the Lord; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God.” (Verse 19.)

The words of the text might now readily be employed for the discovery of the multitude of those who are strangers to the covenant, and also to denounce upon them divine threatenings, and inspire them with terror. But I shall assume a different tone, and rather avail myself of the present opportunity to invite and constrain you; the more so for having read of a Scotch divine who, preaching upon the words, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,” besought his hearers with tears; nay, declared to them that he

could not descend from his place until they had without delay complied with the divine requirement. Although I can not profess that I am characterized by the zeal of that worthy man, I desire to follow him, if not with equal steps, yet at a distance.

Attend, then, my hearers, whoever ye be, while I set before you, this day, life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live. (Deut. 30 : 19.) Choose! Here are two masters; whom will ye serve? Many will say, I will do that hereafter; but few, I will do it immediately. There are two masters in the world, but ye can not serve both. Each one has his kingdom; they are mortal enemies. The one is the Lord Christ; the other the devil. There is not a third, and you, whosoever ye may be, make a resolute choice. Whose servants and handmaidens will ye be? Whom do ye receive as your master and ruler? Do ye choose Satan, the god of this world, to do his will, to live in your lusts? Enjoy then your portion to the full: "Rejoice in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." Love the world and all that is in the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and as you are marked by the deed, be not ashamed to permit it to be known. Acknowledge and profess the devil to be your lord and master. But no; you will say that is too gross; it may not be; we are Christ's; Christ is our Lord and King, although we live to ourselves, although we do the will of Satan, although we live a wicked, carnal life, the devil is not our king; Christ

is our King. I reply, he is not; hear it from the mouth of Paul: "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin, unto death, or of obedience, unto righteousness?" Will ye not have Satan for your master and king; and not have your portion in outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth? Renounce then your allegiance to him; forsake his kingdom; abandon his service; pass over into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, choosing God for your master to serve him; receiving the Lord Jesus as your sovereign King, upon his own terms. Expressly, formally, and devoutly, must you enter into covenant with him. As to this, we have commands and instances in the word of God: "And because of all this, we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our Levites and priests seal unto it. (Neh. 9 : 38.) "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isa. 44 : 5.) The making of such personal covenants is practised in the Church of Scotland, in addition to the national covenant which nobles and common people, ministers and hearers, have solemnly pledged themselves to observe. A form of the personal covenant we find in "The Christian's Great Interest," by W. Guthrie, to be entered into especially on occasion of the observance of the Lord's Supper. It runs as follows: "I am here, O Lord, this day, to engage in a highly important transaction, for which I have of myself no sufficiency: I therefore beseech thy help. The business in which I

would engage is to enter into a covenant with thee ; and I pray thee, O Lord, kindly to be a party in the engagement. Say not to me, as in Ps. 50 : 16, ‘ What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth ? ’ But although thou shouldst, thou art righteous ; but I plead thine own word, ‘ Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ Matt. 11 : 28. O Lord, naught so afflicts me as thine absence, and knowing naught but sin, that can restrain thee from entering into covenant with me, I desire with one of old to say, ‘ That which I know not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.’ Job 34 : 32. O Lord, I have thy promise, and come in thy mercy, and pray that my sins may be blotted out for Christ’s sake, and let me approach to thy sacred table to obtain the fulfillment of my strong desires. I call heaven and earth to witness that I prefer thee to all the riches of the world. Help me this day in my preparation to enter into covenant with thee ; for of myself I am insufficient for this great undertaking. Thou hast said in thy word that thou wilt receive all that are willing to come unto thee. Now, O Lord, I pray thee that in thy kindness thou wilt be gracious to me, and let not this fast-day be observed in vain ; but take to thyself the honor, and be not angry that I make this record, since it is intended to manifest my willingness to enter into covenant. O Lord, I beseech thee not to come unto me at thy table in anger, but in thy mercy manifest unto me thy favor. But rather than thou shouldst be absent, come unto me with chastisements, if but it be not in thy hot dis-

pleasure. I can not express my insufficiency for an approach to thy table; but like Queen Esther, when about to go into the presence of the king, I cast myself upon thy mercy, and say, 'I will go, and if I perish, I perish' at thy feet." Esth. 4 : 16.

Communicants, have you ever thus entered into covenant with God? Hearers, I this day call heaven and earth to witness that I have sought to incline you. I take the holy angels and yourselves to witness. "Yourselves are witnesses." I take the pious who are here present to witness. I take this book, this New Testament, this pulpit in which I stand, this house in which we are at present assembled, to witness. Let it not appear strange to you that such inanimate objects are appealed to as witnesses, for we see the same was afterward done by Joshua. "And he took a great stone and set it up under an oak, and Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us; it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." (Verses 26, 27.) Thus also say I: This book, this pulpit, this edifice, this house of God, shall be witness. But if all this be of no avail, then shall I, to my grief, at that great day, be compelled to witness against you.

But ye, true believers, who fear the Lord, and who have so often chosen the Lord for your God, to-day has it been your privilege to renew your covenant with him. Let it hereafter, then, be your great care, that you trample under foot and forsake the world, 1 John 2 : 15, 16, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the

world, the love of the Father is not in him." This is included in the covenant into which you have entered, and which this day has been sealed to you. Be "God all my delight, my rest, my joy, my fear, the object of my service," your motto. Seek henceforth also more zealously to serve the Lord, and in all things to live acceptably to him. "Serve him with fear, and rejoice with trembling." (Ps. 2.) For this purpose have you been delivered out of the hands of your enemies, that you should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of your life. Let your service henceforth be more spiritual, more fervent, and more upright. We beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, Rom 12 : 1 ; and let the partaking of the Lord's Supper lead you with a pious soul to say : "I have this day partaken of the sacrament and engaged to be the Lord's. O Lord, make me a faithful servant, (or handmaid,) and suffer not Satan to entice me into sin, for thou art my God, and I am thy servant, (or handmaiden,) solemnly consecrated to thee. Make me faithful, and help me to do all things in the strength of the Lord Jesus ; for without him I can do nothing. *Amen.*

Third Collection.

A SUMMONS TO REPENTANCE,

TO THE

INHABITANTS OF THAT PORTION OF AMERICA DENOMINATED
NEW-NETHERLANDS, NOW NEW-YORK AND NEW-
JERSEY, ON THE OCCASION OF AN EARTH-
QUAKE WHICH OCCURRED ON THE 7TH
OF DECEMBER, 1737, ABOUT 11
O'CLOCK AT NIGHT.

IN TWO SERMONS,

THE FIRST UPON REV. 16: 18, THE SECOND UPON JOB, 9: 6.

EXPLAINED, APPLIED, AND PRONOUNCED BY

THEODORUS JACOBUS FRELINGHUYSEN.

PRINTED AT UTRECHT BY JOHN GROENINGEN,

Opposite the State-House.

PREFACE TO THE PIOUS READER.

It is the duty, especially of Zion's watchmen, to sow beside all waters, (Isa. 32 : 20,) in which is included that of availing themselves of suitable times and places, (especially where there is an open door,) and of improving all opportunities. I therefore hope that no one will take it ill of me that I have taken occasion from the earthquake which occurred here and elsewhere, as in Pennsylvania and New-England, to move my hearers to godliness and stir them up to repentance.

I am now about 46 years old, and already in the twentieth year of my ministry, having been ordained to my office A. D. 1717, at Ernden, in East-Friesland;* but have never, to my knowledge, previously to this, felt an earthquake. By this I was awaked out of sleep, which was a source of gratification rather than of regret to me, inasmuch as it afforded me occasion for varied meditation, leading me to think of the duty of watching, that I might not be reckoned among those shepherds of whom the Lord complains, (Isa. 63 : 10,) "His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they can not bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber;" and of "Crying aloud, lifting up my voice like a trumpet, show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. (Isa. 58 : 1.)

I also anticipated judgments, and was led to consider what subject would now be suitable for the congregation. On this occasion these two sermons were preached, and are now published for general edification.

It is true, and we acknowledge it with thankfulness, the Church is provided with an abundance of stirring discourses by pious divines, and could readily dispense with ours; but should they increase the number of them they will do no injury, for I depart not from the rule of faith

* By Johannes Brunius.

no orthodox person will here detect heresy. In addition to this, there are no personal allusions here. As for cavillers, we give ourselves no trouble respecting them, since (through the help of the Lord,) we have been a considerable time in the service, and therefore expect, with all humility, to take the same liberty as other ministers.

Dear reader, peruse with regard to the injunction of the word of God, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. 5 : 21.)

It will, I hope, prove irksome to no one that there is some similarity in matter and expression in the two discourses. They were delivered in two different churches. This is also the consequence of similarity in the subjects. (Phil. 3 : 1,) "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

The God of grace favor us with the grace properly to observe his ways, to the end that thereby we may be stirred up to "serve him with fear and rejoice with trembling. (Ps. 2 : 11.)

I am your servant and real well-wisher in the work of the Gospel.

T. J. FRELINGHUYSEN.

RARITAN, NEW-JERSEY, *Feb. 20, O. S., 1738.*

I.

The Earthquake Improved:

FIRST DISCOURSE, HAVING REFERENCE TO FEARFUL OCCURRENCES IN THE AIR AND UPON THE EARTH AS EMBLEMS OF JUDGMENTS ABOUT TO COME UPON THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH.

“AND there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.”—REV. 16 : 18.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion,” is the command, beloved hearers, Joel 2 : 15. Trumpets or horns were variously used among the Israelites, serving,

1. To assemble and convoke the people for the joyful observance of the appointed feasts. (Ps. 98 : 5, 6 ; Joel 2 : 15, 16 ; Ps. 84 : 3.) “Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, at the time appointed on her solemn feast-days.” Add to these Matt. 23 : 41 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 52 ; Rev. 18 : 22.

2. To assemble the army, and to serve as a signal to march and to go forth to war and conflict, and to stimulate them. And they were thus a symbol of consternation and destruction, as we read in the book of Judges. When the trumpets were blown by Gideon

and his men, the Midianites were put to flight and slaughtered. "Blow ye the trumpet, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble." (Joel 2 : 12.)

3. It was the duty of watchmen upon walls and in towers, in case of danger and the approach of an enemy, to blow the trumpets and warn the people. (Ezek. 33 : 3-6.) Ministers are watchmen upon the walls of Zion; and when the Lord God shows by plagues and judgments that his wrath is revealed from the high heavens, and when carelessness and profound corruption prevail, it is their duty to apply the trumpet to their mouths, cry aloud, spare not, lift up their voice like a trumpet, Isa. 58 : 1; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season, 2 Tim. 4 : 2.

Since God, who is a righteous Judge, and is angry every day, has recently warned us by an earthquake, we shall step aside from the matter which we have at present under consideration, and as appropriate to the occasion, dwell upon the words which have been read.

This chapter contains an account of the pouring out of the vials, or cups, or bottles, (as a certain translation has it;) that is the infliction of the heavy judgments and plagues, the execution of which was enjoined in the first verse; the first of which had reference to the earth; the second to the sea; the third to the rivers and fountains of waters, (upon the occurrence of which the righteousness of God was extolled with songs of praise;) the fourth to the sun; the fifth to the throne of the beast, notwithstanding which men repented not; the sixth upon the great river Euphrates; and lastly, the seventh vial is poured out into the air. (Verses 17-21.)

We have here the pouring out itself, verse 17, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne saying, It is done." The air is that portion of creation which is nearest the earth, encompassing sea and rivers, which thus far had remained untouched; which is of the widest extent; every thing occurring in which can be seen by all; which subserves the purpose of breathing, the grand support of common life. This must not be understood literally, but figuratively, as signifying the completeness of the divine judgment; its extension to all degenerate foes of God and his cause wherever they may be, so that they shall not be able to escape; and that this shall be manifest to the whole world. The seventh vial brings all things, and consequently the whole Antichristian world, to a consummation, and is said to be poured out into the air, since the air is essential to life, and Satan (with divine permission) there holds his sway. (Eph. 2 : 2.)

All this is confirmed by what follows, which is,

1. An audible voice: "And there came (to intimate the earnestness of the speaker and the importance of the thing declared) a great voice out of the temple of heaven," or God's heavenly habitation, nay, "from the throne," God's glorious seat, in that celestial temple, before seen and described by John, and which differed much from the other parts of the temple. It is thus the voice of God, the Judge of all; a voice significant of something hitherto kept secret, but yet true and holy. Thus John hears it saying, "It is done," that is, all is completed, which, according to the word

of God, was to take place in the world. "It is done," that, namely, which relates to the judgments and plagues to be poured out by the vials upon the enemies of God, which terminated in these last, and which consequently related to the Antichristian world, and all other enemies of the Church, whose end shall come at the pouring out of this last vial. "It is done;" plagues upon Antichrist and the enemies of the Church have an end! The meaning is, the last plague, which shall effect the destruction of the enemies of the church, standeth at the door: "And he said unto me, It is done," Rev. 21 : 6; as Christ said, "It is finished." (John 19 : 30.)

2. It is also confirmed by actual results set forth under certain emblems, being terrific phenomena in the air and upon the earth; in the words of our text, "And there were voices, thunders," etc., expressive of great and fearful judgments—words appropriate to the present occasion, since for a long time there have not only here been wonderful appearances in the sky, but we have recently experienced a great earthquake. Oh, that our hearts quaked and that we came trembling to the Lord and his goodness! The signs and terrible exhibitions brought under notice by the text are two-fold, so that the words divide themselves into two parts, having reference,

I. To the signs in the air: "Voices, thunders, and lightning."

II. To those upon earth: "A great earthquake."

I. In the air, there would be most terrible exhibitions of voices, thunders, and lightnings. We can here bring into comparison Rev. 4 : 5; 8 : 5; 10 : 3;

11 : 19, in allusion to the giving of the law, Ex. 19 : 16, when there were "thunders, lightnings, the sound of a great trumpet, and an earthquake."

1. "Voices," properly an audible sound. We read of various voices in this holy book: of a voice as loud as a trumpet, 1 : 10; of one as loud as the sound of many waters, verse 15; here, of "voices," significant of a distinct sound, tokens and emblems of God's almighty power; majesty, and also his awful and inevitable wrath upon his enemies.

2. "Thunders." We shall not here philosophize. What thunder is, is better learned from experience than from any account which can be given of it: it is that sound which, proceeding from lightning, as it comes bursting and tearing from the clouds, is heard now cracking, now rumbling, now reverberating, now in few, now in many peals: therefore, "thunders," in the plural number. It is preceded by and associated with

3. "Lightnings." These are those dazzling flashes which proceed with a loud report from the clouds, otherwise denominated coals of fire, (Ps. 18 : 13.) With great minuteness does the Word of God speak of these thunders and lightnings, declaring that they proceed from and out of heaven, 1 Sam 2 : 10, and thus as it were come forth from the throne of God, Matt. 24 : 27; that they are formed in dense or heavy clouds. (Ps. 77 : 17, 18.) The principal matter of them is fire. (Job 37 : 2; Ps. 97 : 3, 4.) The author of these thunders and lightnings is the almighty God; for it is the light of the Lord that is here seen, Job 37 : 3; they are his lightnings, Ps. 97 : 4; it is God's

thunder which is heard, Job 37 : 4 ; it is his voice which is upon the waters. "The God of glory thundereth," and is powerful and full of majesty, Ps. 29 : 3, 4 ; a voice of his excellency with which he roars and thunders marvellously, Job 37 : 4, 5 ; for the thunder (or the greatness and awfulness of his power) who can understand. (Job 26 : 14.) The nature and effects of thunders and lightnings are, that they light the world, purify the air, terrify, astonish, discompose, perturb, and cause its inhabitants to shake and quake, prostrate towers, trees, and habitations, and damage and destroy beasts and men.

In the Revelations of John, thunders and lightnings come under notice figuratively and emblematically. At the opening of the first seal there was also heard a voice as of thunder, Rev. 6 : 1, intended to excite notice and produce reverence, and significant of the manner in which the sound of the Gospel would proceed, to the terror of many through the length and breadth of the whole world, from the mouths of the sons of thunder, Mark 3 : 17, who would preach, exhort, threaten, contend with, and announce judgments upon men. The voice of great thunder, Rev. 14 : 2 ; 19 : 6, represents the greatness of the rejoicing of the believers. Voices, thunders, and lightnings, accompanied with an earthquake, also occurred, when the angel cast the fire of the altar upon the earth, Rev. 8 : 5, signifying fearful judgments which would visit the enemies of God and his Church, as thunders and lightnings fill men with fear. Seven thunders uttered their voices, not described by John, but he sealed that which they had uttered, Rev. 10 : 3, 4, signifying ex-

ceedingly great and heavy judgments, but which, since they were not described, would serve for the greater exercise of the faith, hope, and patience of the pious, and the hardening of the ungodly.

Our text, finally, observes that these voices, thunders, and lightnings were "heard and seen" in the air—when the seventh angel poured out his vial into it; by which we need not understand violent cries of murder, nor the sound of the preaching of the Gospel, or the glorious results of the same; but this fearful commotion in the heavens represents, and is a delineation of, God's heaviest and most dreadful wrath upon the Babylon of Antichrist and all enemies of the Church; which judgments will be particularly exhibited when God shall gloriously reveal himself at the last day. The annotators say that by these voices, thunders, and lightnings, are to be understood the signs which will precede the last judgment, as they are also declared, Matt. 24, Luke 21, Mark 13, 2 Pet. 3 : 10. The earth will be affected as well as the air; for the fearful occurrence which will take place upon the earth is an earthquake, the subject of the second portion of our text:

II. "And there was a great earthquake," etc.

The tokens are reduced to two classes, those in the air, (as has already been shown,) and those on the earth; for there was an earthquake.

1. "An earthquake," being a shaking or commotion of the earth, which is terrible in its nature, and has great power to affect the consciences of men; by which houses are sometimes prostrated, human beings and whole cities are destroyed, as is frequently the

case in Italy and Eastern lands, of which we have an example in the recent destruction of a large part of Smyrna, which has been as it were swallowed up, as well as in the West Indies, where the greater part of Jamaica was once for the most part destroyed by earthquakes, as some of you must be able to remember. At various periods, slight earthquakes have been also experienced here, although (as I have been informed) without injury; but upon the past Wednesday, at about eleven o'clock at night, there was here a great earthquake, or at least greater than usual, since by means of it our doors, windows, beds, and houses were shaken, and our china and tin-ware rattled. Frequently do we read of earthquakes on the sacred pages both of the Old and of the New Testament: When the law was given upon Mount Sinai, the earth quaked, Ex. 19, to which Paul has reference, Heb. 12 : 26, and David, Ps. 68 : 8. "The earth shook." And under the New Testament, at the death of Christ, the earth quaked. (Matt. 27.) At the resurrection of the same there was a great earthquake, (Mark 16, foretold Ps. 18 : 7.) Not only was this a proof of the Godhead of Christ, but also of the wrath of God against the Jews, and an emblem of the dissolution of their state, the destruction of their city and temple, the abolition of their ceremonial system, and the establishment, in their place, of an unchangeable mode of worship. After the ascension of Christ, when the apostles were assembled and prayed, (Acts 4 : 31,) the place was shaken. When Paul and Silas sang praises, there was a great earthquake; and before and

at the last judgment there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. (Matt. 24 : 7.)

An earthquake serves to terrify ; for when there was a great earthquake, the watchmen fled through fear. (Matt. 27.) So, here, the earthquake is a symbol of God's terrible wrath ; for through his indignation the earth trembles and the nations can not endure his displeasure, and by it the ungodly will be so terrified that they will weep, howl, and mourn, (Matt. 24,) and the world and earth be made to pass away at the last day.

This earthquake is further described as having been

2. "A great" one. How dreadful this shaking ! It is therefore called great, nay, so great that many words can scarcely express it, and such as has not been since men were upon the earth, whether from the creation or within the remembrance of man, namely, such and so great an earthquake ; with which expression we can compare Dan. 12 : 1, "And at that time there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." Thus, then, by the voices, thunders, lightnings, and great earthquake, are to be understood the most serious troubles and heaviest judgments, and the greatest terror, amazement, trembling and confusion, with the entire destruction and annihilation of Antichrist, and all the enemies of the Church both before and at the last judgment, including the inconceivably grievous punishment of hell. That there will be many judgments inflicted upon Antichrist appears from the Revelation. Of these some have already been accomplished, but the last,

namely, its entire annihilation, and full execution of the threatened judgment, is still in the future. The words of the text, therefore, are well suited to the object of St. John, which was to declare the execution of the seven last plagues, with the utter ruin of the enemies of the Church, and especially that Babylon would be overthrown and brought down to hell, there for ever to drink of the cup of the wrath of God. Accordingly, verses 19, 20, it was said, "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came to remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

That various frightful tokens and evils will precede the last judgment, appears from the Revelation of John, and the words of Christ himself, already adduced; for although the Lord hath concealed from us the precise time, he has yet stated in his word various tokens which will precede the coming of Christ, the greater part of which have already occurred: as the power of delusion through many heretics and false prophets; a falling away; bloody wars; thunders, earthquakes, floods, famines; dreadful persecutions; general carelessness and ungodliness; the preaching of the Gospel over the whole earth; the revelation of Antichrist. That the day of judgment will be a fearful day appears from its name, and the description of it—it is the great and terrible day—and from the terrible signs which shall precede and accompany it; for when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of

God, there will be dreadful amazement in heaven and upon earth. Jesus the judge will appear in great glory, with many thousands of angels, in the clouds, before the eyes of all, Rev. 1 : 7 ; whereupon the dead will be raised and with the living cited before the judgment-seat. This the Judge himself teaches us, Matt. 24 : 29-31. The Judge shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd does his sheep. He shall set the righteous on his right hand, and the wicked on his left. (Matt. 25.) Upon this will follow an investigation, and that of an exceedingly minute character, as by means of a certain book. (Rev. 20 : 12.) The verdict will then be delivered, and this in the most delightful words with reference to the righteous : "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;" but terribly will he say in his wrath to the wicked on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ;" upon which the execution will immediately follow. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

APPLICATION.

Come hither, ye careless, at ease in sin, ye carnal and earthly-minded, ye unchaste, whoremongers, adulterers, ye proud, haughty men and women, ye devotees of pleasure, drunkards, gamblers, ye disobedient, ye wicked rejecters of the Gospel, ye hypocrites and dissemblers, how suppose ye that it will go with you ? That great and terrible day will be a fearful

day to you, a day of anguish and distress, when your sins of thought, word, and deed will be brought to light, and you judged on account of them. "For the day cometh that shall burn as an oven," and then shall all the proud, and all that do wickedly, be as stubble; the day that cometh shall burn them up. (Mal. 4 : 1.) Then shall that come upon you which is written, Isa. 33 : 14, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Tell me, I beseech you, when the elements shall melt and pass away, when the earth and the things that are therein shall be burnt up, 2 Pet. 3; when all things shall be wrapt in fire and flame, where will ye appear? Whither then? The period of grace has concluded. All earthly satisfaction ceaseth. Your agonies and pains as to soul and body have no end; for ye shall be cast into that lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever, where your worm dieth not and your fire is not quenched. Then may you call to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, to the hills, Cover us and hide us from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come. (Rev. 6 : 16, 17; Luke 23 : 30.)

Can thunder and lightning cause you to shake? Did the earthquake cause you to tremble? How then at that day? Like Belshazzar, Dan. 5 : 6, "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed

and his knees smote one against another." Is it not greatly to be wondered at, that you can be careless respecting this day, and that whilst the immovable earth, set fast by the divine hand, quakes, you notwithstanding remain unmoved? The devils tremble in view of this day; Felix is filled with exceeding great fear, but who among us is moved to the exercise of faith, by the terror of the Lord? It is an evil token when one lives in sin and yet trembles not at that great judgment; the more when he is warned by terrible signs in the heavens or upon the earth. Awake, therefore, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Eph. 5 : 14.) Behold, whither art thou going? Awake, awake, stand up, Jerusalem, ere thou have drunk at the hand of the Lord, of the cup of his fury. (Isa. 51 : 17.) Awake, ye drunkards! Weep and howl, all ye drinkers of wine. (Joel 1 : 5.) What else canst thou expect, if thou remain unconverted, but to drink fire and brimstone. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night until wine inflame them. (Isa. 5 : 11.)

Tremble, ye cursers and swearers, reflect that you will not have a drop of cold water to cool your accursed tongues, when you shall be in flames, and gnaw upon your tongues for pain.

Be filled with terror, ye impure swine, adulterers and whoremongers, and consider that without true repentance ye shall soon be with the impure devils; for I announce a fire hotter than that of Sodom and Gomorrah to all that burn in their vile lusts; not a place to set a foot upon for the dogs in the New Jerusalem,

into which there shall not enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abominations, or maketh a lie, but they only who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21 : 27.) Awake, ye miserly wretches, unmerciful Nabals, and read the language of James, chapter 5 : 1-6, Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth ; and the cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you. Know then, that ye unrighteous and covetous, who are idolaters, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Awake, ye civil ones, who engage in your religious performances to be seen of men ; formal and almost Christians, apers of the pious in their discourse, who wish to be considered as of the number of the pious ; ye who creep in among them ; ye who have a form, but are strangers to the power of godliness, and " Be not deceived, God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Hear the words of Christ himself: " For I say unto you that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the

Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5 : 20.)

Awake ye all, who are still in a Christless unconverted state. Are ye not ashamed and astonished that the earth trembles and ye remain careless and unmoved. For

1. The earth trembles because our hearts tremble not, and we flee not trembling to the Lord and his goodness.

2. The hard fixed earth trembles, and herewith upbraids us with being more insensible than itself—harder than rocks, which are frequently torn asunder by earthquakes.

3. The earth trembles, thus upbraiding us with our earthly-mindedness—that we mind earthly things, and shall be written in the earth, according to the threatening, Jer. 17 : 13, "O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth," that is they shall be lightly esteemed, and being apostate or remaining unconverted shall be condemned. Such also is the comment of our learned annotators upon the passage. Christ (say they) says the names of his disciples are written in heaven; the apostate, on the other hand, it is here said shall be written in the earth; that although upon the earth they are among the people of God, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and besides in general, externally reckoned among the members of the Church, and sometimes constituting the greater portion of them, they yet do not belong to the number of the elect, and shall have no place in heaven, but be reckoned among those

whose only portion is upon earth, and that their memory shall perish from the earth, even as that which is written in earth is readily effaced.

4. The earth trembles and opens its mouth, and threatens to consume us with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, unless we repent; as frequently whole cities, villages, and habitations, with their inhabitants, have sunk and been swallowed up by the earth, as in our remembrance has been the case in Italy and Turkey.

Hearers, will ye not fear the Lord and tremble at his presence? according to Jeremiah 5 : 22; for that in true conversion and the course of the Christian life, there is included and required a holy trembling, appears from Phil. 2 : 12, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and from the example of the penitent, as the jailor, Acts 16 : 29; Paul, Acts 9 : 6, "They trembled and were astonished;" the penitent Jews, Hos. 3 : 5, 11 : 12, and even in the established children of God. Daniel trembled by reason of holy awe before the Lord. Job says, "At this also my heart trembleth." (Job 37 : 1.)

Awake then ye sinners, men and women; be moved, cast down yourselves before the Lord, tremble before his dread majesty, tremble at his word. Upon such will the Lord look: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66 : 2.)

Tremble at his judgments: "The hair of my head is risen up through terror and I am afraid of thy judgments." (Ps. 119 : 120.) Come to the Lord, bowing down trembling with penitent Israel, "Wherewith shall I appear before the Lord and bow myself before

the high God," Mic. 6 : 6 ; and like the woman who had touched the Lord Jesus, knowing what was done in her, "But the woman fearing and trembling came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth." (Mark 5 : 33.)

1. Consider your insignificance and unworthiness. That man is so proud, arises hence, that he knows not his own nothingness. Contemplate thyself, O proud man ! What art thou ? Dust and ashes as to what is natural : "All the nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance," Isa. 40 : 15 ; and spiritually children of wrath. Have you not then reason to tremble before the Lord, and with Abraham to exclaim : "Behold I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord who am but dust and ashes." (Gen. 18 : 27.)

2. Learn to know your guilt. Oh ! did you but see your sins ! as the servant, who owed ten thousand talents fell down before his lord, Matt. 18 : 21-26 ; you would be led to tremble and fall down before the Lord, exclaiming, "My God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God ; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. (Ezra 9 : 6.) This caused the poor Publican to be so dismayed that he stood afar off, and would not lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smiting upon his breast said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18 : 13.)

I pray you then turn from your evil ways. Should you not, when the Lord is showing by signs in heaven above and in the earth beneath that he is angry with us, and that we are living in the last days ? If Peter

already in his day, could say, the end of all things is at hand, how much more may that be said now? The judge standeth at the door. Besides every day brings the end nearer, and as death leaves man so will judgment find him. Therefore to-day while ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts. If ye refuse to turn to the Lord, heaven and earth will witness against you; the wonders of heaven, and tokens upon earth will condemn you. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live. (Deut. 30 : 19.)

Up, up, let the truly pious, exhorting one another, say: the more, since they have reason to acknowledge that they live at too great a distance from the Lord. "Come let us return unto the Lord for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. (Hos. 6 : 1.)

I conclude with the words of Ps. 2 : 11, 12, Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. *Amen.*

*Delivered at Six Mile Run, }
11th December, O. S., 1737. }*

II.

The Earthquake Improved :

BEING A DECLARATION OF THE POWER OF GOD AS
MANIFESTED IN THE EARTHQUAKE.

“WHO shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.”—JOB 9 : 6.

INTRODUCTION.

“PREACH the Word ; be instant in season, and out of season : reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” Thus exhorts Paul his beloved son Timothy. (2 Tim. 4 : 2.)

PREACHING, a work of great importance, is, as a messenger of God, in his name, and as the mouth of the Lord, to speak with uplifted voice to the congregation, by the assistance and help of the Holy Ghost. What should Timothy preach? The Word, as given by inspiration from God ; profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction ; as a fire and hammer ; as quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword ; as the power of God unto salvation. The manner : be instant *in season*, and out of season ; urge, nay, compel

them to come in. (Luke 14 : 23.) Improve all fit occasions ; for a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. (Prov. 25 : 11.) *Out of season* : by the use of this word the Apostle designed to urge upon Timothy the duty of constantly and zealously persevering in his work, without neglecting any occasion or opportunity, although it might not be altogether suitable to his own convenience, or his hearers might imagine it was not convenient for them to listen to his exhortation. Thus Paul prolonged his discourse until midnight. (Acts 20 : 7.)

Since, now, a servant of Jesus Christ, preaching the kingdom of God, for which he is sent forth, in accordance with Luke 9, must not only persevere, but avail himself of every opportunity, we have been unwilling to leave the recent earthquake unnoticed, but have endeavored to improve it, by dwelling upon suitable texts, as was done on the preceding Lord's day in another church, and shall now again be done, with heart lifted up to the Lord for his assistance. For this purpose the words which have been read afford suitable matter.

Upright Job acknowledges the righteousness of God. (Verse 1.) This is an answer to the reasoning of Bildad. He shows that it is profitable to no one to contend with God. "How should man be just with God?" that is, no one will be found free from guilt and ill-desert. (Ps. 143 : 2 ; 130 : 2.) "If he will contend with him, he can not answer him one of a thousand." (Verse 3.) Should God enter into judgment with man, he would be found guilty and condemned.

(Rom. 3 : 19. See also Prov. 24 : 16.) To this end he states some proofs and properties of the wisdom and power of God. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. He who hardens himself against the Lord, instead of peace must expect his wrath and displeasure. The first proof of the power of God is stated, "Who removeth the mountains;" the second in the words of our text, "Who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble," words suitable to the present time, inasmuch as we have just experienced an earthquake. We notice in the same two parts.

I. The token of God's power, "Who shaketh the earth." And

II. The consequence of it, "And the pillars thereof tremble."

I. 1. The author of the event here spoken of is God specified, (verse 2,) the same who is afterwards said to be wise in heart, and mighty in strength. El Gibbor, the mighty God, having power with which he can accomplish all things, doing what seemeth him good, nothing being impossible with him; nothing too wonderful; all that he pleases he irresistibly executes. Our God is in the heavens; he doeth whatsoever he pleases; his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back. Since the earth is set fast, (Ps. 65,) no one can shake it but the Almighty.

2. "Who shaketh the *earth*," that is, the dry land. That portion of the world which is inhabited—for "the heaven is the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men"—is divided into four parts, known by the names of Asia, Africa, Europe, and

America ; it brings forth many things, as is shown at length in Ps. 104 ; it teaches the providence of God, for it is full of God's goodness. "How manifold are thy works ! In wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches." It hangs upon nothing, that is, according to the opinion of philosophers, upon the air, which is almost as subtile and unsubstantial. Our annotators say upon this passage, the earth is sustained by nothing but the exceeding great power of God. It is spherical : the circle of the heavens is hence spoken of, Isa. 40 : 22. That it is stationary, and the sun revolves, has been shown by many divines from the sacred Scriptures. It was created to be given to the children of men, to be inhabited with this great design, that his name might be excellent in all the earth, (Ps. 8 : 2,) and that he might there form a people to show forth his praise. It is therefore provided with all things necessary for the support of man and beast. "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." (Ps. 36 : 6.) It is immovably established : "The world also is established that it can not be moved." (Ps. 93 : 5.) It is established upon its foundations, so that it shall never, while time shall last, be removed, (Ps. 104 : 5,) but continue according to his ordinances, (Ps. 119 : 90, 91.) Yet it is occasionally subject to shaking and quaking through the almighty power of God. Thus here : Who

3. "Shaketh the earth." By this we understand an earthquake, which is an agitation of the earth, being that shaking which is calculated to fill with terror, especially those who have evil consciences, and which sometimes prostrates the habitations of men,

and causes whole cities to perish. It is the design of Job, here, to express especial tokens of the power of God, of which the shaking of the whole or a part of the earth is by no means the most insignificant, and which has to some extent been experienced in many portions of the world. The learned divide earthquakes into those which are natural, and those which are supernatural. Those which are natural proceed from natural causes. The earth is full of combustible matter; not only wood, turf, coal, but also brimstone and sulphur, as appears from the volcanic mountains, Vesuvius in Italy, Etna in Sicily, Hecla in Iceland, and others. When, now, this oily, sulphureous matter in the bowels of the earth becomes ignited, it seeks an opening, whence arises an agitation of the earth, as is very frequently experienced in countries which are in the neighborhood of volcanoes.

Those which are supernatural occur whenever God, without natural means, causes the earth to shake, as was the case at the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, Ex. 19; Ps. 68; at the death of the Saviour, Matt. 27 : 5; and at his resurrection, Matt. 28 : 2. Patient Job seems here to speak of a supernatural commotion of the earth; and since the basis of this country is rocky, the earthquake which recently occurred here, seems to have been supernatural, and intended to signify that the wrath of God is revealed from high heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, Rom. 1 : 18; and plagues and judgments are about to come upon us and the inhabitants of this land for our wickedness. (Ps.

107 : 34.) The consequence of this earthquake was as follows :

II. "That the pillars thereof trembled." A great earthquake causes a violent agitation. Our inspired speaker ascribes to the earth

"*Pillars :*" which are supports, columns, sub-strata, foundations, upon which the earth is established. (Ps. 104 : 5.) By these pillars commentators understand the waters on which the earth is founded. Hereby we are given to understand the steadfastness of the earth ; "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the flood." (Ps. 24 : 2.) When the Lord produces an earthquake the steadfastness of the earth is affected.

II. "That the pillars thereof tremble," that is, are moved, and to such an extent that perhaps houses are engulfed, nay, whole cities swallowed up. Frequently does the word of God make mention of earthquakes, both under the Old and New Testament, besides the instances which have already been mentioned, when Israel passed through the Red Sea, Ps. 77 : 18 ; also Ps. 114 : 4, 7, "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord." When the Lord revealed himself to Elijah, an earthquake previously occurred. (1 Kings 19 : 11.) In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, there was an earthquake. (Amos 1 : 1 ; 1 Zech. 14 : 5.) Under the New Testament when the apostles prayed, (Acts 4,) and Paul and Pulas sang praises. (Acts 16 : 15, 26.) Fearful signs, and among them earthquakes shall precede the judgment. (Matt. 24 : 7.) In the Revelation of John we

find mention made of earthquakes, though figuratively, and as emblems of fearful signs and judgments which would come upon the enemies of God and his Church. In sacred and profane histories we also find frequent mention of earthquakes; of the fact, for example, that some of the cities of Asia, to which John addressed his Revelation, perished by means of them, and of Colosse, that, forsaking the holy truths delivered to it by Paul, and lending an ear to vile seducers immediately after Paul's decease, during the reign of the emperor Nero, it, in company with Laodicea and Hierapolis, was overthrown by an earthquake. God thus righteously swallowed up in the earth those who refused either to enter or to continue in the way to heaven, so faithfully pointed out to them.

In profane history we find frequent allusion made to earthquakes; (cast your eyes but for a moment over the table of contents of the histories of S. de Vries;) and in Turkey there is frequently much devastation caused by them. But recently a large portion of Smyrna has been destroyed by them. In Italy, likewise, at Mount Vesuvius, situated in the vicinity of the city of Naples, much injury was done by a great earthquake, and many human beings miserably perished, on which occasion the Papists, (oh! poor, degenerate race!) instituted many processions. In the West Indies, as many of you, doubtless, remember, the island of Jamaica for the most part perished by an earthquake. Anno 1727, the neighboring province of New-England was visited by an earthquake, on which occasion the distinguished Dr. Cotton Mather

issued a small essay, under the title of "The Terror of the Lord," with remarks on earthquakes, an edifying and godly work. In this land light earthquakes have also occasionally been felt, although hitherto with no injurious effects; but on the 7th of December there was one which set in commotion doors and windows, chairs and houses, and was noticed through the whole land.

Since an earthquake is an unusual effect of the power of God, serving to inspire with terror, as we perceive in the watchmen, (Matt. 28,) who fled, and became as dead men, it is employed as a symbol of the wrath of God, Ps. 18 : 7, "The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved, and were shaken because he was wroth;" and Joel 3 : 16, "The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and the heavens and the earth shall shake." The effect, therefore, which an earthquake should have upon us, is to lead us to repentance, to cause us to fear the Almighty, and to glorify him. "And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." (Rev. 11 : 13; Compare with this Luke 24 : 5, 37.) Even as the extraordinary operations of God, above all the righteous displays of his wrath, can affect and soften the hardest hearts, although there are many who now, like Pharaoh, harden their hearts amidst so many wonders and plagues. It is hence added, "And gave glory to the God of heaven," who there holds his throne, and who had now caused his mighty voice to be heard,

that he might be distinguished from all earthly gods : some but outwardly acknowledging his hand in these things, and others really humbling themselves and turning to him, thus honoring and glorifying him.

This, now, was suited to the purpose of pious Job, which was to adduce tokens of the power of God in proof of the fact, that he is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, and that no one who hardens himself against him shall prosper—who removeth mountains, who shaketh the earth—surely a proof of Almighty power, for who can shake the earth but its Maker? Let this suffice for a brief opening of the words of the text. We must now seek to improve them.

The almighty power of Him who removeth the mountains, who shaketh the earth so that the pillars thereof tremble, should fill with terror you openly ungodly, as adulterers, whoremongers, drunkards, misers, dishonest persons—all in whom the works of the flesh are manifest, who are enumerated by St. Paul. (Gal. 5 : 19–22.) Remaining unconverted you shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21 : 8.) Ye ignorant persons, who have not a knowledge of the divine truths, which must be known, believed, and confessed, ye are still graceless : your ignorance is a clear proof of it. A soul without knowledge is not good : therefore evil. If you persist in your ignorance you will perish ; for the Lord, with flaming fire, will take vengeance upon them that know not God, and upon them who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. (2 Thess. 1 : 8, 9.)

You, ye careless ones, who live at ease, as if there were no death, resurrection, heaven or hell to be expected; who upon insufficient grounds assure yourselves of heaven. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria." (Amos. 6 : 1.) When you shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon you, as pain upon a woman in travail. (1 Thess. 5 : 3.)

You also, ye earthly minded, who mind earthly things, walking according to your carnal desires, who are set upon the things of this life, and make provision for naught but present gratification. (Rom. 13 : 14.) Woe unto you, ye of this world! When you shall have had your portion with the rich man in this life, then your good things will have passed away: dying, you will, with him, go to hell, be stripped of all things, and suffer pain and anguish under the intolerable wrath of the Almighty, "Whose end is destruction." (Phil. 3 : 19.) No less should the almighty power of God fill with terror you, ye obstinate, ye obdurate, who heed neither warnings nor judgments, but persist recklessly in your sins, making your faces harder than a rock. The servants of Christ cease not to rebuke you: they threaten you with the wrath of God; they affectingly propose to you the terror of the Lord, and that in more than one tongue, and even with tears in their eyes; in a word, they pipe to you, to allure and woo you; they mourn to you, but ye remain insensible, and lament not. But woe unto you! "He who hardeneth his heart shall suddenly fall into mischief;" for "He is wise in heart and mighty in

strength who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" (Job. 9 : 4.)

Ye civil and outwardly religious persons, ye also have reason to fear. Ye who live morally and correctly, so that nothing can be alleged against your outward conduct, and in addition, make an appearance of piety. But of this you make your Christ. Upon this you rest ; on this you found your expectations of heaven. But, ah ! poor souls, you deceive yourselves ! Hear the words of Christ himself : " Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5 : 20.) " Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter in, but he that doeth the will of my heavenly Father."

Above all should the almightiness of Jehovah trouble you, ye hypocrites, and dissemblers, who assume the appearance of godliness, sigh and lament, associating yourselves with the pious to obtain honor and esteem, and the promotion of your worldly interests, in the meantime deceiving men, and being conscious that you are not before God such as you are before men, who outwardly exhibit yourselves differently from what you are inwardly, having more regard for the externals than the essence and power of godliness ; who as many masters despise and judge others, but flatter and overlook yourselves—beholding the moat in another's eye, but not perceiving the beam in your own ; who from custom and affectation complain of the corruption and degeneracy of the Church ; presuming to direct ministers what and how they should preach, having something to say upon every preacher

and discourse. (See Brakel, vol. 2, ch. 1, sec. 24.) Ye are those who creep in among the people of God, the chaff upon the threshing-floor, the tares among the wheat. Wo, wo, wo, unto you, ye hypocrites! No more horrible monster than a hypocrite—no hotter hell than for a hypocrite, whose portion is where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 24 : 51.)

The almighty power of God should also serve to alarm you who are but in general convinced of sin—who live under the conviction of an awakened conscience—who by the preaching of the word of God, and common operations of the Spirit, are convinced that remaining thus you can not enter heaven, and who yet remain destitute of renewing grace. How often have you been informed by ministers and the pious, especially those who are elders and helpers, that conviction is not conversion. But if ye quench the Spirit, if your convictions pass away as a morning cloud, if you become more careless and hardened, if you return with the dog and the washed sow, it were better that you had never known the way of righteousness, than that, having known it, you turned again from the holy commandment, 2 Pet. 2 : 21 ; all your convictions will, as so many coals of juniper, render the worm of your conscience intolerable.

Tremble also, ye that have turned aside from the good way, ye that have discontinued religious practices, ye who were wont to come out for the truth, who appeared moved, who acted religiously, so that we began to entertain a hope of better things respecting

you ; woe unto you, for he that turneth aside is an abomination to the Lord.

The almighty power of our El Gibbor should also be subservient to your perturbation, almost Christians, who are not far from the kingdom of God, who walk with Christians and seek with Christians, but not in a right manner ; many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. (Compare herewith 1 Cor. 19 : 21.) In short, the almighty power of God should fill with terror those who, under all the means of grace, under all the blessings of heaven, under all plagues and judgments, and amidst all signs and wonders in heaven and upon earth, remain graceless, without an actual change, the old man, without spirit and life ; so that the fear of God is not before their eyes, and the way of peace they have not known ; according to Rom. 3 : 17.

Fear and tremble ye ungodly, natural men ; for this almighty God is your adversary ; ye can not hold out against him, and there is no hiding-place, nor refuge to protect you, nor to deliver you out of his hand. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 'Tis true you are here at ease and quiet with Lais, unconcerned with the old man, as if you had made a covenant with death, and were at agreement with hell. Although here you sport with the messengers of God who warn you, although you put far off the evil day, seeking to expel from your heart fear of the judgment of God, when the trumpet of a mighty voice shall sound, it will not fail to awake you. How will you then be terrified, shake and tremble ! When the Lord himself shall descend from heaven as a dreadful tempest, with the voice of the archangel,

with the trump of God, and there shall be a commotion in the heaven and upon earth, voices, thunders, and earthquakes—when the last trumpet shall sound, arise ye dead; come to judgment—when you shall be summoned before the judgment seat of Christ—(Adam, where art thou?) then, trembling shall you make your appearance; then shall your sins, even those secret ones, over which you would now blush for shame, did you think that they were known to men, be brought to light; then shall the great judge pierce you through with his all-seeing eyes, and say to you in his wrath: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25 : 41.) Therefore, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee life.” (Eph. 5 : 14.) “Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.” (Isa. 13 : 6.) “Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones.” (Isa. 32 : 9, 11.) Should you not? for the earth is moved, in order that we might be moved by the terror of the Lord to faith, and fleeing come to the Lord and his goodness, as upon the previous Lord’s day I adduced.

’Tis true there is a natural and affected trembling, as in the Friends, therefore called Quakers; there is a slavish fear like that of Felix, but we have now in view a holy trembling, such as is found in the truly converted as we have already shown. (Add Hag. 2 : 6, 7.)

Come then, ye sinful men and women; awake,

awake, be troubled, stand up, O Jerusalem. (Isa. 51 : 17.)

1. Consider your insignificance. Let also the pious mourn and sigh on account of their pride, as they have abundant occasion.

2. Learn to know your guilt.

3. Acknowledge the majesty and almighty power of God. Here we children of men are at a fault; we comprehend not the exalted sovereignty, the most perfect purity, and the most pure righteousness of the great God; for the sinner will not behold the majesty of the Lord. (Isa. 26 : 10.) Behold God is great, and we know him not, said Elihu. (Job 26 : 36.) He who has an impression of the greatness of God must tremble, and laying his hand upon his mouth say, Behold, I am vile. (Job 40 : 4.) Who must not with Jeremiah exclaim: "Who would not fear thee?" (Jer. 10 : 7.)

4. Add to this a prayer to the Father of Lights for enlightened eyes of understanding.

5. Consider, further, how improper and horrible is insensibility to so many benefits, to so many warnings, reproofs, and supplications. Hence it is that our sin is not only unfaithfulness and unthankfulness, but also immovable obstinacy; it is almost as if we were second Ahabs, who were sold to do evil. How long has the Lord, by his servants, who, rising up early, cease not all the day, faithfully warned us, in more than one language, with a diversity of gifts, that our destruction is at hand and our way is not good! And yet, how insensibly do we go forward, with a heart hardened against all exhortations, and upon which nothing can make an impression! Oh! how often have we heard

Jehovah sigh: "Oh, that they were wise! They would understand this, they would consider their latter end." How often has the Lord Jesus with eyes suffused with tears, and heart-breaking sighs, lamented over us, as erewhile over Jerusalem, (for we must conceive that we hear Christ complaining when his servants utter a cry of distress in his name, for it is the same word,) how often has the Lord cried to us, "Oh! that thou understoodest in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace!" But, alas! that we give the dear Saviour occasion to lament, "It is kind from thine eyes;" for we are "a foolish people." (Jer. 5 : 21.) God has now so long, as it were, followed and cried after us, "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and had walked in my ways," Ps. 81 : 13; but, "Who among you will give ear to this." (Isa. 42 : 23.)

It is not only a hardening against verbal warnings, but against the judgments of God. Is it not an occasion for wonder? We find that our wickedness corrects us; we see that it is an evil thing, and bitter to forsake the Lord, and notwithstanding go heedlessly forward. O shame! One would say that did not the hammer of God's word break the rocky heart, that it must be done by plagues and judgments. But no. "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved." (Jer. 5 : 3.) Therefore, "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." (Jer. 6 : 8.)

But who are they who may comfort themselves with the power of God, who may confidently trust with the Psalmist, "Therefore shall we not fear though the earth be removed," etc., (6 : 3, 4,) nay, Who may long

after the coming of Christ? They are the children of God those who know and fear the Lord. We shall not at present adduce many marks by which they may be known, but specify such as flow from our text viewed in connection with what precedes, they being the opposite of the hardening of ourselves. (Verse 4.)

They are such as are broken and contrite in heart and poor in spirit, "But to this man will I look and upon him who trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66 : 2.) And Matt. 5 : 4, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Such as are averse to themselves on account of their corrupt nature and sins, and loathe themselves, according to Ezekiel 36 : 31.

Such as from a view of their universal misery of soul have betaken themselves to the Son of God, as surety and mediator, with a sincere desire to be found in him. (Phil. 3.) This mark is given by Paul. (Heb. 6 : 11 and Rom. 5 : 1.)

Those in whose heart the fear of God rules, so that they are supremely anxious to do naught that is displeasing to God, but all that is well pleasing in his sight.

Examine and prove yourselves by these marks, beloved hearers.

Children of God, since it is an evil time, a time of corruption and departure from God, in which the Lord himself preaches, Oh! awake, stand up, turn, do your first works; the more, since the Lord still so sweetly calls, "Return, return, O Shunamite; Turn ye, backsliding children." (Jer. 3 : 14.) Be prepared to answer, Behold, here are we. We come unto thee, for

thou art the Lord, our God ; “ I will arise and go to my father.” (Luke 15.) Seek now to stand in the gap, as the defense of the land. Pray and supplicate the Lord, “ Spare thy people, O Lord, and give them not to reproach ; we will not depart from thee ; let us live ; help us, O God of our salvation.” (Ps. 79 : 9.)

I conclude with the counsel of Daniel, that man greatly beloved, to Nebuchadnezzar, “ Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor ; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.” *Amen.*

*Preached at North Branch, on the }
18th December, 1737, O. S. }*

Fourth Collection.

SELECT DISCOURSES,

MOSTLY PREACHED

ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

- I. THE FIRST EBENEZER; OR, MEMORIAL OF DIVINE HELP—ON 1 SAM. 7 : 12.
- II. THE DUTIES OF ZION'S WATCHMEN—BEING AN ORDINATION DISCOURSE ON EZEKIEL 3 : 17, 18, 19.
- III. CHRIST'S WOEFUL LAMENTATION OVER THE UNBELIEF OF THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM.
- IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT—ON LUKE 22 : 31, 32.

BY

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PRINTED AT PHILADELPHIA, BY W. BRADFORD.

PREFACE TO THE PIOUS READER,

PARTAKER OF THE UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE.

SINCE the holy Evangelist, Luke, dedicated his book denominated the Acts of the Apostles to Theophilus, (Acts 1 : 1,) dedications of treatises and books have become so common as to be regarded almost absolutely necessary. There are various kinds of dedications : the pious *Wilhelmus à Brakel* dedicates his "Reasonable Service" to the churches of the Netherlands. We in our dedication shall follow the example of the reverend and departed *Joh. Verschnir*, during his life minister of the divine word at *Zeeryp*, a bright star among the ministers of *Groningen*. His valuable work, "The Truth Triumphant," he dedicates to the Lord Jesus in these words: "Dedication to the King of kings, the precious Lord Jesus, whose is the glory to all eternity." My reasons for copying the example of this distinguished man are various: the language of *Canaan* which he employs shows that he has held communion with the Lord; his name is blessed among us; his works praise him in the gates; his prayers and edifying books bear much fruit in our American *Zion*. "The Truth Triumphant" seems to have been composed for our aid and vindication. The reverend author insists in it, that a minister should examine members by inquiring of them, What is the state of your souls? and that professors are bound to give a reason of the hope that is in them; and that parents who present their children for baptism, should be examined. (These, and the like duties, have here been faithfully performed by us in our ministry, and with much fruit and blessing, for which the Lord be praised.) But this was done amid much opposition and contradiction, even from such as pretended to be great rabbis, who branded these pastoral acts, having reference to a knowledge of the state of the flock, as dangerous innovations, nay, even as a new and false doctrine. Similarly, have some *Elymas*-like

ministers here done with respect to us, as well in their pulpits—proper places for pouring forth the vials of their fury—as in their libellous writings, denominated “complaints,” completely refuted by the Rev. Mr. Van Sandvoort. Nay, our departed man of God agrees with us in the smallest particulars, also maintaining that Judas did not partake of the Lord’s Supper. Although this is but a problematical question, I had stated it in my three sermons, in agreement with numerous eminent divines, in connection with whom I do not regard myself worthy to be mentioned. This was siezed upon by the secretary of the lying spirit, in the so-called “complaints,” as one of our heresies, as our honored defender has learnedly shown in his dialogue, written by him in reply. The second book of our dear brother, denominated “Experimental Divinity,” is here also of much use to stop the mouths of those, of whom gowned personages are the chief, who represent the work of the Holy Spirit in the pious as fanaticism and enthusiasm. Our new Erastians, that is, ministers who have arisen in the Reformed churches, teaching that unconverted persons have a right to the Lord’s Supper, are likewise refuted in it. (See pp. 448, 460.)

Our opponents were brought to silence; but upon Long-Island has arisen a Goliath, who, in his recklessness, seeks to infuse into every one the idea so agreeable to the flesh, that it is the duty of the unconverted to partake of it as a means of grace. Although this Diotrephes prates against us with many malicious words, denouncing Rev. Mr. Goetchins and myself, in his mad zeal, as cursed heretics; and although like Balaam, he is yearly hired by the disaffected, to intrude, for filthy lucre’s sake, to strengthen the hands of the disobedient, and continually belies and slanders us, and intends to be too wise and bold for every one, and like Ishmael, to set his hand against every man, he has already found upon Long-Island orthodox men, lovers of old-established truths, who are able to meet him; and since he is disposed to blame every one, and does not hesitate, even from the pulpit, to mention persons by name and surname, whether members or not, and to denominate them liars and brutal persons, without being made an object of appropriate discipline, (but what cares this zealot for discipline,) he has already fallen into the hands of the authorities and drawn the costs of a civil suit upon himself and those associated with him. Did not this minister steel himself against all the warning he has received even from Holland, he might perceive that the measure with which he meted to others, has been meted to himself, and that while he pursues others, he

is rushing on his own destructions. But this man, who thus rides over every one's head, is to be pitied; and that they may know how great is the power of God towards us also and our churches, we beseech the pious brethren upon Long-Island to watch, stand fast, and contend earnestly for the faith, persevering, making much use of the illustrious writings of Verschnir. This digression will be tedious to no one acquainted with the trying situation of our Church.

DEDICATION TO THE LORD JESUS,

BY HIS OLD AND UNWORTHY SOLDIER.

MY Lord and God, King of kings and Lord of lords, let it not displease thee that I lay down at thy feet these few and imperfect lines; and that, for these two reasons: first, and especially, because thou art worthy that all things should be dedicated to thee, and that in all things we should acknowledge our dependence upon thee; for thou art Alpha and Omega, having obtained all power in heaven and upon earth, being beyond measure exalted, having obtained a name that is above every name, that to thy name every knee should bow, and all tongues confess that thou Jesus art Lord, to the glory of the Father, holding the stars in thy right hand; secondly, on account of all the benefits which I have so richly received from thee, oh, good Shepherd, (although I am chief of sinners, and the least of thy servants,) inasmuch as it has not only pleased thee to thrust me, insignificant son of man into the harvest, but also to be with me, (since through thy grace I am what I am;) but especially because thou hast been with me in so many distresses in this strange land, continually delivering me. Truly the deliverances of thy countenance are too multiplied—thy blessings upon my weak ministrations, person, and family are too numerous to be reckoned up in order. All the favors thou hast shown me, even in the time of trouble, lie as so many bonds of obligation upon my soul, so that I am compelled to exclaim, "What shall I render unto thee for all thy benefits: Lord I am thy servant, and will, by thy assistance, be faithful unto death, going in the strength of the Lord, fighting the good

fight of faith, gladly suffering and enduring, saying and recording, having frequently, with the congregation, expressly sworn in our solemn covenanting, "I am the Lord's."

Enjoy, Frelinghuysen, immortal fame ; bear abundantly the fruits of righteousness ; let thy pious instructions distill as the dew, and compose the disorderly elements of humanity around. Such is the affectionate, filial language of,

JOHN FRELINGHUYSEN,
Student of Divinity.

Numerous and fearful are the vicissitudes to be expected by the children of God. For comfort's sake, this is added by

DAVID MARINUS,
Student of Divinity.

I.

The First Ebenezer :

THAT IS, A MEMORIAL OF DIVINE ASSISTANCE, BEING
A HUMBLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF JEHOVAH'S HELP
AND ASSISTANCE AFFORDED HIS CHURCH AND SER-
VANT.

“THEN Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”—1 SAM. 7 : 12.

INTRODUCTION.

“I TELL you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Luke 19 : 40.)

The occasion upon which the Lord Jesus uttered these words, was when he made his entrance as king into Jerusalem. So greatly were the disciples rejoiced that they said, “Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord,” (verse 38,) which the Pharisees took ill, saying, Master, rebuke thy disciples. Thereupon he answered, “I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” As regards the form of expression, compare

Hab. 2 : 11, " For the stones shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

This is a figurative mode of speech by which the Jews are reprov'd for and convicted of their inexcusable wickedness and unbelief; as if the Lord Jesus had said: the fact that I am the Son of God, the King of Israel, the Christ, is so evident that it can not be concealed, but will by one means or other be made manifest in spite of all your endeavors to prevent it. This prediction was fulfilled when the veil of the temple was rent, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves were opened. (Matt. 27 : 51.) Although stones can not literally speak, they may notwithstanding be employed as memorials of events, as is here done by Samuel as a public declaration of gratitude, according to the words of our text, "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Israel had now received a distinguished benefit from God: he had dispersed their enemies before their eyes. This obligated Samuel to a public expression of thankfulness, and that not only for himself and his people at that time, but to perpetuate the remembrance of divine benefits among posterity. He sets up a stone as a memorial and in everlasting remembrance of the fact that Israel was helped by the Lord. For in the preceding we learn that the ark was conveyed and placed at Kirjath-jearim. Samuel exhorts the people to turn to the Lord and put away the strange gods; the Israelites obey him, keep a day of fasting and prayer; the Philistines design to attack the Israelites, the Israelites are afraid; Samuel offers a prayer

for Israel; he and the people are heard; the Lord thunders terribly upon the Philistines and they are smitten; Samuel erects at Mizpeh a memorial in token of this wonderful deliverance, according to the words of our text, in which two points present themselves :

I. The act of Samuel : " He took a stone."

II. The words which he spoke : " Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

The person here spoken of is Samuel of Ramah, of a pious family, his father being named Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, who was greatly distressed on account of her barrenness, and went and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. (1 Sam. 1 : 10.) Her prayer was heard by God, and she called him Samuel, (in the Hebrew Shemuel,) that is, one received from God in answer to prayer; because, God had heard the prayer of this pious mother, (verse 20,) a son therefore, not so much by natural birth, as of the heart and lips. While praying, she made a vow, by which she engaged to give the child for which she prayed, if it were a man-child, to the Lord, all the days of his life. (Vs. 11, 24, 28.) This Samuel, born of such godly parents, Elkanah and Hannah, served the Lord from his very youth, before Eli the priest. He was a Nazarite, consecrated by vow to God, wearing, as a Levite, a linen ephod, (chap. 2 : 18;) he grew and enjoyed favor with God and men. Hereupon, the Lord called him once and again, but Samuel did not yet know the Lord: he was not acquainted with the manner in which Jehovah was wont to reveal himself to his pro-

phets. He therefore went to Eli, who directed him. God then revealed to Samuel what he was about to do; and he was thus established as a prophet. (3 : 19, 20, 21.) After the death of Eli, he was appointed judge over Israel, to rule over and deliver them. Many excellences and acts of his are found on record.

1. He was a loved prophet and teacher; clear in his instructions, solemn in his reproofs, moving in his exhortations, agreeable in imparting consolation; he reprov'd without respect of persons, making no distinction between king and subject: how zealous an exhorter to all that is good, how faithful a friend of the pure worship of God! (Chap. 7 : 3; 12 : 14, 15, 20, 35.)

2. "Samuel:" one earnest and mighty in prayer, who earnestly persevered in supplications for his people, as appears from chap. 12 : 18, 19: he is therefore reckoned, by way of eminence, among those who called upon the name of God: "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name," (Ps. 99 : 6;) and when God upon one occasion, threatened Israel with extreme punishment, he said, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me yet my mind could not be toward this people." (Jer. 15 : 1.)

3. Our Samuel was exceedingly faithful in his ministry: he persevered in the discharge of his duty to the people, seeking their welfare even to old age, (1 Sam. 12 : 23,) how righteously and uprightly, appears from his appeal, (1 Sam. 12 : 3, 5.) How clear a conscience! He has also the honor of being placed by Paul, with Daniel, and the other prophets in the

catalogue of those who wrought righteousness. (Heb. 11 : 32, 33.)

4. Our good and faithful man, experienced favor at the hands of God, and of the people : he was pious from his youth ; he increased in knowledge and in gifts, and from that time also in favor with God, and love with men : thus we read, 1 Sam. 2 : 16. This love and favor, God manifested by remarkably blessing his labors, and hearing his prayers. The people also shewed their love by the high esteem in which they held him, and his services. Was aught to be done? they went and inquired of the seer Samuel ; they obeyed his commands, lent their testimony to his faithfulness, and finally, when he died, all Israel came together, lamented him, and buried him in his own house at Ramah. Samuel became greatly advanced in years, for he died in a good old age ; (this was promised by God to Abram as a special blessing, Gén. 15 : 15, and fulfilled to him, Gen. 25 : 8 ;) and precious was his death in the sight of the Lord. (Ps. 116 : 15.) He was invested with two offices, being ruler and judge in the state, and in the Church a prophet. By these two offices, he was obliged to thankfulness, which he shewed by his act ; he “ took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh, and Shen, and called the name of it, Eben-ezer.” He caused a stone to be brought, possibly a large and comely one ; he set it up, not for a religious use, (well knowing that was forbidden,) but as a monument, to commemorate the victory gained by Israel over the Philistines, and as a proper token of thankfulness. From the most ancient times, it has been customary to erect memorials of conquest. We

find, that men of God have adopted the same method of perpetuating the remembrance of benefits received. This was the case with Jacob. When he had enjoyed his illustrious vision, he "took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." (Gen. 28 : 18.) Hence originated the idolatrous practice among the heathen of setting up stones, anointing them, and honoring them with religious worship; as also in this very land, there are at some places in the forests, great heaps of stones, upon which our Indians, when passing by them, are in the habit of casting more. Jupiter had an epithet assigned him by the heathen, derived from a word signifying a stone. In like manner, the servant of the Lord, Joshua, set up stones. (Josh. 4 : 8, 9.) Subsequently, trophies, pillars, and columns were erected. He called the stone Eben-ezer, that is, stone of help: the sign bears the name of the thing signified; as the altar built by Moses was called, "Jehovah is my banner." (Ex. 17 : 15.) This is intimated by the words of Samuel in our second part.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Notice here :

1. The person; Jehovah. 2. Who he is: "I am that I am," (Ex. 3 : 14,) and in the New Testament, "Who is, and who was, and who is to come," (Prov. 1 : 4;) unchangeable in his essence, faithful to his promises: "I am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. 3 : 6.) Samuel does not ascribe help to the stone, but to Jehovah. He knew that the praise was not due to the might of their horses, to their chariots, and the power of Israel's weapons, but only to the Lord. And this was here manifest to all; for the Lord had thundered with a

great thunder, and that is a work of God; he alone has power and control over the thunder. "The God of glory thundereth." (Ps. 29 : 3.) The Almighty had fought for them with his thunder. Often has he employed the thunder of his power for the consternation and destruction of his enemies, and the help of his people. The victory was then the Lord's. "The Lord hath helped," and this help our worthy Samuel acknowledges.

2. "Helped." It was not through their own power, but they were graciously helped. In what this help consisted, appears from the preceding narrative, by which we are informed that the Lord had heard the prayer of Samuel, by contending against the Philistines with a fearful thunder, which he caused to burst upon them at the commencement of the battle, by which they were so terrified that they were immediately smitten before the face of Israel, so that they were helped from the fear that had seized upon them, (verse 7,) helped from the danger that was suspended over them, delivered from their enemies; themselves rendered victorious, and their enemies overcome. This have the pious always confessed and acknowledged. From Him proceeds victory. Such was the sentiment of Asa, in his war with Zerah the Ethiopian. This was made manifest to king Uzziah, whom God helped against the Philistines. But the godly Samuel adds

3. "Hitherto." This may in the first place be regarded as signifying to this place, to the place at which the stone was set up; so far had the Lord thundered, so far his help had been rendered evident; and

therefore, to the everlasting remembrance of the event, be it recorded. "Hitherto;" thus far, unto this place, didst thou thunder, and the thunder ceased; without the exclusion of the idea that what followed was from the Lord.

2. It can be regarded as expressive of the greatness of the deliverance by way of admiration: "Hitherto!" And who could have thought it? So large, so illustrious a victory, nay, the entire destruction of the enemy! "Hitherto;" that we are, is to be ascribed to the fact that "the Lord hath helped us—that they were a great people, since the Lord had thus far blessed them. In this amplifying sense we find the form of speech employed.

3. It may also signify that they had not yet experienced a full deliverance; that it was, as yet, but in part. They had indeed been delivered "hitherto," and for some time, from the Philistines, but their power was not as yet entirely crushed, though greatly weakened; at least, the Israelites were at present free, and for this they were thankful; though they were not to continue always free from their enemies, yet, "Hitherto had the Lord helped them."

4. And lastly; this may also express their hope and expectation, that the Lord would much further help them—that having begun he would also complete their deliverance. "Hitherto" had all been well done; they also hoped well for the future, as David from a former deliverance concluded a future one. "The Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." (1 Sam. 17: 37.)

“Hitherto,” they had been delivered, and that the Lord had done it was marvellous in their eyes.

“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows to the Most High.” Great benefits demand becoming acknowledgments. In all ages have Israelites, in whom there is no guile, discharged this duty. Not only is this true of godly Samuels, magistrates, and ministers, but also of the pious in private stations; nay, that the memory of divine benefits might be ever blessed, the whole Church in every age has not only preserved them in lively remembrance, but aimed to transmit the knowledge of them to the most distant generations, Ps. 78 : 1, 6 ; 105 : 6. “Forget not all his benefits.” (Ps. 103 : 2.) They have therefore, as the Church, Ps. 44 : 1, declared them to their children. For this purpose they have frequently established memorials, and observed days of thanksgiving. The feast of Purim, observed by the Jews in remembrance of Israel’s deliverance from the plot laid for their destruction by Haman, as may be read in the book of Esther, is an example. In Holland, there are still days observed in commemoration of deliverance from the French and Spanish yokes. There have also been medals struck to convey the thankful recollection of their great deliverances to their posterity. I shall mention a few. When the mighty Spanish fleet, Anno 1588, was chiefly destroyed by a terrible storm near the coast of Ireland, there were medals struck having on one side the inscription, “*Soli Deo Gloria*,” [To God alone be the glory,] and on the other a representation of ships with these words, “*Classis Hispania*,” [Spanish Fleet,] and around, “Come ; Gone ; That was.” On another there

was on one side, a vessel in flight and wrecked, and on the other, the figures of four men in a posture of supplication and thanksgiving, encircled with the words, "*Homo proponit; Deus disponit*," [Man devises; God directs.] In like manner when Prince Maurice in 1597, in a campaign of about three months had taken ten cities and three castles, there were medals struck, on one side of which there was in Latin, "This is the Lord's doings, and it is wonderful in our eyes;" and on the other in a circle, "*Venit; Vidit; Deus vicit*;" [He came, He saw, God overcame;] and thus have there been those which bore the inscription contained in our text, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Behold, attentive hearers, the pious Samuel's acknowledgment of the great deliverance which Jehovah had wrought for Israel, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Truly, the church which assembles here, and the minister, may thankfully say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," in a remarkable manner; the Lord alone, and that hitherto.

The circumstances in the dangers out of which we have been helped are too numerous to be rehearsed. We shall, however, specify some of the most remarkable; for should we keep silence, the stones might cry out, the pulpit, and beams of our church upbraid us for our unthankfulness; nay, the forests and trees of the wood, the streams and rivers which we must pass in our journeys to our places of preaching, might testify against us; for these have seen our trouble and sorrow, have heard our sighs.

"Hitherto," (let now the Israel of God—our Ameri-

can Zion—this little flock—this young vine—say,) “hath the Lord helped us.”

1. Against all opposition and persecution, “hath the Lord helped us.” “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul.” (Ps. 124 : 1-4.) Amidst such storms and waves the Lord of hosts was with us. (Ps. 46. : 7.)

2. Although our adversaries shut our churches, so that we were compelled to preach in barns, as was the case Anno 1725, showing by what spirit they were actuated; yet, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,” so that we may hold our assemblies in our houses of worship undisturbed, being glad in and with those who say to us, Let us go into the house of the Lord. (Ps. 122 : 1.)

3. Notwithstanding our opponents wrote a book against us, which appeared Anno 1725, full of lies, and false accusations, (as has been shown in their replies by two reverend brethren,) the Lord has so ordered it that it has resulted in the furtherance of the truth. Appropriate here are the words, “O that mine adversary had written a book! Surely I would take it upon my shoulder and bind it as a crown to me.” (Job 31 : 35, 36.)

4. Although our adversaries sought help against us in the gate, and endeavored to stir up against us, the then Governor and other officers of the English government, yet so did our king Jesus, in whose hands are the hearts of kings, turn their hearts, that instead of

being against, they were for us ; thus was this their plan frustrated. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

5. It is known to all who are not here strangers, how many assemblies and councils were held against us. It was the great and almost daily business of learned and unlearned, to frame devices against this little “lodge in a garden of cucumbers;” but “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” Therefore, “take counsel together, and it shall come to naught;” “for no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” (Isa. 8 : 10 ; 54 : 17.)

6. Although we had opposed to us not only uneducated wealthy country people, but also learned and acute divines, (principally Dutch,) we were yet not compelled to keep silence ; for we had a good cause, a good conscience, and the Mighty One of Jacob on our side. Thus, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;” although we are persuaded that the majority of the ministers were misled by evil rumors, not regarding the ancient admonition: *Audi et alteram Partem*, (Give an impartial hearing.)

7. Although the prosecution against us cost the disaffected much money, and the saying of Solomon is true, “*Money answereth all things*,” yet “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

8. Although many complaints were preferred against us to the Rev. Classis of Amsterdam, so remarkably did the Lord aid us in our defence, that we were pronounced orthodox, and the disaffected were exhorted to peace, and a return to the bosom of the Church.

9. Notwithstanding from time to time, strange

teachers, those who ran without being sent, and hirelings in pay of the disaffected, have from year to year intruded among us to maintain the strife, and afflict us, yet, amidst all this bustle and noise "hath the Lord helped us."

10. Although some have crept in among ourselves, Christians in word and appearance, who feignedly subject themselves, but at the same time are secretly opposed to us, and seek to hinder our prosperity; being tares in our field, and the chaff upon the threshing-floor of the church, yet, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

11. It is indeed true that in this land in which we are strangers, we have often been severely afflicted and chastened by the hand of God, not only with bodily sickness, but also with spiritual desertions; so that we have had occasion to exclaim day and night, "Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture was turned into the drought of summer, Ps. 32 : 4; we were constrained to preach from the words, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath, Lam. 3 : 1; and I am as a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong refuge, Ps. 71 : 7; yet have we not been given over to death, but again and again delivered by him "Who bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up." (1 Sam. 2 : 6.) Who knows in how many instances our enemies have rejoiced in our affliction, with aha! aha! but, "Rejoice not O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." Surely, unless the Lord had helped us, we should long since have perished in our affliction. Therefore (although with humble mind) I

say with Paul, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say." (Acts 26 : 22.)

But is it for our goodness and excellence that we have been helped? No: our "goodness extendeth not to thee." (Ps. 16 : 2.) "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." (Ps. 115 : 1.) We are altogether unworthy. The great benefactor has loaded us with benefits. He has fed us with the finest of the wheat, and satisfied us with honey out of the rock. (Ps. 81 : 16.) It is he who has prepared a table before us in the presence of our enemies; our cup runneth over, Ps. 23 : 5; "Who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." We are the people of God, in covenant with him; his vineyard not only, but one as to which he has spared no pains, no cost; planted upon a very fruitful hill, richly watered with the dews of heaven, (for the means of grace are here in all their fullness,) whom he hath so wonderfully preserved and helped to this day. But oh! unthankful, unfaithful generation that we are! Like Israel, (for the words addressed to them by way of upbraiding, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?" Deut. 32 : 6, are applicable to us,) alas! we have forsaken the God who made us, and lightly esteemed the Rock of our salvation. (Deut. 32 : 15.) Are these the thanks for his help? Is this the reward for his undeserved goodness, long-suffering and forbearance, (not knowing that his goodness leadeth thee to repentance?) Who suitably acknowledges the help of the Lord? Who appreciates it?

who answers it with thankfulness? In want and distress, vows are indeed made that we will amend our lives and more diligently serve the Lord, but who pays his vows? With the mouth, it is still not uncommon to acknowledge the good hand of God and his help; but to respond to his favors by a holy and exemplary walk is little aimed at. Oh! unbecoming, inexcusable conduct! More abominable still is the conduct of those who ascribe the help, worldly good, and other blessings which they have received to their own wisdom, understanding, and diligence.

But ye, my hearers, lovers of the truth, children of Zion, come, let us not only with Samuel, erect a mere outward memorial, but afford a substantial evidence of our thankful remembrance of the Lord's help shown to the congregation. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We must, therefore, ascribe the help only to Jehovah; give to him alone the glory. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. (Ps. 118 : 23.) Say, with the Church, "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, but thy right hand and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance," Ps. 44 : 3; "God is my help and my deliverer." (Ps. 70 : 5.) It is true, we must thankfully acknowledge we have also received help and assistance from good men. For,

1. Two worthy ministers have, in public print, vindicated our cause. Messrs. Freeman and Van Santvoort are to be praised, who would not condemn us unheard, but interested themselves in our affairs, and

by their fraternal epistles frequently refreshed and strengthened us.

2. The pious and faithful in the land have prayed for us, compassionated us in our affliction; among whom the English Presbyterian brethren have excelled.

3. Especially must we thankfully acknowledge the good hand of God upon us, in raising up godly brethren for us in Holland and East Friesland, who remembered us in their prayers and public religious exercises; and by their pious and edifying letters, frequently sustained our sinking hearts. But these are means which Jehovah employs, and which he raised up for the purpose. From these we must avert our eyes: the creature must step aside. "Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man." (Ps. 60 : 11.) Therefore, Israel, trust thou in the Lord. (Ps. 115 : 9-11.) We must not only acknowledge the help of the Lord, but render thanks to him for it, and openly show forth his praise. Thus have the pious ever done, by their thanksgivings and songs of praise. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." (Ps. 103 : 2.) Above all, we must show our gratitude by godly lives. Oh! that we were, then, truly thankful! that by a genuine turning to God we directed aright our way, yielding our members instruments of righteousness, wholly consecrated to God and his service, soul and body, constrained by his benefits. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present

your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. 12 : 1.) But we must, lastly, also be reminded that it is but "hitherto" we are helped ; for we can not yet say that we have finished our course, fought the fight, and entirely overcome. No : "the devil goeth about as a roaring lion." (1 Pet. 5 : 8.) The words found Rev. 12 : 12, are also applicable to our Church, "For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6 : 12.) The disaffected still exist, and are never at rest : there is at least still "a remainder of wrath." (Ps. 76 : 10.) There are still hirelings : "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you." (2 Pet. 2 : 1.) We are yearly still visited by one in the service of the malcontents, who, like Diotrophes, prates against us with malicious words, and in his zeal without knowledge, rails at us as *accursed heretics* ; but may it not be laid to his charge : in a word, our Church is as a "lilly among thorns : " we dwell among thorns, scorpions, and evil persons. But we have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin. We must still "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." (Jude, verse 3.) Watch, stand, having on "the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day." (Ephes. 6 : 13.) We must hence, also, earnestly pray and supplicate further help in view of the multitude of our enemies, with an

humble acknowledgement of our helplessness, after the example of the pious king Jehoshaphat, "O our God, we have no might against this great company; but our eyes are upon thee;" and with the Psalmist, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." (Ps. 121 : 2.) This, with the help of God, will we also do; for prayers and tears are the weapons of the Church.

In conclusion: children of God engage yourselves solemnly to the Lord; especially upon our days set apart for especial religious services, and in our prayer-meetings, (which are hereafter to be held in public,) to be faithful to him; with an assured faith that Jehovah, who has helped us "hitherto," will further help us; "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." (2 Cor. 1 : 10.) To Him alone be the honor and thanksgiving.

Now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

*Preached January 1st, 1745, }
at Six-Mile-Run. }*

II.

Duties of Watchmen upon the Walls of Zion.

PREACHED ON OCCASION OF THE ORDINATION OF REV.
JOHN HENRY GOETSCHIUS, MINISTER AT JAMAICA.

“SON of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

“Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”—EZEK. 3 : 17, 18, 19.

OF the qualities requisites in an overseer of the Church, faithfulness is one of the most prominent: “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4 : 1, 2.)

The original word, *pistos*, faithful, when applied, as here, to the ministry, signifies so to order one's con-

duct as to aim to answer the design and expectation of him who has called us to it. In this sense we find it throughout employed when connected with the ministry: "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house." (Heb. 3 : 5.)

A servant of the Lord, then, is faithful when he is upright, being actually such as in the discharge of his ministerial duties he seems to be. (1 Tim. 1 : 12.)

Faithful, because he performs all the parts of the service assigned him by the Lord, without designedly excepting any; but attending to the difficult as well as the easy, the private as well as public parts of his duty, endeavoring to perform the one as well as the other, as requirements of the high and wise God. Thus the word is employed, Luke 16 : 10, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."

Faithful, when he performs his work from a pure motive, having in view, not to gratify himself, nor to acquire vain applause, but to please and glorify God in the treatment of souls: herein the Apostle Paul states faithfulness as consisting in his epistles to Timothy.

Faithful, when he perseveres in the zealous performance of his duties, without being terrified by difficulties and opposition, but being "faithful unto death." (Rev. 2 : 10.) Thus was Antipas a "faithful martyr" of the Lord. (Rev. 2 : 13.)

Faithful, because he has in prospect a glorious and gracious reward: "Well done, good and faithful servant," etc.

Faithful, finally, in relation to the prescribed

method by which he is to regulate himself in the discharge of the duties of his ministry. He may not exceed the appointed bounds, or act from caprice or respect of persons, but as a watchman appointed by God, strictly regard his charge and commission: "Hear the word at his mouth, give them warning from him," which charge is contained in the words of our text.

In what precedes, we find the prophet eating the roll at the command of God, who again charges, instructs, and strengthens him against the stubbornness of the people, (verse 4,) and in the words of the text, affords him requisite information respecting a faithful prophet and watchman, and confirms him in the same: words in point and season at the present time, designated for the induction into office of a newly-called minister of the Gospel. We notice here three points:

I. The appointment of the prophet to the office of a watchman: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel."

II. His charge and commission: "Therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me."

III. The consequence, to the disadvantage of the prophet in case of his failing to warn, verse 18; to his advantage, verse 9, in case of compliance.

In the appointment we have the address, "Son of man," in the Hebrew, Ben Adam, that is, a son of Adam, to commend to him the grace of humility, as being a descendant of Adam, a man of like passions

with others. Therefore all men are denominated children of Adam, or children of men, guilty, depraved children of nature. It might be asked why this prophet in particular is so frequently called the son of man, while the epithet is not applied to others, but they are termed men of God, holy men, servants of the Lord, or, like Daniel, greatly beloved. The reason is, that he might not be exalted by the surpassing excellences of the holy and heavenly vision with which he was favored, but much rather humbled by the consideration of his human frailty. From humility, Christ so often denominated himself the Son of Man.

To what office was he appointed? "I have made thee a watchman:" watchmen are properly persons to whose watch and care are committed certain things, persons, or places. There are watchmen of cities, who go about them especially by night. Cities have also their watchmen by day—principally fortified and frontier cities. They are ordinarily found upon the walls, or in towers, or at or upon the gates. To these there is reference. (2 Sam. 18 : 24.) To such as go about cities to guard against danger within, there is allusion. (Cant. 3 : 3 ; Ps. 127 : 1.) Here, according to the force of the original word, the reference is to such as are stationed upon walls and in towers to guard against danger and commotion. Among the names by which the holy Scriptures have designated the overseers and teachers of the Church, both extraordinary—as the prophets of the Old Testament—and ordinary, is that of a watchman: "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isa. 21 : 11.) "I have set watchmen

upon thy walls, O Jerusalem." (Isa. 62 : 6.) The foundation of the epithet is, that they are in spiritual things, and in relation to the souls of men, what literal watchmen are as to the body, in relation to a people, state, or place committed to their care. Let us contemplate the agreement in some striking particulars.

1. Watchmen have a certain state, people, or post intrusted to them. The city committed to the care of ministers is the city of God, of which highly "glorious things are spoken," Ps. 87 : 3 ; the Church, the people of God ; Jerusalem, or the house of Israel.

2. Watchmen must carefully contemplate all things far and near, 1 Sam. 14 ; 2 Kings 9 ; as also the original word intimates, being derived from one which signifies accurately to observe, to explore. It may also be translated, to "lie in wait." Ministers also must contemplate objects on every hand, those which are remote as well as those which lie directly under notice, in order to observe whether there be not perceptible some approaching dangers, some evil designs, some pernicious evil doers ; and they therefore bear the name of "episcopoi," overseers.

3. The name of watchmen is applicable to ministers, since to them is, in the most solemn manner, committed the oversight and care of the souls of men—to take heed as to themselves, so to all the flock—watching for souls. (Heb. 13 : 17 ; Acts 20 : 21.)

4. Watchmen : because they should not be timid, but cheerful and courageous in even the greatest dangers, as Paul testifies of himself, Acts 20 : 24 : "But

none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself."

5. Watchmen: because, as the word itself imparts, they should be not heedless, but watchful, attending carefully to every occurrence, the least as well as that which is greater. For the neglect of this by the Israelitish overseers, it was declared to their shame, Isa. 56 : 10, "His watchmen are blind: loving to slumber." Timothy, on the other hand, as an overseer, is charged, "Watch thou in all things." (2 Tim. 4 : 5.) A bishop must be vigilant. (1 Tim. 3 : 2.)

6. Watchmen must be well armed, continually having the sword upon the thigh. Ministers must, likewise, be practised in the wars of the Lord, knowing how to meet the foe, as Paul charges his Timothy, 2 Tim. 2 : 3; and they, to this end, must have their weapons—the sword of the Lord's word—in readiness. They accordingly come under notice as valiant men, around the bed of Solomon: all of whom bear swords. (Song of Songs 3 : 7, 8.)

7. Watchmen are men under the authority of others, who have appointed them to their office. Of spiritual watchmen this is also true. Oh Jerusalem, I have set watchmen upon thy walls, Isa. 60 : 6; and here I, Jehovah, the triune God, have set or appointed, verse 16; for appointment to the office of an overseer in the church is ascribed to God in general, Heb. 4 : 5; also in particular to the Father, Gal. 1 : 15; to the Son as Mediator, Eph. 4 : 11; and to the Holy Spirit, Acts 13 : 2, as being a work, *ad extra*, performed by divine power; an attribute of the divine essence, common to the three persons. The Lord

appoints when he chooses, calls and qualifies for the purpose. Paul therefore says, 1 Cor. 4 : 1, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ." Especially were the prophets holy men out of all the tribes of Israel, in an extraordinary manner raised up and called by God, and infallibly guided by the Spirit of God.

8. As a watchman is appointed over a certain city, place, or people, so our prophet over the house of Israel, otherwise, the house of Jacob, that is, the Church. (Ps. 147 : 2 ; Rom. 9 : 4.)

9. Watchmen must give the alarm in case of danger, arouse the sleeping, and cry, The foe ! the foe ! Ministers must also arouse those who are asleep in their security, and cause them to understand the nearness of the enemy of their souls ; incite them to the spiritual conflict, and faithfully warn them of destruction. By Jehovah himself is this duty, as well of a literal as spiritual watchmen, urged, Ezek. 33 : 6 : that if he see the sword come he must blow with the trumpet, and our Ezekiel was, therefore, under the severest threatenings, required to give warning ; for this is his charge and commission, in our second part :

"Therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." Although the Lord our God is a pure Spirit, human members, and among them a mouth, are, notwithstanding, ascribed to Him. As, then, the mouth is the means by which men outwardly express and communicate to others their thoughts, so is a mouth ascribed to the Lord ; in so far as he makes known the thoughts and purposes of his heart, his will and commands ; and thus by the mouth

of the Lord is to be understood his charge and commands. When, then, Jehovah says, "Thou shalt hear the word, at my mouth," his words are equivalent to, Thou shalt ask counsel of me, shalt depend upon me for instruction; which is immediately after expressed by the words, "and give them warning from me," that is, according to the force of the Hebrew language, in my name, at my command. The word translated warn, signifies to glitter, shine, and hence to exhort, give warning; through which light and clearness of mind are acquired, together with advantage, profit, benefit. Overseers of the Church are hence appointed as watchmen to warn the people in the name of God, which is more clearly set forth, together with the consequences of their office, (verse 18,) in the last portion of our text:

"When I say unto the wicked." [Compare Ezek. 33 : 8.]

The person spoken of is "the wicked," derived from a word which signifies restless and disturbed. (Job 34 : 25.) It signifies, in the first place, a disturbed mind: one who is of a restless spirit, who disturbs good order, whose passions are in constant propensity to evil: Job 3 : 17: "There the wicked cease from troubling;" "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it can not rest." (Isa. 57 : 20.) "Raging waves of the sea." (Jude, verse 13.)

2. The wicked is one who can not stand in the divine judgment, who is condemned; for one who being summoned before a judge, is not able to maintain his cause, is, with reason, disquieted: "Let mine enemy be as the wicked, (Job 27 : 7,) that is, as a criminal

who is condemned. (Add Ps. 109 : 7.) In a word, the wicked is one who is destitute of true righteousness—the opposite of the righteous.

Such are all men by nature: all who are destitute of grace. The wicked, notwithstanding, are of various kinds and degrees: the openly profane, those who are unboundedly and intolerably wicked, (1 Cor. 16 : 10 ;) the externally and morally correct, like the Pharisees, (Luke 18 ;) those who justify themselves, (Matt. 9 : 13,) who are outwardly religious, having a name to live apparently pious. And by the wicked must not, therefore, be understood only those who live in all abominations and open sins; no, though they be altogether civil and virtuous in outward behavior, as long as they lack the righteousness of Christ, and are unrenewed, they are wicked and graceless: Isa. 57 : “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Such are not only without, but even within the Church: “Among my people are found wicked men,” (Isa. 5 : 26.) These watchmen must warn :

“When I say unto the wicked.” God does not only say unto the wicked, “What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?” (Ps. 50 : 16,) but also “the soul that sinneth shall die;” for the wages of sin is death: “Thou shalt die.” According to the Hebrew, dying, thou shalt die; that is, thou shalt surely die, not only temporal but eternal death, perish, be lost. This watchmen must proclaim. This is clearly set forth by our Catechism, which observes, that it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and those who do not from the heart turn to God, that as long as they do not turn they are subject to the wrath of God and eternal

condemnation. (Ques. 84.) But if the watchmen do not lay this to heart what will be the consequence?

“If he give him not warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way.” His object must be that he turn and live, to deliver him from the evil way, (Prov. 2 : 12,) to save his life; to wit, not as God, the great first cause, by his own power, but as an instrument: by the ministration of the word, which is called the power of God. (1 Cor. 1 : 18.) Thus the ministers of God are said to justify many, (Dan. 12 : 3;) to be fishers of men, (Matt. 4 : 19;) light and salvation of the heathen, (Acts 13 : 44;) to open the eyes of men, (Acts. 26 : 18;) to save themselves, and those that hear them, and hide a multitude of sins, (James 5 : 20; Jer. 1 : 11.) But if the wicked be not warned,

“The same wicked man shall die in his iniquity.” Hereby is expressed the miserable state of those who are lost, as is said of Saul: he died in his sins. When the Lord Jesus would express the unhappy state of the Jews after this life, he said: “Ye shall die in your sins.” “In his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die,” (Ezek. 18 : 24;) and thus, indeed, the wicked perish by reason of their not turning to God, and on account of their own sins; and yet it will be to the detriment of the watchmen:

“His blood will I require at thy hands,” as Gen. 42 : 22. Blood is frequently taken for guilt—the guilt will be thine; thou art the cause of the destruction and misery which comes upon them, for thou hast not warned them, sought to save them with fear.

(Jude, verse 23.) But if the watchman discharge his duty, what then?

“Yet if thou warn the wicked,” and he turn not—cease not from wickedness—do not return, “he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul;” to wit, from my wrath and punishment, which would otherwise come upon thee. Paul could accordingly say, (Acts 20 : 26,) “I am pure from the blood of you all,” that is, I am not the cause of the destruction and misery which may come upon any of you.

How suitable, now, these words are to the object of the Lord God, which was to fortify his servant against the stubbornness of the people, we can not at present show. We could also hence make manifest the weight of the ministerial office, but this would consume too large a portion of our time. No wonder that holy men, prophets and apostles, were so reluctant, that it was necessary that they should be thrust out; for if a sinner go unwarned to hell, his blood falls to the account of the minister: “His blood will I require at thine hand.” O weighty and intolerable burden! lying upon the soul of the poor watchman! Who can refrain from exclaiming: “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor. 2 : 16.)

Truly, my hearers, it is a display of great goodness, providence, and love to man in the exalted Mediator, that he gave to his Church some as prophets, apostles, and evangelists at the beginning of the New Testament, and afterwards pastors and teachers. (Eph. 4.) In this so guilty land, the wilderness of America, has Jehovah set watchmen upon the walls of Zion, whilst they are taken away from many places, the

candlestick being removed, affording occasion for the bitter complaint: "We see not our signs!" (Ps. 74 : 9.) "My sheep wander through all the mountains, and upon every high hill!" (Ezek. 34 : 5, 6.) But through undeserved long-suffering they are still among us; for although the multitude of those who publish good tidings among us is not great, there are, notwithstanding, some who, in all languages, and with every diversity of talents, warn in God's name. Is one removed by death, or transferred, he is succeeded by another, as appears this day. Our eyes yet see our teachers. Oh! that all who bear the name of overseers were men called of the Lord, endued with grace, faithful watchmen; but alas! the word of God and sad experience teach us the contrary. The lamentations of the prophet Isaiah are applicable to our times: "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb, they can not bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." Should we undertake to show what pious divines have said on this subject in their writings, where should we begin? where should we end? The mark of the unfaithful we find, Song of Songs 5 : 7; where the unfaithful, the evil themselves, are called watchmen. Truly those who are destitute of grace know not the bride, the true people of Jesus, and hence can not be true guides to "feed the Lord's people with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. 3 : 15.) But the words are necessarily applicable to them, "The leaders of this people cause them to err," (Isa. 9 : 16,) for both prophet and priest are profane. (Jer. 23 : 11, 14, 15, 26.)

They deserve to be denominated unfaithful:

1. Who are absolute enemies of true piety, and the professedly pious.

2. Who smite, wound the pious with the tongue, or in their public discourses or in their libellous writings, with the opprobrious epithets of hypocrites, and Pharisees, Puritans, Pietists, Quakers, Schismatics, new-lights, and whatever similar epithets there may be, by which they are shamefully aspersed by unfaithful watchmen ; as if they were a body of pretenders, who make their religion to consist in bowing down their heads like bulrushes. This is with lies, to make sad the heart of the righteous. (Ezek. 13 : 22.) A distinguished professor, (Van Driessen,) observes that as there always has been, and will be a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, so does the enmity discover itself principally in unsanctified ministers ; as their stated public ministrations so often testify.

3. Those who actually ill-treat the pious, and those who bear their name, by mocking their sorrows, (Ps. 99 : 27 ;) by giving them foolish directions ; by leaving the comfortless un comforted : "The weak thou hast not strengthened." Worthless, foolish pastors. Woe unto you, unfaithful watchmen !

Reverend Brother, permit me to recall to your mind and my own, that it is our duty to examine ourselves ; for the name and office of watchmen will be of no avail to us. These are also given to the evil and unfaithful. "Thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Paul once inquired, Rom. 2. We teach our people that they should examine themselves ; shall we then fail to discharge this duty to ourselves ? or

shall we persuade ourselves with the ignorant multitude, that all ministers are true believers, and really good, and shall certainly be saved? We know better from the case of Judas, Demas, and those who at the last day shall say, Have we not prophesied in thy name? Neither a thorough literary course, nor an ecclesiastical license, nor a lawful call, constitute us faithful watchmen. Oh! let us judge ourselves, and examine whether we bear the marks of the faithful.

I shall frame no inquiries of my own, but present such as have been proposed by illustrious divines, who in learning and piety have shone, and still shine in their writings, as stars in the firmament of the Church of Christ; at whose feet I would gladly sit, could it so be. "Have I been sent and appointed of God, or have I run of myself? Was I aware of the import of the office? Have I experience of conviction, regeneration, of the love and leading of the spirit of God, of the various frames of the pious soul, that I may from this good treasure of my heart bring forth things new and old, from experience give to each his allotted portion? Had I a special desire to preach Christ, to convert souls, to build up the Church? Did I experience continual incitements within to undertake the work? Had I a desire to know whether the Lord appointed and sent me? Have I prayed to know it? Have I even been inclined to refrain from the work in view of its greatness, and my own unfitness? Were the sinful motives which I found arising in my mind an affliction to me? Did I feel a readiness to part with substance, honor, and life for the Lord Jesus? or have I had reference but to honor, respect, and ease,

by the office to obtain a livelihood and pass through the world without difficulty? What is the character of my ministry? Do I look to God for direction, hearing the word at his mouth? Have I ever carefully considered what it is to watch for souls, to warn sinners, that their blood may not be required at my hands, and they not cry for vengeance upon me? Is it my great object to discover men to themselves, to take the precious from the vile? Is it my chief care also to comfort the sorrowful? And in relation to the external call, how have I become located in my present place? Have I indulged in flattery to the consistory, or any of the congregation? What causes me to remove from one place to another? Is it the summoning voice, "Come over and help us?"

Those who do not approve of such inquiries, may be assured that a time of reckoning will once come; and that it will then be found far different with many from what they imagine. O miserable! who shall then be sent away as wicked and slothful servants! (Matt. 25 : 26.) Is any one convinced that he has not been appointed to this weighty office, but entered in through wrong motives and means, let him humble himself in the most profound manner before God, and seek reconciliation through the blood of Jesus Christ, and seek to be yet inwardly called; but if not, it were better to desist, though he were compelled to beg his bread; for a wicked preacher is the most abominable object the world presents to view. The terrible judgment of God is suspended over him: "His blood will I require at thy hands." But happy he who upon careful investigation, finds that he has been appointed and called

of the Lord, as the pious Brakels, who was in an extraordinary manner assured by the words, "I have called thee, I have called thee!" Time now requires that I should remind you, as well as myself, of some of the duties belonging to a minister's office, though not the general ones of prayer, catechising, administering the sacraments, and exercising discipline. We might reasonably be supposed to be acquainted with our duties, yet it is also sometimes necessary that (as seldom is the case) we ministers, should hear our duty. Some which flow from the text are the following:

1. We are children of men, flesh of flesh, men of like passions with others, that we should not be high-minded, exalting ourselves, either by haughtily treating others through pride, or aiming after vain glory. He who is puffed up falls into the condemnation of the devil. That is to preach ourselves and not Christ; of which Paul complains. They all seek their own, (Phil. 2 : 21.) This sometimes yields the bitterest fruits, as appeared in a certain minister endowed with extraordinary gifts, an eminent preacher, who fell into the depths of despair, because, as he himself expressed it, he had preached himself.

Does it at any time happen that ministers are converted in the course of their ministry, they acknowledge with grief their selfish motives; and old and approved ministers are compelled to watch against them.

2. Are watchmen appointed by God? Are overseers the gift of the ascended Lord? They must therefore not run before they are sent, by a constant seeking after new places. (Jer. 23 : 21.) Such the

Lord (whose province it is, as holding the stars in his right hand, Rev. 1 : 6) does not give, or if by permission he do, oh ! that it were not manifest in the end, that he does in anger, and therefore also takes them away in his wrath !

3. We must hear the word at his mouth, look to him for instruction, follow his directions. We should never preach our own conceptions, much less the deceits of our hearts, either by doubtful conjectures, incoherent allegories, ridiculous predictions, impertinent illustrations, but sound words, substantial truths, by which the soul lives, therefore denominated clean provender. (Isa. 30 : 24.) It is therefore necessary that we should be much in prayer, and looking up unto God.

4. Are we appointed watchmen ? let us faithfully give warning. We are watchmen in a city, in which many wicked and secure ones are hastening to destruction. Let us be careful, that we deliver our souls, that their blood be not required at our hands ; that we faithfully give them warning from God : "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." (Isa. 58 : 1.)

5. Upon the discharge of our ministry depend the salvation and destruction of precious noble spirits. In contemplating a congregation we behold those, each of whom has an immortal soul. By nature they all pursue the broad way. There is no means of deliverance but ourselves, in whose mouths is put the word of reconciliation. If we give them not warning, we perish, and that for ever ! Whose soul shall not be influenced with desire to rescue them ? Can we not

behold unmoved the destruction of the body, when for example one falls into the fire or water; and shall we who are appointed watchmen not seek to pluck sinners out of the fire? How was the Lord Jesus moved by the sight of the multitude, and Paul by the state of his brethren according to the flesh? (Rom. 9 : 3.)

6. Though I would prescribe a method of preaching to no one, I am yet of opinion that the application should be discriminating, adapted to the various states of the hearers. (Jude 20 : 21; Jer. 15.) In the church are wicked and unconverted persons, moral persons, Christians in appearance and profession; and these constitute the greater number, for many are called, but few chosen. Also are there in the church converted persons; little children, and those more advanced. Each one longs and calls, each one must be addressed and dealt with according to his state and frame; according to Jer. 15 : 19. How pernicious are general applications, has been shown by many zealous divines. (Ezek. 13 : 19, 20.)

7. We must impress it upon our minds, that we, like watchmen, must give account to God of the souls intrusted to us. If we are unfaithful, woe unto us! if faithful, it shall be well with us. Surely, the Lord will cause us to appear before him in judgment, say to us, Give account of thy office! How hast thou answered thy calling and mission? how occupied thy talents, and improved thy fair opportunities? How hast thou dealt with souls? Have any perished through thy fault? Hast thou strengthened the hands of the ungodly? and made sad the heart of the right-

eous? Hast thou suffered the dying to die? Hast thou exercised especial care over my lambs, or hast thou without care grieved and smitten them? Where are the souls which have been comforted, converted, and built up, through your ministry? Oh! how sorrowful a season, how sad an inquisition, will this be for many overseers! How dreadful a sentence! Had they never been born, never been overseers, or watchmen! To perish for their own sins, and in addition, to have the burden of so many other souls to sustain! and to see and hear them at the last day, rising up against them and saying: Thou soul-murderer, thou knewest that I was ignorant, that I lived in sin, that I neglected the worship of God in my household! Hadst thou had proper regard to me, hadst thou warned me, I would have been converted and saved; but behold, now I perish, thou unfaithful minister. God require my blood at thy hand! deal with thee as unfaithful! Some even in this life are ready to invoke divine vengeance. We have read of an instance. It was that of a distinguished and rich man, who lived according to the desires of his own heart. He became sick, and fell into extreme despondency, beholding nothing before him but eternal misery. A certain minister, being a familiar friend of his, visits him. Having arrived, he finds him occupied, and inquires if he be engaged in making a disposal of his property? whereupon, with an exceedingly distressed, piercing, and bitter cry, he burst forth and exclaimed, Yes, I am! and first, I bequeath your soul to the devil, because you have not warned me. O fearful legacy!

Although that man had not the soul of the minister at his disposal, yet, his expression gives us to understand, that he was one of those whose blood would be required at his hands, and who would cry out vengeance, vengeance, against him on account of his unfaithfulness.

Worthy hearers, both consistory, and members in particular of the congregation, Behold, here your watchman whom you have called, in what manner you are to give account. The rules of our Church say: "The election shall take place after previous fasting and prayer, as in the times of the Apostles."

Since the office of the ministry is a divine institution, it is therefore by no means to be regarded as a human device, merely contrived for the purpose of keeping the public under restraint, as impious atheists slanderously say; nor to be looked upon as superfluous and unnecessary, as enthusiasts maintain. No: the ascended Son of God has given some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers. (Eph. 4 : 12.) The institution of the office of the ministry is a display of the Lord's compassion. We are by nature blind, perverse, and born in the broad way, we wander all as lost sheep, have need of instruction and warning, proceeding from the mouth of God himself. Should now Jehovah address us with his majestic voice from heaven, we would be so overcome as to be led to cry out with Israel, Ex. 20 : 19, "Let not God speak with us lest we die;" for "so terrible was that sight that Moses himself said, I do exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12 : 21.) Should

he commission angels, such are the glory and lustre by which they are characterized, that, like the watchmen and women, hearing them, we should be afraid and become as dead men. What then? The compassionate God adapts himself to our human weakness; sending his Son in the form and essence of a man, that the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in him may be concealed by that evil, and not overpower us with terror. This reason the Lord himself assigns, Deut. 16 : 17, 18, and when the Lord had ascended to heaven, he again proceeded to make known to us his will, employing men of like passions with others as his mouth, who would not terrify us with their presence; but whose feet are beautiful; of whom we may freely inquire concerning that which we do not understand, seeking the law at their mouth, being angels, messengers of the Lord of hosts, (Mal. 2 : 2 ;) and who are themselves compassed with infirmity, that they may be able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God. (2 Cor. 1 : 4.) It is therefore noted as a special favor, Amos 2 : 11, I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. O wonderful compassion of God! adapting himself in the declaration of his will to our weakness as men!

And since hearers oftentimes lightly and incorrectly pass judgment upon their teachers, I shall show how you should conduct yourselves in relation hereto, employing for this purpose the words of another.*

We must distinguish between ministers: As for

* Mr. Campe.

those who conduct offensively and unworthily in their office, and show themselves enemies of the truth and godliness, they are worthy of no honor; their office can not protect them; it but fixes upon them a more indelible stigma. It were to be wished that they were dealt with in the severest manner; and though this be not done, a true believer can yet not regard them otherwise than as slaves of a base self-love, until by true conversion they desist from their unedifying mode of life.

As for those who are marked by external decency and propriety, although we can cherish no firm assurance of their gracious state, we must yet be quiet with respect to it. Though a minister were unregenerated before God, he could notwithstanding by the capacity of which he was possessed for presenting divine truth, so long as his walk was not at variance with his words, be a source of edification. The calling of Judas to the apostleship, as well as the case of carnal men in the primitive Church who were endowed with miraculous gifts of the Spirit, though Jesus had never known them, are impressive instances.

Those whom we have reason from their fruits to regard as possessed of grace, must be embraced the more earnestly, with due love to their persons and obedience to the word, which is in its purity proposed by them. To this purpose are the exhortations, 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13. Thus far that zealous man.

Further my friends: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account, that they

may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13 : 17.)

I conclude with the words of Isaiah 3 : 10, 11 : "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him ; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." *Amen.*

*Preached in Bucks County, }
in Pennsylvania. }*



III.

Christ's Lamentation over the Inhabitants of Jerusalem.

"O JERUSALEM, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" MATT. 23 : 37.

"THEN I said I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for naught and in vain," are words which we find Isa. 49 : 4. It is manifest that the Messiah is here introduced, complaining that he had labored in vain, and spent his strength for naught. By his strength we may understand his bodily energies; which we may conceive to have been far more vigorous in the Lord Jesus than in men ordinarily, from his numerous journeys. But we must also understand by it the powers of his mind—his capacity and his faculty for teaching with so much wisdom, and for performing his mighty and wonderful works. With this strength the Messiah had labored. (Understand the labor of his prophetic office; his preaching and working of miracles, in which he displayed zeal of no ordinary kind: Ps. 69 : 10; "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.") But all this was in vain, for

naught, to no purpose. (Understand this in relation to the majority in comparison with the rest—that his labors yielded little or no fruit, in comparison with what they should have yielded.) It is true there were some, with respect to whom he did not labor in vain; but they were few, and thus his labors were for naught and in vain, in relation to the greater part in Israel, as is said in the following verse: * “Israel will not suffer himself to be gathered.”

Truly, thus it was; neither his discourses nor miracles found admittance with the majority of the Jews; the chief priests and scribes remained the hardened, bitter enemies of the Lord Jesus: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John 1 : 11.)

The fulfillment we behold in the words of our text, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets,” etc.

In what precedes, the Lord Jesus denounces upon the Pharisees and Scribes eight woes, on account of their sins, on account of their hindering the Gospel, (verse 13;) on account of their covetousness, (verse 14;) on account of their blind zeal, (verses 15, 16;) on account of their erroneous teachings, (verses 17–22;) on account of their display of zeal in regard to the minor matters of the law, whilst they neglected its weightier duties, (verses 23, 24;) on account of their pretense of great holiness in partaking of their food, (verses 25, 26;) on account of their deceiving the people with the mere appearance of righteousness, (verses 27, 28;) on account of their pretended high regard for departed saints, whilst they persecuted the living, and were ready to

* Dutch translation.

stone Christ himself, (verses 29-32.) Hereupon, he severely reproveth them, and sharply upbraids them in the words of our text, "O Jerusalem!" etc, in which is contained a lamentation over the obstinacy and unbelief of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and which are followed by a prediction of its destruction.

Words in point in these evil days, in which we may pour forth lamentations, nay, lift up our voices in cries of distress.

Oh! that we mourned over ourselves, and knew at least in this our day the things that belong to our peace!

In the words of the text we find two parts:

I. An earnest protestation of the Saviour's: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" etc.

II. An upbraiding of them for their unwillingness: and "Ye would not."

I. The Saviour's address is directed, as on another occasion with tears, (Luke 19,) to the city of Jerusalem—the capital of the whole Jewish land, the seat, the court of the Jewish state, the city of the great King, beautiful for situation; the joy of the whole earth, where were the thrones of judgment and the tribes of Israel assembled, the holy city and place of worship, (Matt. 4 : 5,) the holy temple, the place of God's fire and hearth, (Isa. 31 : 9,) the city of God, therefore denominated Jehovah Shammah, (The Lord is there,) that is, the place favored with his special presence. By Jerusalem is here, however, to be understood the Jewish people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The repetition of the word Jerusalem is here designed to

impart emphasis to the address. This form of speech occurs elsewhere in the Scriptures, as Jer. 22 : 29, "O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord;" Rev. 8 : 13, "Woe, woe, woe!" There it is triple. The twofold form is also found, as in Ezek. 21 : 6, "Sigh, sigh!" John 3 : 3, "Verily, verily!" Here it is, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" This intimates the earnestness, zeal, and emotion of the Lord Jesus; the importance of the subject; the awfulness of their unbelief; the certainty of their destruction and desolation. This Jerusalem is reprov'd with accompanying upbraiding: "Thou that killest the prophets." Prophets were holy men raised up out of all the tribes and families of Israel, endowed with extraordinary gifts, and infallibly moved by the Spirit of God to teach the people of God; to foretell future events, and confirm their words with a godly life. Such the Lord himself had sent to them from time to time. This is added in the text: "Which are sent unto thee." Truly a great benefit; for "Where there is no vision the people perish." (Prov. 29 : 18.) (But they are false prophets who run and yet are not sent. Jer. 23 : 21.) But oh! base ingratitude, prophets whom the Lord had sent to them, they had killed, stoned!

Stoning was one of the modes of capital punishment among the Jews. Jerusalem was the ordinary place of the killing of the prophets, (Luke 13 : 33;) and thus by making itself guilty of such tyrannical acts, from being the house of God, it had become a den of thieves. It is therefore said of its former state, Isa. 1 : 21, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it is full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now

murderers," and Jer. 2 : 34, "Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents ;" and Matt. 21 : 35, 36, the chief priests and elders of the people are designated as husbandmen, who beat some, killed others, and stoned others of the servants whom the Lord of the vineyard sent to them, as appears verses 23, 25.

The Lord Jesus further testifies : "How often would I have gathered thy children together." Here the city is represented as a mother ; and the Jews who were of the same religion, and came hither from all parts of the land of Canaan, as her

"Children," Hos. 2 : 1-4, that is, inhabitants.

These Jesus "would gather," that is, he diligently employed all means to convert them—form them into a new people, and bless them in his kingdom. Whereby? By the means of grace which the Lord granted them, by teaching and preaching among them, proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, ("Repent and believe the Gospel,") doing wonders, working miracles, healing their sick ; nay, journeying throughout their land and doing good. (Acts 10.) For this purpose he chose his disciples ; whose business it was to gather the Jews, inviting them saying, "Come, for all things are ready." (Luke 14.) But how?

"As a hen gathereth her chickens." It is known that a hen when she sees birds of prey hovering in the air, utters a peculiar sound, by which she calls together her young, at the same time elevating her feathers and spreading out her wings, thus forming a place of refuge for them ; thus wings are also ascribed to God, Ps. 17 : 8 ; 36 : 7 ; 63 : 7 ; Deut. 32 : 1, especially the

Lord Jesus. (Mal. 4 : 2.) Thus in our text the Lord Jesus comes under notice as a hen, extending her wings to and over her chickens, to allure and gather sinners to himself. He is not only a roaring lion, roaring over his prey for its preservation, but as a bird thus will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem. (Isa. 31 : 4, 5.) Thus God covers the righteous with his wings. The Psalmist also on several occasions ascribes to God a shadow. What the sun does in relation to the inhabitants of the world, warning and defending them against wind and cold, all this the shadow of God's wings does in relation to sinners who betake themselves to them. The wings which are ascribed to God in Christ, betoken these two things.

1. That defense and protection which the sinner finds by faith in Christ, and thus with God through Christ, against the deserved wrath of God, power of temptation, and the attacks of Satan. Hence the Lord Jesus is denominated a hiding-place from the wind. (Isa. 32 : 2.) This is the benefit which God promises to his Church. (Isa. 4 : 5, 6 ; Ps. 91 : 4.)

2. That refreshment and consolation which the godly find with God in Christ, in whom many have found a refuge ; as one who flees out of a storm to a hiding-place, or who from the burning rays of the sun seeks a refreshing shade, or the covert of a great rock, and thus revives his drooping spirit. So says the bride, Cant. 2 : 3, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight;" Mal. 4 : 2, "With healing in his wings."

The great prophet and compassionate high-priest Jesus, contemplating their exposure to many seductions, and the aim of the hellish bird of prey, has ex-

tensively and frequently called men by the voice of the Gospel, to shelter themselves under the wings of his grace and gracious protection. During the whole time of his public ministry, he stretched out his hands, but to a gain-saying people; to an evil, hardened, unbelieving generation, as appears from our second head:

II. "And ye would not." The Saviour would say, You have made constant opposition to my designs. It was the unceasing aim and endeavor of the Pharisees and Scribes, as much as in them lay, to hinder the progress of the Gospel. They themselves would not enter in, and they would not that Jesus should gather their children, but to that moment sought to root out the Prince of life in Israel from among his people.

We are not, however, to apprehend this, as if their unwillingness that Jesus should gather their children, could render his whole work of no effect. By no means; for many were gathered, whom Jesus had in view, and others who were restrained for a while by malicious opposers, were afterwards brought in through the ministry of the Apostles; at least "as many as were ordained to eternal life." (Acts 13 : 48.)

The advocates of free will wrest this text to establish their erroneous tenet, as if man had power to comply with the divine call if he would. No: this place speaks of the divine call, by which Christ is offered for justification. That men who are not elected resist it we admit; for the carnal mind is enmity against God. The natural man hates the Father and the Son, (John 15 : 24,) and hates all true holiness. It is true

that viewed in their natural helplessness, they also can not come, (John 6 : 44 ;) but it is also true that they slight the outward means. This they do willingly, and with an evil disposition not to permit themselves to be gathered. It is their pleasure, their delight, so to do. Therefore the Lord Jesus reproves and reproaches the Jews, saying, "And ye would not." We can not hence, however, infer free will, and the power and faculty in the natural man to believe without supernatural grace and effectual calling, as do Pelagians, Arminians, and all devotees of free will, as if it were legitimate reasoning to say, They can of themselves not will; consequently they can also of themselves, will to come and believe. But the inference does not follow, for the sinful *not* will-ing we have natural power in ourselves; but for a holy and right *will*-ing we stand in need of supernatural grace, which we have not of ourselves. Christ does not say that the Pharisees and Scribes, and inhabitants of Jerusalem *could* believe and turn; but upbraids them with this, that "they would not;" and this was an aggravation of their disobedience, as displaying their determination, obstinacy, willfulness, in not coming to him. They would not even calmly consider his person, his works and doctrines; but with bitter and settled prejudice, persisted in their opposition to him, and willfully hardened themselves. Nay, so abandonedly wicked were they, that they could not endure that any of their children were gathered by him. It did not then proceed from ignorance, but from unwillingness. Of this the Lord Jesus also reproachfully reminded them:

Ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

This was proposed to them under the similitude of those invited to the marriage, who would not come. (Matt. 22 : 3 ; Luke 19 : 22.)

This now was suited to the purpose of the compassionate Saviour, which was not only to censure the Scribes, but sharply to upbraid and threaten them ; for their wickedness towards him beyond measure aggravated their guilt and hastened their destruction : "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ! thou wouldst not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Verse 38.)

The words of the text, my hearers, be it remembered, proceeded out of the mouth of him who was the best of preachers. They are full of power, earnestness, compassion, and emotion. So much so, that I have been unable to make them the subject of my study without emotion. Give them for a moment I pray you your particular attention. When the merciful Jesus says, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ! it is as if with weeping and with earnest voice, he had burst forth in the following strain :

"That Chorazin and Bethsaida have not improved my mighty works, for their repentance I must remind them of, by denouncing upon them a woe ; that the exalted Capernaum has not turned at my word, shall thrust it down to hell, (Matt. 11 : 20, 24,) and aggravate its condemnation beyond that of Sodom ; that my Nazareth, where I have lived and been brought up, so lightly esteems my prophets, I can readily forget, (Luke 4 : 23, 24 ;) that the inhabitants of Gergesa preferred their swine to myself, gives me but little concern, (Matt. 8 : 34 ;) but that thou, Jerusalem, Jerusalem ! the scene of my wonders, whom I have made

great among the nations, and princes among the provinces, (Lam. 1 : 1,) and exalted above all and chosen thee as my habitation and dwelling-place, (Ps. 32 : 13, 14,) my vineyard, planted upon a very fruitful hill, to which I have done all that could be done to it, (Isa. 5 : 1-4;) that thou Jerusalem, thou Zion, so maliciously rejectest my grace, that breaks my heart, that causes me to sigh; that I neither can nor will so lightly forget; my grace is far too precious; I have too clearly revealed myself to thee to be thus rejected by thee, and that thou, O Jerusalem! shouldst so hastily rush to destruction! Were it the sin of an Amorite, a Canaanite, or Jebusite, I would bear with it four hundred years; were it that of the first world, I would grant them an hundred and twenty years for repentance; were it a Sodom or Gomorrah, Admah or Zebvim, I would spare it for ten righteous, (Gen. 18 : 32; Deut. 29 : 32;) but now, that it is thou, Jerusalem, who shall present an excuse for thee, O Jerusalem! or who shall have compassion upon thee? Thou hast forsaken me, (Jer. 15 : 5, 6;) and what occasion? Didst thou but know how evil and bitter a thing it is that thou hast forsaken me! (Jer. 2 : 19.) Didst thou but know the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes! Thou wilt not come to me that thou mightest have life! and though year after year I have stretched out my hands to thee, and would gather thee as a hen does her chickens under her wings; and though I have sent to thee my servants the prophets, rising up early, (Jer. 7 : 13; 25 : 4,) who have invited thee in my name, thou yet wouldst not!"

Hearers, ye must be strangers in our Americau Jerusalem not to perceive how applicable are these words to ourselves and our consistory. Raritan, Raritan! how often would I have gathered thee, but thou wouldst not! It is true, God has not sent to us prophets, in a strict sense of that term, whose work it is to foretell future events: these were peculiar to the old dispensation, and the beginning of the new. He has, notwithstanding, given us pastors and teachers—ministers of the New Testament, who are also prophets. It is also true, that they are not here at the present time, stoned or killed; but how many are there who resist them, and thus kill them, as far as in them lies. Had those opposers been possessed of the power, who knows if they would not have killed us? How many evil and rude persons are there, who in every way molest faithful ministers, so that they are compelled to perform their work amid sighs and groans. How many the disobedient, who remain ignorant and unconverted, of whom we must say, I have labored in vain? To how many must we say, How often would the Lord have gathered you by his word and servants, “but ye would not.” The Church swarms with such evil ones—those who will not. Thousands are to be found throughout Christendom; and thus, also, the greater part among ourselves, are those to whom the holy Jesus would be compelled, as to the Jews, to say: “Ye would not come to me.”

I shall here make manifest two things:

1. That the Lord Jesus has long sought to gather you, as a hen does her chickens.

forth
that

2. That all who have remained unconverted thus far, "would not."

As long as you have had, read, and heard the word of God, as long as you have enjoyed the preached word, the Lord has been engaged in gathering you. How often have you heard the divine sighs: "Oh! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they considered their latter end!" (Deut. 32 : 29 ;) "Oh! that my people had hearkened unto me!" (Ps. 81 : 14 ;) "Oh! that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments!" (Isa. 48 : 18 ;) "Oh! that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" (Luke 19 : 42.)

How often have the invitations of the Gospel been uttered in your hearing. Truly these are intended for all, without exception, who live within its sound: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." (Isa. 45 : 22.) "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22 : 17.) "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." (Rev. 3 : 18.) How long has the Lord Jesus warned, and invited you by his servants who have been sent to you, coming, now piping, and now mourning! How often has the Lord Jesus, with weeping eyes, cheeks suffused with tears, mourned over you, as over Jerusalem!

ly, we must regard the Lord Jesus as lamenting, his servants do so in his name, and pour out expressions of grief, for it is in his name that we utter his own word which they utter—the

same as was uttered by him : "He that heareth you heareth me." (Matt. 10.) They are ambassadors for Christ, and pray as if God besought by them. (2 Cor. 5.) How appropriate, then, the words of the text, "How oft would I have gathered you!" but alas! that we have reason to say to you, "and ye would not!"

This is true,

Of you wicked, who are persisting in your sins ;

Of the unconverted, who live without true holiness ;

Of those who have not fled for refuge to Jesus ;

Of those who are still strangers to Christ, having never seen him ;

Of those who have never been convinced of their need of Jesus, in order to salvation ;

Of those who have not realized the preciousness of Jesus ;

Of those who have, as yet, never engaged in covenant transactions with the Lord Jesus.

How many years have you been invited and called? but, pray, tell me what has prevented you from heeding the divine call? Is it not your own unwillingness, or do you imagine the divine decree to be the occasion of it? [Heedless men accuse God of injustice, as if he were the cause of their unregeneracy and destruction.] But the decree of God neither compels nor prevents you : that is not the rule of your doing and leaving, but his revealed will. You have not remained unbelieving and unconverted because you imagined that God prevented you, but because you felt no desire.

Or will you ascribe it to this: that God has never wrought the will in you—that he has never drawn you? That were again to cast the blame upon God; for tell me, I pray you, was the Lord under obligation to perform those acts towards you? Have you ever, with real earnestness, besought him to draw you?

Or, when you would come, have men prevented you? But if any have endeavored to prevent you, others have urged you to flee destruction, and have gone before you not only with their word but also with their example.

Or, will you cast the blame upon your inability? Thus do the carnally secure, employing their inability as an excuse for their sinful security. But do you not know that the fault is your own? Inability excuses you not; for, have you done all that you should? I have done, you say, my utmost. But then, would you make use of means: you would not neglect attendance at church, catechisings, or other public religious exercises; you could search the word of God, be more engaged in prayer, and prostrate yourself before the Lord Jesus.

Have you ever felt that you remained unconverted because you could not? Oh! no: your difficulty has not been a *can* not, but a *will* not. Seek as many evasions, cover yourselves with as many fig-leaves as you may, I must say, with the Lord Jesus, "Ye would not!" He has given you his word and servants, means and time for repentance, and sometimes also, the Spirit for conviction, and now and then stirs up to exercise your conscience; but you resist the Spirit, and thus the obstacle is in your will: "Ye will not

come to Christ!" Wouldst thou know the reason of thine unwillingness? It is,

1. Because thou dost not sufficiently see the necessity of coming to the Lord Jesus: your estrangement and lost state does not weigh heavily upon your heart.

2. Because you can not properly come to Jesus, except you deny yourself, forsake all your vain pleasures, honor and esteem. You have, with the young man in the gospels, too much worldly good. You are still too much attached to the world and your sins.

You imagine that you can effect it yourself, by means of attendance at church, and going to the Lord's table; by the repetition of some forms of prayer, some moral deeds and good works, and similar self-righteous performances.

You imagine that you can come when you will. There is in your estimation always time enough for repentance, and therefore you constantly procrastinate. To-morrow, Then, and Then, are your words.

You say you will come to Christ, you would go to heaven: but who would not fain go to heaven? Who would not gladly be saved? But you take no pleasure in the method, in the way of salvation. The way is too narrow for you: the holiness of it is not congenial to your feelings. Were the way to Jesus and heaven a broad and sinful way, oh! how many would then come! You would serve God and mammon; you would fain retain your sins.

You take no pleasure in the consequences of that way—the cross, reproach, derision, persecution. (Acts 14: 22.) Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.

You imagine that you are already believers and regenerated persons, because born of Christian parents; supposing that you can not fall short of heaven. False ground's soul-destroying imagination, by which thousands deceive themselves under the Gospel! a way which seemeth right to a man, by which Satan keeps back millions from God. See, thus is it with natural men. These are the reasons of your unwillingness! Oh! how unhappy and miserable is your state! for,

1. You are still estranged from the Lord Jesus, who will gather his people as a hen does her chickens;

2. It is a fearful rejection of the revealed way of salvation;

3. It is an awful insult to the Father;

4. It is a contempt of the Son of God—that fountain and rock of salvation;

5. It is a reckless disregard of the day of grace.

How does this heighten your criminality; how will it aggravate your condemnation, that the Lord would gather you, that he long bore with you, so often would have taken you under his wings, but “ye would not!”—that he invited and you refused, stretched out his hands, but you opposed; rejecting his counsel, not willing that he should be King over you. (Prov.

1.) Oh! if there is aught that will render the worm of conscience exquisitely tormenting and intolerable, it is above all, that the dear Saviour would have gathered you, “and ye would not!” O miserable sinners! would that ye were wise and willing. How long shall the Lord suffer you, O unbelieving and perverse generation! How long will ye refuse?

I pray you suffer yourselves to be gathered. There is still time for repentance. The Lord Jesus still stands with extended arms to gather you. He still waits upon you.

Nowhere else can you find defense and protection. It is absolutely necessary that you should put your trust under the shadow of his wings, for otherwise "You shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on you." (John 3 : 36.)

All that is in Jesus, and is to be enjoyed under his wings, is so inviting—it is so refreshing. Oh! that you had experience of it! "I sat down under his shadow," says the bride, "with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Sol. 2 : 3.) O sinner! how canst thou longer refuse? If you come to him you shall not be cast out.

Yet once consider. Can the kindness and love of the great God and good Saviour not move you? How would he gather you in order to defend you against that wrath which you have deserved? Will he himself be your rock and refreshment? and will you not come? Have you no pleasure in it? How can you find it in your heart to do thus? Is not the kindness of God of so much weight with you, when yet it is so great that David exclaims, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings;" and should not you, then, forsake the pleasures of sin and the joys of this world? Do you not violence to your own soul?

Do you not go contrary to your own judgment

when you despise Jesus, and sin against him? (Prov. 8 : 36.)

And whither shalt thou betake thyself at that day when heaven and earth shall be in flames? What wings shall then be able to cover thee from the face of God and the wrath of the Lamb? Oh! there shall be no place of refuge, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Heb. 10.)

Resolve, I pray you, to be willing, and to arise and come to Jesus.

Behold the danger which presses upon and threatens you.

Acknowledge in a lively manner the necessity of coming to Jesus: So shalt thou have life; for, saith He, "He that findeth me findeth life." (Prov. 8.)

Oh! that you had a lively impression of your inability and unwillingness, that in holy dismay you might look for the drawing which the Lord Jesus promised when he said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," (John 12;) and therefore pray with the Spouse, (Song Sol. 1 : 4,) "Draw me, we will run after thee."

We conclude with Heb. 12 : 5 : "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

Preached at New-Brunswick, }
Anno 1745. }

IV.

The Christian's Encouragement in the Spiritual Conflict.

"AND the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat :

"But I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not ; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." LUKE 22 : 31, 32.

REMARKABLE and full of consolation for the children of God are the words of David : "Though the righteous fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." (Ps. 37 : 24.) A righteous or just person is not one who is perfect, for such an one is not to be found among the children of Adam, and perfection is the prerogative of the second Adam alone ; but he is one who has fled for refuge to the grace of God, and is justified by the faith of Christ. All men still sin, even the righteous ; "We all offend in many things," is the inspired observation of James ; "A just man falleth seven times," that is, frequently, is that of Solomon, Prov. 24 : 16 ; falleth into miseries and difficulties, or (as the pious also do) into sins and imperfections, 1 Cor. 10 : 11, 12 : "Let him that

thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." When the righteous falls either into misery or sin, he is not utterly cast down: "He riseth up again," said Solomon; by a new repentance he is raised up and helped out of his situation, "for the Lord upholdeth his hand;" he raises him up, and strengthens him after the inward man; so that he falls indeed, but does not fall away. Of this we have many instances, as that of David; he fell and was not cast away, but arose again, Ps. 51, and of Peter, who fell grievously, but was not cast away; for the Lord upheld him, or which is the same, prayed for him, as is taught in the words of our text.

In the preceding the ambition of the disciples is reproved, though in connection with an illustrious promise from verses 24-30, upon which follows the prediction of the fall of Peter in the words of our text, in which three points are to be noticed:

I. A prediction of the fall of Peter, verse 31: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan," etc.

II. A promise of his perseverance in the faith: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

III. The duty to which the Saviour exhorts him: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

As to the first there comes under review the person who speaks, and the person who is spoken to. The person who speaks is the Son of God, and the Lord Jesus, both Lord as God, and Lord as mediator; the Lord and proprietor of his people. This is shown more at length in the Catechetical exercise, Lord's Day 13, Question 34. The person who is spoken to is Peter, "Simon, Simon." Christ speaks to all of his disciples

in the name of Peter, as Peter was wont to speak to Christ in the name of the other apostles. (Matt. 16.)

The name of Simon is frequently found in Scripture, as Simon the leper, the Pharisee, Simon of Cyrene, etc. The origin of it we find Gen. 29 : 33, where we are informed that Leah, having brought forth the second time, said, "Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, and she called his name Simon;" so that Simon is equivalent in meaning to a hearer; which is also applicable to Peter, who when called of Christ, immediately heard and followed him. (Matt. 4 : 18, 20.) His surname is Peter, which signifies a rock. This additional name Christ had promised to bestow upon him when he was called to the Apostleship, at which time he also received it; and it was confirmed to him, when he made his illustrious confession of Christ, Matt. 16 : 18, "Thou art Peter," etc. He was otherwise called Cephas, this being a Hebrew name, signifying the same as Peter. (John 1 : 42.) The father of Simon Peter, was one Jonas; on which account he is called Simon Barjonas, that is, the son of Jonas. (Matt. 16 : 17; John 21 : 15.)

Although this apostle was in an exceedingly humble condition before his call, being a fisherman by occupation, (Matt. 4,) and afterwards displayed numerous and even great imperfections, so that through ignorance and misguided compassion, he sought to dissuade Christ from his sufferings, who therefore said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" as he also made himself chargeable with dissimulation, Gal. 2 : 12-14, he was yet honored with the privilege of being an eye-witness of the great glory of Christ upon earth. (Matt. 26.)

Emphatic is the address of Christ, in the form of a repetition: "*Simon, Simon.*" The prophets and apostles have frequently indulged in similar repetitions; as we recently heard from Ezek. 23 : 6, "Sigh, sigh," and Jer. 22 : 29, "O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord!" as also Rev. 8 : 13, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth." Christ also on other occasions reduplicated his words; as "Verily, verily," John 3 : "Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" Matt. 23 : 27, and here, *Simon, Simon.* Hereby Christ expresses his love, and especially his compassion for his disciples; as if he had said, Simon, thou art not aware in what danger thou art; thou wouldst otherwise not be so cheerful, thou wouldst not depend upon thine own strength; therefore carefully observe, take particular notice. But what did this warning forbode? A sad, though altogether unknown event to Peter! "Satan hath desired to have thee," etc. That many angels have fallen and become devils, is known, and on other occasions shown. They bear a variety of names, and among them that of Satan, in signification the same as an adversary, antagonist, hater, (Ps. 8,) enemy, revengeful one, (1 Pet. 5 : 8;) for he opposes God and his glory; the salvation of men, their faith, holy exercises, obedience, their prayers, righteousness, and outward weal; as also their eternal salvation. (Mal. 3 : 13; Gen. 3; Job. 1 : 2; Matt. 4; John 8 : 44.) Paul denominates him Belial. He is also denominated the enemy, the tempter, as well of Christ as of believers, (1 Cor. 7;) Beelzebub the god of filth, or of flies; so contemptible, impure, and abominable is he in the estimation of God and all his saints. He is further

called the strong man armed, rulers of this world, (2 Cor. 4 : 4,) ruling with God's permission in the children of disobedience ; being employed by God as an executioner of his vengeance in the air, and upon the world of the disobedient ; occasioning many commotions and perturbations, and events strange and to us incomprehensible. (Job 1 : 2 ; Rev. 9 : 12 ; 3 : 6.)

Satan's operations are various, as having reference,

1. To God, whose enemy he is, whom he belies and slanders, (Gen. 3,) whose word he perverts, (Matt. 4 ;) hinders the proclamation of, and opposes it. (1 Cor. 16 : 9.)

2. To Christ, whom he resists in his work of saving men ; as we perceive in the vision of Joshua the high-priest, (Zech. 3 : 1 ; Jude 9 ; Rev. 12,) whom he tempted, (Matt. 4,) and betrayed through Judas, (John 13 : 2 ;) to whom he opposes all his might and violence, (John 14 : 30 ; Luke 22 : 53 ;) whose heel he bruised, (Gen. 3,) and whose kingdom he seeks to destroy. (Rev. 12 ; Matt. 12.)

3. To man in the world, to whose detriment he employs the creatures, leading him astray, and, as far as he can, retaining him under his control ; terrifying, threatening, accusing, and seeking to injure, to destroy, and, by his machinations, lies, and excuses, to draw him from the right ways of the Lord, taking also from him that which is good, (Matt. 13 : 12 ;) in a word, he works powerfully in the children of disobedience, as holy Scripture everywhere testifies.

4. To the pious and believing ; for the good are not free from his temptations, and therefore Christ teaches his disciples to pray : "Lead us not into temptation."

(Matt. 6.) Satan tempts to evil, or instigates to sin; thus he did to king David. He opposes or pollutes that which is good in believers; the Spirit of God denominates this buffetings: thus we hear Paul complain that, "There was given him a messenger from Satan a thorn in the flesh to buffet him," (2 Cor. 12 : 17;) fiery darts of the adversary, (Eph. 6 : 16;) these are the evil thoughts which he continually injects into true believers, by which they are brought into great dismay and distress. This he does in an exceedingly wily manner, concealing his agency; and they are therefore also called wiles of the devil. His modes of operation herein are so diversified that it is impossible to enumerate them. The word of God therefore speaks of the depths of Satan; he lies as it were in ambush against them, he persecutes, terrifies, and injures them as to soul and body, as we see in the case of Job. How much was that righteous man called to suffer from him; he was plagued by him with terrors; all that he had was in his hand, his life excepted; he excited with God's permission a tempest, by which he was deprived of all his children; he was also through his malice robbed of all his possessions, and in addition still affected with sore boils upon his body; in a word, Satan regards with deadly enmity the children of God, their knowledge, illumination, faith, hope, love, prayers, good conscience, patience, steadfastness in holiness, and works of righteousness.

This sifting is by some divided into that which is external, with perplexity, vexation, and assaults of the adversary, and that which is internal, with an inclina-

tion to unbelief, desperation, absolute despair, and self-destruction.

This the Saviour here foretells Peter and the other apostles: "Satan hath desired to have you, (all my apostles,) that he may sift you as wheat."

What wheat is, is known—the best grain which grew in Canaan, spoken of in the sacred Scripture as the best kind of food. "The fatness* of wheat" is hence extolled. (Ps. 81 : 17.) Christ on various occasions borrowed similitudes from wheat, as Matt. 13 : 24; as Paul has also done, 1 Cor. 15 : 37. How wheat is treated is known to yourselves better than I can describe. It is sowed, and, when ripe, cut and gathered into the barn, (Matt. 3 : 12;) then threshed, and when threshed, fanned and sifted; whence is drawn the figure the Saviour here employs: to sift as wheat.

1. When wheat is sifted, it is tossed hither and thither, and kept in constant motion. Thus it is with the believer when sifted by Satan, and tossed to and fro by surrounding difficulties, that he may if possible seduce him from the faith; he gives him no rest, but assaults him with temptation upon temptation.

2. Wheat is sifted that it may be purified from its chaff and impurities, and separated from all spurious grain; thus temptation in the end serves to promote the welfare of believers; for although through the force of temptation they fall, they yet rise again, and become more humble and cautious; for all things must work together for good to them. (Rom. 8 : 28.) But God's children are kept by his power through faith

* Dutch translation.

unto salvation; [hereto pertains also among others the example of Christ;] for not one of the believing people of Christ can perish: hence said the Redeemer in the second part of our text,

“But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,” for thee, Peter, especially for thee; knowing that the temptation will be directed with the greatest force against thee; and that thou shalt be in great danger of being overcome, and therefore, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”

Christ prayed for his people while still upon earth, (John 17 : 19, 20,) for he presented himself to his Father as their surety, who would satisfy for all their sins, and reveal to them his will; and desired that they might experience the power and fruit of his sacrifice.

He still prays for them in heaven. (Rom. 8.) Wherein this consists, we showed when we preached upon the priestly office of Christ from the Catechism. But to what end was this prayer of Christ?

“That thy faith fail not.” Faith can not entirely perish, so far as the principle and habit are concerned; but it can become exceedingly weakened, and be impaired in its acts and exercises. Now when Christ said, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,” he intended that he prayed that his faith should not be entirely extinguished by the temptation of Satan, with which he would be visited. Truly, this was a display of great love to Peter, which it became him to answer by love in return. This the Saviour requires in our third division:

“And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

Peter had experienced the first conversion, for when called he followed Christ, forsaking all; but here is understood by reformed divines the second conversion, consisting herein that a believer arises after a grievous fall, and by repentance returns to the Lord. When then he should be converted from this particular sin—have recovered from this fall and temptation, what were then his duty? “Strengthen thy brethren.”

Brethren, in the sense of Scripture, are various; those who are literally such—born of the same parents; those who are nearly related to each other, denominated by the Hebrews cousins; brethren by profession; members of one and the same church are denominated brethren, though unconverted. (1 Cor. 5 : 11.) But especially are true believers denominated brethren; because they have one God for their Father, one Jesus for their Saviour, one Church for their mother; thus the Lord said, I ascend to my Father and your Father. (John 20 : 17.) Hence arose the practice among the primitive Christians, of addressing one another as brethren. (James 1 : 2.) These are here to be understood; these he was required to strengthen, confirm, and comfort; the Lord would say: When thou shalt have recovered thyself, do thy utmost to strengthen thy brethren; pray for them as I have prayed for thee, and encourage them that they may not fail as thou hast; in a word, seek to influence them by thy own example. For this he would then be better qualified; for he who has himself been in danger and temptation, can the better caution others against it; he who has been deli-

vered from it can better comfort others with that comfort or confirmation, with which he himself has been comforted.

All this also Peter did after his repentance, for he was then exceedingly bold and zealous, and not only converted many thousands, (Acts 2 : 4,) but also strengthened his brethren, as appears from his two epistles which he addressed to the converted Jews. Read them, and you will perceive that he faithfully discharged his duty. See among other passages 1 Pet. 5 : 10. At last he died as a martyr. (John 21 : 18, 19.) To this he alludes 2 Pet. 1 : 14.

The Book of Martyrs (which is in the hands of some of you) informs us that he died the death by crucifixion, and requested that his head might be suspended downward; not regarding himself worthy to resemble his Lord and Master in the manner of his death. O wondrous Peter! What wondrous ways did the Lord Jesus pursue with you! What hast thou had to declare to thy Lord, when thou camest to him in heaven! as the aged and pious Brakel said with his dying lips, upon his dying bed: "Oh! how much shall I have to tell my Lord, when I arrive at my home above!" How much canst thou narrate to him respecting thy temptations! how much respecting thy deliverances! How glad wast thou when delivered out of the sieve of Satan!

O poor Peter! when thou wast tossed to and fro in the sieve of Satan, so that thou deniedst thy Lord and Master, which caused thee such bitter mourning, oh! how many a tear hadst thou to shed! but oh! how happy now that thou hast overcome! Now art thou

free from his temptations and persecutions. Oh! how great was thy joy when thou arrivedst at the presence of thy Lord, who has wiped thy tears from thy eyes! Who would not be glad, might he, with thee, through the power of God and the prayers of Christ, also overcome; so that he could say, "I have fought the good fight!"

O favored Peter! in that thou couldst glorify thy Lord by thy death, so precious in the eyes of the Lord!

From this explanation of the words of the text, which we trust we have not only briefly but also distinctly proposed to your attention, we can learn, that there in reality are temptations and assaults of Satan, and that he not only works in the children of disobedience, but that even the pious must suffer greatly from him.

He sets himself in direct opposition to the word of God, who applies what is said of Satan and evil angels, either to evil men or sinful emotions, or disordered frames, a perverted imagination, disease, frenzy, and the like. In no way can we do Satan a more agreeable service than by denying his agency, and seeking to expel the fear of it from the minds of men. That the Reformed Church teaches that there are assaults and temptation of Satan, appears from the Sixth Petition, Lord's Day 52. The truth of this is confirmed by examples of the saints of the Old Testament, as Job and David, and also of the New, not only Peter but also Paul, (2 Cor. 12,) and others in later times.

All who have left behind them an account of their

experience which has been given to the world, make mention not only of convictions, comforts, and sweet manifestations, but also of their struggles, conflicts, onsets of Satan, and deliverances. Of that great Reformer, Martin Luther, it is told, that he, on one occasion, experienced such siftings of Satan that he betook himself to his bed; and being so affected in body as to despair of his life, he made his will, which read as follows: "Lord God, I thank thee, that it has been thy will that I should be poor in this world. I have no landed estate nor money to leave behind me. Thou hast given me wife and children, whom I return to thee. Feed them, teach them, and keep them, as thou hast done me hitherto, O Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widow!" On the day following he said to Justas Jonas: "Yesterday I shall never forget. I was under the schoolmaster, and suffered what it is not easy to express." These temptations he afterwards frequently mentioned to his friends, and was wont to call them, with Paul, (2 Cor. 12 : 7,) "buffetings of Satan." He said, that three things were necessary to constitute a divine: meditation, prayer, and temptation.

My hearers, is it a truth, that all the pious are more or less subject to temptation in this vale of tears and place of conflict? How is it, then, with you, who are aware of no dangers, have experienced no siftings, are acquainted with no temptations, and as the people of *Lais*, are quiet and secure in yourselves, in the midst of sinful enticements? Have you no fear? But you imagine you can protect and preserve your-

selves. Should one say to you, Into this or that sin you may yet fall, you would take it exceedingly ill, and say that you would not fail to *take* care* of that. But no clearer proof could there be, that you are still in the state of nature, and thus under the dominion of the devil, and in the snares of sin; for those whom he still has in his power he seeks but to keep quiet and at ease in the sleep of security, as Christ shows, Luke 2 : 22.

When, after your manner, you pray, or repeat the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, are you sincere, whilst you willfully rush into temptation, and desire to be delivered neither from temptation nor evil, but, on the contrary, eagerly pursue vanities? for is there a horse-race here or there, or a meeting for vain amusement, which are you to be kept back from, whatever arguments may be presented to you? Will you not, at all hazards, be there? and do you not, therefore, bring yourself into temptation, like Dinah, who went out to see the daughters of the land, and experienced a fall? And when you so pursue the riches of the world, you certainly fall into many temptations: that Paul plainly teaches you, 1 Tim. 6 : 19. How frequently do you place yourself in the sieve of Satan by entertaining the lusts of the flesh, and indulging in sinful meditations! and still more by leading others into temptation! Thus do the licentious, who tempt others to licentiousness. Thus do the revellers and drunkards, who say, Come, I will fetch wine. (Isa. 56 : 12.) O sinners! behold, I be-

* An Anglicism used by the author himself, in the Dutch.

seech you, your misery, and awake out of the snares of the devil! He seeks but to drag you to destruction, and that without your knowledge. He goeth about as a roaring lion, and you observe it not. Oh! be concerned respecting yourselves, and call earnestly upon the Lord to deliver you from him, from the world, and from self. You will perhaps say, We know that Satan goes about, but Christ has come to destroy the works of the devil, and prays for us. Oh! happy were ye had ye Christ for your intercessor! I wish you that blessedness from my heart! but let me be faithful to you by warning you, and reminding you that the intercession of Christ is a privilege only of the people of God, who have been reconciled by a true faith of God in Christ, and have thus at the same time become his property, and whom alone he calls his: John 7 : 9: "I pray not for the world," etc. The heart is by nature altogether filled with, and entirely enslaved to earthly things, (Rom. 7 : 5 ;) 1 John 4 : 5: "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world: and the world heareth them."

Oh! that we were aroused to resist Satan, that he might flee from us; and were engaged in combat with him, having put on the whole armor of God, to quench his fiery darts, not yielding to his temptations, not following his seductions, being always sober, and watching in unceasing prayers to God, with believing endeavors to give no place to the devil. (Eph. 4.)

But ye upright ones, who by experience know what it is to be tempted and to be cast into the sieve of Satan, look not for ease, but conflict. "Strive to enter in," is the language of your Lord. (Luke 24.)

2. Remember that your tempters can not endure that you have forsaken their service: they would fain have you again in their power. The Lord himself, when he called you by his grace, called you to the good fight of faith. (Tim. 6 : 12.)

3. Labor diligently to become acquainted with your enemies; and give them no place in your hearts: otherwise you can not well watch against the siftings of Satan. To know his depths and devices, is to be half delivered from them.

4. Be actively engaged, that you be not unexpectedly overcome: 1 Pet. 5 : 8: "Be sober, be vigilant," etc.

5. Watch against pride, and a vain imagination of your ability to preserve yourself from these or other sins, for these are the readiest way to a fall. Peter's sad fall should serve as a beacon to you. "Be not high-minded, but fear." (Rom. 11 : 20.) Oh! what occasion has each one to pray, "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, (acts of pride;) let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." (Ps. 19 : 13.)

But methinks I hear a struggling soul say, Satan is great and powerful, and I, on the contrary, am weak. I therefore fear that I shall yet fall into the hands of Saul. But be of good courage, you have to do with conquered foes. Trust not in your own strength; remain at the side of the Captain, Jesus; hide by him; strive in his strength. He prays for you. Rest only upon him, and so through him you shall overcome; and the Lord, who is faithful, shall strengthen you

and preserve you from evil, so that the gates of hell, that is, their cunning, power, or violence, shall not overcome you, (Matt. 16,) but Satan and all his forces shall be bruised under your feet. (Rom. 6 : 2.)

Do you experience a fall? remain not prostrate, but with Peter arise. Are you endowed with grace? when converted, through the intercessions of your faithful Lord and Master, Jesus, strengthen your brethren; hear your duty as it sounds forth from the mouth of Jesus himself. And how proper is this duty, since they are not only your brethren, but (which is more) the brethren of Christ. Does the Apostle John require that we should lay down our lives for the brethren? how much more are we bound to strengthen them? And when you have been honored, by the grace of God, with turning a sinner from the error of his way, you shall save a soul from death, according to the words of James. And having enjoyed the honor of strengthening and comforting your brethren in the Lord, how delightful to you will be their company when you shall dwell with your Lord and them in glory, and recount the ways the Lord has pursued with you, what temptations and siftings you have here experienced, and how you have escaped from them.

We conclude with the exhortation of Paul, (1 Thess. 5 : 14 :) “ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.” Amen.

*Preached after a severe }
conflict at Raritan. }*

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