

from
John Pritchard.
10107
DISCOURSE,

Delivered at Hackinsack, June 28, 1796,

ON OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF A COMMISSION
OF SYND TO COMPOSE CERTAIN DIFFER-
ENCES IN THE CONGREGATIONS OF
HACKINSACK AND SCHRALENBURGH.

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IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.



NEW-YORK:

TO
THE MEMBERS
OF THE
CONGREGATIONS
OF
HACKINSACK AND SCHRALENBURGH,

THE FOLLOWING
DISCOURSE

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

The AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT occurred as an objection to the publication of the following Discourse, that it might appear like exposing the unhappy disputes which had existed, and which, a reconciliation having been effected, the parties might wish to be for ever forgotten. But when it was considered, that these disputes were not secret—that they frequently arise in all societies, from the imperfection of even the best in this world—that the remembrance of what was past may serve as a warning in future—that the doctrines inculcated are of the highest importance to all—and that, under these impressions, the publication of the Discourse was requested by one of the Consistories, and others who heard it, the Author could not, in duty, withhold it.

July, 1796.

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

MATTHEW v. 9.

*Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall
be called the children of God.*

HAD I been called, my brethren, to address you on a common occasion, I had, probably, chosen a different subject. But it is expected, and it is proper, that the discourse should be adapted to circumstances publicly known to exist in these congregations. The divisions and contentions which are permitted to take place among professing Christians, expose them to the reproach of the world, and have ever been used, by infidels, as an argument against Christianity itself. We wish such to know likewise,

likewise, that the religion is not in fault; that its precepts are pure, and enforced by the strongest motives; and that its native effect is righteousness and peace.

Indeed, love to man, and its necessary concomitant, peace, are so essential, that the subject is not unsuitable on any occasion; for, by the desire of peace, we try the sincerity of our love, and by both we determine whether we have felt the power of the religion of Jesus, and may be called the children of God.

The text is part of our Lord's excellent sermon on the mount; and surely when he speaks we owe the utmost reverence and attention. He was fully commissioned for the redemption of his people; he hath made reconciliation by his blood; and he teaches by his word and example. He who hath revealed the terms of acceptance, and will confer the final reward, hath pronounced, *Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.* As I come to
you,

you, therefore, my brethren, in the name, so also in the words of Christ, beseeching you to hear Him. Let us briefly inquire,

I. Who are to be understood by peace-makers.

II. What the blessedness is which such shall enjoy. And then, what improvement we ought to make of the whole.

By peace-makers are to be understood, FIRST, those whose tempers are mild and inclined to peace. Some persons seem to be so happily formed by nature, or have acquired by habit such a dominion over their passions, as to bear misfortunes with calmness, and injuries with patience; while others are of so rugged a mould, or so destitute of self-government, as to be tormented with fretfulness and resentment. The former may be called *blessed*, because the habitual composure of their spirits saves them much pain, and because they are esteemed, and their friendship courted by all with whom they converse.

This

This mildness is to be distinguished from meanness or servility, which feels not an injury, and has no respect to dignity of character. There are cases in which not to feel would be stupid, and not to discover a becoming indignation would be to forfeit all pretensions to every thing that is noble in man. The greatest danger, however, is of running into the opposite extreme, by resenting things which are much better unnoticed, and by pleading necessity, while we are only gratifying our own wicked passions. There is more magnanimity in forgiving an offence, and incurring reproach, than in revenging it, and obtaining applause. He is a hero who can do the first; a coward may perform the last.

But, it is not that mildness which any men naturally possess that will entitle them to the character and the blessedness intended by our Saviour. Until they have made their peace with God, and have been renewed after his image, they are
not

not peace-makers, and cannot be called the children of God. Love to a brother is the sign of love to God, and love to God is the source of love to a brother. *This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.** To this I pray you, my brethren, particularly to attend; for we may deceive ourselves by taking a happy disposition for grace. We have not, by nature, that principle which can guide our actions and render them acceptable to God. It must be wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. Whatever may be our natural constitutions, and whatever command of ourselves we may have acquired, if the love of God prevail not in our hearts, and we be not influenced by the precepts and motives of the gospel, we will not seek peace from true principles and with proper ardour.

Let me remark here also, that there will be different tempers even among those who

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are

* 1 John iv. 21.

are the subjects of divine grace. Those who are gentle, grace will make more amiable; those who are froward, it will subdue; but still their natural propensities will appear. Sanctification being imperfect in this life, the law in the members will war against the law of the mind. The particular sin to which one was prone before conversion, is likely to be afterward the sin which will most easily beset him.

We may be assured, at the same time, that as far as grace prevails in all, they will die to sin and live unto righteousness. *From whence, says the apostle James, come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?** Pride, envy, covetousness, ambition, and jealousy, these cruel lusts have, ever since Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him, broken the peace of families, neighbourhoods, and nations, and made this world a scene of blood-shed

and

* James iv. 1.

and carnage. The predominance of these in the false professors of Christianity, and the influence which they have in all here below, hinder that mutual love, those tender offices, and that perfect harmony which the gospel is calculated to produce, and which shall forever reign among the redeemed in heaven.

SECONDLY, By peace-makers are to be understood those who, in case of a variance between themselves and others, use all proper methods to effect a reconciliation. They do not retain anger and indulge a spirit of revenge; they do not provoke by reviling language, and return one injury by another; but are ready to acknowledge their own faults, and to forgive the faults of others. They seek peace as their great duty and happiness.

A little acquaintance with mankind will teach us how extremely depraved they generally are in this respect, what unjust maxims they imbibe, and how far they are from

from the spirit of the gospel. We will see one insist on a satisfaction purposely to mortify the other, while the other is too proud to give the satisfaction which he ought: we will see them contend who shall utter the most bitter invectives; we will see them treat one another with pointed incivility; in short, we will see them unreasonably and obstinately persist in their errors. To justify themselves, they will alledge, that it is mean either to acknowledge or to forgive an offence, especially to one whose character is conceived to be bad; and this is easily conceived when prejudice and passion once take possession of the mind. They consider not, that next to innocence is confession; and that forgiveness is victory both over ourselves and others.

Numerous passages of scripture which refer to this subject might be mentioned. Let me ask your attention, my brethren, only to what is delivered by our blessed Lord in this chapter. He taught the best morality;

morality; and though it may contradict the maxims of a wicked world, and excite the foolish sneer of infidels, yet it will be found to ennoble man, and promote his real happiness.

Hear how he forbids anger and all opprobrious language! *I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,* shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.†* There are slanderous imputations punishable by human laws, and where they cannot come under the notice of these, they expose to the righteous judgment of God. By his law, all revengeful desires and reproachful words are condemned as proceeding from a murderous heart.

The necessity of reconciliation, when a difference has arisen, before we can be accepted of God in acts of worship, is pointed out.

* A vain empty fellow.

† Verse 22.

out. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Too frequently is variance made an excuse for not offering our gifts; but we are to blame when there is no attempt to remove it. If we have offended, reparation is our duty, and without this we only mock God by calling upon him. He who is offended may be unreasonable and continue his enmity, but after all due advances and acknowledgments on our part, we are clear in the sight of God. The sin of a brother will not hinder us from confidence and acceptance in our worship.

Hear farther, how patience and forbearance under injuries are enjoined! *I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to*

*to him the other also.** The obvious meaning of this precept is, that we ought not to be hasty in our resentment, or to seek retaliation. Though we may remonstrate against the offence, and avoid the occasions of it, yet we ought to preserve our own peace and innocence of mind. The apostle well explains the meaning of our Saviour, when he says, *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.†*

Because others treat us with injustice and cruelty, we are ready to think that we are discharged from all obligations of kindness to them, contrary to this command, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.‡* The love here intended does not include a delight and confidence, such as we have in those who are amiable in themselves,

* Verse 39.

† Romans xii. 19.

‡ Verse 44.

themselves, and friendly toward us, but that regard which will keep us from doing them ill offices, and lead us to desire their reformation and welfare. Then, as the apostle expresses it, we *heap coals of fire on the head* of an enemy, and we *overcome evil with good*. By restraining our own passions, and showing kindness to the injurious person, we take the most effectual method to make him ashamed of his conduct, and convert him into a friend. When Saul was shown the skirt of his robe which David had cut off in the cave, he *lifted up his voice and wept*. And he said to David, *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as, when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.**

As in the example before us, so in others, it may be impossible, by the most kind and
generous

* 1 Samuel xxiv. 16, 17, 18.

generous behaviour, to conquer malevolence; but in this way it is most likely to be conquered, its effects defeated, and turned against itself. We are accountable for the desire and endeavour to make peace, and not for the consequence. *If it be possible, says the apostle, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.** It is in difficult cases only that reverence for the precepts of Christ and the power of his grace appear. Were not Christians to do more than others, what would distinguish them from the ungodly world? Of what advantage their sublime morality, and the divine assistance which is promised, if they live like other men? In the words of our Saviour, *If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye; do not even the publicans the same?†* How excellent, my brethren, is the religion of Jesus Christ! What blessed effects will its prevalence and power produce in this disordered world! *The wolf shall*

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shall

* Romans xii. 18.

† Verse 46.

*shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.** Hasten, O Prince of Peace, thy glorious reign!†

THIRDLY,

* Isaiah xi. 6.

† Though Thomas Paine, in the first part of his *Age of Reason*, says, that Jesus Christ preached and practised morality “of the most benevolent kind,” and that his system “has not been exceeded by any,” yet he speaks very disrespectfully of this morality in the second part of his work. He finds fault particularly with these two precepts respecting forbearance under injuries, and love to our enemies. As to the first, he says, “It is assassinating the dignity of forbearance, and sinking man into a spaniel.” So unwary and inconsistent is this writer, that in the very next sentence except one, he approves of the precept. “It is incumbent,” says he, “on man, as a moralist, that he does not revenge an injury; and it is equally as good in a political sense; for there is no end to retaliation; each retaliates on the other, and calls it justice.” Let me ask, if this be not the meaning of the precept? It does not enjoin us to invite injuries, and to use no method to prevent them; but not to revenge them, or not to return one by another. For, as Mr. Paine remarks, “there is no end to retaliation.” If, when one smites me on my cheek, I smite him on his cheek, war and blood will ensue. Unless one forbear the other, a reconciliation is impossible. Mr. Paine, at the same time, is entitled to no credit for his commentary on the precept, because he did not intend it, and has explained pretty well what he does not seem to understand.

Whether his assertion in the same page, in a note, is “wil-

THIRDLY, By peace-makers are to be understood those who are zealous in healing the divisions and composing the differences which

ful lying," or only a mode of communication which misleads, every reader must determine for himself. His words are, "In Christ's sermon on the mount, in the book of Matthew, it is there expressly said, that the doctrine of forbearance, or of not retaliating injuries, was *not any part of the doctrine of the Jews.*" There is neither such an expression to be found in the book, nor any thing which will bear such an interpretation. It is there expressly said by our Lord to the Jews, *Ye have heard that it hath been said.* He was correcting their false interpretations of the law, and explaining it in its spiritual meaning and full extent; but do his words imply, much less expressly declare, that the Jews had no law on the point in question? Blush ye his followers, for this shameless man, when he asserts, in immediate connection, that the "doctrine is found in Proverbs," and when, in the preceding page, he quotes the words and gives the very chapter and verse. He alledges, indeed, that the doctrine must have been copied from the Gentiles; to which the answer is sufficient, at present, that it is found in the Bible, and was known to the Jews.

Equally disingenuous is his interpretation of the precept, *Love your enemies.* According to him, it is "to love in proportion to the injury"—"to love without a motive"—and would imply, "that God loved man not in proportion as he was good, but as he was bad." Surely that mind must be extremely perverse which can make such inferences! Had this precept been found in some heathen writer, and not in holy scripture, how would infidels have boasted! Not because they would love the precept, but because of the high

which happen among others. This is the first idea which strikes us from the words ; but it is necessary to include the particulars before

strain of morality, and its beneficial influence in the world. Would it please these men, were the precept reversed, and stood thus? *Hate your enemies, curse them that curse you, &c.* Is this your morality, ye scoffers, and blind guides? If the Christian morality makes men *spaniels*, your's would certainly make them *wolves* and *tigers*. Against this opinion you may quote these words of Thomas Paine: "Those who preach this doctrine of loving their enemies are in general the greatest persecutors ;"—a sentence which, like the greater part of his book, is scandalous misrepresentation. Had he said, that many professing Christians have been persecutors, he had said truth; for many do not preach the pure doctrines of the gospel; and even among those that do preach them, many do not believe them, or feel their power. But to say, that to preach the doctrine of loving our enemies has a natural tendency to produce strife, and make persecutors, (which is the meaning of Mr. Paine in the connection of his words) is in the first rank of absurdities.

From these few remarks on this performance, found in the limits of two pages, the reader may judge what a scene the examination of the whole would present. There would be much need of the exercise of the graces which our blessed Lord recommends, in *blessing* and *doing good* to the man, while we *smote both the cheeks* of his work.—The world is much indebted to Dr. Watson, the present bishop of Landaff, for his *Apology for Christianity*, in letters addressed to Edward Gibbon; and it is equally indebted for his *Apology for the Bible*, in letters addressed to Thomas Paine. If infidels be as serious in their inquiry after truth as they pretend, they will give this *Apology* a candid and attentive perusal.

before mentioned, because only those who have felt the power of godliness, are themselves peaceable, and disposed to forgiveness and reconciliation, will, from proper principles, make peace among others. Only such know the value of peace, are truly concerned for the salvation of men, and jealous for the honor of Christ.

Not to detain you here, let me remark, that peace-makers will be solicitous above all things to bring persons to make their peace with God. Unless the breach be healed which sin has made, eternal misery is the inevitable portion; and where there is no fear of God, every other consideration to recommend amity between brethren loses its influence. In this view, the Ministers of the gospel are in a special manner peace-makers. *We are ambassadors for Christ, says the apostle, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.** They are likewise

* 2 Corinthians v. 20.

likewise frequently called to reconcile contending parties among Christians, and to be sorrowful witnesses how little such are bound by the great law of love. This business, however, does not exclusively belong to those ordained to public offices in the Church. Every Christian is a peace-maker. He is constrained to exert his abilities and opportunities to win men to Christ, and promote harmony and love. Nor shall he be without a reward, for the text sets forth,

II. The blessedness which peace-makers shall enjoy. *They shall be called the children of God.*

To be called, and *to be*, frequently signify in scripture the same thing. These words of our Lord, *My house shall be called the house of prayer*, stand in another place thus, *My house is the house of prayer*: and *to be called the sons of God*, is of similar import with the phrase, *to become the sons of God*. Peace-makers, then, are the children of God, and shall receive all the happiness which

which flows from that relation. They resemble God—shall be owned by him—and amply rewarded. Time, and a desire not to prove tedious to you, my brethren, will admit but a short discussion of this head. Perhaps, indeed, it is not necessary to enlarge, because all that happiness which believers enjoy here, and are entitled to hereafter, shall be enjoyed by peace-makers in an eminent degree.

1. They resemble God. He is called *Love—The God of Peace*. He bestows, with a liberal and incessant hand, blessings upon his creatures, even upon the unworthy, and those who requite him with ingratitude and rebellion. Peace-makers bear his image, and imitate his perfection. We find that our Saviour presses the duties of forbearance, kindness, and love toward our enemies, by the example of divine benevolence. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth*

*sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

Hath he forgiven us innumerable offences? hath he spared us? and is he still pursuing us with loving kindness? and shall we not forgive the offences of our fellow mortals against us? Did he give his Son to die for us? and shall not this astonishing love to such miserable creatures produce love to him, and to all mankind? Do we need, in this world of affliction, each others direction and assistance? and shall we embitter our cup by wringing into it wormwood and gall? No, the children of God resemble their Father; they follow the steps of Jesus Christ, who, in their nature, exhibited a most perfect pattern of every virtue. This is blessedness to be like God, who is infinite in excellence.

Again, Those who are of the character described shall be owned of God. All others falsely pretend to love him, and are objects of his displeasure. Hear the declaration of Christ—

Christ—*If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** Hear likewise the apostle—*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.†* Alas! my brethren, that any should deceive themselves by resting in an empty profession, by depending on some outward duties, while they live in hatred, variance, and strife with their neighbours. How can the holy, peaceful Spirit of God dwell in hearts so defiled?

Lastly, Peace-makers shall be amply rewarded. In this life they have a superior degree of pleasure in the tranquillity of their minds, and in the reputation which they gain. They are ornaments and blessings to society. The evenness of their tempers, their soft words, and their friendly counsels, like the melody of David's harp, chase away the evil spirit, or charm it to repose.

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* Matthew vi. 15.

† Hebrews xii. 14.

But though with David himself the child of God should lament and say, *Woe is me that I sojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My ſoul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but, when I ſpeak, they are for war;* yet in a little time, he ſhall fly away and be at reſt.* His full bleſſedneſs is reſerved in heaven for him, where peace and pleaſure reign for evermore; where his labours and ſufferings ſhall end, and be ſucceeded by a proportionable and gracious reward.

It might not be improper to introduce here the oppoſite character and miſery of thoſe who begin and continue ſtrife. They are the children of the devil. They reſemble him, and do his works. Actuated by him who is a liar and a murderer, they ſeparate very friends, add fuel to the fire, and, by their malignant breath, blow it to a flame. By the tales which they carry from one to another, with miſrepresentations

* Psalm cxx. 5, 6, 7.

tions and aggravations of their own, ill-will is generated, and a slight prejudice, which might have quickly vanished, is increased to a quarrel. *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so, where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.** Like the devil too, they are tormented with their cursed passions, and find no peace. Envy, hatred, and jealousy, gnaw them inwardly, and render tasteless all the sweets of life. Without repentance and renewing grace their portion will be to dwell in that place where all the bad and miserable are collected, and, groaning under the weight of divine wrath, to spend an eternity in mutual reproaches, bitter wailings, and horrid blasphemies. Let me turn from this diſmal picture, and ask your attention to some application of the subject to the circumstances of these congregations.

THE Commission of Synod appear among you this day as peace-makers. They are
invested

* Proverbs xxvi. 20.

invested with power either to effect, if possible, a reconciliation, or, if thought advisable, a separation; to determine in such manner as shall to them seem most for the glory of God, and the edification of his Church. Do any ask us, On what side are you? we answer, on the side of Christ. Your respective pleas have not been heard. We only know, in general, that there are divisions among you, and that, from what causes soever they have sprung, they are much to be lamented. They are opposed to the spirit of the gospel, unbecoming its professors, and as such ought to be healed with all care and speed. Without entering, therefore, upon the merits of your controversy, or prejudging them, you will allow me to mention, with all plainness and faithfulness, a few considerations, which ought to have great weight in directing your conduct.

A plan of union, not long since, was adopted, with a solemn declaration of adherence, and a formal subscription. It is
true,

true, that a change in affairs may render a separation now eligible; but it is certain, that the reasons for this ought to be strong and evident. Had no union ever been formed, your profession as Christians would oblige you to seek it; but after it is once formed, the obligation is increased, and it may not be violated lightly or wantonly. The good man, if he swear, though *to his own hurt*, yet he *changeth not*.*

Again, What advantages are expected from a separation? Living in the same neighbourhood, passing and repassing one another

* The plan of union referred to was adopted at a meeting of a Commission of Synod in the year 1789. The causes of difference need not be detailed. It may be necessary, however, to inform the reader who is not particularly acquainted with these congregations, that they have two Ministers, who preach alternately in two churches, and had in each congregation their respective adherents, though both be of the same denomination. Had these congregations separately adhered each to one Minister, the matter had not been so difficult; but living promiscuously, and indulging animosity, each house was divided against itself. This rendered a variance the more grievous, and some plan of union extremely desirable. How happy, if, on the second accommodation, they *stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel!*

another on your way to and from the Church, are you likely to be better friends? Though you sit under different Ministers, and communicate at different tables, yet will you have “laid aside unfeignedly all enmity, hatred and envy?” Are you not more likely, the one party to account the other as heathen men and publicans, or be to one another as the Jews and Samaritans were formerly? Will not disunion be perpetuated to your posterity? What mischiefs arise from contentions among Christians! The wounds are so deep and ulcerous, that they are with difficulty, if ever, cured.

On the other hand, the benefits of union are great. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of*

*of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.** Unity, like precious ointment, is salutary and fragrant; but discord is like a corrosive to the flesh, or dead flies which cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking favour. Unity, like the dew or gentle rain, refreshes and cherishes the fruits of the earth; but discord, like the pitiless storm, beats down all, or, swelling to a flood, sweeps flocks and herds, all the hope of the husbandman, irresistibly away.

Let it be particularly remarked, that where unity is, *there the Lord commands the blessing, even life for evermore.* How can we expect a blessing to attend the means of grace, if we live in strife? Is this to act as those who not only belong to the same family of mankind, but are *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another?* Will not God take his Holy Spirit from us, and give us up to follow our own lusts?

If

* Psalm cxxxiii.

If we cannot agree here, what ground to believe that we are preparing for heaven, the place of eternal love and peace? These, my brethren, are awfully serious considerations, and I pray you to admit them in their full force.

Suffer me to ask farther, if unity, especially at this day, be not advantageous, as it recommends religion, and abashes the impudence of infidelity? Is not the inscription on the stone over the door of this Church, “UNION GIVES STRENGTH?” If, then, the union be broken, is not the strength gone? It was during last summer, in the midst of your contentions, that the heavens gathered blackness, and the lightning, bursting from the cloud, broke this stone, and tore it from its place; as though God looked down upon it as an insult to his name, or thus loudly called upon you to attend to your solemn profession and indispensable duty. I will not assert that there was a particular voice in the thunders of
that

that day ; but it has been mentioned by many as somewhat singular, that while differing about the appropriation of some money, you should be made to expend a part in repairing the damage of your Church ; and that this stone, bearing the memorable inscription, should be the only one which was removed and broken. Surely you may learn from it an important and affecting lesson. While it recalls you to duty in this life, let it impress you with the thought of those dreadful thunders which shall usher in the last judgment, and those fires which shall burn up this earth and all the works that are therein ; of that tremendous day, when all who hate God and their neighbour *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.**

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* The thunder-storm was on Friday, the 10th of July, 1795, and was uncommonly severe. It is said that it arose suddenly, and was confined to the town of Hackinsack and its vicinity ; that the flashes of lightning and peals of thunder were repeated and terrible. In one explosion, the lightning

The last consideration which I shall mention, is the near approach of death, when we must leave all earthly concerns, and enter upon an unchangeable state. Yet a little while, and the present generation shall pass away, your Ministers shall be succeeded by others, and the seats which you now fill shall have new occupants. How little will the things of this world appear, when we are about to close our eyes upon them all ! What bitter reflections will we have, if sensible of having injured a brother and promoted variance ! Soon must the slanderous tongue falter, the hand that was lifted to strike become motionless, and the
 envious

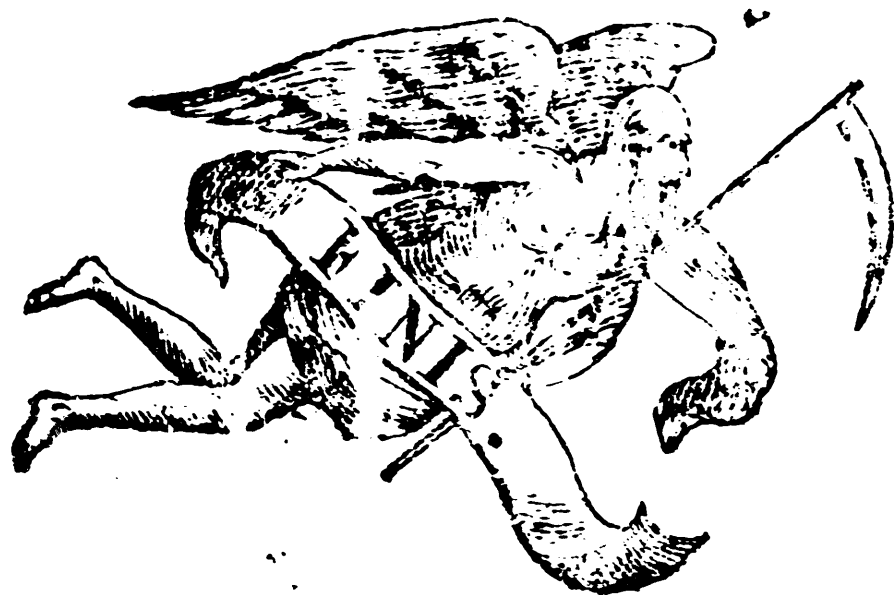
struck the steeple of the Church, which it damaged much; and, in its descent, displaced the stone with the inscription over the door. This stone was broken in several pieces, either by the lightning, or by the fall. It had been cemented and replaced before the delivery of this discourse. These circumstances, being in part known, gave occasion for the allusion. May the members of the congregations be firmly united ! May they be "ingrafted into Christ by a true faith, "be altogether one body, through brotherly love ; and not "only show this in word, but also in very deed towards one "another !"

envious eye grow dim ! Would we die in peace, let us live in peace. Come view your conduct with respect to that hour when all are honest and serious. Will your consciences approve, when just about to appear before an omniscient and righteous Judge ? Will you be able to say that you have endeavoured to be *void of offence towards God and towards man ; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, by the grace of God you have had your conversation in the world ?* O my brethren, deal faithfully with yourselves, and delay not a moment to secure your peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

To conclude, If the Commission of Synod shall be so happy as to accomplish a reconciliation, a new stone shall be engraven and brought to its place with honours and triumph. Unhurt by any dark cloud, it shall remain a monument to late posterity, of restored love and friendship. But if a separation shall be judged to be expedient,

let the broken stone continue as an emblem of disunited brethren. In either case the peace-makers shall obtain their reward. *Now, the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.* Amen.*

* Thessalonians iii. 16.



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