



MEMORIAL VOLUME.

COVENANT RENOVATION

✓ BY THE SYNOD OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

^{et} IN NORTH AMERICA. *Synod*

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF SYNOD.

"They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten." Jer. 50: 5.

PITTSBURGH:
BAKEWELL & MARTHENS.

1872.

THIS volume is published in accordance with the following action of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America :

“The Committee on the advisability of publishing a Memorial Volume on the act of Covenanting, reported :

“We recommend that Synod appoint a committee of three, with power to prepare, and have published, at as early a day as possible, a history of the taking of the covenant, with such a synopsis of the proceedings as they may deem expedient.”

J. R. W. SLOANE,
J. W. SPROULL,
S. A. STERRETT,

Committee.

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Page 172 - No prayer was offered while
making the constitution of our
land tho the convention lasted
5 weeks

Frank Lee Stewart

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with ornate, symmetrical scrollwork at both ends and a small central flourish.

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COVENANT RENOVATION.

NARRATIVE.

THE transaction which this volume is designed to commemorate marks an important era in the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

The limits to which we are necessarily confined, preclude any discussion of the Scriptural ordinance of covenanting, or any detailed history of those memorable epochs in which the church of God has exemplified this part of her testimony.

For information upon these points, we must refer the reader to the discourses in the body of this volume, and to such other sources as are easily accessible.

The object which we have in view is simply to present a brief narrative of the Act of Covenanting by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in the city of Pittsburgh, May 27, 1871.

It has been the custom of the church to commemorate remarkable events in her history, both by material structures and literary records. We have early instances of the former in Jacob's pillars, those set up by Moses at Mount Sinai, the twenty-four stones erected by Joshua at the passage of the Jordan, and the one which he set up

under the oak by the sanctuary of the Lord in Shechem ; of the latter, in Miriam's song at the Red Sea, that of Deborah and Barak at the overthrow of Sisera, and in many of the Psalms of David.

Following such approved examples, Synod resolved to erect a commemorative pillar—a “Memorial Theological Seminary,”—as an expression of devout thankfulness to our covenant God for the tokens of the divine favor enjoyed in all the circumstances of this solemn transaction, and also to issue this “Memorial Volume” as a means of perpetuating its remembrance, and transmitting to posterity an accurate account of the impressive services connected with it. “Walk about Zion and go round about her ; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.” — “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.”

In the September number of the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter* for 1871, will be found a detailed account of the various attempts made by the church in this country to renew her federal engagements. Although many of these efforts resulted only in disappointment and apparent failure, it is manifest that the Head of the church was all the time preparing his people for a realization of their hopes, while leading them by a way which they knew not.

At the meeting of Synod held at Northwood, Ohio,

May, 1868, petitions from the 1st congregation of New York, 1st Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, were presented, urging immediate attention to the subject of covenanting. These petitions were favorably received, and a special committee appointed to report on the subject at that meeting of Synod. The following is the report of the committee :

“WHEREAS, Public social covenanting is a duty and privilege of the church under the New Testament dispensation ; and whereas, it is a distinctive principle of the Reformed Presbyterian Church that such engagements should be entered into at suitable seasons ; and whereas, the ordinance of covenanting has never been practically exemplified by the church in America ; and whereas, it is our devout conviction that the proper observance of this ordinance would be blessed by God to the revival of the church through the outpouring of his Holy Spirit ; and whereas, we are profoundly convinced that there is in the present aspects of divine providence toward our church an urgent call to enter immediately upon the work of covenant renovation ; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That Synod appoint a special committee to prepare the draft of a covenant, and make all necessary arrangements for entering upon the work of covenanting without unnecessary delay.”

The adoption of this report was immediately followed by the appointment of a committee, consisting of S. O. Wylie, D. D., J. R. W. Sloane, D. D., T. Sproull, D. D., A. Stevenson, D. D., and William Crawford—J. Wiggins and Andrew Knox were subsequently added—to carry out the recommendations of the report.

At the next meeting of Synod held in Newburgh, N. Y., May, 1869, the committee, owing to the indisposition of the chairman, was not able to report progress. The committee was continued, and directed "to prepare a bond and report to the next meeting of Synod, on the morning of the second day of its sessions, and the consideration of the subject of covenanting was made the order of the day for the forenoon session of the third day." Pastors of congregations were also directed to preach on the subject of covenanting.

Accordingly, at the meeting of Synod held in New York, May, 1870, a draft of confession of sins and bond of covenant was reported by the committee. These were carefully considered, discussed, amended, and finally unanimously adopted. "The form of covenant," as thus adopted by Synod, "was sent down in overture to presbyteries and sessions, with instructions to vote yea or nay. Presbyteries were also directed to transmit to Synod the votes of sessions."

As many of the members of Synod as were members of the committee on covenanting were appointed a committee to report the order of exercises for the renewal of the covenant. This committee reported the following order, subsequently with slight variations, observed :

1. That Synod, if the way be clear, engage in taking the covenant on Saturday after the day on which it meets in May, of 1871.

2. That the sacrament of the Lord's supper be dispensed on the following Sabbath, and the Friday preceding be observed as a day of fasting.

3. That a committee be appointed to arrange the order

of proceeding in covenanting, and to assign to suitable persons the parts of this work and of the communion, and publish the arrangement in the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, in connection with the minutes of Synod.

4. That all office bearers in the church present at the meeting, be allowed, if they wish, to join with Synod in taking the covenant.

5. That sessions and presbyteries take early action on the bond, and that clerks of presbyteries remit to the clerk of Synod the results of their action, that he may have them in readiness for immediate action in Synod.

The existing committee on covenanting was appointed under the third paragraph of the above report.

The arrangements were completed and published in the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter* for January, 1871.

When Synod met in May, it was found that the reports from presbyteries were all favorable, and that the desire to go forward immediately was very general; with many it had been the cherished hope and subject of earnest prayer for many years; not a few were present at considerable sacrifice, for the express purpose of witnessing this solemn act, and now that all things appeared ready, they were impatient of any delay which might again put it in hazard. After an earnest discussion, conducted in the best spirit, it was decided by an almost unanimous vote, to carry out the expressed purpose of Synod, without further delay.

A committee had been appointed "to receive and consider any papers in relation to the form of covenant, and to hear and remove, if possible, any objections which

may be made to the bond." This committee found its task comparatively easy ; but few objections were presented, and these, in most instances, easily removed. In order to satisfy scruples, the committee recommended an amendment to the confession of sins, more distinctly recognizing the covenants of the "Second Reformation." This recommendation was cordially accepted, and the following resolution adopted :

"*Resolved*, That in order to satisfy the scruples of some members of Synod, we understand that the expression 'Covenants of the Second Reformation' includes the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Kingdoms,"

These additions and explanations served to satisfy the minds of all those who had been in doubt, with the exception of two ministers and one ruling elder ; and thus the way was open to the immediate observance of the ordinance. The mountains flowed down and became a plain before our New Testament Zerubbabel. The Lord our God made our darkness to be light ; fears were disappointed ; cherished hopes were to be realized. The morning of joy had dawned. There was cheering evidence that our covenant God was about to "visit Zion, and his glory to arise upon her." From the time that the final determination was made, a feeling of deep solemnity appeared to pervade the minds of the members of the court. Humility, joy, hope, serenity and pleasing anticipation, were the mingled emotions with which they looked forward to this act of self-consecration. Prayer also was made continually.

Friday was the day set apart for humiliation and prayer.

The services of the forenoon were, reading confession of sins, by Rev. James Wallace, of St. Louis, Missouri, and sermon by Rev. J. R. Thompson, of Newburgh, N. Y. The sermon was preached in the afternoon by Rev. H. H. George, of Cincinnati. It is unnecessary to characterize these or the other discourses which were preached in connection with the services of this memorable occasion, as they are given in the body of this volume, and will be read, we are confident, with pleasure and profit, by many who did not enjoy the privilege of hearing them delivered.

In the evening a large number of the members of Synod assembled for devotional exercises, which were conducted wholly by ruling elders, Mr. David Wallace, of Muskingum, Ohio, presiding. This meeting was characterized by a deeply devotional spirit. After these devotional exercises, a sermon was preached by Rev. James Kennedy, of New York city.

Saturday was the day appointed for covenanting. Rev. Andrew Stevenson, D. D., of New York city, preached a discourse appropriate to the occasion. At the close of the service Synod took a recess of half an hour; at the expiration of this time, Synod was called to order. The large house of worship in which Synod met was filled to its utmost capacity with an attentive and deeply interested audience, the members of Synod occupying the pews immediately in front and on each side of the pulpit. The exercises of the afternoon were introduced by singing a portion of a psalm, followed by the reading, in an impressive manner, of the covenant, by Rev. J. M. Beattie, of Ryegate, Vermont. Then followed the address

“Upon the spirit in which we should engage in the act of covenanting,” by Rev. J. R. W. Sloane, D. D., of Allegheny city. Rev. Thomas Sproull, D. D., of Allegheny city, who had been appointed to preside, then solemnly addressed the Throne of Grace. A few moments were given for silent prayer. He then proceeded to read the oath, all the members standing and holding up their right hands, and at the close responding audibly, “Amen.” Dr. Sproull then read the covenant, section by section; at the close of each section the members again responded “Amen,” and at the conclusion of the whole repeated in concert, “All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient.” The covenant was then subscribed by seventy-four ministers and seventy ruling elders, members of Synod, and by five licentiates, four students of theology, and nineteen elders who were not members of the court.

The closing address was then delivered by Rev. Wm. Milroy, of Northwood, Ohio, on “Covenant Keeping,” and the service was closed by singing Psalm 72 : 17-19.

The scene thus briefly sketched was one never to be forgotten. A solemn awe pervaded the entire assembly. At some points in the service, the deepest feeling was manifested. None shouted for joy as in the old Greyfriar’s churchyard, but many wept. The feeling that predominated was a calm and holy joy. All felt that the covenant promise had been fulfilled, “In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.”

As the sacrament of the supper was to be observed on the following day, the terms of communion were read,

and tokens of admission to the Lord's table dispensed, Rev. John Crozier, of Elizabeth, Pa., conducting this service, the closing one of "a great and good day," as it was characterized by many members of Synod.

We cannot refrain from quoting, as strikingly appropriate, the beautiful words of another, descriptive of a similar scene in a distant land. "The public religious services of this memorable day were concluded about seven (five) o'clock in the evening. Amidst the solemn calm of the closing day, the large assembly that had waited upon them for so many hours, with fixed attention, retired from the scene, under impressions of the peculiar favor of the God of their fathers vouchsafed upon the occasion."*

On communion Sabbath the psalm was explained by Rev. Samuel Carlisle, of Newburgh, N. Y. The action sermon was preached by Rev. S. O. Wylie, D. D., of Philadelphia, Pa. The service of debarring was conducted by Rev. Samuel Bowden, of York, N. Y. The words of institution were explained by Rev. Thomas Sproull, D. D. The first table was served by Rev. D. S. Faris, of Sparta, Ill.; second by Rev. J. W. Sproull, of Allegheny; third by Rev. J. Hunter, of Wilkesburg, Pa.; fourth by Rev. R. J. Sharpe, of Philadelphia. Rev. John French, of California, Mich., addressed the communicants. Rev. D. McAllister, of Walton, N. Y., preached the sermon on Sabbath evening, and Rev. A. M. Milligan, of Pittsburgh, on Monday evening. Rev. John Galbraith gave the parting address and read

* "Memorial of Covenanting," by Thomas Houston, D. D., Knockbracken, Ireland.

the usual passages, thus closing the communion service held in connection with covenanting. The communion season added much to the interest of the occasion, and was felt to be a time of reviving and refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Arrangements were immediately made by Synod to further the work of covenanting by the various congregations. Directions were given as to the manner of procedure. A committee was appointed to prepare a "Pastoral Address," and another to issue as soon as practicable the present "Memorial Volume."

We are, perhaps, too near these solemn transactions to estimate properly the results. Already, however, there are cheering evidences that the anticipations of the church are to be realized; that the Spirit will be poured out from on high, the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the desert be made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

"Who is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

GOD'S PUNITIVE DEALINGS WITH MAN.

BY REV. J. RENWICK THOMPSON.

GENESIS 3 : 24. "So he drove out the man."

THE idea of man's responsibility to God underlies our text. It is a truth that is clearly revealed in human consciousness ; that meets us on the very threshold of human history ; and that is written with the pen of inspiration upon the sacred page. Both the natural and supernatural unite in linking man by an indissoluble chain to the throne of the Eternal. No more certainly do the minute atoms of matter that fringe the outer verge of creation respond to the force of natural law, than man responds to the constraining power of a moral responsibility that binds him to the moral Governor and Judge of all.

An ignoring of this responsibility, a breaking a link in this chain, necessarily, and at once, exposes the transgressor to the certain, impartial, and avenging judgment of God. Hence, the very moment that man in the morning of his existence attempted to throw off this responsibility, swift judgment followed, and he stood a condemned criminal at the bar of God. It was a judgment, not merely upon the first man, but upon the whole human family. It was not Adam alone that God drove out of the garden, but the human race federally in Adam. This judgment was the first penal infliction upon the race, and was a witness and prophecy of the many judgments that leave their dark impress on the page of human history. A judgment meets man almost at the beginning of his history ; a judgment will meet him at the end ; and judgments lie

along the whole line of his earthly progress. Truly he may look up to the Ruler of the Universe and exclaim, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne."

This first judicial infliction, however, was not without a gleam of mercy. As soon as the night of sin settled down upon the earth, the star of mercy arose above the dark horizon. Justice and mercy met together on the cross, but they had their first earthly meeting in the garden of Eden. Justice declared "Thou shalt surely die," but mercy at the same time announced "That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

These thoughts grow out of and cluster around our text. They suggest for discussion a very important feature in the divine administration, and clearly show that God deals with man for his conduct—deals with him severely, justly, and yet mercifully. "So he drove out the man."

Doctrine : God punishes man for his sin.

I. *Severely.* It is no light infliction, no sham punishment that mocks justice and deludes the guilty ; but it is real and severe.

1. God punishes man severely by *opening his eyes to a perception of his sinful and sad condition.* "And the eyes of them both were opened." Gen. 3 : 7. Their eyes were opened, as the serpent predicted, but not in the way they had expected. They were opened to see their spiritual nakedness, their moral depravity, their misery and utter helplessness. A spiritual insight was given to them, by which they had a perception of the moral turpitude of their act, its unprovoked ingratitude, its stain upon God's moral government, its effects upon themselves and

upon their posterity to the latest generation, and upon a portion of the human family throughout eternity. It was this view of sin that forced from the Psalmist the bitter cry, "My sin is ever before me;" that constrained the evangelical prophet to exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone;" that wrung from Peter those penitent tears as he "went out and wept bitterly;" that stung the conscience of a Judas until he rushed forth and hung himself. One of the severest penalties that God inflicts on sinners is opening their eyes to a perception of the criminality of their sins, and thereby awakening into activity the power of conscience, that ever-present avenger that fills the soul with dreadful forebodings and kindles within it a fire which is never quenched. A view of sin in its nature and consequences, is a severe infliction in this life, and will form no small portion of the penalty of the lost for ever and ever.

2. *By judicially abandoning man to the dominion of sin.* Scripture and human experience alike confirm the fact that sin is a punishment for sin; that the burden of guilt and depravity which every one bears about with him is not only the consequence but the certain punishment of sin. Sin follows close on the heels of sin as an avenger. The moment Adam sinned, guilt and depravity seized him in their iron grasp and became the penal infliction for his rebellion against God. Paul, in Romans 1: 24, clearly shows that because the heathen forsook God they were judicially given up to uncleanness as a punitive infliction for their sin. In like manner God punished Pharaoh, not merely by withholding grace and leaving him to the hardening influence of his native depravity, but by mak-

ing the “hardening” of his heart a penal infliction so that his sin became the punishment for his sin. A ruined constitution is not only the consequence of the violation of natural laws, but the punishment for such a violation. Spiritual insensibility not only flows from sin, but is the punishment of sin. When Paul uttered the bitter complaint, “Oh ! wretched man that I am,” it was not only because he loathed his depravity, but felt it as a severe punishment—that “the body of death” was God’s punitive hand upon him, crushing him down almost into the depths of despair. God drove man out of his presence, left him a captive in the power of sin, and by this judicial abandonment inflicted upon him a severe punishment.

3. *By suspending communion with him.* Man’s delightful fellowship with God in Paradise was interrupted by sin, and he was sent forth from the tree of life, from the presence of God, and the gate of the garden closed against him lest he should return and partake of the symbol and pledge of those blessings he had forfeited. As he reluctantly went forth, forced out by the penalty of his sin, he felt the severity of his punishment, and in his own soul was ready to exclaim in the words afterwards uttered by his rebellious son, “My punishment is greater than I can bear”—shut out from the presence of God and left alone in a sin-cursed world. Exclusion from the presence of God in the sanctuary, was a severe punishment to the Jew ; and suspension from the privileges of the church, is one of the severest inflictions upon a child of God. But much severer is the trial when God judicially suspends communion with man and shuts him out from his gra-

cious presence. Truly did the pious Henry Martyn say that to be absent from God for a time was to be miserable.

4. *By exposing him to the ills of this life and the life that is to come.* Expulsion from the garden was the beginning of multitudinous trials. The world became to man a prison-house ; the ground was made to bristle with briars and thorns ; in the sweat of his face he ate his bread ; disease seized his physical frame, and death cut short his career. Suffering in body and in mind, in various forms, bears testimony to the severity of the punishment which a righteous God inflicts on man. But eternity can only reveal the true character of that righteous retribution that the God of vengeance executes upon the impenitent violator of his law. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." The avenging Nemesis follows close on the track of sin, and the divine providences are so adjusted that "punishment is the recoil of sin, and the strength of the back stroke is in proportion to the original blow." As the crime is heinous, so the punishment is severe. We may exclaim with the apostle, "Behold" not only "the goodness," but also "the severity of God ; on them that fell *severity*."

II. Justly.

Divine punishment is not the arbitrary act of a sovereign ; nor the blow of a blind and remorseless fate ; nor yet the uncertain stroke of the wheel of chance, but the just penalty, the inevitable retribution for sin. Its sanction is in man's moral constitution, in the religion and literature of all nations, in the retributive forces of nature, in the mysterious revolving of the wheels of providence, and is echoed from the awful throne of the sin-avenging

God. Every department of Jehovah's empire proclaims the truth that "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." God punishes sin justly.

1. *Because of the dishonor it does to his moral government.* Sin being an act of rebellion against God's throne, an assault upon his administration, an act of spiritual treason, it necessarily puts dishonor upon God's government, and therefore justly deserves punishment. God's nature, as well as the claims of his government, demands the infliction of punishment upon the sinner. The necessity for punishment springs from the divine love ; and did not God punish the sinner he would not be a God of love. His love to his true children calls for the punishment of the disobedient. The very existence of God's throne, as well as the purity of his administration, cries with an inexorable voice for the punishment of every assault made upon his government. Every stain upon God's government must be wiped out by the hand of retributive justice.

2. *Because man has transgressed the known law of God.* Law is a rule of conduct prescribed by the Supreme Ruler. Its obligation does not spring from our consent or approbation, but from the will of the Lawgiver. It is not a compact, for then it would, in part, originate with man ; but is a command given to us and for us. The strength of this law lies in its penalty. Hence, says Blackstone, "of all parts of the law, the most effectual is the *vindictory*." Without the penalty, the law would be a rope of sand. The violation of law, then, is necessarily followed by the infliction of the penalty. In God's moral government, as well as in nature, the penalty follows as the avenger of violated law. God, who is just,

must inflict the penalty wherever his law is violated, "The wages of sin is death," for "sin is the transgression of the law."

3. *Because man has violated a solemn covenant engagement.* Where there is a covenant entered into there is an increased obligation arising from the voluntary assent given to its stipulations. Adam was bound by the law of God originally, but his obligation was increased by entering into the covenant of works. Abraham's obligation to God was increased by his accepting the Abrahamic covenant. Our covenanted forefathers had their obligation strengthened by setting their seal to the Solemn League and Covenant. Accepting, then, this principle, a violation of a covenant is a sin of no small magnitude, and justly deserves a severe penalty. God drove Adam out of Eden because he was a covenant breaker; and covenant sins are not among the least of man's transgressions. "They have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law."

4. *Because of the consequences of man's sin.* Sin, in its effects, is not confined to the sinner or the limits of time. Adam's sin did not terminate in his own person or his own age; its influence was imparted and its guilt imputed to the whole race, and its effects reach into eternity. Adam and Eve went not alone out of Eden, but were followed by a procession of the whole human race and a train of woes and sorrows that extend into the future world. No tongue can tell the consequences of his sin. Collect all the fruits of it in this and the future world, and pile them up in one mass, and the earth would not form a base wide enough or heaven be high enough to contain so dark a

monument. Sin is the fruitful parent of every crime and woe. It fills our jails with criminals, our asylums with the insane, the dark haunts in our cities with festering disease, squalor and death. It fires the passions of licentiousness, inflames the appetite of the inebriate, sends sinners blindly down the yawning gulf into perdition and peoples hell with its victims. It is sin, that has lit the torch of persecution, that has rent the seamless robe of Christ, and that has nailed the Son of God to the cross. Oh ! sin has done all this, and more. Shall we not arraign this culprit before the bar of God ? Shall not you render the verdict *guilty* ; and shall not the Judge pronounce the righteous sentence ? Surely, man's sin that is so far-reaching and disastrous in its results, justly deserves the severest punishment of Heaven. Punishment is truly the logical exponent of sin ; its just desert. God *must* inflict the penalty. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

III. Mercifully

The punishment on man is not only severe and just, but also tempered with mercy. "Mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other:" Ps. 85 : 10. The very moment the sword of justice was unsheathed against man the rainbow of merey spanned the throne, and a voice came forth, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." "I have have found a ransom." God punishes mercifully.

1. *By not inflicting upon man the full penalty of the law.* The penalty was death—death spiritual, physical and eternal. The first was inflicted the instant man sinned. The knife fell the very moment sin sprung the trap ; but mercy

stayed its progress, and it did not reach the extreme limit of the penalty. Death physical was delayed ; and death eternal was robbed by mercy of many of its victims. God did punish man, but not to the full extent of the law. He drove man out of the garden, but not out of the world. He closed the gates of Paradise against him, but did not bolt them, so that they could never be opened. He clouded man's prospects, but did not entirely quench the spark of hope. Mercy accompanied justice as the latter drove man out into the cheerless world, so that outside of the gates of Eden man could sing of mercy as well as of judgment. And through the ages that are past, mercy has locked the wheels of judgment and delayed the hour of execution, by causing the hand of justice to move slowly on the dial. If justice would immediately exact from the sinner its full demands, who could live for a moment in its presence ? " If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? "

2. *By accompanying the penalty with the promise and pledge of salvation.* In connection with the penalty was the germ of a future restoration, the symbol that excited the hope of a return to Paradise. At the east gate of the garden was not only the flaming sword of justice to vindicate the rights of God's government, but also the cherubim of mercy and hope pointing back to the tree of life, and symbolically announcing that a way of return would be opened up. There stood two symbolical sentinels, the one guarding the rights of sovereignty, and the other offering mercy to the returning prodigal. From that day to this, mercy has gone hand in hand with judgment ; the promise has kept pace with the threatening ; the mes-

sengers of pardon have followed close in the track of the ministers of justice. On the very cross where justice slew one on the left hand, mercy snatched a trophy on the right and bore it in triumph to glory. As flowers bloom on the margin of the eternal snows, so mercy appears on the very verge of justice. While the sword of vengeance goes forth slaying its thousands, the angel of mercy follows in the desolated track, gathering up the wounded, pouring in the oil of joy and offering eternal life to the dying. Mercy gives the promise and pledge of salvation even under the shadow of the penalty, and achieves the brightest victories where the thunders of justice are the loudest.

3. *By giving him full time for repentance.* A delay in execution is mercy to the sinner. Mercy lengthened out Adam's days to nine hundred and thirty years, and thus gave him full time to repent. It held back the flood from the antediluvian world and gave it a respite for repentance. Long did mercy cry to our guilty nation, "Let the oppressed go free." Long did it check the bursting storm and delay the doom, that an ungrateful nation might be spared. And long has mercy been pleading with our nation to honor Christ, to

"Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

Oh ! impenitent sinner ! mercy is likewise giving you time for repentance. Nestled among the Alps was once a hamlet near that mountain glacier that moves but a foot and a half in a year. The progress was so slow that the inhabitants felt no alarm. Scientific men warned them of their danger, but years of peace had lulled them into se-

curity. The day of mercy, however, ended, the glacier broke loose, and in a moment that village was buried in icy ruins. Oh ! sinners ! towards you, God's judgments are moving forward ; and while mercy retards their progress, escape for your life, look not behind, flee to the mountain of safety.

4. *By bestowing many blessings upon man even while he rests under the penalty.* Adam was driven from the garden, but the severity of the penalty was mitigated by special blessings. The earth was cursed, for his sake, with briars and thorns, and yet made to yield the finest of the wheat. The sentence, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread," was enforced, yet his labor was turned into a means of health and an antidote to sin. His expulsion from Eden was an act of mercy, for, had he remained, he might have eaten of the tree of life, and thus profaned a divine ordinance, excited vain hopes, and perhaps sealed his eternal condemnation by making his spiritual death incurable. Thus, his eating of the tree of life would have been more disastrous than his first sin in eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Mercy, too, instituted at the gate of the garden remedial ordinances, and erected an altar which, for sixteen hundred years, was the place where the devout went up to offer sacrifices and worship God ; and the same mercy has continued, until the present time, gracious institutions for the true Israel. While on the one side of Israel was the frowning brow of Ebal, on the other was the smiling face of Gerizim. There was a thorn in the flesh given to Paul, and yet grace to counteract its influence. Upon the cross where were the agonies of death were also the joys of a new birth. The history of the world is luminous with bless-

ings that shine the brighter because of the background of divine judgments. Truly, while God severely and justly chastises his own people, he is mercifully crowning them with his loving kindnesses. "So he drove out the man" from one Paradise, only to reveal to him another, brighter and more glorious.

In conclusion, the survey of this whole subject presents to us the moral completeness of the divine character; that the idea of God includes justice as well as mercy, the sterner and gentler attributes meeting and mingling like the rainbow and the thunder in the same cloud. The Most High should not be viewed from the extreme point of a cold, stern, unyielding fatalism, nor yet from the other extreme of a sentimental free-will Pelagianism that resolves the divine character into nothing but a sickly and spurious love. Both extremes are alike derogatory to the perfection of God's character. In him justice and mercy harmonize.

In the light of this subject we see that God is justly chastising us for our sins—our sins as individuals and as a church; and yet at the same time the voice of mercy cries, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; why will ye die, O house of Israel" Its rainbow round about the throne, like unto an emerald, invites and emboldens sinners to draw near, that they may find grace to help in time of need. It has opened up the gates of Paradise, through which the expelled sinners may enter in and eat of the fruit from the topmost bough of the tree of life. That God that drove man out of Eden gives also the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

COVENANTING A DUTY IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

BY REV. H. H. GEORGE.

2 COR. 8:5. "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

THAT covenanting is a duty, the Scriptures clearly teach, a duty binding alike upon individuals and society, upon churches and nations. As an act, it is one of great solemnity and importance; a contract with God, a link of connection with his throne, and an oath of loyalty to him. It is one, whose impress upon the church must be marked either for good or ill: for good, if done with honest purpose and sincerity of heart; for ill, if unworthily and in hypocrisy.

*contract
link
oath*

We select this text as an example of covenant renovation by the New Testament church.

The three churches of Macedonia, viz., Philippi, Berea and Thessalonica, were endowed with the grace of God that disposed them to contribute liberally to the poor saints at Jerusalem; "this they did," as the result of a solemn dedication of themselves to the Lord. It was an ecclesiastical covenant, in which all the churches of Macedonia participated. It could have been none other than an act of covenanting, because they had given themselves to God in a profession many years before; and their dedication in baptism no doubt took place at the time of their profession, as it was customary to administer baptism immediately upon conversion: The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, and "she was baptized and

her household." The same night the jailor of Philippi believed on the Lord Jesus, he "was baptized," he and all his, straightway."

Nor could it have been an ordinary communion season, for such was no more than the apostle expected of them ; but this was an unlooked for occasion, "not as we hoped or expected ;" some high, extraordinary consecration, verified only in public social covenanting.

Granting that covenanting was a duty recognized and observed in former times, practiced by Jews and early Christians, the question still arises in the minds of many, what is the use of it now? Has it any appropriateness to our day? To this we might answer, a moral duty never ceases in its obligations. Instituted by God for both Old and New Testament dispensations, it remains with perpetual force upon the church as long as her or-
ganization continues.

When any thing is plainly directed in the word of God, it is presuming to be wiser than he to ask what is the use of it. But yet many obvious reasons may be adduced to convince the inquirer that it is a duty now as ever before. Let us first consider a few of these reasons.

1st. The visible oneness of the church is maintained by covenant renovation. No Bible reader will deny that the church was a covenanted society in the days of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. "Which covenant he made with Abraham and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." It was the basis of God's dealing with the Patriarchs.

Nor was it different through the entire period of Moses, of Samuel, and all the prophets.

When the prophets foretold that glorious era yet to dawn upon our world, they gave prominence to the fact, that it should be a covenanting period. "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." *Jer 50:*
See also Is. 19 : 18-21, and 44 : 5.

Our text illustrates the same idea in New Testament times. And history records on many a page, that the true church of Christ owned publicly her covenant relations to him.

The Waldenses were a covenant society, bound by an oath, and they required all who joined them to subscribe the covenant. / A German divine writes, "that both the Waldenses of Toulouse, and the Hussites of Bohemia, ratified their federal transactions with solemn oath." In the year 1530, a historic covenant was made and entered into by the Protestant people of Germany, together with their princes, denominated the League of Smalkald. Seven years subsequently, the Genevan church and republic bound themselves by solemn covenant to the principal doctrines of the Christian religion, and to the order and discipline of the primitive church.

In 1620, the Reformed churches of France entered into a public covenant, swearing conformity to the confession of faith then adopted. The record says, "we

swear, as well in our own names as in the names of the churches and provinces which have commissioned us to be their deputies unto this assembly, that we will live and die in this confession.”

And as to Great Britain, no Protestant need be told that it is a covenanted land. To those bonds that bound church and nation to God, we look back as bulwarks of defence to the followers of Christ; as towering monuments of that favor of God that led them through the struggles of their persecutions, to the enjoyments and privileges of a glorious reformation. The Second Reformation is known by all readers of history as the covenanted reformation.

Now, with this line of history, is the Covenanter of to-day in the visible oneness of the church, or the man who derides the solemn act? Is the true church of Christ transmitted through the line of covenants, or by the way of covenant renunciation and disregard? Let the reader of his Bible and of history answer. By this solemn act we join hands with all the faithful of past generations back to Abraham; by it, we identify with the true church to-day, and by it we reach forward our hand to unborn generations, the grand gathering of all which shall constitute one general assembly around the throne of God, in everlasting covenant with himself.

2. But a 2d reason. It is the best means of maintaining the church's testimony.

In those days of the past, when it was necessary for truth to have an edge upon it, when it was necessary to draw a clear dividing line between the friends and enemies of truth, as, *e. g.*, the days when Protestantism was born,

and had to struggle through years of blood for an existence; those were days when covenants were a felt necessity. Then God's people felt the need of being bound together, hand and heart together, to stand or fall, to live or die in defence of glorious principles. As our nation, amid the struggles of rebellion, bound her subjects by an oath of loyalty, so the church amid the fires of persecution bound her subjects with an oath of fealty to the great Captain of her salvation.

The first reformation, from popery, had been a failure. (1.) had not strong men, bound by solemn oath, stood unflinchingly together. The second reformation, from prelacy, would have been trodden under foot, when popish influence combining with corrupt civil authority drew the sword against all nonconformists, had not worthy men, bound to God and one another, faced the storms, and held aloft their testimony, till God gave them victory through the blood of the Lamb and the word of that testimony. (2.)

In these days when the enemy of souls has intoxicated the church with the idea of popularity, persuading her that she must let down her standards in order to suit the wants of the day, that she must be accommodating, and have no distinctive principles at all, no explicit testimony, it is no wonder that covenanting is unpopular. There is not that unity of faith, oneness of sentiment, and uniformity of practice against the crying evils of the world, to make a basis for covenanting.

Men may agree together on election in the same church, but they differ on politics; they agree on temperance and Sabbath keeping, but they differ on secret

societies; they stand together in resisting popery, but they differ widely in regard to the propriety of connection with Masonic lodges. But those who have a testimony, and have a heart to maintain it, a courage to stand by and defend it, such greatly reinforce themselves by covenanting; thereby they combine their strength with their courage, and unite their labor and effort in its maintenance.

3- In the 3d place. It is the best means of transmitting a faithful legacy to our children. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children." Another command with reference to this testimony is, "Bind it up, and seal the law among my disciples."

No more effectual bonds can be put upon it, than those of covenant obligation; and in no better way can it be kept safe, and preserved intact, for transmission to posterity, than by an oath of fidelity.

One of the aims prominently held forth in all the ancient covenants was the transmitting to future generations the blessings vouchsafed in them. "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." To those who were actually engaged in crucifying the Messiah, Peter says, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our

fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

The principle of the descending obligations of cove-
nants is one familiar to every mind. A parent contracts
 an honest debt, and his surviving children are morally
bound to pay it. A nation assumes obligations in one
period that are justly entailed upon future generations
to be discharged. family
nation

Many of the benevolent schemes in operation, such
 as schools of learning, asylums for the poor, and even
missionary efforts, are only the carrying out of contracts
made by such as lived years ago. Property not directed
 by will, may be squandered in many a way ; but fixed
 by testamental stipulation, it must take that direction.
 So in like manner, principles, covenanted, oath-bound
principles, are transmitted, and bear with all the weight
of solemn, sworn contract, upon the children of those
that take them.

The covenant God made with Israel at Horeb bound
 with equal weight in all its provisions upon those who
 stood there at the taking of it, and upon the generation
who lived long afterwards. "The Lord our God made
 a covenant with us in Horeb; the Lord made not this
 covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who
are all of us here alive this day." When Joseph was
 about to die, he "took an oath of the children of Israel,
 saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up
my bones from hence." Several hundred years after-
 wards, when Israel was setting out on their departure,
 we read, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with
him ; for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel," Covenant
06
1000

saying, God will surely visit you ; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."

When the Gibeonites came to Joshua under false pretences, he made a covenant with them that they should not be put to death ; years afterwards, Saul broke the covenant by slaying them ; and five hundred years from the time the covenant was made, there was a famine in Israel, because of Saul and his bloody house, for he had slain the Gibeonites.

God will see to it, that faithful covenant contracts are transmitted to posterity, and as faithfully observed ; or else the breach will be atoned for by suffering the penalty.

On the principle that human contracts are binding, and after confirmation can never be withdrawn or mutilated, Paul says, "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men, though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto ;" which is to say, that every principle in the bond that we are about to swear, will not only be binding upon us, but upon our children in all time to come.

A second general thought we notice is, the times that call for covenanting.

And 1st. A time when danger threatens the cause of truth and righteousness.

In those days when the storm-cloud gathered thick and dark over ancient Israel, threatening to pour out the floods of Jehovah's indignation, Israel, under the leadership of such wise men as Hezekiah, Josiah and Nehe-miah, who could discern the signs of the times, were led to God in holy covenant. "Now, it is in my heart

to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us." In the days of our fathers, when the ark of God trembled upon the cart wheels, when the conflict raged between the blind and maddened forces of popery and the friends of civil and religious liberty, when the great issues pressing upon the world were, whether the night of ignorance and superstition shall continue, or the sunlight of truth and righteousness dawn upon the earth; whether the yoke of popery should continue to gall the necks, and the chains of superstition fetter the limbs of mankind, or should liberty, glorious liberty, bless the earth; amid the struggles of such times, the friends of God and truth took refuge in solemn covenant. They believed the promise, "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion." They heard the invitation, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers" of covenant security, "and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." They entrenched themselves within the covenants, as bulwarks of defence.

And are not the aspects of danger equally threatening to the cause of God in our own day? When enemies, strong and mighty, are massing their forces, and "taking counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," it is manifest to every observer that the enemies of God and his church are augmenting their strength, organizing their effort and increasing in boldness.

Already they hesitate not to make open warfare upon

the Bible and the Sabbath of the Lord. With foul hands they are attempting to disrobe the Redeemer of the world of his divinity, and with blasphemous tongues they assert that in his stead there is a coming man. They are crucifying the Lord that bought them, and infamously casting his authority behind their backs. As Prophet they deny him, as Priest they disown him, and as King they proudly rebel against him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Never, perhaps, was a more opportune time for the friends of Christ to bind themselves to him, and to one another in holy covenant, as a bulwark of defence against his and their enemies. When the enemy's flood of infidelity, Sabbath desecration, profanity, intemperance, licentiousness, and every species of rebellion, is threatening to sweep all before it, by covenanting the Spirit of God will enable the church "to lift up a standard against him."

2d. Times of declension, when the faith and practice of the church are weakening, when lukewarmness is pervading the ranks, and covetousness, which is idolatry, is captivating the hearts of God's people.

During the last days of Joshua, Israel had become greatly addicted to idolatry; they served the gods their father's served on the other side of the flood, and the gods of the Amorites. Joshua summoned them all to Shechem. There he put the test, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." In response they said to Joshua, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." "So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in

Shechem." This covenant was made for a state of declension, and designed as a reclamation from idolatry.

What true lover of Christ does not feel to-day that vital piety is low ; that while there is much of the form, there is but little of the power of godliness ; that worldliness has taken a deep hold upon the church, and folly and fashion have made many inroads upon her ?

" The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts : all her gates are desolate : her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper."

But, for such a state of things there is a remedy, for such decline there is an antidote ; and that is found in returning to God with sorrow in our hearts, and honest confession upon our lips, binding our souls in solemn covenant to be obedient. " All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."

To arrest the back slider, to stay the tide of declension, and to return again to the favor of God, there can be no more direct and efficient way than by swearing anew to be his, and only his, and his forever.

3d. Times when we are desiring and praying for a revival. An immediate outgrowth, or evidence of a grand revival contemplated by the prophet, when God says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," is covenant engagement. "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."

Not only is it an evidence, but also the procuring cause of a revival. To swear a covenant is only a new engagement to be the Lord's, an additional bond of devotedness, a superadded vow to be faithful and true ; and what else is a revival ? In Hezekiah's day, the people rejoiced when they had taken the oath.

xx { The history of all such occasions shows an awakened interest upon the part of the covenanters. Amid the dark days of Scotland, when the sword of persecution was being glutted with the blood of the saints, those who had solemnly covenanted with God never lost faith in the moral force of their vows.

see { When James Guthrie, a faithful martyr, was led to the scaffold, his eyes were bandaged, and all things made ready for the execution ; the last moment before the fatal platform was turned, he raised the napkin from his eyes, and cried aloud, " The covenants, the covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving."

rd { Amid the excitements of this day, the great feature of a genuine revival, viz., fidelity to God and his truth, seems to be in no small degree ignored. The fact that revivals are only by the Spirit of God, and that according to his word, seems oftentimes to be lost sight of. The prayer of the psalmist of Israel, " Quicken thou me according to thy word," is unheeded ; and hence their spasmodic character. We hail with gladness the promised day of revival, grand, universal revival, but we expect it not till men are ready to make a complete surrender of themselves, and all they have and are, to God ; to pledge themselves in solemn vow to be for him, and not for another.

"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."

Conclusion.

1. In covenanting, we should have a deep view of sin. It is our nearest approach to Him "who cannot look upon sin," "whose eyes see and whose eyelids try men's sons."

2. We need great faith. In the darkest hour that ever brooded over this lost world, when the Saviour of men was suffering, he set us an example of faith, "My God, my God." Well he knew, though all else should prove a wreck, that God who had made the covenant with him was still his God.

3. We need importunate prayer. "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Nos. 14:2

4. We need to know and feel our own personal covenant relation to God. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

HUMILIATION FOR SIN A PREPARATION FOR ENJOYING DIVINE FAVOR.

BY REV. JAMES KENNEDY.

PSALM 106 : 6. "We have sinned with our fathers."

WHATEVER may be thought of the theory of Hengstenberg, that the 105th and the 106th psalms form two members of a trilogy, of which the 104th is the first, it is plain that these two psalms are most intimately connected, and relate to the same subject. Perhaps it would be more natural to regard them as a double psalm—a morning and evening hymn—having the same subject—God's ways with man, as set forth in his dealings with the nation of Israel. The 105th presents this subject from the divine stand-point, the 106th, from the human. The former is replete with the infinite condescension, wisdom, goodness, long-suffering, faithfulness and grace of Jehovah—the latter with the ingratitude, folly, waywardness, and inexcusable wickedness and rebellion of man; and together they bring the lights and shades of the divine government into clearer manifestation by their vivid contrasts. As the artist places behind the object to be photographed a screen, on which, as a background, the lights and shades of his pictures may be more distinctly visible, so here human wickedness is spread out, that on its darkness the glory of divine wisdom, faithfulness and longsuffering may have a more glorious manifestation. As a few tons of water are raised from earth, and spread out as a dark canvas, on which to

paint the glories of the bow, and every drop in that weeping cloud has prismatic power to exhibit more distinctly the colors in the sun's rays—so in the story of Israel here, there is raised up and spread out before our view, a dark mass of humanity, and on all its various aspects and workings are to be seen, reflected in brighter colors, the glories of the divine character and government. At the same time the ingratitude and inexcusable wickedness of man, and the horrid character of his deep depravity, become more strikingly manifest, when contemplated in the light of the divine glory shining on them.

The practical application of these great principles to ourselves in our present circumstances, is easily made. We realize and enjoy more of God at any time, the deeper, clearer and more impressive the views we have of our own sinfulness ; and to labor after and diligently seek such humbling views of ourselves, is, at any time, the best preparation for more enlarged manifestations and gracious experience and enjoyment of God. As has been beautifully said, “ All gracious experience of God is like the rainbow, beams from heaven in drops from earth.”

How seasonable, then, the exercise for which we meet ! We are hoping and expecting enlarged manifestations of divine favor in connection with a season of covenanting and renewed communion. Can anything be more suitable, then, than that we follow the example of the godly, who in past times have gone before us in such work, and meditate deeply and frequently on our own exceeding sinfulness, and its enormous aggravations, that our hearts may be duly affected, and from a realizing sense of our

own criminality before God we may confess, "We have sinned with our fathers?"

Consider here, I. The Confession.

The confession has regard to three things: sin, sin which we feel *we* have committed, and, sin aggravated by its having been "with our fathers."

1. It regards sin.

There are many terms employed in Scripture to denote what is morally evil or wrong, before God, in its different degrees and shades of guilt. Sin is one of these, and like other terms employed, as, iniquity, transgression, trespass, error, wickedness, etc., has always reference to a standard of obedience. "For sin is the transgression of the law." Without correct views, therefore, of the law, there can be no just idea of the sinfulness of sin. It is from knowing that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good," and being able to say, "For we know that the law is spiritual," that we come to add, "but I am carnal and sold under sin." Besides, however, a knowledge of the absolute perfection and universal extent of the law, it helps us to clearer views of sin to know exactly the *form* of law against which our sin has been committed. Law may exist in one of three forms. First, law absolute, or the will of the Creator absolutely enjoining or impressing upon the creature, as a sovereign, a rule of obedience. Law in this aspect, consists of two elements, a precept and a penalty. Secondly, law economic, or law in a covenant form. This form of law differs from the absolute in two respects. First, it is proposed to the subject and receives his assent, and, secondly, a promise is added to

the precept and penalty to encourage obedience. Under this form of law we know the human family was originally placed, and from certain hints contained in the Scriptures, it is highly probable that this was the form under which angels were also placed at their creation. That the laws, under which they were to serve, had their assent, seems implied in what is predicated of their obedience, "that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word," and that they serve under a promise, is deducible from the fact that they shall be judged, and if judged, of course, rewarded. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" The God-man judge, with acclamations of assent from the justified throng of redeemed saints, shall, no doubt, on the great day of assize, decree and proclaim a reward of increased honor and happiness to holy angels for the diligence wherewith they have labored to promote all the ends contemplated in the covenant of grace, as well as sentence to punishment those fallen spirits who have labored to frustrate God's gracious purpose. Now this form of law, the economic, violated and taking effect, just constitutes man's present moral standing and condition. Its precept broken, and ability longer to obey it on his part gone—its penalty incurred and in part inflicted—its promise lost—whilst from having had, and still having, a measure of assent, on his part, that it is good, his mouth is stopped, and he is brought in guilty before God, and nothing remains to him but a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

As, however, the confession before us is made by God's people in a new relation, that of children in Christ,

there must be another form of law against which their sins are committed. This is law mediatorial. "Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." Whilst unbelievers still remain under law, with precept violated, penalty incurred, and promise lost, in the economy of grace, through the work of Christ, believers are brought into a new relationship to law. In Christ they are under law with its precept fulfilled by perfect and accepted obedience, its penalty borne, and its promise made sure. It may be asked in their case, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" It was added as the rule of the Mediator's government, that by it we may render obedience to Christ, and attain sanctification of nature and life. The sins of a believer, therefore, after conversion, are transgressions of this new form of law—law mediatorial. They do not and cannot destroy his state of justification, for that is founded on the perfect obedience of his surety, and "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." They do not endanger his safety, for in Christ he is not in a state of probation, but "has passed from death unto life." They do not make void the promise, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God, by us." But they strike against the authority of God as put forth through the mediatorial government; against our new relationship to him in the covenant of grace; against his purpose, love and grace in our salvation; against the ends of Christ's sufferings and government; against the work and presence of the Spirit within us; and against our holy calling and our manifold obligations to obey and honor our Saviour and

Lord The sins of believers, then, though not condemning, are awfully aggravated ; indeed, more aggravated than sins against any other form of law, being not only in direct opposition to God's authority, but to his whole object and design in the plan of redemption and its mediatorial administration.

2. The confession regards sin which we feel *we* have committed. In morals, as in physics, it is sometimes difficult to realize the connection between general principles and facts. The boy who has been taught in his class-room that the law of gravitation is always holding him down to the planetary centre, little realizes the power of such a law in his leaps, gambols and gymnastic efforts during his hours of play. In like manner the mind may assent to the formula, "that action and reaction are equal and contrary," yet can hardly credit the fact that the result of that law is, that whatever we touch acts back on us as strongly as we act on it ; that in every footfall, for example, the earth strikes back upon the walker a blow with the same force as that where-with itself is struck. This arises from our ignorance of the manner in which physical laws apply and operate. So also it is in morals. We are quite ready, in a general way, to admit the existence of law, and that we have transgressed it, and thereby become sinners. But when we come to facts and particulars, to specific sins, alas ! it often turns out that we have no proper sense of sin at all. If questioned, men will readily admit "O yes, we are sinners, great sinners." But ask, well, what have you done ? What so grievous sins have you committed ? What is wrong in your life ? Are you drunk

ards, Sabbath-breakers, dishonest, liars? They will probably answer with righteous indignation, no, no! and perhaps regard themselves as grossly insulted. They are willing to admit sin in the abstract, so long as you do not come to particulars, and most devoutly repeat, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint," while they neither feel nor will admit one symptom of the moral malady. Now, there is no proper confession of sin, without feeling wherein *we* have transgressed, "*We* have sinned with our fathers."

Applying these principles to our present circumstances, should not we, about to enter into covenant with God, ministers, elders and members of the church, seek out and confess those sins more particularly connected with the position we occupy, and the performance of the duties to which we have engaged?

And first, in respect to the sins of ministers. Among many things that might be noticed, the following are suggested for consideration, of course without personal knowledge or personal reference: Should it not be to us a most humbling consideration and a special sin to be confessed, how little we have really felt the value of perishing souls, and how little we have been in earnest for their salvation; how much self-seeking in an office which we have declared that we have been moved to undertake, not from any selfish motive, but for "the glory of God and the edification of the church;" how little close walking with God, too, in the duties of our office, and how little habitual spirituality, and earnest devotedness of end, aim and pursuit, in doing our work! In rising from the perusal of the biographies of such

men as Payson, or McCheyne, or of such books as James' "Earnest Ministry," how often we have been ready to exclaim, have we been living as ministers of Christ at all! Can Christ recognize us at all! Again, in prosecuting our studies so as to keep up with the attainments of the age, and be able to refute the errors that are constantly being propagated in the regions of theology, philosophy, literature and science, as well as to have always something new, as well as old, out of the treasury, and thus always maintain that forward position in relation to the people, that will enable us to be really teachers, how imperfectly we have performed our duty! Yielding up ourselves to slothful indolence, or wasting time in unprofitable pursuits, or engrossed with wordly interests, and neglecting the aid of the vast mass of biblical literature, that in our day is courting us to the investigation of every Scripture question, how often have we been very imperfect in our attempts to feed the flock of Christ according to the requirements of the times! In reading the discourses of some of our persecuted fathers, prepared under circumstances so unfavorable as theirs must have been, we have often felt, in this respect, our great shortcomings. Take up, for example, the sermons of the youthful martyr Renwick, and consider under what circumstances, discourses that yet please and thrill as well as edify, were produced. When hiding in some mountain refuge with nothing but the shelter of a rock, or burrowing in some natural cavern, or artificial retreat excavated in the earth, with furniture no better than a couch of heath from the hillside; without books, or study, or help, save like the dreamer

in Bedford jail, his Bible, he produced sermons which for matter, arrangement, and copiousness of illustration, would not only compare favorably with the best specimens of our own day, but which put to shame many of our lame attempts, notwithstanding all our unprecedented facilities. Again, how satisfied we have been with the mere routine, and often the very perfunctory performance of ministerial duty, without either watering our sowing with our tears, or cherishing it into success by our loving labors and prayers, and so little concerned as scarcely to look back for results ! And as we continue our search, how much wasted time and opportunities of doing good, neglected and lost, come up to reprove and humble us ! How often we may feel as once did the noble Chalmers, who, having spent a most agreeable evening in general conversation with a British officer of high rank, in the house of a friend, was shocked, next morning, to learn that his pleasant companion of the previous evening had, during the intervening night, passed away into the eternal state, and gave utterance to his feelings to this effect : “ We are enjoined to ‘ be instant in season and out of season.’ A wise precept ; for who can tell what is really most seasonable ? If I had pressed on my friend last evening his eternal interests, it might have been thought unseasonable, but how seasonable it would appear now, when, alas ! it is too late.” And how often, likewise, have we all lost precious opportunities by false modesty, sinful delicacy, or careless indifference, and often, when God has set before us an open door of usefulness, we have failed to enter in till too late.

In holiness and consistency of conversation and de-

meanor, too, before our people, and before the world, we have much for which to be humbled. How unlike Jesus, our Master, have we been as we have mingled with society, and entered into the enjoyments of social life! How unlike him whose language never once bordered on levity, who never uttered a jest, whose whole bearing was ever in keeping with his mission, and every scrap of whose conversation, however casual, embodied some glorious thought, or had some spiritual aim, and lofty moral, and in whose whole recorded life you cannot find one element low, trifling or carnal, but all pure, grand and ennobling! In all these and in many other respects, fathers and brethren, may we not realize a sense of sin as we confess "we have sinned with our fathers?"

In the same way, may not ruling elders feel that connected with the manner in which the duties of their office have often been performed, there is much for which to be humbled? Paul says of elders in relation to Christ's flock: "Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," and speaks of the performance of their duty thus, "for they watch for your souls as they who must give an account." Yet, alas! what oversight; what watching, in many cases, has there been? What account can many of our elders render of the spiritual state of the flock? How often elders cannot tell whether those committed to their care have been in the pasture at all, or in attendance upon ordinances! Perhaps they have not been in attendance themselves, or have not had a sufficient sense of their responsibility to Christ, to look after his sheep. How few elders make conscience

of statedly visiting those under their charge, to inquire into their spiritual condition, to press upon them the claims of religion, to deal with the young, to quicken the careless, to encourage the weak and timid, and really to do the duty of their office ! Many, you would imagine, regard the office of ruling elder in the church rather as a sort of honorary distinction, or ornamental appendage, than a vital element, having vital and highly important functions to fulfil, in the spiritual body. Nor should elders in their confession forget how frequently the spirit of emulation, wrath and strife has been at work, and how they have often been “carnal, and walked as men,” and how these things have, through their bickerings, marred the peace of the church, hampered the pastor in his work, and kept back efforts to do good. Instead of sustaining their pastor, elders sometimes have discouraged his heart, and when, perhaps, burdened and tempted, he has come to his public work, have met him, not with the soothing anodyne, but the corrosive caustic, and by bitter strife or hostile criticism, have marred, rather than promoted the success of his labors. Moreover, with means, talents, and time, and every facility for doing good, how many elders seem never to have comprehended that there is any obligation upon them to attempt any evangelical labor in the world, or that Christian usefulness is among the responsibilities of their office !

And have not both ministers and elders much sin to confess in connection with the manner in which the work of the Lord has been conducted in church courts ? How often have they imported into the courts of the

Lord's house their own quarrels and disputes, their likes and dislikes, and by party spirit and faction made, what would otherwise have been, according to promise, a "quiet habitation," a sort of bear-garden, where men have fought in personal encounters, or in organized parties sought to achieve miserable victories, as if they had been foes! One would suppose that in a church such as ours, with a creed so explicit, and discipline and order so well defined, it would be almost impossible for much difference of opinion to exist, or disputes to arise. But the fact is, in all churches where they have existed, these lamentable strifes have invariably originated outside, in some misunderstanding or unkindly feeling, confined perhaps at first to a few, but which, like the snow-ball, by a little rolling, attains to dimensions and developes into a party, and then some technicality or shibboleth, becomes an ostensible *casus belli*, and church courts are turned into a battle-field, whilst all the time "the war and the fighting come from the lusts that war in the members." How sad in "the house of God, which is the church of the living God," to hear such expressions as frequently meet us in reading reports of ecclesiastical proceedings, such as, "our side of the house," and "your side of the house!" "those acting with us," and "those acting with you!" "our party" and "your party," etc., suggesting the question, "is Christ divided?" And sadder still that even judicial deliverances and decisions have sometimes been the result of personal feeling, or of maddened passions, and men have been judging after the lusts of their own hearts, when using the great and dreadful name of the church's Head.

And, perhaps, it may not be out of place here, before many of the members of the church, who may be following us in this work, to say to them, you also should endeavor to feel that you are not without sin that should be remembered in the confessions uttered to day. One aspect alone, however, we would notice, of the sin of our members calling for humiliation, viz., wherein they may have failed fully and consistently to maintain their position as members in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We are aware that generally our members have a very high idea of the superior excellency of our position, and are delighted to hear it, in public, defined and defended. They like, they often say, to hear our ministers always preach like Covenanters, and not fail to let the world know who we are and what we are. A little testimony-bearing in fact. Well, sympathizing deeply with such a feeling, we would only ask our members, Have you been practically carrying out the principle?

In the first place, have you been living your testimony? Is your life a testimony? It has been said truly that men will argue, and dispute, and fight, and die for religion, and do every thing but live for it. Again, have you, according to your means and opportunities, been sustaining the church, and co-operating with her, as you should, in her efforts to diffuse and extend the principles of her testimony? Again, have you been acting toward your fellow members as companions and brethren in tribulation and in the testimony of Jesus Christ? The want of the spirit of brotherly kindness and charity, is one of the most glaring defects in our covenanted Zion. How little warmth of affection, care for each other, in-

terest in each others welfare, and readiness to make sacrifices for each other, do we manifest, though John declares we ought "to lay down our lives for the brethren!" With all our professions we fall immeasurably short in brotherly kindness, affection for each other, mutual forbearance and a forgiving spirit, and readiness to assist and relieve each other, of the attainments in many religious communities with a less orthodox creed than our own. And again, how is your testimony brought to bear upon your families? Are your children trained in our principles and usages? Are they acquainted with our standards and familiar with our literature, or do they know Tennyson and Longfellow better than the Confession and Testimony, and the contents of the last sensation in the world of fiction better than the "Scots Worthies" and the "Cloud of Witnesses?" In how many such practical inconsistencies may we all find enough for which to be humbled!

3. The confession regards sin as aggravated by having been committed "with our fathers."

Into the economic arrangement, originally made for the government of the human family, the principle of representative responsibility largely entered. Adam, the natural head of the race, was constituted its representative head, and hence not only made responsible to God for the good behavior of all his descendants, but these descendants were made liable to suffer for any error or mistake he might commit as their representative governor. This principle underlies all government. It is recognized everywhere as just—the ruler responsible for the behavior of his subjects, and the subjects liable to suffer

for the mistakes and governmental errors of the ruler. It follows of course that all Adam's descendants would thus have been responsible to him, not only in their individual capacity, but in all the relations and connections they might form, all of which, whether natural or contracted, he would have made subservient to the ends of his government. When Adam's failure involved the race in guilt and misery, it pleased God to renew the same form of government over men, on the same principle, in the "last Adam," so that the whole human family is now "under the law to Christ." This was shadowed forth in the theocracy established in Israel. The supreme rule was God's. A divinely appointed judge or ruler was to represent God, to whom the tribes were under law as to God's representative, whilst in the arrangement of tribes, families, rulers of thousands, of hundreds, and of tens, all responsible to the judge, the system was graded so as to reach the humblest member of the commonwealth. Under Christ's government, therefore, as well as under Adam's, representative responsibility includes *natural* representation, the result of natural relation. Hence parents are responsible for the education and moral training of their children, and one generation covenants, contracts, and acts representatively for the generations following, whilst remote generations enjoy the fruits of their ancestors' obedience, are credited with their well-doing, or punished for their transgressions. Thus Abraham covenanted for posterity ; Israel, at Sinai, engaged for following generations ; Levi was credited with tithes paid by Abraham, and the generation in our Lord's day made to suffer for the blood shed by many

preceding generations. Besides, the government of the second Adam being not only over individuals, but over corporate bodies, as churches and nations, which have a continuous identity from age to age, notwithstanding the changes going on continually in their constituent elements, he may deal with such bodies at any one period, for all time past or all time to come. Hence such corporate entities are often spoken of not by the historic *they* of the past, but the *we* of continuous present being, and what has occurred in the past or shall occur in the future is thus identified with their whole existence. Thus in Psalm 66, the passage of the Red Sea is connected with the generation in the time of David. "There did *we* rejoice in him." So Hosea says of the transaction with Jacob in Bethel that it was a dealing with the race. "He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with *us*," 12 : 4. And Paul, though he knew that "the day of the Lord was not at hand," connects it with his own generation, "*we* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord."

It is easy to see on this principle, how the obligation of moral covenants descends on posterity, and how breaches of covenant may be visited on generations following. Also that when our fathers' sins are approved and copied, their mistakes perpetuated, and their courses of defection approved and followed, it is a righteous thing for God to "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." To have sinned with our fathers, then, increases our danger, renders sin thus perpetuated more difficult to break off, and intensifies the influence of our example for evil on posterity, and is such a frightful

aggravation of our own sin, that we should seek repentance for it to-day in the sight of God.

II. Our adopting the confession practically implies,

1. The judging of ourselves before God that we may not be judged. When Daniel sought mercy from God in Israel's restoration, and Nehemiah led the returned captives to renew their relationship to God, both made historical confession of sin. "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee." Such a confession is intended, as it were, to take home judgment to ourselves, that divine judgments may be stayed from off the penitent, and is the only way of realizing the language of Phinehas, "Now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord." "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

2. Such confession vindicates the character and government of God in exercising toward us his clemency and grace. In it we take home to ourselves the whole blame of sin and its consequent misery, saying, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

3. Such confession, apprehending the provisions of the covenant of grace and realizing pardon, gives boldness in claiming all the benefits of renewed relationship to God. God, for sin, "drove out the man," and placed a minister of justice and a sword of justice, as emblems that he could not return to God and life by the broken covenant of works. That sword being now quenched in the blood of our surety, we know that "if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There fore "we have access with boldness into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

4. Such confession promotes a suitable frame in which to covenant with God. In the new covenant into which God promises to take us, Heb. 8 : 10-12, there are four elements : the law put into our hearts, the subject matter of the covenant ; a new relation to God, its privilege ; knowledge, its frame ; and a proviso of pardon, our security for the future. Now our confession has a bearing on each of these. It works a frame of humility and dependence so that we accept all of free grace. It owns and accepts the law and truth of God as holy and good, and conforms us thereto. It renounces our connection with the covenant of works and accepts God in the better covenant. It teaches the true view to take of God and ourselves in the transaction, and it apprehends God as a contracting party, as one with whom "there is forgiveness," thus preventing us from attempting to frame anew with God, as many do, a covenant of works, but, rejoicing in the ample security we have in God's covenant for the future, it brings home to us, in all its comfort, his own divine assurance, "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

COVENANTING, AND ITS BENEFITS TO THE COVENANTERS.

BY REV. A. STEVENSON, D. D.

HEB. 8: 10—"I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

OUR God has always dealt with man by covenant, evidencing on his part great condescension. He might have acted as an absolute sovereign. Originally, man could approach his Maker in person; but when sin entered a mediator became necessary, and Jesus, the eternal Son of God, was divinely appointed. To him reference is made in the context. Two covenants are mentioned by the apostle; the first is the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai. It was just and holy, wisely adapted to the age and necessity of the church, though not designed to bring her to perfection. It was conditional, Isa. 1: 19, 20. The Israelites failed, and the covenant passed away. The second or new covenant is the covenant of grace, as revealed in the gospel and solemnly confirmed by the dying of Jesus, its mediator. It is unconditional, or rather, all its conditions are fulfilled by its surety. It makes provision for its own perpetuity, God promising to write his law in the heart, and make it effectual. Especially "He (Jehovah) will be a God to us"—all that is excellent, desirable, or necessary to make us holy and happy forever; and he will make us his peculiar people, willing to swear allegiance to him, and love, trust and serve him forever.

Such are the promises made, and such the wondrous privileges conferred upon those who to-day, in faith, take hold of this precious covenant. We will consider :

I. The ordinance of covenanting.

II. The manner and spirit in which the service should be rendered.

III. The benefits to be expected from a right performance of the duty.

I. 1. It is personal. This is the first and essential step in acceptable covenanting. We must give ourselves unto the Lord, before we join in covenant by the will of God. It would be a profanation of the ordinance to unite with others in the covenant, while the heart is enmity against God, and the soul still in rebellion. The removal of this enmity and the bringing of the sinner into friendship with God is the work of the Spirit. He begins by convincing of sin and of its penalty, by awakening a desire to escape from the wrath to come, and showing the poor sinner that he is without help or hope in himself. He then reveals the Lord Jesus in the glory of his person, as an Almighty Saviour divinely appointed, and freely offered in the gospel to all who accept him. The soul is by the Holy Spirit persuaded to approve of Christ as the Saviour, to accept him as offered, and enabled to yield itself to him to be pardoned, sanctified and saved on the terms of the gospel, promising to love and serve him forever. This is personal covenanting, a real transaction. Isa. 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.”

2. It is social. All social bodies may covenant. Especially is this the duty of the church and state. These may covenant with God either separately or together, as circumstances may indicate. If the nation be remiss, the church must not neglect her duty; she is a distinct society. To her the command is addressed, "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." He is her husband as well as her king, and she should engage publicly to love and serve him. This she does by social covenanting, in which she appears as a community of the faithful, joined together in one body and one spirit, claiming the Lord to be their God. Confessing all revealed truth, rejecting all error in doctrine, and putting away all known sin, she binds herself, in the strength of promised grace, to promote the glory of God by performing all commanded duty, and remaining faithful till the ends of the covenant shall have been attained.

3. The ordinance is binding. Both parties are bound by the obligation. Without this the transaction would not be a covenant. For a covenant is an agreement. "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." In personal covenanting this is clearly seen. The aged believer acknowledges the obligations of the vows of early youth. He confesses that he is as much bound now as in the day of his first covenanting to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. He rejoices, also, in the thought that his God is a covenant-keeping and faithful God. In the exercise of faith, he claims the fulfilment of promises made, and he expects that "he which hath begun a good work will perform

it until the day of Jesus Christ." For hath he not said, "He is our God forever and ever ; he will be our guide even unto death ?"

In social covenanting the truth is equally plain. The matter of the covenant being moral is of perpetual obligation. The church never dies. When the object requires generations to accomplish it the obligations descend. The church undergoes continual change by the reception of new members, but the covenant binds every element which enters into the social body. Indeed, all religious covenants recognize posterity. God takes the children instead of the fathers, and makes them princes in all the earth. "I am thy God and the God of thy seed forever." As long as the duty can be performed the obligation must continue. A man and woman enter into the marriage covenant. They become husband and wife. The vow may have been taken in Britain or Holland. They come to America. The obligation of the marriage vow still rests upon them. The husband is as much bound to love his wife, and the wife to be faithful to her husband, as in the land of their nativity. So, from the unity of the church, the vows into which she enters being moral and scriptural are of perpetual obligation, until their ends are attained. We are as much bound to preserve the true religion, to promote the unity of the church, to oppose all false religions and immorality, to maintain civil and religious liberty, to war against popery and prelacy, and to promote each other's sanctification, as our fathers were in their day, when, either in Ireland or Scotland, they covenanted with God for themselves and for us. In our

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covenanting to-day, we hope to deepen our sense of covenant obligation, to derive from Christ fullness of grace to perform our vows more faithfully in the future than we have in the past, and to obtain a larger measure than we have heretofore enjoyed of the precious blessings sealed to us in the federal deeds of our fathers, the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms. The other party is equally bound. Our God has not only given the promise, he has sealed it with his oath. Heb. 6 : 17, 18. As the covenant with Abraham put his posterity in possession of the promised land, Deut. 1 : 8, " Behold, I have set the land before you ; go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them," so shall our covenant God fulfil to us and our children the glorious things he has promised his church, under this dispensation.

II. 1. Formally, by a formal act of covenanting. The believer virtually covenants in the very act of receiving Christ by faith. He submits to his authority, and promises to make his law the guide of his life. He does not stop here ; he goes farther. He subscribes with his hand to the Lord, Isa. 44 : 5. Having realized his need of a saviour, and accepted the Lord Jesus as offered, he examines the whole matter. He writes out his reasons for the necessity of a saviour, his right to take the Lord Jesus, the purpose for which he has accepted him, on what terms and to what extent he has given himself to love and serve the Redeemer. He does this in secret, and comes to the communion table to

have it sealed ; which being done, he is formally in covenant with God, and may safely say, “Thy vows are upon me.” The language of the Psalmist in referring to personal covenanting is express, and his example authoritative. Ps. 119 : 106 ; “ I have sworn and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.” With what confidence he speaks of acceptance : “ He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.”

In social covenanting, also, there must be a formal act. In no other way can the church, as a visible society, properly and explicitly profess subjection to her glorious Head. History illustrates this by the covenants in the days of Moses, of Asa, and of Nehemiah, and of our fathers in Scotland. A covenant bond is prepared and approved. The church then acts first in her representative capacity. The members of the supreme judicatory swear and subscribe to the covenant. It is afterwards transmitted to the various congregations of which the church is composed, to be by them sworn to and subscribed in a manner orderly and becoming the sacred ordinance. The act of subscribing is necessary. For this we have both history and prophecy, Neh. 9 : 38 ; Isa. 44 : 5. When this has been done, the work is complete and the church is a formally covenanted body.

2. *Sincerely.* God loves truth. In every service he requires the heart. To be *sincere* we must be *intelligent*, for covenanting is a reasonable service. There must be a knowledge of God in his being and character, Heb. 11 : 6 ; knowledge of the truth we swear to maintain, the errors we abjure, the sins we confess, and the duties we engage to perform ; knowledge of the ordinance

of covenanting itself and of the word of God as the only standard and test of all doctrine and duty. Lack of intelligence in personal covenanting lies at the foundation of much of the feebleness of piety, and the distressing back-sliding, so common in the church to-day. The same cause has acted powerfully against social covenanting. In times of great interest many ignorantly entered into the oath. The excitement ceased and they returned to folly. Their goodness was as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it passed away. As God loves truth, we must draw near with a true heart as well as with an intelligent mind, so that we can, like our fathers, appeal to Almighty God that we enter into this covenant with a true intention of keeping the same, and not like Israel of old, who flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant. Ps. 78: 36, 37.

3. *With joyful solemnity.* Two thoughts are here thrown together. They are not incompatible, Ps. 2: 11. He with whom we have to deal is of terrible majesty, and infinite purity, Ex. 15: 11; Lev. 10: 3. If it was necessary for Moses and Joshua to put their shoes from off their feet, because the ground whereon they stood was by the presence of the Lord made holy, how much more should our thoughts be collected, our affections spiritualized, and our minds solemnized when we stand to covenant with him? We need a mediator in order to approach him, as we are totally unworthy in ourselves even to name his name, and unable to perform the duties of the oath. We need the aid of his Spirit to enable us to

take hold of the blessings of the covenant for ourselves, our children and our children's children ; a vast multitude with whom our God condescends to enter into covenant as with us to-day. We should remember the awful consequence of covenant-breaking to us and our posterity. Yet notwithstanding all this, we should come with joy. A mediator is provided, in whom we can approach God with acceptance, be received into his family and enriched with all the covenant blessings. Covenanting is always a season of joy. In Asa's time, "all Judah rejoiced at the oath," 2 Chron. 15 : 15. So in the case of the captives from Babylon. So in Rev. 19 : 7. With joy did our fathers in Scotland in 1638 renew the grand charter of their civil and ecclesiastical duties and rights, the National Covenant. "Thousands lifted up their hands and hearts to God, so intensely influenced by the Holy Spirit, that their emotions became irrepressible. Some wept aloud ; some burst into a shout of exultation ; some added after their names 'till death.'" (Hetherington.) "All subscribed with joy. It was a day wherein the arm of the Lord was revealed ; a day wherein the princes of the people were assembled willingly, to swear allegiance to the great King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts ; it was a day of the Redeemer's power, wherein his volunteers flowed unto him ; it was the day wherein his youth was like the dew from the womb of the morning ; a day of joy and gladness, when they stood again a people in covenant with God." (Stevenson.)

III. 1. *A revival of true godliness among us.* We have reason to rejoice that our covenant God has graciously preserved us from gross violation of his law,

and enabled us in some measure to observe the forms of religion. Yet alas ! there are little heart in our devotion and little self denial in our life. Covenanting is the divinely appointed remedy for this, Jas. 4 : 8. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Every act in our solemn work—our searching out of sin, our sincere repentance, and honest confession to God—tends to revive our graces and enables us to run in the way of God's commandments. The believing application to the blood of the atonement for pardon and purification, with the assurance that there is for us, not only forgiveness, but eternal life through Jesus ; the renewed dedication of ourselves, soul and body, time, influence and acquisitions to the Redeemer, with the unfeigned purpose that let others do as they will, we will serve him, will hasten a great reformation. History shows, that a true revival is the fruit of honest covenanting. See in the case of Joshua, of Asa, 2 Chron. 15 : 18 ; of Jehoiada, 2 Kings, 11 : 17, 18 ; of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 31 : 2, and in the covenanting times of our fathers in Scotland. "Plentiful showers descended to water the Lord's weary heritage. The Lord did let forth much of his spirit on his people, when the nation did solemnly covenant in 1638. Many yet alive do know how their hearts were wrought upon by the word. The ordinances were lively and longed after. Then did the nation own the Lord and was owned of him. Much zeal and an enlarged heart did appear for the public cause. Personal reformation was seriously set about, and there was a remarkable gale of providence attending the actings of his people, which did astonish their adversaries, and forced

many of them to feign subjection.” (Fleming.) And we know that it was followed by the reforming assembly, the deposition of the bishops, the spiritual independence of the church, the restoration of a faithful ministry, the enfeebling of adversaries, and the triumphs of the Second Reformation. Our God is faithful. His promise in connection with covenanting stands. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.”

2. *Increasing unity.* Covenanting is a happy mode of binding up the testimony when it is in danger of being rent by schism. At present, we are sorely tried. We have educational and local prejudices. We are separated from each other in our fields of labor, with few opportunities of cultivating friendships or brotherly confidence. We are powerfully influenced by political movements and social benevolent organizations. The great questions which agitate society, and arrange on different sides the mightiest minds of the age, cannot be ignored by us. We are far removed from the lands where for “Christ’s crown and covenant” Covenanters shed their blood. The traditionary faith of our fathers is losing its hold, and the sense of covenant obligation becoming enfeebled. These and other causes are tending silently yet powerfully to weaken the unity of the Spirit, and, if we are in heart, in mouth and in act to remain one people, we must seek the God of our fathers in the ordinance of covenanting, as well as in the other institutions of his grace. Our covenanting will clearly *exhibit* our *testimony*, in-

crease brotherly love and inspire with confidence. All are brethren. All profess the same truth, agree to do the same work, are exposed to the same enemies, and expect the same reward. When all are sworn to stand by each other in the holy covenant jealousies will cease; evil surmisings will not be tolerated; every man, having lifted up his hand to the Lord, will be helpful to his brother in the great conflict. This is the history of covenanting, whether in Judea or the valleys of the Alps—in Smalkald or Scotland.

3. *Strength for work and warfare.* Union is strength. “A three-fold cord is not easily broken.” There is much to be done in our households. We need strength for the work. The opposition to family godliness is very great, arising from the prevalence of infidelity, the insubordinate spirit of the age, and the almost universal neglect of the fifth commandment. In the church we are to labor according to our power, for the reviving of true religion, the gathering into one the divided and scattered friends of truth, the removing of whatever is contrary to godliness, that the church may be beautified with universal conformity to the law of her divine Head and Lord. But our greatest work is in the nation. Its condition is truly lamentable; without God, without a Mediator, without an infallible rule of legislation; with the administration in the hands of the enemies of Christ, and the honors and emoluments of the government, in large measure, bestowed upon the openly avowed servants of the devil. Yet the churches seem satisfied; nearly every mouth is silent, and all are incorporated with the nation, in the grandest rebellion against

her mediatorial King, in which the sons of men have ever engaged. Yet, to-day, we take possession of the land for our King, and pledge ourselves that in his strength we will labor to bring this nation into covenant with him. The work is great, the warfare terrible, but victory is certain. He will reign till all his enemies are put down. Could this or any other nation successfully resist him he would be unworthy of our confidence; his covenant would fail, and the gates of hell would triumph. This is impossible. "The Lamb shall overcome." The nation suffered much before it yielded to humanity its rights. It shut its ears to the cry of the oppressed. Our covenant God pleaded the cause of the down-trodden. In the furnace of national affliction he melted the chains of the enslaved, and by tears, suffering and blood secured the rights of man. Greater far will be the suffering ere the claims of Jesus will be acknowledged. There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since man was upon the earth, till that same time. Dan. 12 : 1. This warfare is upon us, and covenanting is a means of strength, as it gives unity in the service, encourages to steadfastness, gives assurance of victory, "The Lord of Hosts is with us," and especially as it secures personal dedication. The soldier, who has taken the army oath, whose soul is inspired with lofty patriotism, and whose heart is filled with love for his commander, presses forward unmoved by difficulty or danger. So we having sworn to the Lord, enlisted under the Captain of our salvation, should be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

4. *Our God will be glorified.* This is the highest motive which can influence either the believer or the church. 1 Cor. 10 : 31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." He will be glorified by our attending upon and honoring a long neglected and almost forgotten ordinance in the church, by all the actings of grace in connection with this service, by our standing before men and angels as the servants of the great King, not ashamed to own him, and promising that in the face of a corrupt public opinion, in the face of all opposition, we will maintain the rights of his crown, and make his law the rule of our conduct. He will be glorified by our bringing before the mind of the evangelical church in this land the great, yet neglected truths of the universal headship of Christ, the supremacy of his law, the unity of the church, and the duty of men of every rank to submit to him whom the Father delighteth to honor. He will be glorified by our oneness in doctrine, our harmony in counsel, our unity in action, and our communion in the truth and ordinances to-day. For this the Redeemer has long prayed, "That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou has sent me." This is the beginning of his triumphs among us, and God is glorified.

Conclusion.

1. Fathers and Brethren : Remember that personal covenanting is the grand preparation for this ordinance. We can be accepted only in the Beloved.

2. We should bless the God of Israel for his wondrous loving-kindness in dealing with us. By nature we

are the children of wrath, our souls filled with enmity against God. Yet, he gave his Son to die for us, sent his Holy Spirit to destroy this enmity, effect reconciliation and bring us into a covenant of friendship. He has pardoned our sins, and given us the adoption through Jesus. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." And while the great, the mighty, and the noble of the earth are passed by, he has taken us to be a peculiar people unto himself, and intrusted us with the testimony of Jesus, the purity of his worship, the maintenance of his truth, and the honor of his crown. "The Lord hath done great things for us ; whereof we are glad."

3. We should be greatly encouraged in view of the future. Our work is great, but the help is sufficient. He sendeth none a warfare at his own charges. The terms of the covenant to-day are the same as of old, "My grace is sufficient for thee." What we most need every step in the Christian life is an appropriating faith to lay hold anew upon Jesus, that we may derive continual supplies from the unsearchable riches of his grace. Whether we view our work in reference to personal religion, or family godliness, or the maintenance of a public testimony, we need heavenly help for its performance. In ourselves we have no strength to stand aloof from, and not incorporate with this great, growing and prosperous Republic, while in its atheistic madness, it continues to ignore the being of God, and refuses to even mention the name of our mediatorial King, the Lord Jesus. But he says, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." In carrying out the covenant we must contend

with enemies, and encounter powerful opposition. But we have no reason to be discouraged, while our covenant God says, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." If we deal faithfully with the covenant, it will be said of us as of Hezekiah after he had entered into covenant, "The Lord was with him; and he prospered."

4. We should cherish a holy dread of breaking this covenant. "Happy is the man that feareth alway," Prov. 28: 14. Holy fear is a valuable conservative principle as far removed from legality as from presumption. The Holy Spirit addresses solemn warnings. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We should live in continual dread of self. For this purpose we should meditate much upon the awful threatenings denounced against covenant breakers. Ez. 17: 15-19; Deut. 28 and 29; Neh. 5: 13; Heb. 10: 38; Jer. 11: 3. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The covenant breaker is worthy of death. The sentence shall be executed. His Lord shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WE SHOULD ENGAGE IN THE ACT OF COVENANTING.

BY REV. J. R. W. SLOANE, D. D.

WHEN the great French preacher, Massillon, was about to pronounce the funeral discourse of Louis XIV., he stood for a moment, surveying in silence the vast assembly before him and the emblems of mourning with which he was surrounded ; and then, as if overwhelmed with a sense of the indescribable nothingness of man “at his best estate,” broke the solemn stillness with these words, “God alone is great.”

Standing in this presence, amid the hallowed associations of this hour, and on the very threshold of the solemn service in which we are presently to engage, I feel that silent meditation would be more fitting than words, and that at best I can but speak to you with stammering tongue.

We are here, not to lay God under any new or additional obligation, but to devote ourselves by a renewed act of self-consecration to his service, and to receive for ourselves and for our children the blessings which are treasured up in that everlasting covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things and sure. In that eternal arrangement between the Father and the Son, God promises to be our God, to stand to us in a very intimate and endearing relation, and to bestow upon us all necessary and gracious blessings. We have but to accept the terms, to hear him saying to us, “I will betroth thee

unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies," "Thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of Hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel," "For all things are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's," and, reaching out the hand of faith, receive out of that fulness that dwells according to the good pleasure of the Father in Christ, and appropriate to ourselves all promised blessings from the infinite riches of his grace.

This approach to the presence of God must be made in the spirit of deep humiliation. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, the seraphim veiling their faces before him, and heard their solemn "Trisagion," "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory," we hear him crying, "Wo is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." If he, the rapt Isaiah, "whose hallowed lips were touched with fire," was overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness, much more may we inquire, "Who can stand before so holy a Lord God ?" It becomes us to say with Ezra, "O 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." When Moses saw the bush burning with fire but not consumed, he heard the voice of God, "Draw not nigh hither ; put off thy shoes from off thy feet ; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." We re-

member that the bush burning with fire but not consumed, was the emblem of the church of our fathers. Three hundred years have passed since, with hands lifted up to God, they swore to the same principles to which we give our adherence to-day. "*Nec tamen consumebatur.*" Do we not also hear from out this flame of fire, this bush yet unconsumed, the voice of God, in tones solemn as those which fell upon the ears of the son of Amram, in the desert, "*The place whereon thou standest is holy ground?*" Surely we all feel that this is the most important and solemn hour of our lives. We have been at the communion table, that holy place, overshadowed with the wings of the cherubim, where God meets with his people, communes with them and blesses them. We have been in the chamber of death, and as the soul of the righteous departing from the earthly house went to be forever with the Lord, a solemn awe has fallen upon the spirit, as we felt that Jehovah with his chariots of salvation was passing by. We have mingled, doubtless, in many solemn scenes of which we have said surely "God is in this place." But now, we draw nearer to him than we have ever done before. May we so approach him that with holy Jacob, after his wrestling with the angel, we may inscribe upon this place PENIEL, and say with him, "For I have seen God face to face."

We must enter into this our covenant and oath in the spirit of entire self-consecration to the service of Christ. In the days of the pious Asa, when God had wrought a great deliverance for his people, they renewed their covenant, and it is said of that transaction, "And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with *all their*

heart, and sought him with *their whole desire*." In laying hold of God's covenant, we not only take him for our God, but we pledge ourselves to be his people, that "we will live no longer to ourselves, to Satan, to sin or the world, but for him alone, that, all other gods being rejected, we will believe, worship and serve him alone; that we will devote ourselves, soul and body, to him as his temples and spiritual sacrifices: our *mind* his to know him, our will to worship him, our *affections* to love him, our *eyes* to behold the wonders of his power, our *ears* to hear his voice, our *tongues* to celebrate his praise, our *hands* to do his work, and in fine, every member as an instrument of righteousness to God." Let us hear the exhortation of the apostle, "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." Let no one take the oath of God who hath not vowed to consecrate himself to God and to the church, with his whole heart and strength and mind. "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart and with all thy soul." May the declaration of the inspired apostle, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself;" "Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's," come home with power to our hearts, and may we be enabled to say, as for us and our house we will serve the Lord.

We must earnestly seek for the divine Spirit to enable us to be faithful to our covenant obligations. "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest

vow and not pay." "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We pledge ourselves to-day to some principles which we hold in common with all the people of God of every name, and also to others which we esteem of equal importance, but to which we are at present the only witnesses. That these principles will eventually triumph we are confident, but until that day come we must make our account to meet with more or less of opposition and reproach. Let us beware of the example of the perfidious sons of Ephraim, who, lacking neither bows nor arrows, turned back, faint-hearted, in the day of battle. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

We recall the scene in Grey-friar's churchyard, when the "National Covenant" was sworn by our fathers. "The intense emotions of many became irrepressible. Some wept aloud ; some burst into a shout of exultation ; some after their names added the words *till death* ; and some, opening a vein, subscribed with their own warm blood." The words "till death," were no empty boast. Soon the fires of persecution were kindled, and blood flowed like water ; on battle fields, on scaffolds, in dungeons, and at the stake, many sealed their fidelity to their covenant engagements with their lives. We may not be called to pass through such scenes as those which witnessed the fidelity of our martyred fathers. But we shall not accomplish our testimony without meeting bitter and determined opposition. We may expect to be severely tried. We must set our faces like a flint ; we must keep the eye of faith steadfastly fixed upon Him "who, for

the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame ;” upon the great cloud of witnesses, who have gone before us ; upon the unfading crown and the unending kingdom. “ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Let us seek for that strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that overcomes the world and secures the victory against every enemy. When covenants were made under the Old Testament, the victim was divided, the parties to the engagement passed between the parts, while the blood of the victim was sprinkled upon them in token of their fidelity to their obligations. That blood typified the blood of Christ, by which alone we have boldness to approach to God in any act of solemn worship. Through faith in Christ we become heirs of the blessings of the covenant of grace, and, therefore, we should especially remember that in this act without faith it is impossible to please God. We come “ to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

How long have we prayed and waited for the promise of the Spirit to be fulfilled ! Some communications of God’s grace we have from time to time received ; some showers have fallen upon us, but we have not enjoyed the outpouring of the Spirit in such fullness and efficacy as we have desired. We have not received the great rain of his strength. The heavens above us have been iron, and the earth brass. The seed has been sown, but the harvest has not been gathered. Our neglect of the duty which we now essay in God’s great and holy name may

be the cause. At all events let us now lift up our prayer to God that he would pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. May we not be permitted to believe that the promise of the Holy Ghost is now to be fulfilled, that our covenant God will open the windows of heaven and pour upon us a blessing until there shall not be room to receive? "Awake, O north wind ; and come thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

From this moment let us endeavor to strengthen the bonds of brotherly love. Union in this great act must increase mutual confidence and affection. All wrath, and malice, and envy, and evil speaking must cease.

Permit me to exhort you in the words of the great apostle, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honor preferring one another." Do I not express both the conviction and resolution of all, when I say, that from this time we shall be more united than we have ever been heretofore ; that now hand will grasp hand with renewed zeal and sincerity, and that henceforth, like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots, we will go forward in the work of the Lord ?

We pledge ourselves in our bond that no effort shall be spared to make our beloved country a kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The old blue banner of the covenant which our fathers unfurled to the battle and the breeze, bore for its inscription, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant." Shortly after the disruption of the established church the eloquent Guthrie said, "This storm has blown out the old banner until we read 'For Christ's Crown.' Let it blow a little longer and a little stronger,

and we shall read the entire motto, 'For Christ's Crown and Covenant.' " That prayer, alas ! is yet unfulfilled in the land of our covenant fathers. But here, to-day, we bind ourselves to endeavor to hasten the time when the meteor flag of our country, the starry emblem of its power, shall float over a land in covenant with God, recognizing his Son and owning allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ. And may God hasten it in his time. And now, dear brethren, let us with united hearts, with sincerity of purpose, with fervent prayer to the God of all grace to make us perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle us, and with our hearts lifted up with our hands to God in the heavens, carry out our long-cherished and deliberate purpose to "join ourselves to the Lord in a *perpetual* covenant that shall not be forgotten."

FIDELITY TO VOWS.

BY REV. W. MILROY.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN: How dreadful is this place !
 How solemn is this scene ! How transcendently grand
 this transaction ! How momentous, perhaps, its results !
 We have stood in the presence of that God whose eyes
 are as a flame of fire to search every heart. We have
 opened our mouths, and lifted up our hands unto the
 Lord, and we may not go back.

Let us here pause for a moment, and endeavor to re-
 alize the position we now occupy.

Claiming to be the descendants and proper representa-
 tives of the men of the Second Reformation and of those
 who are known in history, and honored as "the Martyrs
 of the Covenant," we have just been exemplifying, in the
 face of this great American nation, the *duty* of covenant-
 ing. In a *bond*, framed with a view to the times and
 circumstances in which we are placed, we have avouched
 the Lord to be our God, and pledged renewed devotion
 to his cause and service.

We hold ourselves still bound by "the covenants of
 our fathers," familiarly known by the designation,
 "National and Solemn League." Indeed, if the prin-
 ciple to which we have given renewed expression in
 this, our covenant, be just and true, viz., that the
 obligation of moral covenants, which contemplate
 posterity, descends upon those represented in the
 taking of them till their end is accomplished, then it
 follows, as a necessary consequence, that we *could not*

rid ourselves of the obligations of the covenants of our fathers if we *would*; and I hope it is equally true, we *would not* if we *could*?

The grand leading principle of *both* the covenants to which allusion has just been made, is not, we apprehend, embraced in our present *bond* at all; or if at all, only by implication, viz., the duty of the state, *as such*, to enter into alliance with the church of Christ, and to *profess, adhere to, defend and maintain* the true religion.

Ever since Christianity became a power among the nations of the world, the minds of legislators have been occupied with the difficult question, *Can* church and state enter into mutual alliance, and yet each prosecute, untrammelled, its respective ends, and exercise, uncontrolled, its important functions? Though the verdict of the Christian people of the United States, if called to-day to answer this question, would probably be overwhelmingly in the negative, yet we conceive, the pious, profound and sagacious men of the Second Reformation more than two hundred years ago, solved the problem correctly, answering in the affirmative. And not only so, but for a brief period in the land of the covenants, they presented to the world what has nowhere else been witnessed, that solution in practical operation.

We stand, then, this day, before the churches and the world, in the solemn attitude of *covenanters*, avowing our belief in, and cordial reception of, the principles embodied in this, *our bond*; proclaiming at the same time our undiminished attachment, and continued adherence to these covenants of our fathers; and convinced of their moral and scriptural character, deliberately expressing, under

the solemnity of an oath, our settled determination, with the help of God, unfalteringly to vindicate and maintain both the one and the other.

There are two general considerations that should have weight with us in attending to the question of fidelity to vows, viz., the advantages of fidelity, and the fearful consequences of unfaithfulness.

The advantages that may be expected to result from strict fidelity to our vows are many and great. The preparation and investigation necessary to the proper performance of the duty, tend to solemnity of mind and clearer apprehensions of divine truth. Covenanting unites the friends of truth in sentiment, in affection, in firm, holy resolve to maintain the truth. It furnishes to those who love the truth the means of readily discovering each other, and presents a rallying point around which they may gather. In union there is strength. Our fathers in days gone by were thus drawn together, and rallied under the banner of the covenant; and finding they were perfectly joined together in one heart and one judgment, were enabled to perform that work by which their names have been transmitted with honor to posterity. In those days of pure piety, uncompromising principle, lofty purpose, and heroic deeds, when men loved not their lives unto the death, the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant were the means of erecting an insuperable barrier against the inroads of popery and prelacy, and proved the stability and security of the church in those troublous times.

Have the friends of truth and liberty nothing to apprehend from the same source in our day and our land?

It has been said, and we think truly said, that the high church in England and the high church in Scotland are "sappers and miners for the Church of Rome." With equal truth we may add, popish prelacy, the high church in America, is a sapper and miner for the Church of Rome. And what are the aims and purposes of the Church of Rome here? A distinguished Romish priest of New York revealed them when he said, in a lecture recently delivered in the city of Detroit: "Catholicism rules the city of New York with *fifty thousand* majority. And the question is not now, will the Catholics *ever* rule America? but, *how soon*?" The policy adopted to secure their contemplated end—the end of which they are now, and with reason, so boastfully confident—is jesuitical, artful and insidious. Have we not been forewarned of it? Has it not been intimated to us in the word of infallible truth, that as there were false prophets among the people of Israel of old, so "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies," and whose coming is "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," beguiling unstable souls? Have we not been informed that "many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of?" 2 Pet. 2: 1, 14; 2 Thess. 2: 10.

Is it not high time the friends of religion and truth were taking the alarm? were forecasting the future? were preparing for defence, seizing again those weapons that have been proved, and found so effective in the past? Is it not highly proper, now that danger threatens, that truth is imperilled, that the enemy is coming in like a flood; is it not, I say, highly proper that we, directed by the

example of our worthy covenant ancestors, and animated by the eminent success that crowned their efforts, should again display the banner, as of old, that we should gather for its support, and for the defence of liberty, civil and religious, blended in unity, and bound together as one man by the oath of God?

Our recognition, in connection with our own proper bond, of the obligation of the covenants of our ancestors, legitimately tends to strengthen gratitude to God, and to inspire confidence in his promised mercy. God is thus exhibited in the attractive light of dealing with the fathers on behalf of the children, and those children through successive generations are made to feel that they have cause of thanksgiving to God for his goodness, in having regard to their interests and welfare in those federal transactions into which he has condescended to enter with their parents. It was to show the *duty* of gratitude, and to awaken a *sense* of gratitude for this method of the divine procedure, that Peter said to the Jews, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our *fathers*." Acts 3 : 25. In the fact that God has entered into covenant with, and been gracious to our fathers in times past, a sure foundation is laid for the confident expectation that he will continue to be gracious to the children. He is true to his promises. "He is not man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent." And his encouraging word of promise is, "He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the *covenant* of thy *fathers*, which he swore unto them." Deut. 4 : 31.

The doctrine of the descending obligations of cove-

nants, which we now recognize, tends also to exhibit and promote the unity of the church. In the covenant transaction with Abraham, his seed was embraced. Its terms were, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. 17 : 7. The church in all ages, and under all dispensations, is thus exhibited as one covenant society, bound together in one common brotherhood, seeking the same ends and participating in the same blessings. Hence Paul's language to the Gentiles, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3 : 29. The prayer of the Saviour is, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17 : 11.

"Whence come wars and fightings," "emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies?" "Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" Let these lusts be subdued; let the Holy Spirit be poured down in rich effusion from on high, and we are warranted in cherishing the hope that, even on this distracted earth, the watchmen on Zion's walls shall lift up the voice, and with the voice together sing, for they shall see eye to eye; to anticipate a time when the Lord's people shall *all* speak the same things, and be "perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment;" when the *churches*, bound together and to God in holy covenant, shall "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners;" and "all the ends of the earth

shall see the salvation of our God." Isa. 52 : 8, 10 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 10 ; Song 6 : 10.

Covenanting is, by divine appointment, a means eminently fitted to put the church in possession of the blessings that have been enumerated. But let us bear in mind, it matters not with what care this duty may be approached ; it matters not with what solemnity and frequency it may be performed ; covenanting, without fidelity, will prove only a rope of sand. As, however, *covenanting* with sincerity and honesty in the fear of God is God's appointment, his method of putting us in possession of the advantages specified and many others ; so *fidelity* to our vows will tend greatly to secure and promote all these advantages, and, above all, is indispensably requisite to the enjoyment of the *favor* of God. ★

When God entered into covenant with Israel at Sinai, he encouraged them to fidelity by the assurance of his favor : " Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people : for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Ex. 19 : 5, 6. That favor constitutes a perfect shield and protection. He says, " Fear not, for I have redeemed thee ; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." " Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will up-

hold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa. 43: 1-3; 41: 10. This divine favor has always been realized by, and never withheld or withdrawn from, those who have been mindful of, and faithful to, their vows. The failure has never been on God's part; for he is a God that keepeth covenant. The recorded experience of Israel in the days of Asa has been the uniform experience of all *faithful covenanters* in every age. "And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about." 2 Chron. 15: 12, 15.

We should be deterred from unfaithfulness by the consideration of its terrible consequences. Look, for illustration, at the condition of Scotland to-day: that land, so noted of yore for her loyalty to King Jesus; so celebrated for the piety, intelligence and scriptural principles of her sons; so distinguished for her covenants and her martyrs. What is she now? Alas, how fallen! A large majority of her aristocracy and large numbers of her people "entangled," as one expresses it, "in the meshes of the corrupt Episcopal communion, which is there *high church* in the very worst sense of the term." That land, the glory of all modern lands, conspicuous and pre-eminent for the purity of her principles and the completeness of her reformation, again so tainted and leavened with the corruptions of popery and prelacy, as to be to a considerable extent, high church, *i. e.* little better than Rome herself, in truth, operating, "sapping,

and mining" for the Church of Rome ! And to what is this result attributable ? It may be traced directly to the breach of her National Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant.

That unfaithfulness to vows is regarded by God as a sin of a most aggravated character is manifest from his *complaints*, his *charges*, his *threatenings* against Israel for their guilt thus incurred. How pathetic his complaint ! "The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers." Jer. 11 : 10. How grave his charge ! "They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law." "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Ps. 78 : 10, 37. How terrible his threatening ! "If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me ; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant." Lev. 26 : 23, 25. And when the threatened judgments of Heaven have been executed, and the land rendered a desolation and a waste, when in astonishment inquiry is made, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land ? What meaneth the heat of this great anger ? then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers." Deut. 29 : 24, 25.

Brethren : if there ever can be a time when the following words of sacred writ should be regarded as addressed emphatically to *us*, that time is *now* : "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it ; for he hath

no pleasure in fools : pay that which thou hast vowed : Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." Eccl. 5 : 4, 5.

We have been engaged in what is here a somewhat singular service ; I say singular, because seldom, if ever, performed in this land before. We have now special work to do, and duties to perform, to which we have voluntarily bound our souls by the solemn oath of God. It becomes us, therefore, to watch over our hearts and over our lives with a godly jealousy.

The position we have chosen to take will attract to us the eyes of all the members of our own church in this land, who are expected to follow the example we have thus set them ; the eyes of all our brethren in covenant bonds abroad ; and, to some extent, few and feeble as we are, the eyes of the churches and of the world will be upon us. Above all, the eyes of God are upon us. The principles we espouse, which we emblazon upon our banner, and to which we pledge ourselves anew, we may expect will encounter opposition in the future, as they have in the past ; and who is sufficient for their vindication ? If we have taken hold in truth of God's covenant, if we have not lied to him with false tongues, we may confidently say, " God is our refuge and our strength." " Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed." Ps. 46 : 1, 2.

Ungodly nations may boast of their power, and trust for security to their natural resources, their agricultural riches, their commercial wealth and glory, their military and naval strength, the intelligence, skill, learning and valor of their people. But the experience of the world has

shown that all these prove a poor defence when the Most High arises to vindicate his own honor and law, and punish the nation that has forgotten God. Let it be ours to trust not in an arm of flesh, but "in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel," our covenant God, who is our refuge and our fortress, and whose faithfulness shall be our shield and our buckler.

We have been exemplifying a duty which we believe will yet be recognized as such by the churches and the nations. And further, we believe there is a time coming when the churches and nations will consider it not only their duty, but count it their highest privilege and honor to be formally in covenant with God. Prophecy assures us that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. When this period arrives we cannot suppose that covenanting will be any longer either overlooked or stigmatized as fanatical. The nations will then emulate each other in putting honor upon that Saviour who is exalted as a prince; who is the "Prince of the kings of the earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords." And instead of inciting each other to rebellion, as now, by the mutual counsel, "Let us break asunder his bands, let us cast from us his cords," their language will be, "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten." Jer. 50 : 5

The principles to which we have pledged ourselves to-day can never fail. Resting on a basis of immutable truth, they are as immovable as the throne of the Eternal. But, fathers and brethren, there is no such certainty that

we may not fail. The task we undertake in the defence and development of these principles, in seeking to bring them into public notice and general acceptance, is a very difficult one.

Wealth is against us. The current of popular sentiment is against us. Power is against us. Abuses in church and state, in their entrenched positions fortified by time and use, are against us. Tongues of calumny, whetted with malice and made to cut like swords, are against us. The derision and mockery of the profane and ungodly are against us. The blandishments and the terrors of the world are against us. In the presence of such opposition, and before such an array of most bitter and powerful enemies, who shall stand? None but by the grace of God. If, however, in reliance on divine grace we are true and faithful, our victory is certain; for however weak in ourselves, we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. "Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." Dan. 11 : 32.

If, on the other hand, "unsteadfast and perfidious," we fail in the day of trial, our doom is sealed. Forsaking God we will be forsaken of him, and he will spew us out of his mouth. But God, who keepeth covenant, will not leave himself without witnesses. If we prove unequal to the work assigned us, and behave ourselves falsely in his covenant; if we weakly yield or basely betray the sacred trust committed to us, it will result simply in transferring it to other and worthier hands, that will be honored of God, still to hold aloft

the banner of the covenant, and bear it forward to complete success ; enlargement and deliverance will arise to the cause of God from another place, but we and our father's house will be destroyed. Esth. 4 : 14.

But, fathers and brethren, an important thought, and one that should take precedence of all this, yet remains. It is this. Our first and chief concern should be to know that we ourselves are personally in covenant with God, having by faith laid hold of the everlasting covenant. Without this, our engagements in the covenant of to-day have not been entered into with acceptance, will not be maintained with steadfastness, or prosecuted with success. But if God has made with each of us personally an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and if in our approach we have been honest and sincere, then beyond a doubt, in the federal transaction of this day we have found, and being faithful will still find, acceptance.

And now, dear fathers and brethren, keeping steadily in view the high ends and aims of our covenant, with faith in God, let us labor unitedly, vigorously and perseveringly for their attainment. Sensible of our unworthiness to be admitted into such intimate relation to God, and fully aware that we are dependent on divine help for ability to make a single step of progress, let us humbly, yet hopefully, commit ourselves and our work into the hands of a covenant God, imploring him graciously to vouchsafe his promised aid, that we may "pay our vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." Ps. 116 : 14.

THE MESSIAH EXPECTING HIS FOES' SUB- JECTION.

BY REV. S. CARLISLE.

PSALM 110: 1-4.

THIS psalm is Messianic, referring to Messiah in his person, offices and work. This fact is attested by internal evidence, and various allusions to it in the New Testament. It completes the description of Messiah's kingdom begun in the second. In this, the Redeemer's right to rule is assumed, the nature and extent of his kingdom declared, the relation between his priestly and kingly offices exhibited, and his final triumph predicted.

David was the writer of this psalm. It is ascribed to him. It bears the impress of Israel's sweet singer, and the Master represents him as its author. Its theme is neither David nor Solomon, but him who is Immanuel, God with us.

The Lord did say unto my Lord,
Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thy foes a stool
Whereon thy feet may stand.

The person designated "*my Lord*" was the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, a being of infinite excellence, eminently fitted to rule, "The brightness of the father's glory," David's son according to the flesh but as Immanuel his Lord, this not merely as an individual, but a king, and the representative of a race of kings. The Hebrew word

translated "did say" is peculiar, and limited to prophetic declarations. Literally it would be the *dictum*, the *saying*, the *oracle* of Jehovah to my God. But here, as elsewhere, it is translated "said the Lord," intimating that the subsequent expression is an authoritative declaration of a fixed and definite purpose, made by the Father, that the Mediator has been invested with universal authority. Among the Jews, the right hand was the seat of honor; sitting at the right hand of a king denoted participation in his power. Stephen, the proto-martyr, saw the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, actively engaged. Here the command is, "Sit thou on my right hand," the posture and position denoting his investiture with mediatorial dominion, and his rare fitness for its administration. This government he was to exercise until his foes were subdued. The enthroned Mediator has enemies, numerous, powerful and confederated together, but he will reign in their midst in spite of them.

The Psalmist does not mean that when these enemies are subdued, then the Lord Jesus Christ will be stripped of his power. He does not say that he will reign up to the period in which the enemies will be subjugated, and then cease. Such an idea would be at variance with the teaching of inspiration. The object of the psalm is to show that the designs of Christ's enemies will be frustrated. They will result differently from what they expected. Those who refuse to acknowledge Messiah, the Prince, "to kiss the Son," instead of being successful will be overthrown, while he will remain sitting at God's right hand. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor left to other

people. It shall break in pieces all opposing kingdoms, and shall stand forever.

The Lord shall out of Zion send
The rod of thy great pow'r :
In midst of all thine enemies
Be thou the governor.

God Most High works by *means* in nature, providence and grace, bringing about great and important results, not by the mere exercise of arbitrary power, but by instruments. Some understand the rod of his strength as referring to chastisements, judgments, synonymous with the rod of iron, spoken of in the second psalm. It is more likely his word, the gospel, the wisdom of God, divine truth in its precepts, doctrines, promises, accompanied by the Holy Spirit ; in answer to prayer this is the means employed in converting sinners and confounding those who will not have this man to reign over them. Zion is a type of the visible church, the depository of the truth, and the divine agency for the evangelization of the world. This rod of his strength goes out of Zion by divine appointment. "Go ye and teach all nations," is the command of Christ to the church. The Lord sends it. He calls, qualifies and commissions men to make it known, and crowns their labors with success by making it effectual in the conversion of sinners, the increase and enlargement of the church, and in promoting social peace, progress and prosperity. He that is most mighty is here represented as girding his sword upon his thigh and in his majesty riding prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.

A willing people, in thy day
 Of power, shall come to thee,
 In holy beauties from morn's womb :
 Thy youth like dew shall be.

God's people are a willing people. They are made willing. The Hebrew word translated "willing" signifies "free-will offerings." It is the same as that used in Leviticus denoting spontaneous gifts. The thought is that these people are themselves the gifts. It is not merely that they present sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, but they present their bodies as living sacrifices. A day of God's power is a season when the doctrines of the gospel are preached earnestly and with fidelity ; when the Redeemer is exhibited in the dignity of his person, divinely appointed, eminently fitted to mediate, adapted to the wants and necessities of the race, and men invited to look unto him and be saved ; when the Holy Spirit, in his quickening, saving and sanctifying influences is communicated to the church, and men realize that they are sinners, that Jesus is able and willing to save them, and embrace him as offered in the gospel. Such were the day of Pentecost, the period of the reformation in Germany and Scotland, seasons of public and social covenanting. It is a day of his power, when the hard and stony heart is taken away. A willing people are those born again, having a new nature, new tastes and enjoyments, new dispositions of mind, and new companions. The consecration is made in beauties or ornaments of holiness, alluding possibly to the garments worn by the high priest when he went into the holy place to make atonement for the people. The redeemed are kings and priests, and

as the act of presenting themselves as free-will offerings is a priestly one, they are clothed with sacerdotal vestments. They wait upon him, not merely within the beauty of holiness, but they are clothed with the garments of salvation, covered with the robe of righteousness. The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing of wrought gold, beautified and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. Holiness is the rare and distinguishing excellence of God's people. They are exceedingly beautiful, perfect through "my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." Nor are they few; they are a multitude greater than any man can number, like the globules of dew from the womb of the morning. Perchance the figure refers not merely to the number or beauty of Messiah's people, but to their perpetual succession. As the dew is engendered afresh daily from the womb of the morning, so the perpetual youth of the Messiah is expressed by this figure, whose body is thus constantly renewed by successive accessions to his people.

The Lord himself hath made an oath,
And will repent him never,
Of the order of Melchisedec
Thou art a priest for ever.

This eminent prophet and king is priest of the Most High God. To this office he was chosen and called by God, as was Aaron. The execution of this office by the Messiah, the Prince, is the central idea of the psalm to which all the preceding verses are introductory, and the subsequent supplementary.

Melchisedec, after whose order Jesus was constituted a high priest, was contemporary with Abraham. The apostle Paul speaks of him, "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. The language is evidently metaphorical. We know little of Melchisedec's antecedents. He is presented in the page of sacred story as insulated from all others. Yet we have reason to believe that as a man he was born, lived and died as others ; but in his official capacity he had neither predecessor nor successor, unlike in these respects the Aaronic priesthood.

Besides he united in his person the priestly and kingly offices ; he was the priest of the Most High and king of Salem. As a priest, Jesus the Messiah has atoned for sin by the sacrifice of himself, and he has entered within the vail to intercede for his people. His sacrifice is peculiarly effective. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and his intercession is no less prevalent. Him the Father heareth always. He did not descend from Melchisedec, neither was he of the family of Aaron nor tribe of Levi, but of the family of David and tribe of Judah. He had no official predecessor and he will have no successor, for he ever liveth to make intercession for his people, and, like Melchisedec, he united in his person the priestly and kingly offices. He wears not merely the crown but the mitre, he has not merely the sceptre but censer in his hand. He is King of saints, King of Zion, King of kings, and Priest of the Most High God, and all this is secured and confirmed by the covenant and oath of God. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, *i. e.* will not change. The covenant by

which he has been constituted a high priest will neither be broken nor retracted ; it is confirmed by the oath of God. So that persons of all peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations may with faith and confidence look to him and be saved. His priestly lies at the foundation of his kingly office. “ He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Love him, he is worthy of our supreme affections. Exercise faith in him, for he is the only Saviour of sinners, eminently adapted to the wants and necessities of the race, and all this in the hope and unwavering confidence that in process of time he will subdue all his and our enemies, and receive us to be with him in mansions of glory. Amen.

THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN.

BY REV. S. O. WYLIE, D. D.

REVELATION 5 : 12. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

THE vision recorded in this chapter and in the preceding one portrays the investiture of the Messiah with the glories of royalty. The solemnities attending it are very grand and imposing. The scene is laid in heaven, whither the prophet is carried in the Spirit. A throne of wondrous splendor is seen, upon which the Eternal Father sits in economic character. The scene opens with a grand service of worship, in which cherubim join with redeemed men in ascriptions of praise and dominion to the occupant of the throne. Next is heard the challenge of a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice : "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"—meaning the book in the right hand of the one upon the throne, and containing in it a record of all the counsels and purposes of Jehovah. Silence reigned in heaven. Not a voice was heard. "No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." Shortly a Lamb, bearing the marks of recent slaughter, armed with omnipotent power and furnished with treasures of infinite wisdom, approaches and takes the book from the hand of him who sat upon the throne. The Mediator, Christ, receives from the Father all the counsels, purposes, and plans of the Godhead, that he may reveal,

administer, and execute them. All power in heaven and on earth is given unto him. All things are delivered unto him of his Father, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Immediately upon this the whole assembly of the redeemed, represented by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, proclaim their high satisfaction with the arrangement and assert his incontestable right to the honor, verses 9, 10. The angels who are standing behind them, at a greater distance from the throne, as being less directly interested in the work of the Lamb, respond in loud and joyful voice, the living creatures and the elders joining in the acclamation: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

The angels were many. The number of them was ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands. Millions of them were there. It was number without number. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." He is qualified for and is on every account entitled to pre-eminent honor and glory. Qualification or fitness, and right or title, are the ideas embraced in the worthiness of the Lamb. The Lamb that was slain is worthy, and worthy because he is the Lamb that was slain. "Worthy to receive power," etc. There are seven distinct specifications in this exalted description of dignity and pre-eminence. Seven is the sacred number or symbol for fulness and perfection. The meaning clearly is that the Lamb slain, Christ crucified for sin and now arisen from the dead, is qualified and entitled to receive supreme and universal dominion and honor. *The Lamb that was slain, the pre-eminent dignity and*

honor conferred upon him, and his worthiness thereof, are the topics which lie patent upon the surface of the text.

I. The Lamb that was slain.

1. *The Son of God incarnate in the nature of his people.* The Lamb slain is the incarnate Son of God, the second person in the Trinity manifested in human flesh. The incarnation is a condition precedent to his being slain. Death was competent to and possible only in the case of humanity. The Lamb was one of the distinctive titles of the Messiah. John, who was sent beforehand to announce his advent and declare his character, recognized and pointed him out under this title. John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, "*Behold the Lamb of God.*" Again, looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, "*Behold the Lamb of God.*" The one concerning whom the fore-runner thus spake, was the Son of God. "I saw," he says, "and bare record that this is the Son of God." John 1 : 29 ; 36 : 34.

The title, Son of God, proclaims his possession of infinite and eternal dignity. He is divine in his person and in his nature. He has not only the perfections but the essence of the Father, and is literally of and in that one indivisible essence, which we adore as God. Nothing less than participation of nature is implied in the relation of sonship. The Jews so understood the matter, for they charged him with blasphemy, in calling God his Father, on the ground that in doing so he made himself *equal* with God. He repudiated the charge while admitting the claim. Equality in nature with the parent is an essential condition of sonship. The Son of God inherits by generation the Father's nature. The argument stated

in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews for the superiority of the Son over the angels rests on this principle or axiom of truth. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son," verses 4, 5. Christ has obtained by inheritance the name Son of God. He inherits it by an eternal, necessary and ineffable generation. The angels are sons of God, but not by inheritance of nature. In perfect accord with this exposition of John's language, as applied to the Messiah, are many other declarations of Scripture. He is called the fellow of Jehovah, the image of the invisible God, the brightness of the glory and the express image of the person of the Father; was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Language has no meaning, and leaves us to grope our way through mists of uncertainty, if such expressions as these fail to convey the idea of essential and proper deity.

But the Son of God was also the Son of man. He was God manifest in the flesh. In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman*. The Word was made flesh. He took on him the seed of Abraham. A manhood, perfect in all its parts, was assumed by the Son, and by a mystery of wisdom and power, which we dare not attempt to fathom, was united with his divine and eternal person. He was God-man, equally divine and human at the same time. Out of this fact it arises that the person of Jesus may be designated from one

nature, while the predicate belongs to the opposite nature, or to the whole person as God-man. The church was purchased with the blood of God, with the blood of him who was God and man at the same time. Under this complex character he was contemplated by the saints ages before the period of the incarnation. "Unto us," says the church, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, The mighty God, The everlasting Father." Isa. 9:6.

2. *The incarnate Son of God, a true and perfect sacrifice for the sin of his people.* He is called the Lamb more with reference to his death than his life. Whether the allusion is directly to the passover lamb or to the lamb of daily offering in connection with the service of the Jewish Church, the idea of sacrifice is the dominant one. He was the Lamb which had been slain. The lamb of the passover was killed as a sacrifice and so too was the lamb for daily presentation. "*Behold,*" says John, pointing to Jesus, "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The suffering and death of Christ were strictly and properly sacrificial in their nature. Penal substitution is the one all pervading idea of the cross. In his death the sin of an elect world received the full measure of its punishment. He undertook for his people; engaged to appear and answer for them at the bar of justice; offered himself as their surety and was accepted in their room. Their guilt was charged to his account and punished in his person. The penalty of death was executed upon him in all its tremendous severity, and full satisfaction thereby given to justice in her highest and most inexor-

able claims. This is the Bible theory of the death of Christ and the only one which meets and satisfies the facts and teachings of the sacred record.

The Messiah was "cut off, but not for himself." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "He hath made him to be sin for us." He died "for our sins." He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." He "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." If all *this* does not mean penal suffering, or suffering procuring satisfaction to justice and expiation of guilt, then let some one tell us in what other terms it would be possible to give expression to these ideas.

It was not a death merely which occurred upon the cross. The Lamb of God did not die simply. He was slain. It was a great execution. He perished as a victim upon the altar. It was a sacrifice offered in obedience to the stern behests of eternal law and justice. At the command of the everlasting God the sword was unsheathed; the Lamb was slain, and the sin of the world taken away by the complete and perfect expiation of its guilt. Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God. He hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

3. *The incarnate Son of God arisen from the dead.* The Lamb that *was slain* is the language of the many angels. The Lamb of God once slain in sacrifice for sin, is now alive and shall die no more. The great truth is proclaimed by himself. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." Rev. 1:18.

The question as to the resurrection of Christ is a

question as to a matter of fact. History asserts it, and its truth or falsity must be determined by an impartial application of the canons recognized in testing the validity of historical evidence. All human laws assume that the testimony of competent witnesses, not less than two or three, presents an unchallengeable basis for belief. The conviction and assent of the mind to uncontradicted testimony are compelled by its own intuitions. It cannot withhold its belief even if it would. The argument for the resurrection of Christ, resting upon the application of this principle is unanswerably convincing. It is strongly stated by Paul in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians. The actual occurrence of the resurrection is proved by the undeniable appearing of Christ after his death and burial. He appeared to Peter and then to the twelve, to more than five hundred brethren at one time, to James separately, to all the apostles, and last of all to Paul himself. These, indeed, were not all the instances of manifestation made by our Lord after his resurrection. They are enough, however, for the argument. There never has been since the beginning of history and there never will be until the end of it, another event resting upon evidence surer and more unchallengeable, than that of the resurrection of Christ.

The question is not one of merely human testimony. The witnesses are not men only. Angels, ten thousands of ten thousands of them, testify to its truth. Could they be mistaken when they declared, that the Lamb in the midst of the throne was the Lamb which had been slain upon Calvary? Impossible that they could be. They knew him well. They were present at his birth ;

they were with him in the desert ; they beheld him expiring upon the cross ; they saw him when he was slain ; they kept guard over the body in the sepulchre ; they were present when he arose ; and they went with him through the gates of glory and stood by as admiring spectators when he received his crown and took his place in the midst of the throne. They could not be mistaken when they proclaimed him to be the same Lamb which had been slain.

The hypothesis of the resurrection furnishes the only satisfactory explanation of the success and triumph of the gospel and of the institution and observance of the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week. The success of the gospel was distinctly staked upon the truth of the resurrection, to stand or fall with it ; and the universal observance of the first day of the week as the memorial of its occurrence is inexplicable if no resurrection took place.

We preach the doctrine of Christ's resurrection as a primary principle of the gospel. It is fundamental in the Christian scheme, a vital element in the faith which saves. There is and can be no salvation without it. We are saved by his life not less than by his death. He was raised for our justification. "And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins." The resurrection is the only certification of the approval and acceptance of an atoning sacrifice in heaven. If there is no resurrection, then there is no atonement for sin, and if no atonement, no justification and pardon, and if none of these, then faith in the gospel is utterly fruitless and vain. In that case, we are still under condemnation,

and but one issue remains, and that is that we die in our sins.

II. The pre-eminence to which Christ is advanced. Under this head the following specifications occur :

1. *He is the only acknowledged advocate of his people.* The advocacy of Christ is real, not simply and only figurative. He is called an advocate, and it is by no mere figure of speech that the designation is applied to him. He is a real, living, acting advocate, and is acknowledged as such in the high chancery of heaven. He is the only one that is. His right to plead there rests upon incontestable grounds, and has never been challenged by the judge at whose bar he appears.

The business of the advocate is to present the case of his client before the judge, and claim for him a decision under the requirements of law. The priesthood of Christ is an everlasting priesthood, and the function of it peculiar to the heavenly state consists in managing the case of the saints before God. The writer to the Hebrews says: "Christ is entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us." ch. 9:24. The language is forensic. He appears as an advocate in the presence of a judge. The advocacy of Christ in heaven is a necessity for his people, and is indispensable to the success of his atoning work. Satan appears against them as he did in the case of Job, and prefers charges of guilt. On this account he is called the adversary and the accuser of the brethren. When Joshua, the high-priest, stood before the angel of the Lord, pleading for the restoration of favor to the afflicted and captive church, Satan was present to resist the application.

He demanded her condemnation, and supported the demand by pointing to her garments on the person of her representative, Joshua, defiled and filthy with sin. Then arose her powerful advocate, and rebuked the adversary and accuser by exhibiting his own robe of righteousness, spotless and pure, called also the righteousness of the saints. The plea prevailed; for immediately the decision came forth, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zech. 3:4. The devil impleads the saints at the bar of God. He arraigns them as sinners, and claims that according to law they ought to be surrendered to him as part of his wicked and accursed crew. Against all this, the Advocate with the Father puts in the counter-plea that he is their surety and substitute; that the law exacted satisfaction from him; that he suffered the penalties of justice in their room; that in him they have righteousness and are entitled to exemption from the agonies of the curse. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 2:1, 2.

To the Lamb that was slain belongs the distinction of being the only advocate of his people. There is one mediator and only one. The saints need no other. The admirable skill with which he is qualified to manage their interests and the irresistible efficacy of his plea, his own perfect and finished righteousness and merit, insure success in every case. What need for angels or saints to pray for us in heaven when we have an advocate there so divinely excellent and powerful as Jesus? An incident mentioned in connection with the translation of Elijah

is strongly suggestive on this point. As they neared the place where they were to be parted asunder, the prophet said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, *before I be taken away from thee.*" If he had any request to offer let him make it now, before he was taken away. Afterwards it would be too late. Evidently it never occurred to Elijah that he was to be intercessor for Elisha or any one else in the heavenly place into which he was shortly to enter.

What transcendent dignity and honor in appearing before God as the representative of the countless hosts of the redeemed; in being acknowledged as their only advocate, and approved in the infinite wisdom and skill with which every case is conducted!

2. *He is invested with the government of the redeemed and sanctified church.* The church, properly so named, is the community of the faithful. It is made up of the *called*, those who are called by the word and Spirit of God, into the faith and fellowship of the gospel. The church is the community of the saved, denominated also the righteous nation, the holy nation, the peculiar people, and the people of God!

In the covenant of grace, Christ stood as the representative and head of all this number. He became answerable for them before the law, and engaged to satisfy all its demands against them. To this extent his relation as head to the church is essential to his mediatorship. He could not have been a mediator for man without it. But what is referred to particularly at present is his relation to the church as her governing head. The supreme direction and control of all her interests are con-

fided to him. *He is King of Zion. He is called her Lord. The government of the church is upon his shoulders.* He sustains the whole responsibility of it. The church is his proper and special kingdom. Jerusalem is the city of the great King—the metropolis of his spiritual empire, and here he has established his throne. Jerusalem shall be called “the throne of the Lord.” “Thy God, O Zion ! reigns for ever and ever.”

In administering the authority which belongs to him as head of the church, he displays his glorious wisdom, power and love. He gives her existence and perpetuates her life in the regeneration of elect sinners. He clothes her with organization by furnishing her with officers, institutions and laws. He protects her in the possession and exercise of her chartered immunities and rights ; defends her against the conspiracies of her enemies, and displays in her his glory to the admiration and delight of the whole intelligent universe. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God, hath shined.” Psalm 50 : 2.

It is not, however, over a merely external organization that he rules. His dominion in Zion is pre-eminently spiritual. Immortal souls are the subjects of his sceptre. He reigns by the power of his word, grace and Spirit in every regenerated heart, conquering its enmity, subduing its pride and subjecting every thought to the obedience of faith.

What matchless and surpassing honor and glory are here ! The Lamb slain is advanced to supreme government and dominion over the church. His subjects are many, great multitudes, such as no man can number. The principalities and powers in the heavenly places are

awed by the displays of his glorious majesty, wisdom, power and holiness. Out of Zion our King shines in such splendors of royalty as surpass in brightness the great luminaries of heaven themselves. "The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously." Isa. 24:23. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Ps. 118:22, 33.

3. *He is invested with headship over the nations.* "The Lamb that was slain," is Lord not of the church only claiming and receiving her homage and worship, but Lord of all. His dominion extends to and over all associations whatever. He administers the whole government and law of Jehovah, and all organizations of men, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are put in subjection to his authority. Among the grandest of these are the nations of the earth, and of them the arisen Messiah is the appointed governor and ruler. By the decree of the Eternal Father he is constituted the head of the nations.

In view of the explicit teachings of the Bible, and of the absolute necessities of the case, it is amazing that any doubt could have ever arisen on this point. Jesus Christ is called the "*Prince of the kings of the earth.*" Upon his vesture and upon his thigh stands out the inscription, "*King of kings and Lord of lords.*" Earth's kings and judges are enjoined to profess allegiance and loyalty to Messiah and his throne, and are threatened with destruction in case of refusal. "*Kiss the Son, lest he be*

angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Ps. 2:12. It is not an idle threatening. History records its execution in the utter subversion and ruin of great empires and thrones. What a striking illustration of it is furnished in the overthrow of the pagan Roman empire, accomplished by the events unfolded in connection with the opening of the apocalyptic sixth seal! A great earthquake shook the mighty fabric into pieces, and it disappeared under a succession of crushing calamities and judgments. The sun was veiled with sackcloth, the moon bathed with blood, the stars fell, the heavens departed as the rolling up of a scroll, and the mountains and the islands fled out of their places. The faces of kings, and captains and mighty men, of bond and free, grew black with dismay and terror, as they sent up the despairing cry, "Mountains fall on us, hills cover us." And from what did they seek to be hidden and sheltered in that fearful hour? From the anger and wrath of the Lamb. The Lamb that was slain has power over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of the potter shall they be broken to shivers. The Lord at the right hand of Jehovah shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

The honor of the Redeemer is unspeakably magnified in his dominion over the nations. This honor is ascribed to him by the angels and the redeemed assembly, who foresee and anticipate the hour when all kings shall fall down before and all nations shall serve him.

4. *He is commissioned to preside in the final judgment of the world.* The certainty of a future and general judg-

ment, in which the character and destiny of the human race will be finally passed upon, rests upon the surest grounds. All men believe it, whether they know and admit it or not. It is an intuition of the soul, one of the inborn and ineradicable convictions of our moral nature. The voice of conscience proclaims it. It is interwoven with accusing thoughts. Nothing but the foreboding of future retribution and apprehension of punishment hereafter can account for those guilty and remorseful recollections and feelings, which at times seize upon and torment the soul. They are the witness of conscience to the certainty of a judgment. This is the underlying principle of Paul's argument in the 14th and 15th verses of the 2d chapter, and in the 15th and 16th verses of the 3d chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Some may say, that if human wickedness becomes an occasion of illustrating the truth of God, it would not be right and just in God to punish sin. This objection the apostle repels with abhorrence, and declares that God cannot be unrighteous in taking vengeance, for, in that case, how could he judge the world, a matter which is assumed as not admitting of question. He adds, "I speak as a man," *i. e.* as all men do on this subject. In saying that God will judge the world, and that he will punish sin, he only gives expression to the universal conviction and feeling of mankind. "I speak as a man."

Paul reasoned in the presence of Felix concerning the fact of a *judgment to come*. He proved it, as we may suppose, from the nature and reason of things, from extraordinary dispensations of judgments, from the unequal distributions of the present state, and the necessity, on

grounds of justice, of putting an open and eternal distinction and difference between right and wrong, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

But aside from the suggestions of nature, reason and conscience, revelation not only discloses the judgment as a fact, but makes known the various attending incidents of the august events. Enoch prophecies concerning it ; Job speaks of it ; David in the psalms refers to it ; Solomon warns of its certainty ; and Paul testifies that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness."

The most conspicuous personage in that great day will be Jesus Christ. "The Lamb that was slain" will occupy the throne of judgment. To the Mediator, Christ, is committed the administration of the future and final judgment of the world." He is "ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." Acts 10:42. God shall "judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." Acts 17:31. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:10.

The honor of judging the world is transcendent honor. It is the highest and most honorable office in the gift of God. The exercise of it demands omniscience, omnipotence and immutable rectitude. When he shall come in the clouds of heaven, arrayed in the uncreated glory of his Father, and attended by glorious hosts of angels, to sit upon the throne whence he shall pronounce the doom of the assembled nations of the world, the Messiah's honor will be complete.

III. The worthiness of the Lamb for the great honor to which he is advanced.

1. He is worthy to be the only advocate of his people in heaven, because *he offered the only sacrifice for their sin on earth*. The worthiness of Christ to appear and act in heaven as the advocate of his people finds in this fact the most complete justification. He deserves to be their advocate, and he is qualified for the office, in that he offered himself as a sacrifice for sin upon the cross. The one who expiated guilt is the one who is worthy to plead for deliverance from all its penal consequences and effects.

Between the atonement and intercession of Christ, there exists a real and most intimate relation. The former lays the foundation for the latter. The entrance of Christ into heaven is by virtue and in pursuance of his sacrifice for sin. It was not without sacrificial and atoning blood that he entered into heaven, after the manner of the high-priest, passing with the blood of the sacrifice into the holiest of all. The Advocate with the Father is the propitiation for our sins, and it is this fact which gives efficiency and success to his advocacy. The propitiation is the ground of his pleading; it is the irresistible argument which he uses in pressing his case with the judge. Appearing in the presence of God as the *Lamb that was slain*, the blood of the sacrifice pleads. The pierced side, the perforated hands and feet, the torn and lacerated brow are the pleas of the Advocate. The blood of Jesus speaketh—yes, atoning blood has a voice in heaven, which cannot but be heard.

Christ is the only sacrifice, and, therefore, the only

intercessor and advocate. The only sacrifice for sin, accepted and approved in heaven, is that of Christ. "*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*" Can Paul, or Mary, or any of the saints support an advocacy by the plea of crucifixion? What would be said if, before the throne, they dared to claim with Christ the honors of the atonement? Heaven itself would be filled with blackness in token of its frown, and bolts of lightning, shooting forth from the throne of the Almighty, hurled against them. But amid all the fearful conflict and uproar, the innumerable myriads of angels and redeemed would shout louder and louder, "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.*"

The Redeemer is mighty, and he will plead our cause. Our Redeemer, and he only, is worthy to be our advocate. Abel is not worthy, for his blood does not speak in heaven; Paul is not worthy, for he was not crucified for sinners; but the Lamb that was slain is worthy, for he hath taken away the sin of his people.

2. Worthy of the government of the church because *he redeems and conquers the church*. The government of the church, dominion and rule in and over her, belongs to Christ by right both of purchase and conquest. He has the right to rule the people whom he has redeemed and conquered to himself. Redemption and conquest establish an unchallengeable right to sovereignty.

The elect of God are by nature in the same state of condemnation and wrath as others. They are children of wrath. Judgment to condemnation has passed upon them. Justice holds them as prisoners, ready to execute upon them the sentence of the law. At this juncture

Jesus passes by and, beholding their guilt and wretchedness, proffers a ransom. It was his life for theirs. The offer was accepted. He gave his life a ransom and by his blood redeemed them from everlasting condemnation and death. The church is accordingly called a *purchased flock*, and the price of the purchase was blood. We are redeemed not with *corruptible things*, but with the *precious blood* of Christ. Unwilling still to own him as Lord, for through the corruption of nature the mind is alienated from God, he conquers the will and subdues the rebellion of the heart. By the mighty power of his word and Spirit, he brings down proud imagination and reduces the soul to the obedience of faith in Christ. The kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy, is set up in the regenerated heart and protected and preserved by his omnipotent power. The enemies of the soul are restrained from doing them harm, and at length completely subjugated and destroyed. The Lord doth guard the faithful. He will scatter the people that delight in war. He will keep the feet of his saints and the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

The one who does all this for the church is worthy to be her king. He is entitled to the homage and obedience of those whom he has redeemed from wrath and conquered and rescued from the power of the devil. Upon this ground his claim is distinctly rested by himself. Thus in Hosea, 13th chapter, he says: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. *I will be thy King.*" The one who helps and delivers Israel, is Israel's rightful king. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to be the king and head of his saved people. He has ransomed them from the grave; he has redeemed them from death,

"O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The Lord is our law-giver, judge and king, and *he* will save us.

3. Worthy of the headship of the nations because *he gathers his people out of all nations*. They are in the world and naturally form part of it. "We know," says John, that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." They remain in it, are partakers of its spirit, and under its deadly influence and dominion until delivered by the power of Christ. He gave himself for us that he might deliver us from this present evil world.

The Lamb was slain to the intent that the elect might be gathered out of all nations into the kingdom of God. The memorable prophecy of Caiaphas makes distinct mention of this as the great end to be accomplished by his decease. "He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." John 11: 51, 52. Men are drawn to him from all quarters by the power of the cross. It is not, however, until he goes in pursuit of them and reveals to them by his word and Spirit its overpowering and melting attraction, that they are drawn. He calls them out of the world, calls them from the uttermost parts of the earth, and, in response to the call, they flock to him out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation.

The conversion and subjugation of the elect to Christ is a direct act of aggression upon the devil's kingdom. By a judicial dispensation of God they are his lawful cap-

tives. Satan holds them by the right which the jailor holds the prisoner placed in his custody. But the lawful captive must be delivered by one who has not only the power, but the authority and right to attempt and make the rescue. The Mediator, Christ, is furnished with authority for this purpose. In the exercise of this authority he commissions and sends forth his servants to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound. Go, he says, and teach all nations, preach the gospel to every creature, proclaim throughout all the world the acceptable year of the Lord. Go, for I am authorized to send you, for all power in heaven and earth is given unto me.

The Lamb that was slain is worthy to rule the nations. The subjects of his spiritual empire are scattered among them. Is he not entitled to the honor of dominion over the nations, who rides forth among them with his bow and with his crown to conquer his people and gather them into his kingdom? And is he not competent and fit to be the head of the nations, whose blood and power like the leaves of the tree of life bring to them healing and salvation? The Messiah's right and fitness for headship over the nations are indisputable.

4. Worthy to preside in the judgment of the world, because *he sustained God's moral government in his death*. Sin is a direct and daring attack upon the government of Jehovah. It is rebellion against the authority, and treason against the throne of the Almighty. The arch-fiend who had excited revolt in heaven, struck by the disobedience of our race at the sovereignty and dominion of the Creator and Lord of the universe. The design was to dethrone

the Almighty and to kindle the fires of rebellion in all the newly-created worlds, and the design would have been successful, but for the signal overthrow with which he met in the punishment of sin upon the cross.

The enormity of sin is horrible to contemplate. It aims to rob Jehovah of his sovereignty, his character, and, even more than all this, strikes at the very existence of the Deity. It is not putting the case too strongly to say, that, if it were possible for sin to do it, it would murder the Almighty, the proof whereof we have in the crucifixion of the Son of God.

That indeed was a fearful moment when by man's disobedience sin entered into the world. The great interests of truth, righteousness and law trembled in the balance. They were in peril of sinking amid the wild uproar of universal treason and rebellion. The pillars of the earth were shaken and its foundations were being torn out of their place. It was then that the Son of God interposed. He seized upon the trembling pillars, and restored the foundations of law and order. "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it." By the death of Christ the divine government was fully and forever vindicated and established. By suffering to full and complete satisfaction the penalties of justice, he magnified the law, and honored it in its claims and sanctions. The death upon the cross was an end of sin, and the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness which stands out before the universe as a perpetual vindication of the law and government of God.

Worthy then is the "Lamb that was slain" to preside in the final judgment of the world. It is most be-

fitting surely that the one who sustained in his death the majesty of law and vindicated and established its authority should be charged with the final settlement of all its claims. This will be done in that great day of the Lord when the grand assize will be held. All the generations of men who have ever lived upon the earth shall appear for trial and judgment. Sentence shall be pronounced on every one according to his work. The law will be executed; its promised rewards to obedience will be conferred, and its threatened punishments will be inflicted. Its claims will be finally settled. There is no appeal. No case can ever afterwards be opened. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and by his death upheld and illustrated the majesty and authority of the throne and government of God, to conduct the solemnities of the judgment and to pronounce upon all its subjects the irreversible sentence of the law.

The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. The last and closing act of his administration will be to determine and enforce the claims of his divine law and government, and who can deny that he is qualified for the work, that he is entitled to the honor, and that he has immeasurable and infinite worthiness for the great and high responsibility?

Conclusion.

1. *The all-sufficiency of Jesus invites and encourages confidence and faith in him.* As the redeemer of sinners he is infinitely sufficient. His qualifications as a saviour are complete. The Captain of salvation, lacks in no one condition, fitness for conducting.

The fulness of the God-head belongs to him. The resources of infinite wisdom, knowledge and power are at his command. With divinity he unites a perfect manhood, and is thus allied to us by the ties and sympathies of a common nature. Once dead as the sacrifice for sin, he now lives as our advocate on high : and ever living to make intercession he is able to save unto the uttermost. Never yet has he failed in any part of his undertaking, and never will until the last one of his redeemed has been fully and forever saved. Being made perfect by the things which he suffered, Jesus has become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

We invite you to behold the Lamb that was slain. We call you to faith and trust in a *living* Saviour, the one that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, with assurance that, if you turn towards him the eye of single dependence and trust, you shall have everlasting life. He that believeth shall be saved.

2. *How dreadful the guilt and punishment of those who reject Christ and his salvation.* How worthy to be believed, accepted and trusted ! If the angels, who have never sinned, and therefore have no need of redemption, judge him worthy of the highest possible honor, what inexcusable ingratitude and wickedness for men redeemed by his blood to treat him as an impostor and pretender ! So unbelief does.

What answer have any of you to make for such horrible impiety ? Who is it that you are thus dishonoring ? Pause and consider. It is God's eternal and well-beloved Son, the one who came down from the highest heaven, into a state of the deepest humiliation, and

suffered therein for sinners the uttermost wrath of God. The arisen and glorified Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, deserving of and receiving the concerted and everlasting praises of the heavenly world ! And him you despise. What shall be done to the men who will not reverence the Son ? the men who will not give honor to the Lamb that was slain ? Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be the portion of all such. God himself will meet them when they come to his bar for judgment, and will tear them in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver. If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maranatha. Be warned, O sinner, in time to flee from the wrath to come, or otherwise that which is written in the Prophets must come upon you : “ Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish.” What will you do in the great day when he shall come with the clouds of heaven, to take vengeance on them who obey not the gospel ?

3. *Supreme allegiance is due to Christ from his people.* His claims upon their loyalty are incontestable. He allows of no rival. He will not consent to share their obedience with another, nor do they desire that he should. He is their king, lawgiver and judge, and him they obey without questioning what their allegiance and fidelity may cost them.

They only are true followers of Christ who in purpose and intent leave all for his sake. Father and mother, brother and sister, wife and children, houses and lands, yea and life itself, all must be sacrificed, when demanded by loyalty to Christ and his throne and cause. It is surely then a small matter to forego the exercise of polit-

ical rights and privileges rather than compromise allegiance to our Redeemer and Lord by identification with nations which refuse to yield open fealty unto the Lamb that was slain. If the Eternal Son whom the Father hath made head of the nations is to be discrowned and disowned out of deference to the enemies of his person, religion and law, then we wash our hands of all complicity in the treason, and prefer a thousand times to follow the King into his banishment, protesting, all the while, that he is worthy to sit upon the throne of the nations.

Let us not be ashamed of the crown of Immanuel. Let us not be afraid of the reproaches and scorn of the world. There are others who witness and approve our fidelity. Wisdom is justified of her children. The ten thousand times ten thousand holy angels, who are proclaiming before the throne, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," are with us. We are in the line, too, of a glorious succession, following the great cloud of witnesses, who, in stormier and more perilous times, advancing under the banner sacred to "Christ's Crown and Covenant," passed into the land of glory.

4. *Jesus arisen and exalted is worthy of transcendent admiration and praise.* How inadequate are our views of his excellence and glory! How far short, as compared with his claims, do we come in our admiration! The saints do indeed admire and rejoice in him, but highly as they think of him, their highest thoughts are immeasurably short of his deserving.

What can we do more than join in the celestial ascription, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor,

and glory, and blessing ;” worthy to conduct the cause of his redeemed before the most august tribunal in the universe, worthy to bear all the glory of government in his Father’s house, worthy to rule the nations and to take them for his inheritance, worthy to preside in the judgment of the world and to pronounce from his glorious throne the everlasting doom of men and angels ! His name shall endure forever ; it is above every name. Every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Though all men should hold their peace, yet the “Lamb that was slain” will not be deprived of his merited honor. There are others who admire and exalt him. The universe is vocal with his praise. Every where throughout the vast dominions of Jehovah innumerable voices are lifted in his commendation—voices in the sun, moon and all the stars of light—voices in the thunder and lightning, in the fire, hail, snow and stormy wind—voices from the cattle on a thousand hills—voices in the depths and voices in the heights—joining in glorious unison with the celestial throng as they sound their loud acclaim, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

A great opportunity is given us to-day. It is a great day, an high day, the day which the Lord hath made. Let us signalize it by putting honor upon the Lamb that was slain. Crown him with the whole honor of salvation. Crown him King of saints, crown him Lord of all.

Thine, O Lamb that was slain, thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever

DEBARRING AND INVITING SERVICE.

BY REV. S. BOWDEN.

Debarring.

As our warrant for the difficult duty to which I now proceed, I read Ezek. 43 : 10-12, "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel," etc.

The command is addressed to the prophet here styled the "son of man," as the representative of the Christian ministry. The entire vision exhibits the church under her New Testament form.

The object of the service is here said to be two-fold. 1. "That they may be ashamed of their iniquities" and condemned. I trust, we still feel ourselves to be at the bar of God and our own consciences. 2. To impress the more upon the soul a sense of the awful majesty and ineffable purity of the God to whom we draw nigh. "This is the law of the house ; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."

In the spirit of this divine precept, in obedience to the principle which I conceive to be here clearly intimated, I proceed to debar ministerially in the name of the Lord Christ all unworthy to appear at his holy table : all unconverted, unregenerate, unrenewed persons ; all the enemies of the Redeemer, alienated from him in their minds and by wicked works, who persist and will persist in known violations of God's holy law, who have no true sense of sin, who make no sincere and earnest efforts to break off their sins, who have no faith in Christ, no hope of pardon, no reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

1. In particular all impenitent transgressors of the first precept of the law, who have other gods besides the true and living God ; all atheists, who deny or question the being and existence of God ; who live as if there were no God ; who wish in their hearts there was no God ; who live in ignorance of him ; have no reference to him in their thoughts and lives ; who do not know and acknowledge God as their own God, take hold of his gracious covenant and worship and glorify him accordingly ; who deny the divine personality of the Son of God and the blessed Spirit. All who, in these or other ways not mentioned, refuse God that glory, homage and obedience which he challenges as his due, and continue in such sin not repented of and turned from, are solemnly forbidden to approach the table of the Lord.

2. In the same name and by the same authority, that of the Lord Christ, I debar ministerially all impenitent violators of the second commandment : all who, while they professedly worship the true God, do not recognize and act upon the principle that God alone has the right to prescribe the institutes of his own worship ; who make visible representations of the invisible God, or form vain imaginations of him in their own mind ; who corrupt, add to, or take from the instituted worship of God ; who do great wrong to the church and dishonor to the Spirit, by substituting for the praise he has himself indited and appointed for use the imperfect effusions of uninspired men ; who worship God by proxy, with choirs and organs. All so sinning and not repenting, are forbidden to approach the table of the Lord.

3. In Christ's great name, I debar ministerially all the

unrepentant breakers of the third precept : all who take the name of the Lord our God in vain ; who do not make it their study in their thoughts, words and actions to give the sacred name of Jehovah that honor and homage which he claims as his due ; who read, or speak, or hear God's word irreverently ; who are guilty of a light and irreverent use of his titles, attributes, or any thing by which he makes himself known ; who abuse the oath, that most solemn form of religious worship ; who refuse when rightly called upon, to make an appeal to God, in that manner, or who, when they take an oath, are guilty of perjury, reserve or equivocation ; who use what are known as minced oaths ; who make a light and wanton use of the lot in what are falsely called games of chance ; who throw the dice, or shuffle the cards ; who abuse God's creatures, tasking them beyond their strength, destroying or injuring them to gratify a fiendish spirit ; who pervert the fruits of the earth to minister to their own gluttony or drunkenness ; who make a profession of religion in hypocrisy, for some sinister end, or through corrupt motives ; who are ashamed of their profession after they have made it, or a shame to it by their wanton, worldly, inconsistent lives and behavior. All who, in these or other ways not mentioned, bring dishonor on God's name, and repent not, let them not approach this holy table.

4. All impenitent transgressors of the fourth commandment : who do not remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy ; who do not count the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable ; who devote the day in whole or in part to secular business, or recreation, or abandon it to indolence ; who do not make conscience

of devoting the whole day to the duties of personal and social religion ; who dishonor God by a light and inconsiderate observance of the institutions of the Sabbath, thus by one act of aggravated crime defiling God's Sanctuary and profaning his holy day ; who on the sabbath do in private what they would not do in the presence of their fellow-men ; who make calculations in regard to business past or business to come ; who travel or visit unnecessarily ; who distribute or receive mail-matter upon the Sabbath ; who attend to their correspondence upon that day ; who do not seek to prepare beforehand for the services of the Sabbath ; who protract unduly the business and labor of Saturday, and so unfit themselves for Sabbath duties ; who make frivolous apologies for absenting themselves from the sanctuary, endeavor to satisfy themselves or others with reasons for such neglect, that would not keep them from their worldly business ; who do not endeavor, that those over whom they have control keep the day holy ; who do not set apart portions of their time through the week for meditation, secret prayer, family and social worship. All who in these, or other ways not mentioned, do not sanctify the Sabbath, and who repent not, let them not venture to approach this holy table.

5. All impenitent transgressors of the fifth commandment : all children, undutiful to their parents ; who refuse to give them that honor which God requires, in a respectful entertainment of their counsels, ready compliance with their lawful commands, and due submission to their reproofs and corrections ; who presume to speak disrespectfully either to their parents or of their parents :

all parents who do not bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; who do not pray with and for them; who do not anxiously watch over their children as they grow up, and endeavor by counsel and advice, by admonition and reproof, and by faithful correction when necessary, to keep them in the way of truth and purity, or who by their life show what they teach to be of small moment to themselves; who correct their children harshly, provoking them to wrath, or through foolish fondness indulge them in what is wrong; who allow them to grow up ignorant of the way of life and salvation: all undutiful, unsubmitive ecclesiastical children, members of the church, who do not respect the eldership, do not receive the truth with faith and with ready mind from the ministry of reconciliation, regarding it as a message from God to their souls, but listen carelessly, putting from them the things that are preached: all ecclesiastical parents, ministers and ruling elders, who do not watch for souls as those that must give account, who do not commend their people to God in earnest prayer, who exercise rule to gratify ambition, antipathy or prejudice: ministers who preach the truth with scanty hand, or serve God with that which costs them nothing; who do not reprove and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, in season and out of season; who do not first take heed to themselves and then to the whole flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, but are careless and unfaithful to their high trust; who do not exhibit a crucified Saviour in all his fullness as the alone foundation of human hope: all civil children, members of the commonwealth, who do not

acknowledge civil government as God's ordinance, placed in subjection to Christ ; who do not submit to legitimate authority, or who own as God's ordinance man's infidelity and rebellion against his Maker, submit for conscience sake to constitutions of government set up and administered without regard to God's law ; all seditious, turbulent, riotous members of the community, anti-government or no-government men ; all who swear to support an immoral constitution of civil government, or elect others to take that sinful oath : all civil parents, rulers in the state, who exercise authority in the commonwealth without regard to Him by whom kings rule and princes decree justice ; who make not God's word their supreme rule in all their enactments ; who inflict upon a nation the foul dishonor of having no God : all civil officers, of whatever rank, who do not exert their personal influence and employ their official power to promote the interests of morality, and of true and undefiled religion : all who do not honor the other relations which God has instituted among men for wise, holy and benevolent purposes : all unkind, untender husbands, all refractory and unsubmitive wives : all faithless eyeservants, all masters who do not give to their servants that which is just and equal. All who in these or other ways violate the fifth commandment, God's great rule of social order, and repent not, they are forbidden to approach this holy table. God is a God of order and not of confusion.

6. In the same name, that of Christ, I debar ministerially all impenitent violators of the sixth commandment : all murderers, whether in intention or in act, who indulge

in principles, passions and practices inconsistent with a sacred regard for human life ; the suicide in intention or desire : all who are weary of the good gift of life, who do not strive to prolong their life and preserve their health, who overtask themselves or others ; who, in pursuit of what is called pleasure, injure their own bodies ; who are engaged in any species of traffic or business that is detrimental to the physical or moral welfare of others ; all who use spirituous liquors as a beverage ; all who indulge in cruel and wicked sports ; all malicious, implacable and unforgiving persons ; for he that “ hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” All who in these or other ways not mentioned break the sixth precept and repent not, let them not approach the table of that God whose name and whose nature is Love.

7. In the name of Christ, I debar ministerially all impenitent violators of the seventh precept : all adulterers, fornicators and unclean persons ; who indulge in lustful imagination ; who live under the influence of unsubdued lascivious desires and passions, that set the soul on fire as of hell ; who do not discountenance all principles different from those which God has appointed with regard to the intercourse of the sexes ; all who frequent theatres, balls, promiscuous dancings, prolific fountains of impurity to both the heart and the life ; all who take delight in gazing on vile pictures, reading obscene books, singing filthy songs, which all foster unholy passions. All who in these or other ways violate the seventh precept and repent not, let them not approach a table spread only for the pure in heart.

8. In the name of Christ, I debar ministerially from this table all impenitent transgressors of the eighth commandment: all dishonest persons; all robbers and thieves, who steal by force or secretly; who impose any articles of traffic or any personal services for more than they are worth, or who accept of these for less than their real value, taking advantage of the necessities or distresses of others; who make hard, sharp bargains, and glory in them; who make false representations in regard to articles of traffic; who contract debts without a reasonable prospect of being able to liquidate them; who make bargains and do not keep them, because not for their pecuniary advantage; who throw themselves unnecessarily upon the charity of the church or the state; who do not by application of their own strength and talents strive after an honest, comfortable and useful livelihood; who rob God of that service which is his due, of that time and effort and that portion of their worldly substance which is needful to the support and extension of his kingdom. Continuing in such sins and not repenting of them, let them not approach this holy table.

9. In the name of the Lord Christ, I debar ministerially all impenitent transgressors of the ninth commandment: all liars and slanderers; all who whether in courts of judicature or in the ordinary intercourse of society do not make conscience of speaking the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; who are unsteadfast and perfidious in their vows and covenant engagements; who speak the truth unseasonably, maliciously, or so as to produce a false impression; who raise or spread injurious reports to gratify their own wicked natures, not to pro-

mote the interests of the church's purity or the ends of justice ; who take delight in hearing these evil reports, occupying in this respect the same mean and contemptible position as the receivers of stolen goods ; who tread on the sacred precincts of a neighbor's character, or who through a false modesty or criminal indifference do not guard their own character, thus trifling with what God has committed to them as a solemn, precious trust ; who tarnish their own fair fame by an irregular, wanton, worldly, covetous life. All who in these or other ways not mentioned persist in violating this precept, let them not come to this holy table.

10. Lastly, in Christ's great name, I debar from this holy table all the impenitent violators of the tenth commandment : all covetous, envious, discontented persons, who covet what is their neighbor's when it is not in their power to acquire or in his disposition to impart it ; who repine at the doings of Providence, do not endeavor to cultivate a spirit of contentment and holy cheerfulness ; who endeavor in a perverse and wicked way to change their condition in life ; all, especially ministers and ruling elders, who love to have the pre-eminence in the church ; all who are envious of the gifts, reputation and usefulness of a brother in the ministry, do not rejoice in his prosperity as their own ; all who impeach the wisdom and goodness of God's providence by not being content with such things as they have ; such as make a god of this world, " who say to the gold thou art my hope ;" who make the duties of religion subordinate and subservient to the claims of the world. So sinning and not turning from sin unto God, let them not draw nigh the table of the Lord.

I trust I shall give a scriptural warrant for this important and certainly very difficult service. Read with me, Rom. 1 : 28-32 ; 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10 ; Gal. 5 : 19-21 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 1-5 ; Rev. 22 : 15.

Invitation.

Thus we see the true light in which man involved in guilt is regarded by his Maker ; we behold in clearest colors the necessity for expiation, the necessity for renewal. To accomplish this mighty work, utterly to remove the guilt and stain of sin, Christ has appeared in our nature, even to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Sin, however great, repented of, turned from, renounced and pardoned, cannot prohibit fellowship with God.

" If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is a most suitable text of Scripture with which to occupy our minds most devoutly in this connexion. There is here ample encouragement given to those who turn to God with the whole heart, and oh ! my dear friends, let us remember there is warrant for none else. You will have observed that in the whole debarring service only the impenitent were excluded, those who persist and will persist in ministering to their vices and passions.

A free and cordial invitation is extended in the great and precious name of the Redeemer to all true, genuine penitents, to all the friends of Christ. A gracious Re-

deemer welcomes us, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These are to come in Christ's way. "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in," the gates, the door of authority in Christ's church.

And to show you that I have not exceeded my warrant in tendering this invitation, read with me again from this holy word: Matt. 5: 2-10; 1 Cor. 6: 11; Gal. 5: 22-24; Rev. 22: 17; Song of Solomon 2: 10-13; 1 Sam. 9: 11-13.

"Now, therefore, get you up; for about this time ye shall find him."

Encouraged by such gracious intimations of the will of God, with which most of you are familiar, but which always possess a heavenly freshness and beauty, which are like fragrant flowers which the Saviour strews in our path, come forward to the festival which he hath instituted, relying on him by faith.

Sing Ps. 24: 3-10.

EXPLANATION OF THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION.

BY REV. T. SPROULL, D. D.

I COR. II : 23-29.

THE record of the institution of the Lord's supper, given by Paul in this passage, is fuller and more explicit than that contained in either of the four gospels. He informs us that he received it from the Lord, who appointed the feast, to make it known to the church, and that he had faithfully discharged the trust committed to him. "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." The time of the institution is distinctly noted. It was the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed. In the depth of his sorrow he thought of his people, and provided for them a joyful feast.

The actions performed by Christ are to be done in his name by the administrators of this ordinance, and to be diligently observed by the communicants. They are four in number, and are sacramental and symbolical, having a spiritual significance. First, taking the bread and the cup. "The Lord Jesus the night in which he was betrayed took bread."—"After the same manner also the cup." This denotes the assumption of our nature by the person of the Son of God. "The Word was made flesh."—"As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Second, he gave thanks for the unspeakable benefits of which this institution was the sign and seal, and pronounced a blessing on the elements, designating

and setting them apart to a sacred end and use. By this he pointed out his own consecration to the work of our redemption. "Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world."—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost."—"Him hath God the Father sealed." Third, he brake the bread. This was for the purpose of distribution. The act indicated that Christ by his obedience to death became the Saviour of his people, suited to their individual conditions and wants. The accompanying words clearly teach that his death was vicarious: "This is my body, which is broken for you." Thus each one can receive him as having died for himself. "He loved me and gave himself for me." Fourth, he gave the bread and the cup and accompanied the act with words most expressive and instructive. "Take, eat: this is my body."—"This do in remembrance of me."—"This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." A twofold duty is enjoined here. To affectionately remember Christ in his redemption work, while partaking of the bread and wine; and to keep up the remembrance of him in the church to the latest generations. "This do in remembrance of me." The cup represented the new covenant, sealed and confirmed by the blood of Christ shed for the remission of the sins of his people; and this remembrance is to be perpetuated to the end of the world. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

The communicants receive the elements and partake of them. They eat the bread and drink the wine. By

these acts they declare that they receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith as their Saviour and live on him as the food of their souls. “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”—“Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.”—“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

Prepared by diligent self-examination, and looking to the Spirit of God for grace worthily to communicate, let the disciples of Christ draw near to him in this holy communion service, that, whilst partaking of the emblems of his body and blood, they may by faith feed on him, who is thus set forth as the living bread that came down from heaven, by which they who partake of it are strengthened for their spiritual conflict, and prepared, when their trials are over, for the everlasting rest of heaven.

TABLE ADDRESSES.

I.

THE CHURCH A QUIET HABITATION.

BY REV. D. S. FARIS.

ISAIAH 33 : 20. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities : thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down."

1. THE prophet aims to comfort believers, weary of wars and fightings, with the bright prospect of coming peace.

2. In the world we have tribulation through inward corruption, the temptations of Satan and the revilings and persecutions of the wicked.

3. The believer desires peace in the church for his own sake, for the sake of his friends and brethren, and for the house of God the Lord.

4. The church is and ought to be peaceable, because her children are the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, they have in their hearts the peace that passeth all understanding, and their object is to make peace by reconciling sinners to God.

5. It is our duty to cultivate peace, by subduing our own passions, by living peaceably with all men, but especially by pursuing that course which will secure peace and friendship in the church.

6. We ought to do so because it is the end of our

calling, because of the mutual interest of brethren, but above all because of the mutual pledges of friendship now given in such a solemn manner before the world.

By so doing we can lay hold of the promise, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

II.

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

BY REV. J. W. SPROULL.

GEN. 22 : 14. "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh."

THIS chapter contains the account of one of the severest trials to which a believer was ever subjected, and one of the sublimest triumphs of faith, if not the very sublimest, recorded anywhere of a mere man. In the fourteenth verse we are told what were the feelings with which the principal actor regarded the whole transaction after it was past, and what was the impression made by it on the inhabitants of the country in which it occurred. Thankful to God for his great kindness in saving his beloved son from the sacrificial altar and providing another victim, and desirous that the remembrance of what had been done should be perpetuated to future generations, "Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh," the Lord will provide. The name given to the mount became proverbial for the

riches of divine grace. In seasons of trial and sorrow, such was the impression made by the interposition to save Isaac, it was commonly said in that country, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Let us consider for a little, as here exhibited, faith's trials, faith's endurance and faith's reward.

I. Faith's trials.

These come not by chance, not from the adversary, but from God.

They are sent, not that believers may be led into the commission of sin, not that God may find out their true character, but, that secret sins may be brought to light, that their own insufficiency may be realized, that faith may be increased, that the power of divine grace may be seen and that the word of the Lord may be established.

None should ever dare to flatter themselves with the vain hope that there is any period in life when trials come to an end, or that there is anything too precious for them to be called upon to offer upon the altar of God.

II. Faith's endurance.

It hears the message God delivers and, at once, unhesitatingly, resolves to act precisely as he requires. It is ever ready at his bidding to go forward or stand still, to do or die. Promptly and implicitly, without a moment's delay or the slightest departure from the "Thus saith the Lord," it obeys the command. Not until obedience, entire and literal, is rendered, is it satisfied, even although the command be to slay the first-born or offer up the only-begotten.

True faith forecasts the future, and provides for contingencies. Resolved to obey and leave results with

God, it takes all necessary precautions against outside interference and makes all needed provision for obedience.

The service it performs is not compulsory but willing. It goes forth not questioning and doubting but believing. New and unexpected difficulties it regards not as excuses for neglect but as obstacles to be removed. After every fresh trial, it becomes stronger, until at last its closing act is oftentimes its sublimest triumph.

At first God tries faith. Before the trial is finished, faith tries God.

III. Faith's reward.

A deliverance shall come. That faith will trust and obey, never hesitating, never faltering, and yet in the end be disappointed, is an impossibility.

The deliverance will come from him from whom has come the trial.

It will come in the most opportune of all times, the time of our need.

It will come in the best of all ways, the way in which will most clearly be seen the hand of faith's God and the reward of faith's endurance.

It will come with a fulness the boldest never dared to expect or even think of. The blessing will be bestowed. The mount of trial will become a mount of vision. "Jehovah-jireh," the Lord will provide, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

I. Expect trials. II. Still trust in God. III. Have respect unto the recompense of reward.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
James 1:12.

III.

CHRIST, HIS EXCELLENCE AND LOVE.

BY REV. J. HUNTER.

SONG OF SOLOMON I : 2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine."

THERE is none that the believer delights to honor so much as the King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts, the Saviour Jesus Christ. His fellowship he ardently desires. Hence the request, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth : for thy love is better than wine." In truth this whole book is simply a conversation between Christ and the believer, the church and her head. "Let him kiss me." She is first in the conversation. Not that she is first in love or first in manifesting her love to Christ, for he loved her with an everlasting love ; with loving kindness he had drawn her, yea, he had drawn her with the bands of love. His love is not only prior to but stronger and more ardent than hers. But her intimacy with him was not everything she could wish ; hence these words show her impatience and longing desire for fuller communion with Christ. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. His absence was more than she was able to bear. She ardently desired his presence, which was better than life. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." She had enjoyed sweet communion with him in the past, knew the excellency of his love, and longed for the gracious manifestation of his favors. She loved him and wished that love to be reciprocated. She hungered and thirsted after righteousness.

We have here, also, the person addressed. "Let him kiss me." Christ is meant here and eminently typified by Solomon in the preceding verse. He was the beloved of his father ; so Christ is God's beloved Son. Solomon was wise ; in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He was rich in possessions ; Christ is heir of all things. His dominions were extensive ; Christ is King of kings, yea, Lord of the whole earth. The one-half of the greatness of Solomon had not been told. Who by searching can find out Christ or know the Almighty unto perfection ? The growing fame of Solomon attracted the Queen of the South to see his greatness. The rising and spreading fame of Jesus Christ in the church will draw all men unto him. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." The type is great, the anti-type surpassing. A greater than Solomon is here, the precious Saviour in all his loveliness and in all his fulness. The spouse was ravished with his love. "Let him kiss me." The eye of her faith saw him ; she was full of Christ. He was all in all to her. She thought of him as if there were no other in the world. Such is the case when the believer's heart is full of Christ. All other objects of affection are excluded. Thus it was with Mary at the sepulchre : "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou have laid him, and I will take him away." His perfections overcame her. The brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, beamed on her soul. He, the only-begotten, full of grace and truth, God, equal with the Father, the corner-stone of all her hope. His indescribable perfections enraptured her.

A glimpse of the uncreated glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ illumined her soul. He was the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely; all her salvation and all her desire. In him she had everything, bread, water, raiment, friend, physician, advocate, sight, life, salvation, and hence she says, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth."

The believer under the law longed and anxiously waited for his incarnation, ardently desiring to see the salvation of Israel coming out of Zion. Christ's coming in the flesh brought that redemption near for which the godly waited. Let "thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." By the kisses of his mouth are meant the blessings of the gospel, not the sharp and severe rebukes of the law, but the mild and sweet consolations of grace manifested through the gospel of Christ. These are the words of Christ's mouth. The intimations of his love, brought home to the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, drop as sweet smelling myrrh. They raise the affections, and fill the heart with holy emotions. They are incentives to love. Gospel truths open the mind, let light into the soul, and are accompanied with large measures of love. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God, works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Christ's love comforts us in all our troubles, is heaven on earth, glory begun.

Kisses are tokens of affection among nearest friends, pledges of love. They are expressive of intimacy, union and communion. We are brought to draw comfort from

God in Christ, the source of all joy, for out of his fullness have all we received and grace for grace. His paths drop of their fatness down upon us ; so that here in our earthly pilgrimage, we are sustained, having renewed manifestations of the love of Christ—as in these tokens of his love.*

Thy love is better than wine. Experience had brought her to appreciate this love very highly. She discovered it in the bread and wine. These are the sensible pledges thereof, for they bring before the mind all Christ's engagements for the believer, lost and undone by nature, but found and redeemed by him. His love was set upon me, says the spouse, not because I was lovely, but that he might make me lovely and present me a glorious church unto God, without blemish and without spot, beautifier and adorned as a bride for her husband. O ! the love of Christ in dying for our sins ! Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But Christ's love was greater, for he laid down his life for his enemies.

Many are the blessings that flow from the love of Christ. Vocation, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification. Who can know it ? It is immeasurable, inconceivable, passing the knowledge either of men or angels. Think of it in its length, breadth, depth, and height, the view increasing as the believer advances on his heavenly journey. It is like the rising of water, first to the ankles, then the knees, then the loins, then water to swim in, a river that cannot be passed, an ocean of

* Here the elements were distributed.

love, bottomless, shoreless, boundless, on the wide expanse of which you may sail, but the limits thereof you can never reach. Such is the love of Christ "Thy love is better than wine."

It is free and sovereign in its origin and application. Though we were without merit, yet it is freely bestowed upon us. "Better than wine," "without money and without price." It is perennial, flowing from the eternal fount. Before the highest parts of the dust of the earth were formed, Christ rejoiced, his delights were with the sons of men. Wine fails, but the love of Christ is inexhaustible, for having loved his own, he loves them to the end. For he changes not.

The love of friends abates, but Christ is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Neither life nor death can separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is divine love. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." Amazing love ! It discovers Christ, cherishes the soul, fills with heavenly emotion, gives foretastes of glory. Age makes wine good ; "the old is better." But this love is eternal, pure, without dregs or lees, unfeigned love, a pure river of water of life. It never fails ; nor is it for the rich only, but the poor ; whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, for there is no scarcity ; it is ever flowing.

Better is it in its effects ; wine may cheer the heavy heart, but will not bring the dead to life. But the love of Christ will. His passing by was a time of love. He said unto us when in our blood, dead in trespasses and sins, Live. This love, shed abroad in the heart by the

power of the Holy Spirit, will save the soul from death. Wine may for a little drown and remove worldly sorrows, but can never remove spiritual doubts or give assurance of heavenly felicities. This love unites to Christ and fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The effects of wine will die away, but the effects of this, never. They will always increase, dispelling darkness and filling the soul with joy. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

When Christ holds communion with his people, they know the excellency of his love; it is better than wine. "Because of the savor of thy good ointments," "therefore do the virgins love thee." Being impressed with a sense of Christ's love here, and anticipating a full realization of it hereafter, in glory, we go from his table, singing his praise.

IV.

CHRIST EVER PRESENT WITH HIS PEOPLE.

BY REV. R. J. SHARPE.

MATT. 28 : 20. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

THIS precious promise was given by Christ to his disciples just before his ascension. It was evidently intended to comfort and strengthen them in view of carrying out the great commission he had just given them, to evangelize the world. We may not limit this promise to those who were first entrusted with the official proclamation of the gospel, nor is it confined to their successors in the ministry in after ages ; it is the heritage of all the saints. It is evident from the terms in which it is expressed, that it was designed to animate the followers of Christ in all ages in their efforts to make the knowledge of his salvation co-extensive with the world. The Saviour does not simply assure his disciples of his omnipresence, as if he said, "I am with you as I am with all things in heaven and on earth;" but "I am with you in a special sense as the Mediator, as your Saviour-King, to accomplish the ends contemplated in my mission for you and required by your necessities for time and eternity." Christ is with all his people by his Spirit to strengthen, comfort, sanctify and save them.

The divine King and Head of Zion has appointed ordinances in his church on earth, in the diligent use of which it is both the duty and privilege of his people to seek and to enjoy his presence. Very prominent among

these ordinances of divine grace is the sacrament of the supper, of which you are now called to partake. Under the appropriate symbols of bread and wine, you are to behold your crucified, exalted and ever-present Saviour. You have here the fulness of new covenant blessings exhibited to you as secured by your Surety's death, and are called upon to partake of them by faith, to your spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Christ is fulfilling his promise to you to-day: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*

Consider for a few moments longer the import of that promise to which your attention has been already called.

Christ is with you to strengthen you for the discharge of all duty. There is no lesson more important to the Christian than this: "Without me ye can do nothing." He is not left to sink under a sense of his own weakness, however, for he can say in holy confidence and triumph, "Through Christ strengthening me I can do all things." The duties of the Christian calling are many and attended frequently with appalling difficulties. There are moments when the Christian feeling himself powerless in the presence of some urgent duty or impending responsibility, says, with a crushing sense of his own incompetency, weakness and unworthiness, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Yet, going forward in the discharge of duty, in obedience to the Master and in dependence on his aid, he is able afterwards to say with the illustrious apostle of the Gentiles, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Duty to Christ and duty to perishing souls require no

*Here the elements were distributed.

small amount of courage, zeal and spiritual power. Sacrifices must be made, opposition encountered, hardness endured by us, as good soldiers of the cross of Christ. The Master sends none a warfare at his own charges. Therefore, whenever he calls and to whatever he calls, we may cheerfully go, in the confident assurance that "He will never leave us and never forsake us." "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

He is with you to sustain you in all your trials. Through sorrow and tribulation the saints enter the kingdom. Christ assures all his followers that in this world they shall have tribulation. They are made to pass through deep, dark waters, and are cast sometimes into the fiery furnace, but one like unto the Son of man is ever present to uphold and comfort and in due time to rescue them from all their distresses. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Remember, afflicted Christian, that "in all your afflictions he is afflicted." Human sympathy may be wanting in the hour of your distress and human hands powerless to aid you, but the heart of your Redeemer ever beats in sympathy with you, and his omnipotent arm is pledged for your deliverance. You may be ready to say with the patriarch Jacob when bereaved of his children, "All these things are against me," but they are wholly for you, instead. "All things work together for good to them who are the called according to his purpose." Your necessities require all the

bitter experiences you shall ever have. Your loving Redeemer cannot wantonly afflict you. Infinite wisdom and love characterize all his dealings with you. The precious fruit of affliction is the purging away of sin. In all your sufferings the end in view is your perfection, that you may be presented at last in the presence of God "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

He is with you to note your fidelity and devotion to his cause. The obligations which bind you as the followers of Christ are weighty indeed. He has given himself for you, and it is your reasonable service to give yourselves to him. He requires your supreme affection and your devoted life-long service in the cause of truth and righteousness. You have professed to acquiesce in these claims of Christ. As his covenanted witnesses with all the solemnity of an oath, you have enlisted in his service. Many rivals will dispute his place in your affections. Other masters will claim your allegiance and service. Repudiate them all. You are witnesses for Christ's mediatorial claims, one and all. He is the only infallible prophet, the only high-priest who has made perfect atonement for the sins of his people, and the only universal king. Urge the recognition of his claims in all these offices, upon all men whom you can reach by tongue, and pen, and holy example. Be especially mindful of his kingly claims as they are specially ignored in these days, not merely by ungodly men, but by rebellious nations, and even by some who profess to be his friends. Your Redeemer's glory shall not be fully manifested on this earth until all the kingdoms of the world shall do him homage. "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh

a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." This is no unmeaning title. He shall yet be crowned Lord of all. He is guiding the world in his mysterious and resistless providence to ultimate submission to his throne and sceptre, managing in infinite wisdom the forces of evil, so that while they seem to prevail they are but preparing overwhelming defeat for themselves. Be found ever on his side as against every form of moral evil, convinced that his eyes as a flame of fire are upon you, and hear his voice louder and more impressive than the sound of many waters saying unto you, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

He is with you to defend you from all your enemies and to conduct you home to your eternal rest. The Christian life is a warfare. Corruption in the heart is the most formidable foe of the Christian. Satan can only conquer by inducing to sin. The success of his assaults depends upon the co-operation of the allies that lurk within the citadel of the heart. Subtle, malicious and vengeful in the extreme, and withal possessing marvellous skill in the work of destroying souls, your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But the Lion of the tribe of Judah is more than a match for him. Little would human skill and strength avail against the invisible legions of darkness with which the follower of Jesus has to contend, but the Captain of salvation has met and vanquished them. "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." He has given his people a safe conduct which the prince of hell cannot annul. He is on their right hand and on their left, that

they may not be moved. The struggling, toiling, warring Christian may look forward with confidence to the victorious issue of the conflict in which he is engaged with sin and Satan. Whither is the fore-runner guiding his faithful followers? To eternal rest. After all the conflicts of life are ended, its sorrows endured, its trials borne, there remaineth a rest to the people of God. Their Saviour is with them alway, even unto the end of the world, that they may be with him world without end. Courageously, then, faithfully and hopefully, work in the vineyard of your Master. Consoled by his presence, guided by his power, and animated by his gracious promises, even in the most trying moments of your lives, lose not sight of the certain recompense of reward. For "the ransomed of the Lord *shall* return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

OUR WORK, A WORK OF REFORMATION.

BY REV. JOHN FRENCH.

FATHERS and Brothers: We need not say that the services of this and the past days have been solemn and impressive. We trust that we all feel they have been such. We ought to cherish the remembrance of them, and endeavor always to feel the obligation of our solemn vows and covenant.

When Barnabas went from Jerusalem to Antioch, and saw the grace of God in the work of revival, then he was glad, and exhorted them all "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." The evident tokens of God's favor to us, and his power in drawing us together, in heart and mind, should and do fill our hearts with gladness. United we are powerful. Bound together by an ardent affection for Christ and for each other, and by the strong bond of our covenant, we may expect to be instrumental in winning souls to Christ, and in advancing his cause in the world, as we have never been before. We should apply to ourselves the exhortation of Barnabas, "With purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord." With a firm mind and a fixed resolution we should pay our vows and be constant and conscientious in our fidelity to our divine Master. We must cleave to his truth, his law, his ordinances, his despised claims and his people. In our covenant we have firmly bound ourselves to our divine Master, to be his servants, and to serve him. And now he has given us work to do, an extensive work, a work of reformation.

Let us begin then, 1st. In our own hearts. Much there needs reforming. See that we are personally interested in the salvation of Christ. We need not expect, if out of Christ, to be the honored instruments of reforming the world and bringing the nation into subjection to him. Let us be in subjection ourselves, in heart and in life, to Christ our glorious Mediator and Lord.

2d. In our families. With many of us, we have no doubt, there is much needed work to be done in our households, more parental instruction to be imparted, and more rigid discipline to be enforced. Upon us all more than ever before, is incumbent the duty to act in reference to the everlasting welfare of those whom God has given us.

3d. In our studies. There should be more diligence in study, more prayer, more reliance on the Spirit for aid, more anxious longing and travail for perishing sinners.

4th. In our public exercises and in all our official duties. We should endeavor to realize that we act as agents for Christ, and the stewards of his house.

If we are sincere and faithful in the discharge of all these duties we may expect to be successful in the defence of the truth, and in the maintenance of the claims of Christ as the Prince of the kings of the earth and Governor among the nations. And in the end we may anticipate the soul-thrilling approbation of our divine Master and Judge, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

THE NATURE AND GROUND OF POLITICAL DISSENT.

BY REV. D. M'ALLISTER.

HEB. II : 24-26. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season : esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt ; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

EMINENT among the illustrious examples of faith grouped together in this chapter, is that of Moses. His choice, of which the text speaks, exhibits in a remarkable manner the power of that principle before defined as "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Taken in infancy by the daughter of Pharaoh from the basket of flags that floated upon the Nile, he became her son. And whether it be true or not, that, as tradition affirms, the princess who adopted "the child of the water" was herself childless, and that her adopted son was heir to the throne of Egypt and all the accumulated treasures of a long line of kings, it is at least clear that as the recognized son of the daughter of a monarch who ruled over one of the richest and most civilized nations of antiquity, he had before him the prospect of such affluence and honor as few could hope to possess. And yet, when he reached maturity, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

It is unnecessary to suppose that there was some great public occasion when Moses, rather than perform an act amounting to a renunciation of the religion of his people,

surrendered formally the title he had worn and the honors connected with it. In the very nature of things the time had come for a decisive choice. On the one hand were Egyptian oppressors. On the other hand were the oppressed Hebrews. No one come to man's estate could remain on friendly terms with both parties. He must declare himself and act accordingly. Thus it was with the young Hebrew, as soon as "he was come to years." He made prompt decision. Casting off the proud title which he might have continued to wear, turning his back upon the pleasures of the most cultivated court of the age and the treasures of the land of riches, he cast in his lot with the afflicted people of God, and took upon himself the reproach of Christ, "for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

This choice of Moses illustrates a principle of conduct applicable in all circumstances of the Christian life—the life of faith. It may be employed, however, with special propriety, in illustration of the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in regard to unscripturally constituted civil governments. The members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, like their fathers and brothers of other lands, and like Moses of old, feel constrained to accept disadvantages and sufferings rather than become identified with the government under which they live. This position of political dissent from the United States government, which in circumstances of the most interesting and solemn kind we yesterday swore faithfully to maintain, has often been misstated, and still oftener misunderstood. By many, the reasons for occupying and maintaining it have not been

duly weighed. The aim in view to-night is to state and show good reason for our position of political dissent.

I. The position of political dissent stated and explained.

1. *It is not the exercise of the right of expatriation.* This right, or the right to quit one's native country and renounce allegiance to it, long denied by the most of the European governments, and controverted by many persons in our own country, is at length generally acknowledged. A considerable proportion of the members of our church have availed themselves of this right, quitting the land of their birth to come and settle here. But such renunciation of country, though it may have been occasioned by wrongs in the government of the country left, is not political dissent. The very idea of dissent from the action of a society implies connection with it. Political dissent from the government of a nation implies permanent residence in that nation. We may testify against evils in the government of a country with which we have no connection by birth or adoption, or from which we may have expatriated ourselves, but we cannot properly be said to dissent from its government. It is as American citizens—not members of the political society, indeed, but citizens in the broader and truer sense of the term—that Reformed Presbyterians in this land occupy their position of dissent. Expatriation, then, so far from corresponding to political dissent, is utterly at variance with it, as the former renders the latter in any particular case impracticable.

2. *It is not seclusion and separation from active participation in national affairs.* Man is a social being, and by

the principles of his nature has a place and duties in society. Even if the Christian were living under the worst of despotisms, if he were a captive in a strange land of tyranny and oppression, the divine command applicable to him, would be that addressed to the children of Judah, who sat and wept by the rivers of Babylon, and whose harps hung upon the willows: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Let man be placed where he may in the world, he is still possessed of social faculties, and occupies social and civil relations. And whoever seeks to break his relations to other men, and cast off the responsibilities of such relations, fails in his duty to God, the author of society, as well as in his duties to his fellow men.

But particularly should the Christian, when the land in which he lives is the land of his choice, or his heritage by birthright, pray and actively labor for its peace and welfare. As Reformed Presbyterians we should be the most patriotic, and every way the best of citizens. Our religion has no more sympathy with civil than with ecclesiastical monasticism. The mountain of our Zion is no retreat for the civil recluse. The standards of our faith know nothing but disapprobation for conduct like that of the devotee of literature, Henry D. Thoreau, who sought to seclude himself from his fellow beings in companionship with the irrational creation in the wilds of the forest, and divest himself of the responsibilities of social and civil life.

Fretted by contact with the selfishness of society, and disgusted with its meanness, we may longingly sigh—

“O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade!”

Grieved and sore-pained because of the voice of the enemy and the oppression of the wicked, we may cry out with David, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.” Or worn with apparently fruitless efforts against wrong in high places, and hopeless as to the future of our country groaning under reigning iniquity, we may be ready, like Elijah, to abandon the field of conflict, and seek quiet and repose, if not in the solitudes of the desert, at least in the retirement of domestic life. But no! The place of difficulty and of labor is the post of duty. Social isolation is moral dereliction. As a church we most emphatically insist upon it that patriotism is a duty. And while we maintain a position of political dissent, we acknowledge ourselves, ministers and people, sacredly bound to pray and labor for the welfare of our country. No engrossment in business, no devotion to the family, no absorption even in the investigations of the study, the instructions of the pulpit, or the care of the pastorate, can excuse a want of interest in public affairs, or indifference to the obligations of social and civil relations.

3. Negatively, again, *political dissent is not a denial of the legitimacy of the government.* The nation, like the family, has its origin in the operation of the principles implanted by the Creator in man as a social being. Unlike the

church, it is not a supernatural institution, founded in grace, and intended to meet man's special wants as a self-ruined sinner. But like the family, it is a natural institution, founded in the essential principles of human nature, and designed for man's benefit in an unfallen, no less than in a fallen condition. Corresponding to the family in its origin, it corresponds to the family also in the source and conditions of the legitimacy of its authority. A man and a woman, joining together in wedlock, no matter what their religious belief may be, form a true family. Whether they are Christians or heathen, believers or infidels, the moral being formed by their union, the family, is precisely the same in its essential elements in every case. And in the one case as well as in the other, in that family formed there is lodged by the Creator a true and legitimate authority. Though the family formed by the union of unbelievers fail, as might be expected, to acknowledge God, its authority is not therefore invalidated. The rightfulness of the authority of parents in such a household over their children is unquestioned and unquestionable. *Their* family government, and it alone, is legitimate in that family. In like manner, when people are brought together in the providence of God, and by their union a nation is formed, authority is lodged by God himself in the being thus *born** into the family of nations. And this governing authority, as expressed by the majority of the people, is the only legitimate authority in that nation. No other body of people has any right to set up governmental

* The word NATION, from the Latin NASCOR, to be born, itself embodies the idea of providential superintendence in the origin of a nation.

authority in opposition or rivalry within the national domain. As the irreligion of a father does not make void his authority in the family in those matters that are just and right, so "infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him." The divine command to teachers of Christian people in a heathen country is, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates." The reason is, as expressed in a similar connection, "for the powers that be are ordained of God." To Christians themselves the direct injunction is given, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." And the ground for this injunction is the truth that "there is no power but of God." There is no basis here for the doctrine of "the divine right of kings," nor is there any denial of the right of revolution. "For as the obedience is demanded because of God's appointment, then it is *not demanded* in matters *contrary* to God's appointment. When the civil power contradicts God's word and his voice in our conscience, then it contradicts and subverts its own authority."* But where there are no tyranny and oppression to justify revolution, then the authority as lodged in the people, taken collectively, whether the government be avowedly religious or not, is unquestionably legitimate, just as is the authority of a father, whether he

* Rev. M. B. Riddle, in note in Lange's Commentary on Romans, chap. xiii, 1.

be a believer or an infidel. Thus the existing government of this nation, be its religious character what it may, is acknowledged as the only human power having rightful civil authority over us, and obedience is cheerfully and conscientiously yielded to all its commands which do not conflict with the supreme law of God.

4. We are now prepared to state positively that *political dissent is a refusal to incorporate with the political society of the nation*. The word "citizen" is sometimes used in a limited sense, as equivalent in meaning to the phrase, "member of the political society." When used in this sense it should be qualified by the word "voting." Voting citizens, or legally qualified electors, are the governing body of the nation in the last resort. In every nation only a fraction of the citizens form this governing body or political society. In this country, women, minors, and some other classes, constituting in all about four-fifths or over of the whole population, are excluded. The remaining one-fifth are not only citizens, and sustain not only civil relations, but are also creators of the constitution, and ratifiers of the compact by which the nation is to be governed, and sustain political relations, peculiar to themselves. Political dissent is a refusal to enter into this political society or governing body of the nation.

In our own country, the members of the political society are bound together by a specific and definite compact or covenant, the written constitution of the United States, according to the provisions and stipulations of which they most solemnly agree to govern the nation. Such a compact or written constitution of government there ought to be. At least it has many advantages over

an unwritten constitution. There should also be a solemn engagement by oath, on the part of the members of the political society, either directly and personally when becoming qualified as electors, or indirectly, yet really, through their representative agents in the actual administration of the government, to govern the nation in strict accordance with the written compact.

In taking our position of political dissent, we object not to having a definite written compact, nor to an oath to support it, but to the essential character of the political covenant as it now stands. Being such as it is, we cannot bind ourselves to take part in governing the nation according to it. We are constrained conscientiously to stand apart, and refuse to become identified with the governing body of the nation. Such a position of dissent and separation should certainly not be taken except on good ground and for sufficient reason. And as we yesterday renewed our covenant with God and with each other to maintain this position, it is now a suitable time to state the reasons why it is taken and held.

II. Reasons for political dissent.

1. *The compact by which the political society is bound fails to acknowledge the relations of the nation to God.* That the nation, as such, has relations to God, is a clear truth of philosophy and history as well as of revelation. The nation is not an agglomeration of component parts, which, like those of a cup full of sand, are held together in mere contact by external pressure. It is a body, the parts of which cohere by the internal law of its own life. It is an organism, perpetuating its life from generation to generation, amid the constant flow and change of its constituent

elements. Besides, it is not an organism in the physical world, but in the sphere of morals. It is capable of having moral aims, and of being influenced by moral motives. It has a moral accountability distinct from that which rests upon its members individually. In other words, it is a moral organism, or a moral person, under moral law, and in direct relations with the supreme moral Lawgiver, God himself. Business corporations, or "artificial persons," as Blackstone calls them, have no such relations to God. The state gives them existence for material and purely secular ends, and God holds the state responsible for their character and conduct. But as his Word proves, by its promises and threatenings addressed directly to nations, as history, both inspired and uninspired, also proves, by the record of the fulfilment of those promises and threatenings in the actual experience of the nations of the earth, God deals directly with nations as moral beings in immediate relations with himself.

If it be urged that the moral law, under which the nation, as a moral being, is held bound, is the law of nature, God's law written on the heart of man, this will be readily conceded as correct, so far. But the law given in the Bible is a revelation of the same divine will revealed in nature. And if the law of nature, as the will of God, has any binding force on nations, it binds them to obedience to every further revelation of the will of the same Lawgiver in regard to themselves. The law of the Bible, as a further and fuller revelation of the same divine will, asserts its claims over nations most explicitly and fully. It deals very largely with nations as such. Passages akin to the 2d Psalm, and

the 13th chapter of Romans, are too numerous to be quoted or even specified. Repeatedly does the Bible ascribe to him who is made Head over all things such titles as "King of kings and Lord of lords," and "Prince of the kings of the earth."

The relations of the nation to God and his moral laws are thus seen to be clear and definite. (1.) It is the creature of God. (2.) It is clothed with authority derived from him. (3.) It is under the rule of Jesus Christ. (4.) It is subject to the Bible, the special revelation of moral law. In constituting and administering its government, the nation is bound to act upon the principles involved in these relations. It is under obligation to acknowledge God as the author of its existence and the source of its authority, Jesus Christ as its ruler, and the Bible as the supreme law of its conduct. Such an acknowledgment has its appropriate place in the fundamental law of the nation, the written constitution or compact of the political society, on which the government rests, and according to which it is to be administered. It is not required in every ordinary enactment. An acknowledgment in the national constitution carries with it a virtual acknowledgment in every law enacted under it and in accordance with it.

There is an important difference between fundamental or constitutional law and ordinary enactments. The former determines the structure of the government. The latter meet, at the time, the incidental wants and varying exigencies of the nation. Fundamental laws settle the policy of the government and the principles of its operation. When a ship sets sail she has fundamental rules laid

down for her direction in all circumstances of wind and weather. The end and object of the voyage, and general rules for the safety of the passengers and freight, are all specified and settled when she starts, and are applicable in every condition of the ship. So the ship of state must have her fundamental laws.* And what more important fundamental regulation can the state lay down for its guidance in peace and war, in prosperity and adversity, than an acknowledgment of its relations to Almighty God, and of its subjection to the Bible, as the fountain of its laws and the rule of its conduct? Failing to do this, the ship of state sets sail without compass, and without the guiding pole-star, on her perilous voyage. She has no anchor that can hold her fast amid the tumults of the people, when "the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, and the waters thereof roar and are troubled."

The written constitution of the United States contains no such proper and adequate acknowledgment as the nation is bound to make of its relations to God. Up to the time of its adoption, the States in their constitutions did acknowledge God and Christianity. Some of the State constitutions yet contain similar acknowledgment. And in the actual administration of the national government the principle is admitted. But the national constitution contains no acknowledgment of God. The convention that framed it manifestly designed that all such acknowledgment should be omitted. Good men, and

* See this distinction between fundamental laws and ordinary enactment, admirably stated, and illustrated by the figure of a ship in Judge Jameson's *Constitutional Convention*, pp 83, 84.

Christian men, as many of the members of the convention were, they made the deplorable mistake of yielding to others who were unwilling to express, nationally, any acknowledgment of the Almighty. The spirit that ruled in the framing of the constitution showed itself unmistakably in the deliberate refusal of the convention, after the full and urgent presentation of the matter, to ask God for guidance in prayer every morning before proceeding to business.* With such an omission of

* The statement has been repeatedly made that Franklin's motion was carried, and that prayers were thenceforth offered. Such writers as Morris, in his "Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States," and Lossing and Goodrich, in their popular histories, make this statement. How such a statement came to be made at first, it is difficult fully to explain. Its repetition, when once sent forth, is not surprising. The following considerations may help to account for the assertion :

1. The public felt that prayers should have been offered, and could hardly be made to believe that a motion like Franklin's could fail to pass. 2. Prayers were offered in the same hall at a former convention, when the Declaration of Independence was framed. This might naturally lead to confusion and misstatement. But the following facts are decisive proof, unpleasant as it is to be compelled to acknowledge it, that prayers were never offered in the convention that framed the constitution. 1. For nearly five weeks the convention sat and never thought of looking to God in prayer. (See Franklin's speech in support of his motion.) 2. Franklin's motion for prayers, made in the fifth week, was opposed. A substitute was offered by Mr. Randolph, proposing that a sermon be preached on July 4th, about a week after, at the request of the convention, and thenceforward prayers be offered. Franklin seconded this substitute. The record of the convention, given in the Madison papers, says : "After several unsuccessful attempts for silently postponing this matter by adjournment, the adjournment was at length carried without any vote on the motion." (Elliott's Debates, vol. v, pp. 254, 255.) 3. Franklin's own statement in a note appended to his speech is explicit. "The convention, except three or four members, thought prayers unnecessary." (Sparks' Works of Franklin, vol. v, p. 155.) No unauthenticated statement, though drawn up with minute particulars, and indefinitely repeated, can have any weight beside such fully authenticated facts.

duty—nay, worse, such a deliberate decision not to seek God's direction—on the part of the convention that framed the constitution, it is not to be wondered at that the instrument itself does not acknowledge God, and fails to place the government in its fundamental compact in its true relations to him.

When urging his motion for prayers, Franklin said, in words of eloquent reproach: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard; and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need his assistance?" The practical answer to these questions by the convention, in refusing to have prayers, and in omitting an acknowledgment of God from the constitution, was: "We have forgotten him; we no longer need his assistance; we shall establish our future national felicity without looking to him." Franklin went on: "I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that 'except the Lord build the city, they labor in vain that build it.'" To all this, the

reply of the convention, by its action in refusing to ask God's blessing in prayer, and to acknowledge him in the instrument they framed, was: "We will build an empire without his aid." God grant that our future may not fulfil Franklin's warning words: "Without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall become divided by our little, partial, local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages." We may not, we must not, strike hands in a political compact which knows no dependence on God, no subjection to him, and which thus most gravely threatens our national future. We cannot solemnly agree to govern ourselves and our fellow-citizens on the basis of such a political covenant.

2. *The political compact of the government contains express and positive provisions in violation of the divine law for nations.* It is admitted that the provisions of the constitution are, in the main, most excellent. Let no one withhold from it the admiration which it richly deserves. But it would be as unwise to let its merits blind us to its defects, as to let its defects prejudice us against its merits. Framed by a convention which, as a convention, refused to apply to the Father of lights to illuminate their understandings, it could hardly be expected to be free from essential defects. Failing to acknowledge God and seek his guidance, the convention did grope in the dark, and fell into some of the gravest of errors. One of these errors, in regard to the rights of man, the nation has been led to acknowledge and correct by proper amendment. Two

positive provisions remain to be corrected: (1.) The provision as to the form of the presidential oath; and (2.) That which prohibits the requiring of any religious qualification for office.

In regard to these points, the law of the Scriptures, under which nations are held bound, is clear. As to the first, it specifically requires all who administer oaths, as well as all to whom they are administered, to perform this solemn act of worship in the name of God: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt swear by his name." In direct violation of this command, the national compact provides a form of oath from which the name of God was intentionally and deliberately excluded. As to the second point, intimately connected with the first, the divinely approved direction contained in the Scriptures is: "Provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers." The opposing language of the political compact is: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The intention of the convention cannot be misunderstood. They designed so to frame the compact of government that no irreligious man would be ineligible to office—that even an avowed and practical infidel or atheist might have no obstacle in the way of reaching the highest position in the land. For this very purpose the common form of oath in use was changed, and God's name omitted. Luther Martin, a member of the convention from Maryland, in a letter to the legislature of his State, says: "The part of the system which provides that

no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States, was adopted by a great majority of the convention, and without much debate; however, there were some of the members so unfashionable as to think that a belief of the existence of the Deity, and of a state of future rewards and punishments, would be some security for the good conduct of our rulers, and that in a Christian country it would be at least decent to hold out some distinction between the professors of Christianity and downright infidelity and paganism.”* So the treaty with Tripoli, carrying out the idea of the constitution, signed by the president and senate about eight years after the constitution was adopted, and never called in question as to its constitutionality, declares: “The government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion; it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquillity of Mussulmans.”† And Justice Story, in his Commentaries on the Constitution, describes that instrument as a compact according to which the Christian, Jew, Mohammedan and infidel, all sit down in common at the table of the national councils, without any regard to their religious belief.‡

In some of the State conventions which ratified the national constitution, it was acknowledged that none but God-fearing or religious men should hold official trusts. In the North Carolina convention, Mr. Iredell said: “It is never to be supposed that the people of America will

* Elliott's Debates, vol. v, pp. 385, 386.

† 8 U. S. Statutes at Large, p. 154.

‡ Commentaries on the Constitution, §1879.

trust their dearest interests with persons of no religion, or of a religion materially different from their own.”* Theophilus Parsons, afterwards chief justice, said, in the Massachusetts convention: “It has been objected that the constitution provides no religious test, and that we may have in power unprincipled men, deists and pagans. No man can wish more ardently than I do, that all our public offices may be filled by men who fear God and hate wickedness; but it must remain with the electors to give the government this security.”† But if the electors are to give the government this security, they must do it in the covenant by which they agree to govern themselves and the nation. In the same convention the Rev. Mr. Shute said: “The presumption is, that the eyes of the people will be upon the faithful of the land.”‡ But it might have been known then, as experience has since proved, that there will always be a large class whose eyes are *not* upon the religious and the God-fearing, but upon the wicked and corrupt. And no action of the great body of electors can give the government security against the election of such corrupt and irreligious men to office, except an express agreement in the compact of the political society. What that able journal, the *New York Nation*, has said of appointments, is equally true of elections to office: “Some presidents will appoint good men, others will not; and some will try to appoint them, and give it up as too troublesome. It is the *system* which is rotten, and it is the system which

* Elliott's Debates, vol. iv, p. 194.

† Ibid, vol. ii, p. 90.

‡ Ibid., vol. ii, p. 119.

must be reformed. The desire of the nation for honest servants must be expressed in *laws*."

Irreligious and godless rulers are a curse to any nation. "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." In intrusting power to the nation, God requires the nation to intrust it in turn to such men as fear him and hate covetousness. The nation must make sure that it shall be so intrusted. The governing body must agree in their compact, that the qualifications laid down for rulers in God's law shall be required. They have no right to require any ecclesiastical test. They have no warrant for making the ordinances of the church the badge of fitness for civil rule. But they *are* under imperative obligation to require that "he that ruleth over men *must* be just, ruling in the fear of God." If to insist upon a good moral character and a God-fearing walk and conversation is to encourage hypocrisy, as it is sometimes objected, it may be replied that the world can afford to have such "hypocrisy" encouraged. All good laws encourage such "hypocrisy." If it fail to insist upon such religious qualifications in its rulers, the nation violates the express requirement of God's law, makes itself partaker in the wickedness of its corrupt and irreligious rulers, and calls down upon itself such judgments as have overtaken, not the tyrannical Emperor who lives in affluence and ease, but the responsible nation of humbled, bleeding, unhappy France.

While, then, the political compact of our government violates in its essential provisions the clear and explicit requirements of the divine law, we cannot identify ourselves with the governing body that is most solemnly bound by this unscriptural covenant.

3. *It is impossible to avoid responsibility for such a morally defective constitution and its legitimate consequences in any other way than by political dissent.* It is due to many of the members of the convention that framed the constitution, to admit that they did not intend that the government should be actually administered on the principle that all religions, the true and all opposed to it, should be viewed nationally on a level. They did not fully comprehend the nature and consequences of their act in omitting all acknowledgment of God and Christianity, and prohibiting the requirement of any religious qualification for official position. It is no doubt true that, as Justice Story says, "at the time of the adoption of the constitution, the general, if not the universal sentiment in America was that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the state, so far as was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience and freedom of worship. An attempt to level all religions, and make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation."* It must also be admitted that in the actual administration of the government of this nation a preference always has been shown, and is still in great measure shown, to the Christian religion. Indeed, it has been maintained in judicial decisions that, in the words of Chancellor Kent, "Christianity, in its enlarged sense, as a religion taught and revealed in the Bible, is part and parcel of the law of the land."† And much of the actual administration of affairs has been carried forward on this principle.

* Commentaries on the Constitution, § 1868.

† Case of People vs. Ruggles, 8 Johnson's Reports, p. 290.

But that by which the members of the political society are solemnly bound to govern the nation is not the common custom of any portion of the people, nor even the unauthenticated public sentiment of the nation. It is the written compact itself. And this agreement, as we have seen, does, according to its best interpreters, put all religions on a level. Every year this interpretation of the written constitution is being more distinctly brought to bear upon such features of the actual administration of the government as are inconsistent with it. In opposition to Chancellor Kent's decision, already quoted, we have the following declaration: "According to the best considered authorities, the Christian religion is not a part of the common law of this country."* Many decisions might be quoted like the following, of the superior court of New York: "The principles of our government and the provisions of our constitution are designed to secure equality between different religions, and different forms and sects of religion."† The determined attempts of infidels and atheists, and others combining with them, to exclude the Bible from the common schools, abolish the administration of the oath by civil authorities, expel chaplains from halls of legislation, and, in a word, break down all the existing Christian features of the national life, proceed on the ground that these customs and usages are inconsistent with the written compact by which the nation agrees to govern itself, and which is the summary of all the powers the government may ever legally exercise.

* Comstock's edition of Kent's Commentaries, vol. i, p. 633, Note.

† 4 Sandford's Reports, p. 182.

Now who are responsible for this instrument, with its failure to acknowledge God and Christianity, and its consequent powerful influence against all that is distinctively Christian in the nation? The nation, itself, as a unit, is undoubtedly responsible. But every member of the nation who acquiesces in such a compact has his individual share of the responsibility. The convention that framed our morally defective constitution were first to blame. But the members of the political society that received it with its defects from the hands of the convention, and ratified it, by their act became responsible for it. This society continues its identity from generation to generation; and those who are members of it to-day, stand in precisely the same relation to the compact as those who first framed it or ratified it. They are just as responsible for its character as if they had yesterday actually adopted it for themselves.

Some may say that they are bound, not by the written compact, but by the unwritten or vital constitution of the nation, which the written document ought, but fails, to represent. Doubtless the unwritten constitution of our nation, embracing our customs, social and educational institutions, civilization generally, and much of the actual administration of the government, is distinctively Christian, and ought to be translated into legal language and authenticated in the written constitution. But whatever the character of the unwritten constitution may be, the written compact of government binds every member of the political society, anything in customs or usages to the contrary notwithstanding. On this point Judge Jameson, in his thorough treatment of the relation of the

written to the unwritten constitution of a nation, remarks as follows: "A very important question may arise: admitting the possibility of discrepancies between the constitution of a state as a fact [the unwritten constitution], and its constitution as an instrument of evidence [the written constitution], which has the superior validity? In answering this question it would be easy, and to some minds the temptation would be strong, to propound doctrines subversive of all regulated liberty. The reply seems reasonable that the constitution as an objective fact, the constitution as it ought to be written out, to harmonize with the results of existing social forces, ought to prevail, rather than any empirical transcript of it made by fallible men, and therefore inadequate at the start or become so by the progress of society. But such a doctrine would be anarchical—one according to which no government of laws could long exist. The constitution as it has been declared to be, with its compacts as well as its bare transcriptions, must be the sole guide to all matters and persons within its proper cognizance."*

Thus the written constitution, failing, as it does, to acknowledge the nation's relations to God and his laws, and degrading Christianity to the level of false religions, is the sole guide for members of the political society in governing the nation. It may contain provision for its own amendment. But if it should never be amended, the members of the governing body take it as it stands, and bind themselves by it as it is, and thus become responsible for its morally defective character, and its mischiev-

*Constitutional Convention, pp. 72, 73.

ous influence upon all the best and dearest features of our national life. The only way to avoid this responsibility is by occupying a position of political dissent.

4. *The position of political dissent is the most effective one for the reformation of the nation.* We might rest the case here, without any further discussion. The reasons already dwelt upon are sufficient in themselves. They necessarily involve the additional reason now given. The course of moral rectitude is the only sure pathway to true success. For a man to refuse to bind himself by an immoral compact is to pursue the course of rectitude. When the members of a political society bind themselves by a covenant which fails to acknowledge the nation's relations to God and his law, and which violates the express requirements of that law, they must plainly do what is a moral evil. And we are strictly forbidden to say, or, whatever the supposable good of such a course may be, to act upon the saying: "Let us do evil that good may come." If we do thus act, our condemnation is just.

There is oftentimes a strong temptation to deviate from the path of strict rectitude, arising from the prospect of some immediate and tangible benefit. In no case, perhaps, does the promised good appear more tangible than in the election at the present time in our land of a good man to office, in preference to a notoriously wicked and corrupt politician. But it is a very short-sighted view of the momentous affairs of a nation, which fails to comprehend the truth that the position of complete separation from what is wrong, though attended with an apparent temporary increase of evil, is and must

be, in the end, the most effective position for the thorough suppression of the wrong, and the sure advancement of the right and truth. Communities, cursed with bad rulers and threatened with worse, may strain every nerve to have the electors give the government, for once, the blessing of honest and God-fearing officials. They may succeed. And with such very imperfect success the excitement lulls, and the way remains open for bad men once more to work their way to office, and again to plunder the public treasury, and grind the faces of the poor. A failure to throw off the thieves and plunderers at first would be a cheap price to pay for the lesson, if by it the nation or community would only be taught to go to the very root of the evil, and enact their desire for good rulers, in accordance with the divine command, into the nation's law.

We can afford, then, to have fellow Christians, or fellow citizens, or both, who do not or will not understand our position, say to us: "Why all this talk about the necessity of reform, if you will not act? You are *doing* nothing. Put your shoulder to the wheel. Vote for men in favor of the reforms you seek." We are *doing* what it is most difficult to do. It is easy to follow the multitude. It requires no effort to fall in with the current, and go swimming down the stream amid the acclamations of accompanying millions. But to stem the popular tide, and to give warning to the ship of state, of perilous rocks and shoals ahead—this is the real *work* which but few are found ready to do. "*Hic labor, hoc opus est.*"

Moral truth is the great instrumentality, the mighty power in God's hands, and in the hands of all who are co-workers with him, in overthrowing moral evils. The effective worker with God is the man who makes the truth to be known and felt. The opponents of American slavery never caused the truth they held to make a deep impression upon the national conscience, until they dissented from the constitution which protected the wrong. Their dissent, and the energetic efforts logically connected with it, held up the abomination of slavery to the gaze of the nation and the civilized world, and more than anything else prepared the way for its complete extinction.

So the position we now occupy holds up the nation's morally defective compact of government to distinct view. To abandon the position would be to paralyze our arms, and take the bone and sinew, if not the very life, out of the movement for securing the acknowledgment of God in our national constitution, and sink the truth we hold in obscurity. To maintain our position of political dissent is to press the nation's sin in failing to acknowledge its relations to God and his law, and the need of a constitutional amendment, upon the notice of thoughtful men, and thus secure, in the end, a fundamental and thorough reformation.

Fathers and Brethren, let me add, as we close, that it becomes us, who yesterday held up our hands to God in solemn oath to maintain our position of political dissent until the blessed reformation sought is accomplished, to

remember that our duty requires true faith for its right performance. It was "by faith" Moses was enabled to discharge his duty. "By faith" we must be ourselves united with Christ and consecrated to him, if we are successfully to call upon the nation to subject itself to him as its ruler. Our utterances will but provoke contempt, and be themselves but mockery, unless our life attests the sincerity of our professed desire for the advancement of the honor of the King of kings.

Nor should we forget that the truth which we hold is a heritage. It has been handed down to us by fathers who suffered and died for it. They were removed from the field of labor before their work was appreciated. They bore the brunt of the conflict, and won, at the cost of their lives, the vantage ground on which we stand. With our inheritance of the great truth of Messiah's headship over the nations, there is laid upon us a special responsibility. Other work that we have to do is the same as that given to sister churches. But Americans as we are, native-born as most of us may be, by the very line of our descent from our worthy religious ancestors, there is intrusted to us the banner of "Christ's Crown and Covenant." Do what else we may, we fail utterly in our duty unless, in some degree, we prove ourselves worthy descendants of the faithful of old, by imitating their example, and keeping our banner aloft, its folds all shaken out to the breeze, and its full motto, clear and distinct, before the eyes of the nation :

" Bear aloft, then, Zion's standard,
Crimsoned o'er with martyr's blood.
It hath waved through lapse of ages,
Undestroyed by fire or flood.

On the field of bloody conflict
 It hath waved amid the strife ;
 And our fathers, to preserve it,
 Perilled fortune, home and life.”

Finally, let us have “respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Says an eminent writer : “If there be anything which may justly challenge the admiration of all mankind, it is that sublime patriotism, which, looking beyond its own times and its own fleeting pursuits, aims to secure the permanent happiness of posterity by laying the broad foundations of government upon immovable principles of justice. He who founds a hospital, a college, or even a more private and limited charity, is justly esteemed a benefactor of the human race. How much more do they deserve our reverence and praise, whose lives are devoted to the formation of institutions, which, when they and their children are mingled in the common dust, may continue to cherish the principles and the practice of liberty in perpetual freshness and vigor.”* This is the work we are striving to accomplish. With God’s glory and the good of our fellow-men in view ; “with malice toward none and charity to all ;” as Christians and patriots, constrained to take a position of separation from citizens we respect and love ; bound most sacredly to spare no sacrifice of time, money, or strength, we shall give ourselves to the great work of disseminating the truth as to the relation of government to religion, until the nation, acknowledging its subjection to the Messiah and his laws, shall say, in principle and practice, in the constitution and administration of its government :

* Story’s Commentaries on the Constitution, § 506.

“Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, thou who alone art worthy.”

Then, when under the reign of the Prince of Peace, righteousness shall distil as the dew, and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance forever, the names of those whose lives were devoted to the accomplishment of this aim shall be held in everlasting remembrance. Yes, brethren, the church and the men that work devotedly in this cause, shall live in history. Here is a field for the noblest endeavor. Here is room for the highest and purest ambition. In the days when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, history will be studied and written as it never was before. And the brightest names upon its page will be, not those of warriors and kings, or men of science and great scholars, but those of the moral heroes who did most in their day and place to usher Christ's kingdom in. If, in our individual obscurity, we can hope for no part in those future honors of this world, we can still have “respect to the recompense of the reward;” for in those fields beyond, where light, sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart, come to their ripened harvest, we shall all reap, if we faint not.

THE POSITION AND DUTY OF COVENANTERS.

BY REV. A. M. MILLIGAN.

PSALM 56 : 12. "Thy vows are upon me, O God."

I FEEL all the difficulty and responsibility of undertaking to lead the devotions of a synod of elders and ministers in the closing exercises of such an occasion as this ; and it is only in the strength of promised assistance that I would undertake it. What shall be a fitting close to such a service ? Let us meditate together upon the position in which we stand after such a transaction as that in which we have been engaged. It is expressed in the language of my text : "Thy vows are upon me, O God."

Let us consider the relations in which we stand, the responsibilities, duties and privileges of these relations.

I. As a church we are married to Christ.

Isa. 54 : 5, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name." Isa. 62 : 5, "As a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee : and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

There is no earthly relationship so near as that of the husband and the wife. Brothers may walk together for a period ; but at length their tastes, inclinations, or accidental circumstances, drift them asunder. They follow different pursuits, enter different fields of labor, and form other family relations that lead them far apart. The father and the son, the mother and her babe, may for a

time seem but parts of each other ; but eventually the son forsakes father and mother and cleaves to his wife, the daughter forgets her father's house and her own people and casts in her lot with her husband, and "they twain shall be one flesh." Though human statutes have in some instances separated the interests of husband and wife, and made too easy the separation of the marriage tie, yet the divine rule is explicit : "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Only when thus united do they constitute the perfect human being. It is this unity and identity of interest that has made this relation the most fitting expression of the relation between Christ and the church ; "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." When Adam looked upon his wife, formed of his rib and clinging to his side, he felt that she was part of himself. So Christ and his church are one ; their interests are identical. Her children are his children, her members are his members ; she is his body, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." She shall sit with him upon his throne as he sits with his Father upon his throne. The Son of God bears a different relation to his Father from that which any other son bears to any other father. "I and my Father are one," and he prays for his church "that they all may be one ; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

This relation is constituted not in the act of loving, although that is the force that draws them together ; not in their association, although that is the result of it ; but in the act of covenanting, the marriage—the divine institution in which this relation is represented and sealed.

The importance of the transaction in which we have been engaged, consists not so much in the circumstance that we have come together and pledged ourselves to God and one another, as in the fact that this pledge is the divine institution by which God has ordained that he would signify and seal to us the union and identity of Christ with his church. This is not expressed in the union of members with the church in baptism, nor in the celebration and participation of the Lord's supper, any more than birth and baptism are marriage. The divine institution for expressing this union is covenanting. In this the church as a body, a unit, gives herself to Christ, and Christ gives himself to her. The terms on which the contract is formed are of his prescription ; it is her's to accept them, and only on those terms can it be consummated. "Thy Maker is thine husband." "For he is thy Lord ; worship thou him."

The privileges of this relation are many and great. Honored as the spouse of Christ, she bears his name. His name is "The Lord our righteousness," and "this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." Hitherto she has enjoyed occasional visits interspersed with long and weary withdrawals, while she was left to search and inquire, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" but now she shall be brought unto the King into his palace, and there she shall abide. Of her he will say: "This is my rest forever: here will I dwell ; for I have desired it."

The presence of Christ in his church by his Spirit, animating, comforting, strengthening and rejoicing her, will be the direct result. He will be present in her courts,

guiding her counsels; present in her ordinances, making them the power of God unto salvation; present with her ministers, clothing them with health and salvation, endowing them with gifts and graces, and causing her saints to rejoice. It was this that gave effect to Peter's preaching after the pentecostal effusion. This made Livingstone's sermon at the Kirk of Shotts melt the hearts of the multitude and draw them to Christ. This gave Alexander Henderson that success at St. Andrew's that brought the people of that city into covenant with God. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." This gave Scotland her Knox, her Gillespie, her Cargill and her Renwick. It was this that prepared her heroes to jeopard their lives on the high places of the field, and even her tender maidens to dare death on the scaffold, and in the fire and flood. And now to the church that has just plighted her vows to her head and husband, the bridegroom says, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine!" "The king is held in the galleries."

These privileges bring with them corresponding obligations and duties. The honor of her covenant God must be her care, ever jealous of his prerogative she will not give his glory to another. Neither mitred bishop nor crowned monarch may usurp that headship, which belongs to her only Head and Lord. As she shall share his honor, so she will bear his reproach. Is he crucified, she will glory in his cross. Is he without the camp, she

will go forth to him without the camp. Is he in the wilderness, she will be seen in the wilderness leaning on his arm. She can be party to no compact which would rob him of his well-earned honor, nor can she ever consent that he should be dethroned. It is hers to bring forth the man-child that shall rule the nations; to rear an intelligent, pious, patriotic and freedom-loving community, upon which the kingdom of Christ may be erected; to train sturdy defenders of civil and religious liberty, into whose hands, as the people of the saints of the Most High, Christ will give the kingdom, the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens; to erect an everlasting and universal kingdom, with Christ as its acknowledged head.

Contemplate the act in which you have just been engaged in its association with surrounding events. The Apostle John (Rev. 19,) represents the judgment of the great whore that corrupts the nations, as immediately followed by the marriage of the Lamb. The world has just witnessed the heaven-daring act of the man of sin, exalting himself above all that is called God and that is worshipped, and usurping divine prerogative in the dogma of papal infallibility. No sooner did he thus exalt himself to heaven than God thrust him down to hell. His capital city is wrested from him; the imperial throne that supported him is cast down by the mighty power it had challenged; France, crushed by a foreign power, is left to its fate; Paris is ground to powder under the heels of its own infuriated people; the masses, thrown into anarchy, and incited to fury by communistic leaders, gnaw their tongues for pain, curse God and

look upward. Babylon's sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities, and the smoke of her torment ascendeth up forever and ever.

Right upon the heels of these events, the witnessing church of God on this side of the sea is moved to enter into covenant with God. While his judgments are consuming the great whore; while her smoke is rising, and multitudes are shouting, "True and righteous are his judgments," it is our blessed privilege to join the heavenly chorus, and sing, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Bride of Christ: Your vows are recorded on high, received with shouts by the redeemed, while a glad throng press near to read the inscription on the crown you have placed on the brow of your King in the day of his espousals and of the gladness of his heart, and to trace out the names, the immortal names, of the hundred and forty-four, who have sealed their marriage covenant.

II. As a holy nation, a peculiar people, we have sworn allegiance to our King.

No man can divest himself of his relations and obligations to civil society, nor can civil society or its members ever divest themselves of their duty to God. The first covenant transaction God ever entered into with man, was with man as a member of society. The covenant of works was not made with Adam as an individual, for it affected the race; not as an ecclesiastic, for there was no church, nor did that act constitute the church, for the church was not needed,

and was not constituted till after the fall ; but that covenant transaction constituted the state, made Adam the head of it, and established the relation between Adam, as the head of the lower creation, and God. It gave him authority over all terrestrial things, one tree only excepted, which was to remind him of his subjection to God.

The Israelites at Mount Sinai were organized not only into a church but also into a nation. The covenant written on tables of stone was a national constitution. When Christ appeared he came not merely as a prophet and priest but also as a king. To Pilate, in his trial, he declared : "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." He was crucified with a crown of thorns on his head, and the superscription written over, "The King of the Jews." To his disciples he gave the command, "Preach the kingdom of God."

Our fathers' covenants contained prominently the civil element. The National Covenant was the constitution of the Scottish nation. To it the king was sworn at his coronation, and all the civil functionaries were required to swear it on their investiture with office. The Solemn League and Covenant was a treaty between the three kingdoms, and bound them as nations to be faithful to God, the true religion and each other.

As they were civil compacts binding the subject to the throne of Britain, they bind neither us nor our brethren in the British Isles. That covenant-kingdom of which they were the constitution and the bond of union is revolutionized, the constitution has been overturned, the

covenants violated, and to that covenant-breaking throne the covenanter is no longer bound, and to those guilty lands the violated covenants now secure only the penalty of their violation. But though that goodly and beautiful house which our fathers reared is in ruins, yet the very rubbish and stones of it are dear to the saints, and every principle of truth and order which those covenants contained is treasured as a sacred legacy from martyred and worthy forefathers. To the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, as far as it was represented in those kingdoms, and in those covenants, the covenanters and their representatives, in every age and in any land, are, and must be forever, bound. There never can be a failure on God's part to fulfil the covenant that would release the other contracting party. Those covenants bind the covenanters and their descendants wherever they may be, to labor to set up, extend and establish the kingdom of Christ.

At the time those covenants were taken, this land was a colonial dependency of Great Britain. The great majority of those who peopled these States were descendants of those who swore those covenants. Whether this nation as such, is bound by those covenant bonds, or entitled to those covenant privileges, I shall not stop to inquire. This land and its people are now no longer a part of the British nation. We, who hold ourselves bound by the obligations of those covenants, and entitled to the blessings they secure, claim no existing relation to the throne of Great Britain, nor to those covenants as British covenants. Our relations to civil society are here. This is our country, the land of our birth or

our adoption ; to it we owe the obligations of the patriot. We are part of this nation, and share the responsibility of its character and acts, and we can divest ourselves of responsibility for its sins only by making our protest as public as are the evils against which we protest.

While we are part of this nation, deeply interested in its welfare, and sharing its hopes and fears, we have ever refused to incorporate or identify ourselves with that political society in the nation which formed and administers its government, because, in forming its government and framing the constitution which expresses its character and life, it has utterly ignored the authority of God. In the constitution the people are recognized as possessing that authority which belongs only to God, and the will of the people constitutionally expressed is declared to be the supreme law of the land. It enacts a godless oath by which the chief magistrate shall be qualified for his office, and authorizes the violation of the Sabbath. In the language of God's complaint against Israel by the prophet Hosea, "Israel hath cast off the thing that is good : the enemy shall pursue him. 'They have set up kings, but not by me : they have made princes, and I knew it not : of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.'" On account of this insult offered to God, and this attitude of rebellion against his authority in which the nation stands, we have occupied a position of protest and separation from the government, and in this our covenant we publish and proclaim our sworn refusal to be a party to the plot "against the Lord and his Christ, to break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." We swear

our allegiance to him whom the nation refuseth, and present his claims to the Christian people of the land as demanding their most earnest attention. Christians: is your Redeemer Lord of all? Has the Father committed all judgment to the Son, and does he require that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father? Has God declared that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord? Has God declared that the nation and kingdom that will not serve the church's Head shall perish? And will you hesitate to give him your allegiance, to place the crown of your nation at his feet, and its sceptre in his hand? Will souls purchased by his blood refuse this reasonable service?

We demand of this nation that it recognize, in its constitution, Jehovah as the foundation and author of government; the Mediator, Jesus Christ, as the appointed administrator of the divine government; the revealed will of God as the rule by which nations must frame their laws, and the true religion as the bond by which the state is anchored to the throne of God. These are God's claims upon the nation; and these claims, in his name and by his authority, we proffer, and to them the nation must answer. Like Pontius Pilate and the Jews, the nation has Christ upon its hands; and like the Roman governor, it may well ask, "What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" It must either crown or crucify him. Until these claims were distinctly presented, the nation might claim a partial exemption from the penalty of their neglect, on the plea of ignorance; but now, in the providence of God, they are forced upon its atten-

tion, and the responsibility must be met. By this our covenant we have bound ourselves not to incorporate with the government until it acknowledge and honor our Lord, and have given our pledge that we will labor to the extent of our ability for this reform, until it be effected.

In Independence Hall forty-six men laid the foundation of this great nation in the bill of human rights they gave to the world, and which they pledged their fortunes, their sacred honor and their lives to maintain. Here, one hundred and forty-four men have given to the world a proclamation of the rights of God and the claims of his Christ, and our covenant engagement to maintain them at every sacrifice. We are erecting a greater, more beneficent and more glorious kingdom, that shall last through all ages, and fill the whole earth. Its motto is, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" and the solemnity of this our oath is our pledge to God and the world that we will never turn back till it be established. This is a representation of that kingdom for whose coming Christ taught his disciples to pray; these are its subjects, and that is its constitution. It is the stone cut out of the mountain that shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them;" "his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." We have rallied around our King; we have sworn

to him our allegiance ; and when the chronicles of the kingdom of Christ shall be written, and the names of those who were its early supporters recorded, this parchment will be brought forth as a witness, and these names enrolled with honor among his devoted followers, as men who, in the dark days, in the hold, in the wilderness, like Amasai, have said, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse : peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers ; for thy God helpeth thee."

III. As enlisted soldiers of the cross, we have taken the soldier's oath. Our work is not yet done, hardly well begun. We see not yet all things put under Christ, but we know that he is seated at the Father's right hand, waiting till his enemies be made his footstool. We may by faith see him as Joshua saw him beyond Jordan, with his sword drawn in his hand, coming as the Captain of the host of the Lord. There must be overturning, overturning, overturning, before he come whose right it is to reign. Hitherto we have been only skirmishing on the outposts ; we must storm the citadel. We have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us ; but we must contend with horses. In the land of peace they have wearied us ; we must come to the swellings of Jordan. If the teachings of prophecy be any guide, if the signs of the times teach any lesson, it is that we are approaching the great struggle of the ages. Satan has come down, having great wrath because he knows he hath but a short time. The three unclean spirits like frogs have gone forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Infidelity, with its com-

munistic cohort, is rapidly gathering its forces. Despotism, with its ally, popery, is strongly entrenched in its strongholds, and is putting forth superhuman efforts to rally its forces. All the secret oath-bound fraternities, from Jesuitry the prolific parent of the brood, and Masonry with its high-sounding claim to antiquity, through the whole vile spawn whose name is legion to the Ku-Klux-Klan, working in secret conclave, perpetrating their deeds of darkness and dreading the light, have undermined all the foundations of society—have their mines laid, and their Guy Fawkes ready, torch in hand, to fire the train, explode the magazine, and scatter in ruins every institution that stands in the way of their selfish and ambitious projects. And Spiritualism, allied with hell, and calling its demons from the vasty deep—latest born of the father of lies—is filling the air with its croakings. As the apostle says, they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, and their coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, deceiving, if it were possible, the very elect.

All these forces, which, like a flood of waters, the dragon is pouring out of his mouth to overwhelm the woman and her man-child, are arrayed against the kingdom of Christ. They have possession of the field; they are fortified in their strongholds; empires, kingdoms and republics are under their sway. Even in this asylum of the persecuted, this land of the pilgrims, infidelity has entrenched itself in the constitution. Popery reigns in our principal cities; while the powers of darkness have their secret ramifications through all our institutions, both civil and ecclesiastical. The

land must be conquered before it can be possessed. As the wars of Joshua and David prepared the way for the peaceful reign of Solomon, so it is through great tribulation we must inherit the kingdom.

The walls of Jericho must come down. For though the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they are mighty, through God, to pull down the strongholds; the blast of the ram's-horn trumpets will lay them low.

Soldiers of the cross: are you ready for the campaign? Will you meet the hardships of the march and dare the dangers of the field? I have your answer; this covenant is your pledge; the bond that binds you to your Captain, to the cause, and to each other. Brothers, in the cause of God, led by your elder Brother, you are invincible. As Scotland's heroes in the hour of defeat and disaster, when the unknown knight lifted his visor and discovered to them the face of their leader, their own William Wallace, with a shout that turned defeat into victory, followed their leader, so you, followers of the Lamb, having seen that he who goes before you is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle, be assured of success. Follow wheresoever he leads, for he will lead you to victory. Your enemy is subtle, untiring and malignant, working by guile and in the dark, organizing every form of evil into one Jesuitical horde, led by the prince of darkness. But your Redeemer is mighty; your weapon is the sword of the Spirit, and the victory that overcomes the world is your faith. The enemy is striving to rob you of your arms by taking the Bible from your children in the schools; to drive you from your strongest position by robbing you of your Sabbath; attack-

ing the sacred bond of society, the marriage relation, and making unrelenting warfare upon morality and religion in every conceivable form and way ; and all the time singing the siren song of peace and liberty to quiet your fears, until, bound hand and foot, you are helpless in his power.

But the omens are not all evil. There are unmistakable evidences that the Captain of the Lord's host, with his sword drawn in his hand, is on the march. There is a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees ; the nations have beheld him coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. Austria has been stricken down ; France lies bleeding ; the kingdom of the man of sin is no more. The leaves of the tree of life are being wafted by the Bible Society into the dark places of the earth for the healing of the nations. The angel, having the everlasting gospel to preach, is flying through the heavens, and his trumpet-voice is waking the echoes of earth's utmost shores ; the Chinese wall is broken down ; the harbors of Japan are open to the gospel-freighted ships, and even the Eternal City has accepted the Bible.

On this side of the Atlantic the signs are equally significant. The daring assaults made against morality, Christianity, the Bible and the Sabbath, and the reckless and reeking corruption, manifesting itself in high places, are rousing Christian and patriotic men to a sense of the danger ; the pulpit and the press are beginning to speak out ; bands of earnest men are forming for the fray, and there looms in our near horizon a tempest that is destined to shake our political fabric to its very foundation. But

the issue is not doubtful. The Lamb shall overcome them, and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Bride of the Lamb ! This covenant is your marriage certificate. Children of the church ! You need no longer ask for the bill of your mother's divorcement. She has returned to her first love. She has brought back the glorious days of her forefathers' covenants. Citizens of Zion ! Here is your declaration of independence—the magna charta of your liberty. Soldiers of the cross ! Here is your muster-roll, and here are your names, placed on this imperishable instrument ; they are destined either to glory or infamy. Reformed Presbyterian Church of America ! You are now in covenant with God, and this is your bond. Treasure it up where no sacrilegious hand can deface or destroy it. Make for it an ark of precious wood and overlay it with gold. It is the covenant of God with his new testament Israel. Spread it before your children. Hold it up before the rising ministry, that they may draw inspiration from it for their work. Rear for it a memorial building in which the sons of the prophets shall be polished as shafts for the quiver of the Almighty. And may we never forget that thy vows are upon us, O God.

OUR PAST AND OUR FUTURE.

BY REV. JOHN GALBRAITH.

IN retiring from these holy services, it may be interesting and profitable to review briefly what God has wrought for us in the days just gone by, to inquire how we have been exercised, and then, from our mount, to take a survey of the future.

“God hath done great things for us.” He has taken us into covenant with himself, and inclined us to give ourselves to him. The prevailing apathy and other causes that, for a time, threatened to prevent the Synod from covenanting at this meeting, have been removed; doubts and fears have been dispelled, and we have been enabled, under divine direction, to engage in that great work to which we so long looked with mingled feelings of hope and fear. How highly favored we have been! The bond of the covenant sworn and subscribed by Synod on last Saturday, places us even in advance of the position, noble as it was, occupied by those fathers who swore the National Covenant of Scotland, or those who swore the Solemn League and Covenant. God has put special honor upon us by allowing us, though few in number, to swear this Covenant. Greater far the honor conferred upon the one hundred and forty-four who lifted up their right hands to God, to swear fidelity and allegiance to the throne of God in this land, than upon the others, who more than two centuries ago, in vast multitudes, swore their allegiance to their heavenly King, in the British Isles.

This covenant connects us with the *past*, and binds to *all* the *attainments* that the church has reached, indicates the path of present duty, and will most assuredly connect us with the future of the true and faithful spouse of Christ.

On yesterday the Lord truly brought us into his banqueting house. His word was heard with gladness, his praise was sung with joy. We sat at his table, and our covenant was sealed. God is not only the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the God of the fathers, but *our* God.

How have we been exercised? It becomes me only to suggest, nay, urge, that each one of us look into his own heart, to see that we are right in the sight of God, and to try ourselves at the bar of our own consciences as to the part we have acted in all these holy solemnities.

In taking an outlook into the future, is there not reason to fear defection, backsliding and apostasy not very far away? Such was the case in the days of our covenanted ancestors, and such a contingency is by no means unlikely to occur with us. In view of this, let no one cast about him to discover who of his brethren is likely to prove perfidious, but let each one see that his own heart is strictly watched, and his own integrity preserved. Then all will be well. Let all stand resolutely to their oath. Then fears will most happily be removed, and greatest expectations far more than realized.

Brethren! Cherish the persuasion, and never permit a doubt to enter the mind, that under the bonds of this covenant, as our *banner* for the truth, our glorious Saviour and reigning Redeemer will lead us forth from

victory to victory, until every foe shall be overcome, the whole world brought into the obedience of faith, and all earthly kingdoms become kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.