

A Charge to the Lord's Prophet.

“Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law. Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know Thee. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.”—HOSEA viii. 1-3.¹



THE Lord's prophet, beloved in the Lord, he had to do with very rough and hard timber at this time; he had to do with a stiff-necked people. And not only had the prophet of God to do with the ten tribes to prophesy to them; but sometimes also he prophesies against the Kirk and the kingdom of Judah. The most part of this chapter it is prophesied against the kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes, and the last verse thereof it is prophesied against Judah. And because the Lord's prophet he had to do with such a stiff-necked and rebellious people, therefore he uses more threatenings nor² he does promises; and he has more threatenings nor² any of the rest of the prophets has. For this prophet lived in a time when the people where he lived had no sense, nor know-

¹ In MS., "Preached on the Sabbath befornoon," the Sabbath after the fast, August 22, 1640.

² Than.

ledge of God. And the kings and princes of these lands, they had set their heads and their shoulders together for bearing down the true worship of God. And, ye know, an ill and a great knot of timber it requires a hard wedge to make it to rive.¹ Even so because they had all revolted from God, and had taken them to a false worship, he maun² speak to them as one who kent³ very well what was in their hearts; and therefore, for the most part, he speaks to them of the wrath and anger of God. And in this chapter, the prophet, inspired by the Spirit of God, he begins with a charge and a proclamation: "Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord." That is, declare unto them that there is war coming against them from the Lord. And then he gives a reason for it why he makes this proclamation. Some expone this to be king of Assyria, Salmanasar, that was come to against this people, "who should come as an eagle against the house of the Lord;" and some expone it otherways. But this is sure that this was some swift judgment that was to come against them. Some of them thought this judgment is long a coming; but when it comes, it comes with eagle's wings. It is a better judgment, if any judgment can be better nor⁴ another, that comes upon feet nor⁴ that which comes upon horseback. Against whom shall this judgment come? Not against the wicked folks in the world, but against the house of the Lord, against His own sworn and covenanted people, His main quarrel and controversy that He has is against them. What ailes the Lord to come against His own house?

¹ Split up.² Must.³ Knew.⁴ Than.

He maun¹ be very angry when He does so. A father that comes against his own child to strike him if he be wise, he must have a just cause for it and be very angry at him. And the prophet says that the Lord He has just cause to do this. In the first verse He gives one reason of it: "Because they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law." That is a warrantable judgment that comes for such a cause. When there is sin against God's law and transgressing of His covenant among a people He has just cause to punish them.

What, will Israel make no apology for themselves when the wrath of God comes thus upon them? Yet, says the prophet, they will have their own excuses at that time. "Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know Thee." That is the first skonce² that ever the pursued people of God gets to hide themselves under, and a hypocritical people when they are plagued make this objection against the Lord first. Will the Lord, say they, send a destroying enemy against us fra³ Thou art our God and Thou art in covenant with us, and so why should we be put to the worse? Why should Assyria come as an eagle against us, seeing we say, "We know Thee," and we profess Thee to be our God? In the third verse that objection is answered, as there is nothing that a plastered hypocrite can say to God as an excuse of his ill but the Lord has an answer to it. "Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him." It is not said that they have forsaken

¹ Must. ² A shed under which stones are hewed, defence, protection.

³ Since.

good, but they have forsaken the thing that is good. They have forsaken the Lord and tane¹ them to Balaam; they have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and digged to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. And therefore judgment shall come upon them; the enemy shall pursue them.

Now for the first part that there is a charge given to the Lord's prophet, "Set the trumpet to thy mouth." What is the duty of those who are the Lord's ministers when wrath is coming upon a people? They maun² either tell them of it, or their blood shall be upon the pastor's head. Isa. lviii. 1: "Cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." All ministers and prophets of God who would be free of the blood of lost souls are bound and obleist³ before God to tell them freely of their sins. The Lord says to the prophet (Ezek. ii.), "Tell them from Me what it is that they have deserved." Then all ministers they are heralds sent out in God's name to denounce woe against all God's foes, and to speak peace unto God's friends, and they are messengers sent out from the Lord to tell what is the will of God to His people, to declare whether He be at peace, or if He be at war with a nation.

The *use* of this is, any prophet or minister that changes God's message by the way, and tells it not as God bids him tell it, he is not a faithful messenger, nor a right blower of the Lord's trumpet. He cries not the alarm at the command of the general, as he should that

¹ Taken.

² Must.

³ Obliged.

cries not unto the righteous, "Mercy, mercy unto you for all thy doubting and fainting; salvation to you for all the contrary thoughts thou hast, for there is blood enough in Christ's wounds to cleanse and to save you." And that tells not to the wicked man, "Laugh and rejoice as thou wilt, the anger of God is bidding¹ you, albeit thou seest it not." That is a false minister that changes God's wine, and puts in his own water instead of it, that changes God's copy in any point and fills it up with his own devices, that has not his warrant to show you for what he does. As he is a false messenger that will not show his message to you when he summons you. It is a token he is not right. Even so, all these who cannot let you see the copy of God's Word for anything they speak to you, it is a token that they are bastard trumpeters, and are not sent of God to speak to His people. Such ministers run and God sends them not; they speak the lies of their own head without the warrant of God's Word; and whenever there is a service pressed upon the kirk that is not warranted out of the Word of God, that contains such things therein as bowing before altars and sets apart days of man's devising for worshipping of saints, that is a false copy of God's will, and whoever follows it they speak and God sends them not.

Wherefore is a trumpet mentioned here? Because a trumpet is a shrill instrument of war, and a trumpet it is ordinarily blown to waken all and to stir them up who are not thinking of war, nor has any mind of it. So this is as meikle² as if it were said, "Set thy trumpet

¹ Awaiting.

² Much.

thy mouth; let them hear on the deaf side of their head." The thing that we are to learn here is that a sleeping world and a sleeping Kirk they maun ¹ have a trumpet blown to waken them, for they will not be wakened with rounding ² into their ear to tell them that God is angry at them. But we maun ¹ blow a trumpet, and tell you of the wrath of God and of His anger against you. And there are four reasons wherefore we maun ¹ blow with a trumpet to waken secure sinners.

First. Because they dawt ³ their own conscience that it may not accuse them for that which their mind lets them see to be wrong. Even as a father does to a dawted ³ bairn lets him not wit ⁴ by correcting him when he does wrong. Even like unto that spoken by the prophet (Isa. xxx. 10) they "say to the seers, See not; prophesy not," so that sinners have need to be shouted unto as with a trumpet that they may be wakened. Woe's them that can never be wakened with nothing till hell waken them, and if anything in the world be our wreck that same is it, even a spiritual security and sleeping in sin.

A second reason wherefore there maun ¹ be blowing with a trumpet to waken sinners is because there is meikle ⁵ din, and that hinders hearing when God speaks unto us. Gain is crying so loud in some men's ears, and court, and the honour and pleasing of kings, and ease, &c. These things, and the like, cry so loud in the ear of the natural man that all that God's ministers and His prophets can cry unto him of the Lord's righteousness, of His justice, of His truth, they will not hear, neither can they hear. They who know what a disease in the

¹ Must. ² Whispering. ³ Caress, fondle. ⁴ Know. ⁵ Much.

ears means say this of it, that when there is a wound within, it makes a crackling there, and it hinders hearing of any sound without; and that is it which makes deafness. Even so, when the day of the Lord's anger and wrath, of His taking vengeance on transgressors is spoken of to some, there is something within that cries louder to them, that makes them not to hear the other, and therefore the Lord He bids sound a trumpet unto such.

A third reason wherefore the Lord bids sound a trumpet is, it is an ordinary thing for the devil to hold men off their compts¹ till they be over the score, to keep them from seeing them till they can do no better, until they come to that that he makes them to think that they are over² long a counting with God. Woe's them that let their compts¹ run long, or without taking order with them, for it is a very dangerous thing. Our Lord, again, will have His messengers to set a trumpet to their mouth to tell His people what sin is, for nature will never tell a man what sin is. There are two sorts of convictions for sin that the Lord's Word tells us of. First: There is a natural conviction, and that never lets a man see what sin is. The natural man he is only a patient in that conviction; he never comes to be an agent. The conscience of the natural man may convict him of sin, but for his will and his affections they are mere patients, and join not at all in the work. They know that there is death and hell. But they would have death and hell to bide³ away from them, and this is the cause of that which is spoken, Isa. xxvi. 11: "Lord, when Thy hand

¹ Accounts.

² Too.

³ Stay.

is lifted up, they will not see;" Amos vi. 3: "They put the ill day far from them," and fra¹ they think the ill day to be far fra¹ them, and fra¹ they see not the hand of God lifted up, albeit all the world should cry to them, they will not hear nor make them to know what they are doing. Second: The Word of God tells us of a spiritual conviction where God is an agent, and man himself He convicts also—1 Cor. xi. 31: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord;" Mic. vii. 9: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him." There is an evident mark of one who hears the voice of God convicting of sin when they come to that.

A fourth reason wherefore a trumpet maun² be blown is because to believe news of the wrath of God and of the Lamb is a supernatural thing, and so the spirit of nature will never make a man to believe them. Nature will never tell a man the thousandth part of the ill and sinfulness of sin, and therefore the Lord maun² cry it into the soul as with a trumpet.

Use. Well's that soul whom the Lord works upon in time, and He makes to hear Him when He cries. Well were Scotland if they wakened in time out of their security! I durst say, if Scotland were wakened in the name of that Lord, who sent me here to speak to you, that mercy should be the end of all thir³ tumults and troubles that have been among us. There is nothing that hitherto has been the wreck of Scotland but only security, and that the sinners of Scotland have never been wakened. There be two things that serve for

¹ From the time.

² Must.

³ These.

wakening sinners out of their security, and we have both these to waken us.

First: The sins of the land wherein we live call upon us to be humbled. And¹ there were no more but the drunkenness, the atheism, the hypocrisy, the ignorance of God, the sins of the families of the land in not setting up the worship of God, we have just cause to be humbled for these and for the like.

Another thing which calls for humiliation is when judgment is already begun, and that is among us. And God knows if it be not time for us now to take our pleasure and ease, and to lay down our heads upon a cod² of the devil's stopping³ when the Lord's ark is in the fields, and when the Lord's people of this land are entering into a strange land; and God knows who are their friends or who are their foes into it; and yet we trust that God will make the people of that land to be for their good, and will cause them sell them meat and drink, and what they stand in need of, and that He who has said, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," will do for them, albeit they should not show themselves friends to them. But when the Lord's glory is in such hazard, woe to them who are not praying to God for preserving, and for them who are in hazard for it, and are not humbled now for them, for they shall get none of our Lord's comforts in that day when He shall laugh and rejoice, and shall be set up high above all His enemies. They will not do something now when our Lord maun⁴ either die, or die when we are like to be an undone people, if He die not for us. Woe to them! but

¹ If.

² Pillow.

³ Stuffing.

⁴ Must.

we trust that our Lord's salvation is not far off, but He will help us in time for His covenant's sake, seeing we are a people that are in covenant with Him; albeit the people of this land were all devils and remediless sinners. He will help us now, and take another time for punishing any wrongs of that kind.

There is a reason given for this in the next place why the Lord's prophet should set the trumpet to his mouth: "He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord." What king this was that at this time was threatened to come against thir¹ people is differed upon by some of the interpreters. That it was Salmanasar, as some say, it is not likely, and yet it is sure that Assyria was to come against thir¹ people, and to overcome them, and he was to come against them in a fierce and terrible manner, but we leave that. There are two sorts of judgments that come against the Kirk of God. There are some judgments that come upon four feet to them, that come, as it were, upon eagle's wings. And some judgments that come at leisure again, such as the wrath of God that came upon the old world. It was an hundred and twenty years coming upon them or it lighted, and yet for all that it came [at] last. Let the wicked in the world say as they will, yet the wrath of the Lord is long in coming, yet He is aye² coming, and His judgment and wrath against the wicked sleep not. Isa. xxx. 18: "The Lord waits that He may be gracious, therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you, for the Lord is a God of judgment." The judgments of God sometimes they go at leisure, but they

¹ This.

² Always.

will come. 2 Pet. iii. 4, there is a reason asked for this, wherefore the Lord's judgments that He has threatened are so longsome in coming? And it is answered, "The Lord delays it, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." This is referred to the words that are spoken before; He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. So that the enemies of the grace of God they can get no ground for their false doctrine.

But the Lord has other judgments that come not slowly but swiftly, and upon four feet as it were. And the Lord's Word, it uses three comparisons to show this swiftness of the Lord's judgments. This text that we have read says that they come with eagle's wings, and this is the king of all flying fowls, and comes with a clap upon the prey thereof. So do the judgments of God upon His enemies sometimes. The second word that is said for that is written, 1 Thess. v. 3, destruction shall come upon the wicked as pains upon a woman in travail. So is it with those who are wicked men. When they think least of destruction to come upon them, and when are preaching peace to themselves, and are bigging¹ their castles upon high that they think no evil shall come near them, then the wrath and anger of God it breaks out upon them and destroys them. The third comparison for showing the swiftness of the coming of the judgment of the wicked, it is in the Prov. i. 27, it is said thereof that their destruction cometh as a whirlwind, and ye know a whirlwind is a thing that comes

¹ Building.

very suddenly. For presently before it there is a calm, and incontinent¹ after the calm there comes a blast of a whirlwind that blows away all light things where it comes. Even so does the wrath of God when it comes upon the wicked. They see nothing but a calm before, and then after their greatest calm incontinently¹ the whirlwind of the wrath of God comes, and blows them away root and branches.

Let our *use* of this be to learn to make use of the time which God gives unto us, for if the Lord's wrath come after such a manner upon His enemies, it is best for all to be looking their counts² in time. Well's them that has all their counts² laid and fitted³ before the Lord come upon them to call them to account. He is a blessed soul who can learn wisdom from the foolishness of the five sleeping virgins, and so escapes the wrath of God that comes upon the wicked in the world. O, but that be a sorrowful saying which that man in the gospel says, "Soul, take thy rest, for thou hast enough laid up for many years. Fool!"—is that well said?—"this night thy soul shall be taken from thee, and then whose shall all these things be?" The very time when he is proclaiming peace and ease to himself, aye, when thou art proclaiming rest every way to thyself, it may be that even then the Lord shall send a messenger to take thy soul from you as was done to Him. And what will all thy full barns and thy renewed confidence in the world that thou lippeden⁴ so meikle⁵ unto, do to you then? Well's them who are prepared again the Lord come to

¹ Immediately.² Accounts.³ Examined.⁴ Trusted.⁵ Much.

call upon them. They fear not His call when it comes. What if the Lord shall be pleased to send a trial upon this land, and upon us of this congregation who think they shall be most able to stand out against any trial? None shall be able to stand out against the trial as these who can say in effect that there is no new event come upon them but that which formerly they looked might be, and were preparing themselves for the same; who can say there they resolved to be content, and they are content to quit husband, wife, children, life, lands, and rents, and all for their Lord and for His cause? And so let every one take pains to read over the count of their old sins—the night-drinker for his drunkenness, the blasphemer of God's name for his blasphemy, and such as were anyways art and part bringing in a new worship in the Kirk of God in this land, who consented unto the five articles of Perth, &c.,¹ and be humbled before God for them. If ye would have a lap of Christ's garment to cover you in the ill-day, if ye would be safe when the Lord comes against the sinners of Zion as an eagle, count for your old sins and be humbled for them and ye shall be safe.

Another thing that we have to mark in this comparison is, What is it that leads the eagle to come against the prey? Nothing else but the smell of the prey.

¹ In 1618, an Assembly at Perth formed of members chosen according to directions from court, passed the Five Articles, viz., kneeling at the sacrament of the supper, private administration of baptism, private communicating, observance of holidays, and confirmation. These articles were afterwards, amidst much opposition, ratified by the Parliament held at Edinburgh, August 4, 1621. They were enforced with rigour. Ministers were threatened with deposition if they would not submit to them. See Row's "History of the Kirk of Scotland," p. 318, &c.

What was it, think ye, that led Assyria to come against the people of God when they came? Was it the glory of God? No; it was nothing else but the love of the world and the things thereof, without any respect to God's glory. Our Saviour Christ says, Matt. xxiv. 28: "Where the carcases are, thither will the eagles resort." Wherever there is a breakfast for the eagles, they will be there. Even so, wherever the enemies of the Kirk of God may get their vantage against the same, they will be there. It is a plain instinct of nature that leads the eagles to the prey, and hunger is enough to them to make them seek where the prey is. And the thing that leads the enemies of the Kirk of God to come against the Kirk is nothing else but the malice they have against the Kirk and the love of blood. They have such a greedy desire after it. And the Lord's Spirit tells of Nebuchadnezzar that was drunk with the blood of His people, and that he coveted after the same. We may thank the Lord for this that we know what it is that leads on the enemies of the Kirk to come against His Kirk, that it is not the Lord nor His glory. Is the end that they have before them, think ye, the Lord or His glory? No, no! say what they will. They will say the Divine Service-book which our enemies stand for this day, as one of them imprudently has said of it, that it is a Divine book, and that there is more sound divinity therein nor¹ in all the extemporal prayers of all the ministers, both in our neighbour land and in this land also. But let them say what they will, it is nothing but themselves and the filling of their fat bellies and the pleasures of the world

¹ Than.

which they have been and are still seeking. It is a foolish thing for the enemies of the grace of God to say that man's free will it is a thing indifferent to choose or to refuse anything as it pleases, whether it be good or ill. Is the eagle's hunger a thing indifferent for the eagle to seek to have it stayed or not? No; it is natural for it to seek to have it stayed by the prey. They say there be three things that show this that the will of man is a thing indifferent. First, they say there is in man a thing which they call indifference to do good or to do ill at his pleasure. Second, they say that there is a conscience within those who are enemies to God as well as these have a conscience who are in favour with Him; but that conscience will not keep them in if so be they want grace. Third, they say they have the awe of the Lord in His Word to keep them from sin, and that will be a restraint to them. But there are other three which we may set against these, which are also in every man by nature, that sets them a work to do as ill from their conception. First, there is the habit of natural corruption, that leads them to commit sin; for natural corruption, as they say, is not like a pirate, that comes out of the harbour, and it is a thing indifferent for it to go east or to go west, and so they go where they think they may best find their prey. Nay, natural corruption is not a thing indifferent, but it leads every man captive to the law of sin. Second, there is in every man the habit of acquired corruption, beside the natural corruption which is in all by nature. He has more sin added to that sin wherein he was born, and that leads him on to commit sin. Third, is an individual induration that is come upon wicked

men, whereby God has tied them in His righteous judgment to sin and given them over to their own wicked heart, that whether they will or not by reason of that individual induration that is come upon them they maun¹ sin. Well's them that has their will guided by the grace of God, and not by another thing. See what it is that makes ye to stand for the cause of God, whether it be because there are thousands and multitudes upon Christ's side of it, and it would be hard with thee if thou dost otherways? That is a wrong motive, and it will not miss to fail thee if there come any trial. But that is a gracious freewill that resolves to stand in defence of the cause of God, and to stand by the same albeit there were no more upon Christ's side of it, that albeit all others should turn their backs upon Him, yet they will stand with Christ where He is.

What is the quarrel that this eagle has against the house of the Lord, and against His covenanted people, for it would be thought, Who should be free of straik² if so be that the Lord's people be not free of it? No; by the contrar,³ you know it is said, "Judgment must begin at the house of God;" and, Ezek. ix. 1, where those six men are sent out with slaughter weapons in their hands to slay all in the city save only those that were marked by the man with pennar⁴ inkhorn, even Christ, they are commanded to begin at the Lord's sanctuary. Whenever wrath is a dealing,⁵ professors that have gone on in a wrong course they shall be sure to get the first dint⁶ of it. And so think not with your-

¹ Must.² Stroke.³ On the contrary.⁴ Pen-cas.⁵ Being distributed.⁶ Opportunity.

selves that a profession will save you when the ill days [come]. Now there be three illis in a bare profession that will rather hasten wrath upon men nor¹ keep it off.

First. Where there is a profession of religion there is more light, nor¹ where there is not a profession; at least, there should be more light, and that makes the wrath to come sooner, and to light fiercer and hotter upon those who have it, nor¹ upon those who have no profession at all. The more profession and the greater light thou hast, if so be that thou go against the same, thou shalt get the more straiques,² and the greater wrath shall light upon you. Of all the enemies [he] that is an house enemy, ye know he is the worst enemy. A minister that goes with a gown upon him, and bears a Bible about with him, if so be that he be false, he is the worst enemy that the Kirk of Christ has. You know who it was that sold Christ our Lord. Even Judas who was one of His disciples, and when he was betraying Him he seemed to be very kind to Him, for even then he would kiss Him, and our Lord says to him, "Friend, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" and it is very ordinary to be so. The worst enemies that the Kirk of Christ has in our neighbour kingdom are those that are called the heads of the Kirk, and the reverend fathers in God, Canterbury,³ and those of that kind. Those are the greatest enemies that Christ and our Father and His have, and it is they who betray Him and His cause.

Another ill that comes of a profession is; ye know the

¹ Than.

^{*} Strokes.

³ Laud was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 to 1641.

Spirit of God in His word uses to reckon from a profession; Amos iii. 2: "You only have I known of all the families in the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities;" "I made you My chosen people beyond all others, and therefore I will not let you gang¹ unpunished." The Lord cannot endure a people who have a profession of religion to sin against Him as others do. A lord or a laird dow² not endure a thistle³ to be in his garden, but gars⁴ pluck it up by the roots, and cast it over the dike. He cares not to let many thistles stand in the mountain, but for a thistle³ in his garden he dow² not endure that. Those who give out themselves to be the Lord's beloved people, and yet are barren of any good fruits, and⁵ there be a sore judgment in the world it shall light upon such.

A third ill that comes of a profession is; we trow⁶ that a profession makes black sins to become white sins. No; it is not so. David's adultery is adultery as well as the adultery of the greatest reprobate that is; albeit his adultery be tane⁷ away, and theirs is to be kept to the fore⁸ against them, yet in themselves they are one. The enemies of the grace of God they put a calumny upon us in this, when they say that we say, "God hates not the sin of the elect." No; we say, and affirm it, that the Lord He hates their sin; but withal, He hates not their persons but loves them, and for temporal judgments, albeit they miss spiritual and eternal judgments, they shall not miss them who are guilty of any sin or goes against the Lord's covenant,

¹ Go.² Can.³ Thistle.⁴ Causes it to be plucked, &c.⁵ If.⁶ Believe.⁷ Taken.⁸ Still remaining.

or seem to be for it, and are not so in heart. Though they were never so dear to God, even as dear as Coniah, as it is said, Jer. xxii. 24 : " As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon My right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence ; and I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life," &c. And so of all the sore judgments that come upon any people, it shall come upon them who profess the Lord and religion, and are not an honour to their profession. I am sure this is Scotland's note. Some it may be will be ready to say, " I am sure the Lord will defend me, seeing I am a covenanter, and it is God's covenant." No ; but if there be a waled¹ straik² for any, if thou be not a heart-covenanter, it shall light upon you. The Lord has a judgment prepared for you, albeit thou shouldst never go unto the fields because thou hast no more but a name and a profession thereof. Woe's them that know no more of religion but only the bare name of it !

The prophet goes on in the next verse to tell what a people the people of Israel were, and what they shall do under their trouble. Israel shall say unto me, " My God, we know Thee ; " " Thou art our God, and we know it that Thou art our God." This is an objection to what has been said before ; shall Assyria come against the Kirk of God as an eagle ? No ; it may not be so, for we will tell Him that He is our God, and we are His people, and therefore we will cry unto Him in our distress and trouble. There are three things contained in this prayer. First, that Israel in their distress they will

¹ Choseu.² Stroke.

cry. Second, that in their distress they will cry, "My God." Third, they will cry, "My God, we know Thee."

First: That they will cry to God under their distress and trouble; it teaches us this far that hypocrites when they are under the hand of God they are all very holy folks then. In Judges x. 10, and in divers other parts, it is said of the predecessors of thir¹ same people, in their distress they cried unto the Lord, and acknowledged they had sinned against Him; Jer. ii. 27, in prosperity people turned their back upon God, "and not their face; but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us." This is an ordinary way that we use when we can do no better, then we cry unto the Lord for help and deliverance; Psa. lxxviii. 34: "When he slew them, they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer." When the vengeance of God was lying sore and heavy upon them, they cried unto the Lord, "Lord, save us." When anything ailes hypocrites they will cry fast to Christ then. O! but there be many who will be content to winter Christ that cannot be content to summer Him also. When worldly men see the hand of God to be upon them; O! but they will seem to be holy and to be devout then. But whenever the hand of God is tane² off them again, incontinent³ they return unto their old ways. This should make us to examine bed holiness, and holiness that comes by reason of crosses very well. For there are many that in their sickness,

¹ This.

² Taken.

³ Immediately.

and when they are under the hand of God any way, they will cry fast for the minister then, and seem to be sorry for their former ill-spent time, and will promise very fair if God will spare them then they shall be better servants to Him in all time coming; and yet when time is granted to them they will return after that to be as ill every way as ever they were before. There are three things that we would ¹ try of our holiness in such a case. First: We would ¹ try whether it be our own holiness and ease, or if it be God Himself that makes us to cry to Him, and to humble ourselves. Well's that soul that humbles itself under the mighty hand of God, and is brought home to himself by its troubles. Second: In trouble compare thir ² two together, whether you think it better to be guilty, or if ye think it best to be miserable; if you had rather choose misery before you choose guiltiness; and if ye be more for sin committed than ye are for the misery that come upon you because of sin. There are three things that we look not to in our afflictions. First: For the present our punishment or the afflictions of any, they are not grace. Affliction may well restrain the act of pride for the present, but it cannot restrain the habit thereof. As in Ahab and in Cain when punishment was upon them, the act of pride it was restrained indeed, but the habit thereof was not restrained. Second: We would consider that all the crosses in the world they will do no good unto any, if so be they be not blessed unto us by the cross of Christ. No; they will rather make us worse if He bless them not. The Lord He complains of His people, Amos viii., that

¹ Should.

² These.

the more He struck and plagued them the more they ran away from Him. Third: We would¹ remember that affliction of itself is not grace at all, albeit it be a means whereby the Lord works grace in the hearts of His own children, and makes them pliable for it. Fire, ye know, changes not the nature of metals, to make one metal of another; it may well make them hot and soft, yet for all that it cannot make iron gold. Even so affliction cannot make the devil's iron to become God's gold; it may well make it some softer. And so we had need to try whether our afflictions they be blessed of God or not; and we had need to try our holiness then. There are many who make a form to pray to God now, who have their son in the camp, or their husband, that, it may be, never made an errand to pray to God before, and yet for all that has a crooked heart within them. It is not an easy thing to come rightly to Christ. It is no marvel, nor² the enemies of God's grace say it is an easy thing to come to Christ and to believe, because they know nothing of it; but it is not easier than that which is spoken of, John xii. 32: "When I am lifted up, I shall draw all men unto Me." It is a pull of God's arm that maun³ do our turn to draw us to Him, and not all the afflictions and calamities in the world. Oh, that the Lord will be pleased to bless our public trials in this land, and that He would let all see that it is not good bourding⁴ with the Lord now at this time, when the Lord is taking away the husband from the wife, the father from the children, the child from the parents, the friend from the friends, the minister from the flock, &c. It is time for us to

¹ Should.² Than.³ Must.⁴ Jesting, mocking at.

lift up ourselves in prayer to God, now beseeching Him that He would make His hand to work more and more for us. Well is the soul that comes under the hand of God. Hos. v. 15 it is said, "In their affliction they will seek Me early." Well's that soul that seeks home to God by its afflictions. There is a blessed word spoken (Hos. ii. 6), when the Kirk is running away from God and there is a hedge of thorns set in her way that she cannot win away from Him; when she is following her other lovers and cannot overtake them, she says, "I will go and return to my first love, for then it was better with me nor¹ now." Well waured² trouble and affliction that come upon any soul when it comes home to the Lord, and all the dross thereof is tane³ away, and when a people are brought home, as it is spoken (Jer. 1. 5) of Israel and Judah. "Come, and let us join ourselves in a perpetual covenant with the Lord, never to be forgotten." That is a blessed trouble for evermore that leads us home nearer to our Lord. Now the Lord Himself, who is able to do this unto us, draw us nearer unto Himself by all the crosses and afflictions that come upon us. And to this Lord who can do this for us, to the Son of God, Christ Jesus, to His Father and our Father, and the Spirit of grace, be everlasting praise and glory.—Amen.

¹ Than.

² Expended.

³ Taken.