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A

SERMON,

PREACHED JANUARY 3d, 1804,

AT

THE FUNERAL

OF

THE REV. CHARLES BACKUS, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN

SOMERS,

Who departed this life December 30th, 1803.

BY NATHAN STRONG,

PASTOR OF THE NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN HARTFORD.



HARTFORD,

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1804.





A

FUNERAL SERMON.

PSALM XXIII. 4.

*YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE
SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL : FOR
THOU ART WITH ME ; THY ROD AND THY STAFF
THEY COMFORT ME.*

THE death of the body, when justly viewed, is an evil which human nature will always dread, unless raised above its terrors by the grace and promises of the gospel. In their thoughtless hours, men may appear indifferent to it ; and under the delusion of unbelief and while the change is thought to be at a distance, they may imagine it will not be a terrifying thing to die ; but it cannot appear thus to those, who think considerately what death is, and what its consequences may probably be. Hence we find by experience, that the known approach of death makes men serious and anxious ; and they are calm or fearful according to their expectations for futurity.

There are some instances, in which they appear to be judicially given up to a stupid state, which commonly happens in such as have fallen into deep impiety against the clearest light and the best means ; but

these are not common. The usual event is, that such as have been so thoughtless and dissipated as not to reflect at all, are alarmed, and in a panic leave the world; such as have resorted to infidelity to quiet their fears are confounded, and die under a dreadful uncertainty; while it is the Christian alone, can say, "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? Though I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou, my Redeemer, art with me."

Altho' men suppose themselves out of immediate danger, they are for a moment made solemn by death coming near them, and their ears are opened to hear serious truth. This is because all know they must die, and the questions of their own preparation and the consequences of dying, are excited. For this reason we are told, "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart."

The truth of what I remark is seen in the faces of this assembly. The remains of a beloved and a venerable friend, altho' we have no reason to be anxious concerning the state into which he hath passed, remind us that we must die, and naturally suggest the question, whether we are prepared? It is wise to indulge the inquiry, for we shall very soon be called to make the trial; and it would be happy if his death might be the means of quickening us all, and especially this people to whom he hath so long and faithfully ministered in the word of God.

In the holy scriptures, the shortness of life and our daily exposedness to death are often urged, as reasons for being watchful, prayerful and diligent in the duties of faith and a holy life. In the providence of God, the shadow of death is made without order, and the time of our departure is hidden from us, for the same reasons. It is thus appointed, that we might every day think of death, and do something to prepare. Men have tried every way to secure themselves, but death

still reigns ; also they have tried every means to fortify themselves against its fears, but in all of them have failed, unless their hopes were founded on the sovereign and sanctifying grace of God in a Redeemer.

Christians are the only persons, who can look calmly on those natural evils which take place under the divine government. They only can bear the troubles of life and the world with a true fortitude ; they only can die in hope, and commit their souls to God, in the assurance of faith that they shall be accepted.

It is possible, in some instances, that sinners may rush on death, in a rage against the providence of God, or through the black forebodings of their own guilty consciences, in despair of ever being in a better state. This is the palsy of sin, and it ought to give us a dreadful idea of human depravity and of the sinful heart when it is unrestrained. But it is the Christian alone, who can die rationally and submissively, and with joyful hope commit himself into the hands of a holy and faithful Creator.

The whole of the Psalm, from which my text is taken, describes that Christian confidence in the gracious care of God, which supports his people under present troubles, and assists them to sleep quietly in Jesus, in hope of a resurrection to immortal life. The language of the Psalm indicates a sweet serenity of soul, and a sense of the constant safety and fulness there is in God for his people. Altho' it is in the style of pastoral composition, it is designed to communicate sentiments purely spiritual. Altho' it seems to be wholly expressive of joy, it is not a joy in the world ; but in God, in his government, and in the whole scheme of his counsel and grace, according to which he is governing the world and appointing to every one of his children their state, by means, which often in a worldly sense are troublous, as well as by others which are prosperous. —The writer knew that the world is filled with troubles ; he doubtless felt them himself, and knew that the saints must always feel trouble from their own hearts ; from their enemies, and those who hate

the cause of God ; from the frail nature of things here ; and from the special providences of their Heavenly Father, who moved by his covenant faithfulness “ chastiseth those whom he loveth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Still, in the triumph of a Christian hope, he began the Psalm, “ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Altho’ I am in a world of trouble, the Lord is my preserver. As a shepherd taketh care of the weakest in his flock, so the Lord will bear me in the arms of his providence, and cause all things to work together for my spiritual and eternal good. Altho’ I am in a world of sin, where the passions of men produce constant commotion and warfare, thro’ which the wicked punish themselves and devour one another ; the Lord, by his Spirit, will quiet my soul as by the side of still waters. I shall be safe in the midst of a troubled world ; I shall be satisfied by sweet and silent communion with God, and fed by the influences of his Spirit. Altho’ my unworthiness is great, still I can trust the covenant of his grace, that for his own name’s sake and to display the treasures of his love, he will restore my soul from all iniquity, and lead me in the paths of everlasting righteousness.

These are truths, which enable Christians to bear with fortitude the evils of the world, and quicken them in the discharge of their duty. While, on one side, they see the universal sin of man, pain and the disappointment of human desires, the wrath of man with all its bitter fruits and the just desert of eternal death ; on the other, they behold by faith an infinite God on the throne ; almighty power to execute the counsels of infinite wisdom ; a holy providence directing every event through eternity past and to come ; unchanging rectitude in the divine nature and providence ; and treasures of love and wisdom which can never be exhausted. While they see a law, which is holy and just and places all sinners under a sentence of

death ; they also behold a gospel of grace, thro' which the Lord becomes gloriously just and still the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Christ. They only need a holy heart to make them rejoice in the scheme of divine wisdom and grace.

The saints of God, committing themselves to his care by faith, and by faith receiving an all-sufficient Saviour, feel such a union to his kingdom in all its interests, and such an assurance of divine power and grace ordering the whole in the best manner, that they can rejoice in a present communion with the Lord, and in hope of glory to come. This sense of safety and of holy enjoyment, is what the Psalmist meant by being made to lie down in green pastures and being led by the side of still waters.—These are indeed the waters of life to comfort thirsty souls, which proceed forth from the throne of God and the Lamb, of which some little rills flow by the tabernacle of every Christian here on earth. While the world is tumultuous, they behold safety in God and his gracious providence ; while the passions of men are painfully agitated, they are at peace in the Lord.

This view of God, which is given by faith in his being and government, and in the purposes of his grace thro' Jesus Christ, quickens his children in duty, supports them under earthly troubles, enables them to make the best use of trials for the divine glory and their own sanctification, and makes all their hours times of joy, because the Lord reigns. This is a joy which may be felt in the midst of tears, and is known only to the faithful ; for the secret comforts of the Lord are with those who fear him.—They have a support under afflictions, a security in times of public destruction, and danger to the church, a quickening in duty, and a joy of hope from the promises of God, which can be attained only by Christian love and faith.

Among other blessed effects of a gracious confidence in God, it is not a small one, that thereby the fear of death is removed. “ Yea, tho' I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil :

for thou art with me." If a Christian's faith furnishes the best enjoyments to the mind, in every situation of life; if it be the only effectual support under unavoidable afflictions; if it gives fortitude and joy in death, the change which naturally fills man with terror; it is certainly better than all which the world can bestow on those who neglect religion: but when we look still further, even beyond the grave and into eternity, and find, that Christian faith and piety shall receive an incorruptible crown and a weight of glory, their value must be acknowledged inestimable.

That our reflections may be pertinent to the affecting occasion, on which we are convened, let us inquire, how the fear of death is removed from the people of God; and what are the nature and grounds of their comfort in that solemn hour.

And here, I previously observe, that death, considered merely as the decay and dissolution of the body, must be as painful to the people of God as to others. Infinite wisdom hath not seen fit to remove this part of the curse from any of the children of men; not even from the redeemed. In the death of the body, Christians must follow their Saviour, and it is often a painful scene; but the greater the pain, if it be borne with patience and submission, the higher evidence it becomes of the efficacy of religion and its comforts. The infinite wisdom of God sees fit, that thro' these pains the faith and the patience of his children should be matur'd, and evidence be thus given, to those who survive, of their unshaken trust in God; and also of the power of his grace to uphold them in a distressing scene.

Further, it must, in itself, be a painful thing to the people of God, to have the sweet and dear connexions of life broken. Friendship and the natural affections are not necessarily and in their nature sinful, but only so from excess, and when they make us unsubmitive to the providence of God. But tho' this is a grief, which the pious must expect to feel; in the grace of God there is a sufficient support, and it shows the power of religion, as well as the comfort there is be-

holding and serving God, that it can make them cheerfully bid adieu to all that is dear in the world. These evils, which are necessary to dying Christians as well as to others, if met with submission and a trust in God, will not make them unhappy; which shews that his grace is very efficacious.

But the inquiry returns, what are the nature and grounds of that comfort, which can render the people of God patient under the pains of death, and enable them to say, it is far better to depart, than to remain here?

1. I answer generally, the fear of death is removed, and they are comforted, because God is with them.

“ Though I walk thro’ the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” The general nature of the covenant of grace and all the promises warrant Christians, if they trust in their Redeemer, to expect that divine grace will be granted them according to their day and situation. He who loved them unto the end, and who knows by his own experience what it is to die, will give them such support as they need. Certainly the children of God, who experience in their lives so much of his care and grace, and who have so many glorious promises, need not fear that he will forsake them in death. “ Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” To the church, of which every true Christian is a member, the Lord saith, “ When thou passeth thro’ the waters, I will be with thee; and thro’ the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest thro’ the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”—“ I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem 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, to whom their death is precious, can make them sensible of his presence, by showing them his glory and his mediatorial all-sufficiency;—by strengthening their love into a flame of desire, that they may come nearer to him, even into his presence;—by increasing their

faith so as to depend on his promises, and cast themselves wholly into his protecting arms. To be sensible that an Almighty Redeemer is present, will give strength for all things, even to a dying worm of the dust. And altho' the Christian feels, that in himself he is a guilty sinner, and deserves to be left in misery; still thro' the light of God's reconciled countenance, he believes, feels and knows that such sinners may trust in sovereign grace.

When infinite wisdom, power and grace shine on the mind, all created things become little;—all dangers vanish, in comparison with infinite love;—and all changes, even that of death, are lost in the sight of divine glory. Thus efficacious is a view of the divine presence to strengthen the frail creature and strip death of its terrors.

2dly. The fear of death is removed from the people of God, by seeing that the perfect righteousness of Christ is sufficient for their justification.

“The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.” To the unbelieving death is a fearful change, not merely as a scene of pain, but thro' conscious guilt, which makes them dread the divine presence. They are afraid of a holy judge; they have no righteousness, but much sin and guilt in their whole nature and lives, and therefore fear the sentence of retribution. They have no Saviour and intercessor, whose righteousness they can plead, when called to their great account. But the Christian sees that the righteousness of Christ is full and sufficient for the chief of sinners, and he places his humble reliance on this alone.—When he feels the sanctifying power of God, enabling him to delight in the character and offices of Christ as mediator; and when he commits himself to this grace, he can rely on the promise of acceptance, and hope in sovereign mercy. A sense of his own unworthiness is no bar in the way of his rejoicing in hope; for where sin hath abounded grace much more abounds to the praise of redeeming wisdom and goodness, towards all who are obedient in Christ Jesus.

3dly. The people of God are supported in death, thro' the promise and expectation, that by this change they shall be delivered from sin.

In this world sanctification is but in part, and those, who have made the best proficiency in the Christian temper, do still feel great remains of a corrupt nature. When they would do good, evil is often present with them; and they find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin. When temptations attack them, there is a remaining principle of sin, the un sanctified remains of a heart originally evil, which will consent to transgress, unless prevented by the grace of God, thro' their own prayer and watchfulness. Experience shows that all have some sins which easily beset them. This caused the Apostle to lament, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And he could find no hope of a conquest, but by the power of God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Neither could this conquest be expected until death, which made the same Apostle say, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

All the people of God experience feelings and desires of a similar nature. The remainder of sin is their burden; they need the most painful watchfulness to resist temptation and to keep their own hearts; and they find great imperfection in their best performed duties, and clearest exercises of faith and love. They long to be clothed upon with the house from above, and to find a heavenly purity in their whole temper, and a heavenly freedom in their praise. The deliverance from sin which is expected, is one principal thing which makes heaven appear so desirable to the saints on earth; and a prospect of this, thro' the promise of

God, sweetens even their dying bed. They can bear much pain of body, as a means of being delivered from the burden, which hath lain heaviest on their hearts; they can calmly take a last view of the whole scene here below, if they may thereby bid farewell to sin; knowing that they are in the hands of a merciful God, who keepeth all his covenant, they can boldly enter a new and untried state, if they may therein find a holy perfection; and thus they say, O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!

4thly. The fear of death is removed, and Christians are comforted in it, by the near prospect of more clearly beholding and enjoying the glory of God.

A sight of God's glory is the blessedness of his saints. This is the joy of heaven, and it is the desire of all his saints on earth. When they can see most of God in his works, whether of nature, providence or grace, they are the most emptied and humble in themselves; but most triumphant and joyful in him. New views of divine glory, and an inward strength of love are accompanying operations of the mind, and both may be considered as sources of blessedness. We have reason to suppose that the degree of love to God and his kingdom, in the heavenly life, cannot be conceived by us in this present state; also, that the displays of his glory are such as men on earth could not behold and live. But a similar desire of seeing the glory of God is felt by his people here. This is the comfort of Christians; makes them patient in worldly tribulation; and strengthens them in all their duties. It was the request of Moses to the Lord, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory;" and the disciples said to Christ, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Heaven is described to be a state and a life of vision, to which the brightest views of the perfection and glory of God, which Christians have by faith on earth, are as comparative darkness.—"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see thro' a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am

known."—" And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." In that eternal life every object and every event, will be a medium for reflecting this light of the glory of the Lord on the minds of his people.—An ardent desire of beholding this glory takes away fear, and comforts the Christian in the near prospect of his departure. While the body is sinking down to the dust, a love of God and the Redeemer serves as wings by which the soul rises that it may join the general assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect.

And now, my brethren, having seen what the supports and comforts of religion are, shall we wonder that death, which is the natural terror of men, hath to dying Christians lost its fearfulness? When we consider the reason, and that it is because God is with them, shall we think it strange that they say, "Yea, tho' I pass thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil? Divine strength and the light of God's countenance will render death easy as any other scene thro' which men must pass.

But let us remember, that being destitute of religion, it will be a fearful thing to die. Impiety and unbelief may boast of their folly, they may go thro' life in madness; but they cannot boast in death. In death they must tremble and sink to despair.

Ye thoughtless people, for doubtless in such an assembly there must be some of this character, who are making yourselves easy in a life of impenitence and in pursuing the cares and pleasures of the world; after having heard what it is which gives Christians their triumph, how can you be quiet in your state? Death is a warfare from which there is no discharge, and in its shadow there is no order. Who will next be taken must always to men be a thing unknown, until revealed by the event.

Infinite grace offers salvation to all; but it secures a happy end only to the penitent and believing, and to

such as desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus. Even infinite grace and love will not save an impenitent sinner. And is it not the highest folly in the wicked to think themselves safe, because grace is offered on terms which they are resolved to refuse? or to imagine they shall find support in death, because there is a triumph to Christians, whose character, temper and lives are so different from their own? All that hath been said to shew the grounds and nature of the Christian's comfort in death proves, that those who have not an interest in Christ will be comfortless. If out of Christ, they have no reason to suppose that the supporting rod and staff of God will be present with them. If they have not believed in Christ with the heart, they cannot be made safe by the sufficiency of his righteousness. Being unholy, it will be no support to them to think of perfection and conformity to God; or to meditate on heaven as a place of infinite purity. With their disposition they cannot see the beauty of the Lord's holiness; and the very sight of his presence, instead of comforting will afflict them; so that all the reasons which sweetly draw the Christian forward to his eternal rest will make the sinner afraid to die. Our subject shews the importance of immediate preparation, and that this consists in nothing short of repentance towards God, and such faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as issues in a holy life.

How wonderful is that grace of God we have been considering, which can clothe weak and sinful minds with strength, calmly to leave all things here below, and enter eternity with humble and ardent desire to come into the presence of God! It must be all-sufficient grace, which can produce such effects, perfecting strength out of weakness, and raising heavenly desires in minds which are naturally alienated from God and all that is holy.

My Christian Brethren, While this subject teaches us that our only strength is in the presence and grace of Christ; while it sets before us the only temper with which we can die in peace, it ought also to humble us,

Are not many of us, who have a hope of being the Redeemer's friends, frequently in bondage thro' fear of death? Whence can this come? Only from ourselves and from the weakness of our faith and love. We are not straitened in divine mercy, nor in the provision the gospel makes to assist us in all the conditions thro' which we must pass, nor in a knowledge of the means to be used to obtain this assistance, nor in the sufficiency of our divine Lord; but in ourselves. By the weakness of our graces we are straitened and often made to fear, altho', if sincere as we profess, an incorruptible inheritance is held out before us, as the end of our travel. If we had a greater desire to be holy, we should have less fear of that change which introduces the people of God to endless perfection. If we had less love of the creatures, we should find little to attach us to this perishing world. If we had more love of God and Christ, it would excite a desire to come near him, even to his seat; that we might be with our Saviour, and behold the glory which the Father hath given him. If our faith was increased, committing our souls to the divine care, we could quietly sleep in Jesus. But if our graces remain weak we must expect all our life time to be in bondage thro' fear of death. Those fears of death, which Christians sometimes feel, should excite their watchfulness and prayer; watchfulness against the world, lest it entice their hearts; and prayer for grace, that they may grow in the divine nature, and be delivered from that slavish apprehension, which not only makes them unhappy, but dishonors Christ and their own religious profession.

My brethren, the time is short. The providence of God, which frequently speaks, is now giving us a solemn and affecting call. There lie the remains of a dear, departed friend, whom we must soon follow. Doubtless we feel the stroke of providence, and let us endeavor so to feel, that we may improve it wisely.

Justice to the cause of religion and to the power of divine grace, require that I should say something to you of the character, life and death of our deceased brother.

Doctor BACKUS was born of reputable and Christian parents in that part of Norwich now called Franklin, on Nov. 5th, 1749. By the wise and righteous providence of God, he was left an orphan in his childhood, when his education fell under the direction of pious relations. Discovering an early love of science, altho' his patrimony was not fully competent for the purpose, his friends determined to assist him in obtaining a liberal education. He was graduated at Yale College in the year 1769, and in the year 1801 Williams College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. His theological education was under the Rev. Doctor Hart of Preston, and he became a licentiate for preaching the gospel in June 1773. On the second Sabbath after he commenced a preacher of the gospel he ministered to this people. He received the pastoral charge of this church, by ordination, on the 10th of August 1774. He was twice elected Professor of Divinity; first, in the college at Dartmouth, and afterwards at Yale College, both which elections he declined accepting. The first attack of that disease, which disabled him for public labor and hath terminated in his death, was on August 31st, 1801. He departed this life on December 30th, 1803, after a faithful ministry of more than 29 years.

In college he made a distinguishing proficiency in natural science, and his life was moral and amiable. His understanding, which was naturally clear and distinguishing, and his judgment, which was correct, were improved by a general acquaintance with literary subjects and the best authors.

In the last part of his collegiate life, his mind was impressed with a serious and deep conviction of the sin of his nature. These impressions, after a variety of exercises, terminated in a comfortable Christian hope. In his private writings, he speaks of a season in May 1770, in which the natural obstinacy of his heart was humbled, and he was wonderfully enlightened in a knowledge of the glory of God and of a precious Redeemer; and from this time he maintained a Christian hope.

As a Christian he was exemplary and humble. As a minister he was faithful and indefatigable in his pastoral services, being filled with a love of the souls of his people. Under his ministry, which we hope God hath blessed for the salvation of many, there have been four seasons of the special revival of religion. He was evangelical in all his instructions and his preaching was drawn from the oracles of truth, not according to the wisdom of man, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. This people can witness, how plainly he rebuked sin; how clearly he taught the doctrines of faith in Christ and a holy life, and enforced them by his own example.

As a theologian he was eminent. His retired situation, which was favorable to serious studies, and his eminence as an instructor drew around him many who were designed for the Christian ministry. Nearly fifty have been members of his theological school, the greater part of whom are now pastors in the churches. The Lord, in whose service his life hath been spent, graciously remembered him to the end. In his last illness, which was long, he had much of the divine presence, until he departed and as we confidently believe slept in Jesus.—The last words which he was heard to whisper, were “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.*”

We, who are pastors in the churches, are sensible that a light is extinguished in our Zion; but we rest in assured hope, that he who hath removed our brother, will raise up others to fill his place. The residue of the Spirit is with the Lord and the cause is his own; may he prepare many to minister before him, in this day, when the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers few.

We mourn with this people; and with the afflicted widow. You, madam, are called into fresh affliction, under which we pray you may have much of the divine presence. The loss of an only child* in the be-

* Mr. Jabez Backus, who died March 16th, 1794, in the 17th year of his age, and while a member of Yale College.

ginning of his academic course, who promised fair for usefulness, was a singular trial; but he who gave had a right to take away, and we trust you have felt Christian peace in submission to his holy providence. Altho' by this new bereavement you are placed alone, without companion or child, the Lord can abundantly supply the place of these earthly comforts. We beseech you to remember that our Heavenly Father is wise and good; that it is often best for us to be afflicted; and that we have a promise, if his hand be seen and adored, that present afflictions shall work out for us the peaceable fruits of righteousness.—The only comfort, which mourners in your situation can have, must be from religion; therefore, cast your burdens on the Lord. Live near to God and abide in Christ, and he who is the widow's God will preserve you in affliction, and enable you by his presence to pass thro' the valley of the shadow of death without fear.

We commend all the bereaved friends to the grace of God, and especially one present with us,* who is in the Christian ministry, to whom the deceased was as father. May the spirit of Elijah rest on Elisha.

There is a wide breach made in this church and congregation. My brethren, your deceased pastor hath been a great blessing to you and to your children. Many will remember the broken state in which he found you, and how God blessed him as the instrument of reconciling you in the spirit of love, and building this church in the order of the gospel. Truly he hath been a father to this people. His ministry hath been greatly blessed, and you will not fully estimate your loss until taught by future experience. Be thankful to God that he hath so long continued a shining light in this candlestick; and be humble that it is now extinguished. Remember, and continue to believe the doctrines he taught you: the sinful state of human nature; that salvation is only thro' the merits of Christ, and by the sovereign mercy of God; the necessity of

* Rev. Azel Backus of Bethlehem.

the new birth ; the office of the Holy Spirit in convincing sinners and sanctifying the children of God ; the nature of Christian holiness, and the necessity of good works. Remember how he taught you to distinguish between Christian love and that fanatical zeal, which is not according to knowledge, and follow him wherein he followed Christ.

My Brethren, We beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocations wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And be much in prayer, that the Lord would give you another pastor after his own heart, and build you up in faith unto eternal life.—May we all, both ministers and people, remember that the time is short, and that we must soon give an account and be rewarded according to the things done in the body.—May the grace of God be on all this assembly.—AMEN.

24 JUL 68

