

corner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And, being the very law of eternal holiness, which Jesus by His atoning death "magnified and made honorable," are you not to feel unceasingly its claims on your obedience; and are you not to strive and to pray that you may have the decalogue written on your heart, and transcribed through every "jot and tittle" of it into your life?

But after these views of moral obligation, the Catechism reminds you most appropriately of man's being unable perfectly in this life to keep the commandments; and then setting forth the heinousness and wretched effects of sin, it discloses, at the same time, the way of escape from deserved wrath through the Lord Jesus Christ, unto whom sinners are instantly, with faith and repentance, to betake themselves. And finally, there is presented to you an exposition of the means of grace—the Word, the Sacraments, and Prayer—and these all brought out with simplicity and practical force, to be made effectual, by the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of believers.

Now, these, and along with them, other particulars of the Gospel system, have their due places given them in the precious "form of sound words," concisely yet explicitly offered, and finely arranged, till question after question, growing naturally out of one another, lead you at the close to receive a manual of divine lessons, complete for time and for eternity.

Let me add, in conclusion, that the present occasion has been eagerly seized by me for still pressing on your affectionate regards and never ceasing acceptance, her "form of sound words," her Confession and Catechisms, ratified still for use and salutary guidance; and, in the possessing of which, our Church is worth upholding and extending. Alas! no doubt, voices are now heard around us, muttering, directly or through covert insinuations, the notes of dissatisfaction and even of contempt over her standards; and the notes likewise, of certain small criticisms upon their venerable compilers, to the undervaluing of the mental character and acquisitions of the men who drew them up. These matters, forsooth, are now antiquated! They have gotten the quality of trammels! They must be cut asunder, no more to stop the progress of liberal thinking!

Such are doleful signs of our times: and therefore let me beseech you to draw closer and closer into fellowship for "the support of evangelical truth;" and above all, for prayer to the God of Zion, imploring Him that He may arise and have mercy; that He may keep safe and entire the privileges which have been handed down to us; and that He may honour us by rendering us instrumental for conveying to those who will succeed us "the form of sound words" which we have received,—*"Hold fast the form of sound words."*

I beseech you, "hold it fast in faith;" clinging to the truths of the Gospel testified by it, with conviction of their being the doctrines of your salvation, exercising your mind and heart on them, and fulfilling daily their practical designs.

I beseech you, "hold it fast in love;" in love to Christ Jesus, who is the grand object of its testimony, and whose glory it is intended to manifest; and, "in love" for the brethren, affectionately desirous of bringing all around you to seek the Saviour and to partake of salvation.

I beseech you, "hold it fast" in the purpose and habit of a godly life, seeking and yielding to the Spirit of grace, that He may subject you entirely unto "the Lord who is your righteousness, and your strength."

I beseech you "hold it fast" in the constant exercises of prayer and watchfulness, so that Christ's all-sufficiency may become your safeguard against error and sinful defection; and that thereby fortified against surprises from evil temptations, you may be made "more than conquerors through Christ that hath loved you."

Yes! Dear friends! "Hold fast this form of sound words." Parents! keep it, and use it diligently and prayerfully in your households. Teachers! keep it, and use it diligently and prayerfully in your seminaries. Precious youth of the congregation! my annual catechizing of whom delights me to know well of your having it, keep it in your memories, and seek to have imprinted on your hearts, the truths of the Gospel so fully and simply taught in it.

I commit you all "unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy." Amen.

—o— Last Words.

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BY NANCY A. W. PRIEST.
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She said: "Why should we start and shrink!

Why tall your tears in showers,
Heaven's land lies nearer than we think
Unto this world of ours.

So very near that I can hear
Its rivers softly flowing.
And feel its blessed atmosphere
Upon my forehead blowing.

"When April danced upon the lea,
With violets on her bosom,
I said, 'I shall not live to see
The May-time violets blossom.'
But God's own kind and loving way
'Tis time alone discloses;
I thought ere May to pass away,
But here I clasp June's roses.

"So gently ebbs my life away,
I marvel you can sorrow.
The eyes that oped on earth to-day
Shall ope in heaven to-morrow.
For at the going of the night
I heard a spirit warning,
'Look, yonder breaks the rosy light
Of your last earthly morning.'