

of this rapid and overwhelming conviction, he preached to his comrades.

"The truths of guilt, death, eternity, and the judgment to come, were never proclaimed in gloomier aspect, for there was no mixture of grace with them. Yet he frequently afterwards declared, that if ever in his life he preached by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was then. The whole subject was revealed before him—the necessity of repentance, the threatened perdition of the soul, the terrors of the second death; and he preached to his companions, guilty, reprobate, and dying, as himself reprobate and dying. His terror and fire increased as he went on, and the sympathetic gloom of his audience deepened the convictions of his own soul; the sentences fell from his lips with surmounting and burning majesty, and such point, pungency and power of language, that, as he afterwards related, it seemed to him as if his own hair would stand erect with terror at their awfulness. It was as a blast from the lake burning with fire and brimstone. Yet no man interrupted him; for all felt and saw, from the solemnity of his manner, what an overwhelming impression there was upon him; and though their astonishment depended into angry and awful gloom, beneath the horrid glare of his address, yet they sat spell-bound, listening, and gazing at him; and when he descended from the table, a profound silence reigned in the circle, and not one word concerning the wager was uttered. Thorpe instantly withdrew from the company, without uttering a word; and it is needless to say, never returned to that society. But after a season of the deepest distress and conflict passed into the full light of the Gospel, and at length became a most successful preacher of its grace."

THE TIDE OF GRACE.

BY THE REV. THOMAS GUTHRIE, D. D.

Let me now urge on you the advantage and duty of improving to the utmost every season of heavenly visitation. There are seasons more favorable and full of grace than others. In this there is nothing surprising, but much that is in harmony with the common dispensations of Providence. Does not the success of the farmer, seaman, merchant—of men in many other circumstances—chiefly depend on their seizing opportunities which come and go like showers—which flow and ebb like the tides of ocean? The sea is not always full. Twice a day she deserts her shores, and leaves the vessels high and dry upon the beach; so that they who would sail must wait and watch, and take the tide; and larger ships can only get afloat, or, if afloat, get across the bar and into the harbor, when, through a favorable conjunction of celestial influences, the sea swells in stream or spring-tides beyond her common bounds. The seaman has his spring tides; the husbandman has his spring-time; and those showers, and soft winds, and sunny hours, on the prompt and diligent improvement of which the state of the barn and barn yards depends. If the season of heavenly visitation be improved, who can tell but it may be with you as with one well known to us? She was a fair enough professor, yet had been living a careless, godless, Christless life. She awoke one morning, and most strange and unaccountable, her waking feeling was a strong desire to pray. She wondered. It was early dawn, and what more natural than that she should say, there is time enough—meanwhile 'a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep?' As she was sinking

back again into unconsciousness, suddenly, with the brightness and power of lightning, a thought flashed into her mind, filling her with alarm—this desire may have come from God; this may be the hour of my destiny, this the tide of salvation, which, if neglected, may never return. She rose, and flung herself on her knees. The chamber was changed into a Peniel; and when the morning sun looked in at her window, he found her wrestling with God in prayer; and, like one from a sepulchre, she came forth that day at the call of Jesus, to follow Him henceforth, and in her future life to walk this world with God.

DESPAIR OF FRANCIS SPIERA.

Rev. Dr. Schaff is publishing in the German Reformed *Messenger*, a history of the celebrated Francis Spiera. The terrible despair and anticipated doom of the wretched man is thus described in one of the chapters:

'Daily, many learned men of different nations visited him; and often from thirty to forty curious ones stayed around his bed. To every proffered ground of comfort, he would oppose the lamentation,

'I am damned by the righteous judgment of God! Already, now, am I shut up in hell! My torment no tongue can tell—and this awaits me too in all life to come. All hope—every mercy of God is forever gone. I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven either in this life, or that which is to come. Whoever is guilty of this blasphemy is delivered over to the wrath and punishment of God. I am not able even, to love God, but I hate him with a perfect hatred! Soon will the measure of my deserved punishment be full, and shortly will I see my awful end. God will show me to the elect, as an example against the denying of his name!'

Touching the 'blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,' he is said to have spoken frequently in moving eloquence and with impressive kindness; but invariably with pointed application to himself. On one occasion, his friend from Citadela, the Presbyter, Antonius Pontanius, visited him—who had been in company with him perhaps several months before, and indeed on the day when he journeyed to Venice. As soon as the miserable one saw him, he sorrowfully groaned,

'O, that cursed day! O, that cursed day! O, that I had never gone, or died at the time!'

Hereupon they directly questioned him in reference to his former faith; whether he ever really believed, and in what way he had fallen from it—seeing that it is not to be looked for in the regenerate indeed. He answered:

'I verily believe that Christ is the atonement for our sins, and through him only can we gain Redemption and Justification, this I never doubted. Yet never did I contemplate aright the benefits of Jesus Christ, to a confession of the truth. I never with the heart entire loved him in return. Yea, I even turned the gospel faith into a license for the flesh, and abused it in presumptuous sinning, neglecting all striving after sanctification.'

Turning to a company of bye-standing youths he addressed them in the following words:

'My sons, listen to my words. I speak these things not in the least to detract from the holy gospel which you believe to be incontrovertible; but that you may not so rely upon your faith as to regard good works to be unnecessary! Trust in my experience!'

He then, with sighs and tears recommended to