

sinner and hypocrites in Zion in this imperfect state. Here we may reprove the advocates for perfection, who maintain that the saints are in this life as perfect as ever they will be.—Examine yourselves, brethren, about your desire for holiness, and your progress in it, and your endeavors to obtain it. You say you know it is necessary to be holy. But what influence has your knowledge upon you? Does it put you on your guard in every part of your conduct,—and are you willing to have your heart tried and purged by the Lord Jesus? Are you sincerely desirous to have every lust and corruption mortified and subdued, and to be completely purged? &c.

6. The work of cleansing and purging the church is the work of Christ himself. “*He will thoroughly purge his floor.*” Accordingly when he exercised his public ministry, he purged the temple of them that bought and sold. This was as it were only an emblem or specimen of that purity which was requisite in his service. It was he who purged away the great body of the Jewish nation as chaff, and as fruitless and profitless branches from his church in their dispersion.—It is indeed the work of gospel ministers and other office bearers to attend to the external conduct of church members, and with the fan of church discipline to purge away the chaff of notorious offenders and disorderly members; but after all their accuracy and attention, there are still much refuse and dross when tried by the Lord himself. Many who now pass among men for good christians, will, when weighed by the balance, be found wanting and destitute of true religion. Hence, brethren, the necessity of examining yourselves as to your state. Are you the wheat of the floor, or are you only chaff? If you are the latter, there is a horrible tempest and storm of wind awaiting you which will blow upon you to your utter destruction. Remember, it is not a man like yourselves who is to try and fan you. It is the Lord, the great proprietor of the floor who will do the work, and though you may deceive yourselves and your neighbors, be assured that he seeth not as man seeth—man looketh to the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh to the heart.

7. The saints after all their trouble and hardships will at last reach the port of everlasting happiness. “*He will gather his wheat into his garner.*” The troubles which afflict the just are many, but the Lord will at length deliver them out of them all. They often meet with severe trials from their enemies who do everything in their power to make them fall, but the Lord their God upholds them mightily. They meet with opposition from sin, Satan and the world. Sin often rages and prevails in them for a season, but sin shall not have dominion over them, for they are not under the law but under grace. Satan often desires to sift them as wheat, but the great Redeemer has prayed for them that their faith fail not. They are often weak for the performance of their duty, and unfit to cope with their enemies, but his grace is sufficient for them. This is the situation not of some only, but of all the people of God. Not a particle of wheat will be lost or embezzled, for they are not only the property of Christ, but it is his particular work and employment to gather them into his garner. This being the case, how is it possible that any of them can fall away or perish forever? Will the Lord Jesus Christ lose his property? Will his purchase be in vain? Besides, if one can