

Volume 17

William Huntington

The Child of Liberty in Legal Bondage

or,

The Son and Heir in the Servant's Yoke.

A Sermon, Preached at Monkwell Street Meeting, Sept. 9,
1794.

"I am shut up, I cannot come forth."- Psalm 88:8

*"Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock
unaccustomed to the yoke."* Jer. 31:18

TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

London, Sept, 10, 1794.

Rev. and dear Sir,

As I understand you are frequently troubled, and put to unnecessary expense, with impertinent and unedifying letters, I humbly beg excuse for troubling you again at this time, hoping you will not have reason at least to complain of the impertinence of this letter, how much soever of its ignorance; and not at all of its expense. I had the happiness last night, as in the good providence of God I have often had before, to hear you at Monkwell Street Chapel, on the text "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," &c., with much satisfaction, and, I hope by the blessing of God, with some edification. I think, if, after such a sermon, and the doctrines contained in and enforced by it, your adversaries continue to insist upon the danger of your doctrines, and the error of your judgment as a minister of the gospel, they must form an hypothesis by malice and prejudice, and use the arguments from falsehood and slander. There is no doubt but that, if a man be made an offender for a word, or his own natural mode of expression, who among men (who are all, at the best, but imperfect,) who among them shall escape judgment and condemnation? Only, however, as it is happy for them, by their own brethren, fallible as themselves, and accountable to the judgment, and liable to the condemnation, without repentance, of him who is only impartial and just. According to my weak judgment, you fully settled the dispute with your adversaries respecting Antinomianism, and removed the smallest doubt (to any one) of the orthodoxy of your principles respecting the believer's freedom from the law as a covenant of works, and of subjection to it as a rule of obedience for life, or as a rule of obedience at all, only as a transcript of the moral perfections of God, and perfect standard of righteousness; which is wrought out by Jesus Christ for all whom the Father has given him, and applied to them through the faith of the operation of his Spirit, which works by love; and, as it is perfect and pure, and abounds to God and man, is a fulfilling of the law. Your correspondent, whom you mentioned last night, appears to me to be just such

a man in principle as your adversaries mistake you for. According to what you mentioned of him, as appears to me, he is an Antinomian in the proper sense of the word. When he is once freed from the sensible bondage of the law, he seems to flatter himself he has nothing to fear from its power (as to bondage) for ever again. But I am afraid he soon will, as usual, if we rightly know ourselves, the law, and its author, and at the same time examine our own dispositions and practice for one week, much more a month or a year, that we shall be condemned by ourselves, and shut up; that we can obtain no relief, but by the same power that loosed the bonds of our spiritual death, But, I need not, Sir, mention these things to you, neither do I on any other account but to express my own mind to you as a friend, not as attempting in any respect to instruct one at whose feet I am happy to learn. I could not help last night observing the wisdom and truth of God in making all things work for good to them that love him, when I had the happiness to hear such a sermon, occasioned (as I suppose) chiefly by the incident of your correspondent's letter; and is to me a further proof of the utility of argument, and even in some degree of controversy, in the discovery and defence of the truth. I humbly think, Sir, after preparing such a sermon, and not only so, but in immediate answer to such objections, and in defence of such doctrines; which I believe you yourself are supposed by many to condemn; it would be both doing injustice to yourself, and withholding from the public a valuable means of instruction, if you do not publish it. About six weeks ago, when you preached at Monkwell-street, the sermon on the abolition of the authority of the law over believers in Christ, I was (I must confess) so much taken with it, that I would have almost given any thing, for a copy of it; but did not think it was possible you could have time, and take the trouble, to write out at length such a copious discourse before delivery; and, even if you had attempted it afterwards, you could not have come any thing at all near the sentiments, not to say precise words; but, when (to my great satisfaction) I

found it published almost word for word as it was delivered from the pulpit, I must say I was much surprised, and could not help admiring both the natural and gracious qualifications of the author. By the publication of that sermon I believe, Sir, you have at once defended your own cause and that of truth; while you have favoured the public at large, and those who heard it in particular, with an instructive and edifying discourse on the subject. I, among others, was minded to solicit the publication of it, and would actually have taken the liberty, if it had not been for the reasons above mentioned-that I did not think you could either have written it before, or could remember it with any degree of precision afterwards. However, I do not think the one preached last night any thing inferior to it; and on this account, Sir, I would earnestly beg of you that, as you regard the vindication of your character, and your success as a minister of the gospel of Christ in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, either immediately in your own connexion, or more at large, you will favour them with the publication of it.

I am, Sir,

Your's with due esteem,
N F-H.

TO MR. HUNTINGTON,

Sir,

I desire to return my sincere thanks to Almighty God for hearing, and answering my request, in sending you forth this morning to describe the very feelings of my poor soul; for I did not know it was got under bondage to the law; I thought I was an hypocrite, and I desired the Lord to send you to shew me if I was; and, if not, that you might bring forth some Saint that had been in my state; which the Lord has condescended to

do. The Lord grant me a grateful heart for his great mercies. Dear Sir, pray for me, that the Lord may bring my soul out of this prison, that I may praise his holy name; and may the Lord give you a double portion of his Spirit.

From your sincere daughter

E. T.

Sept 14. 1794.

PREFACE.

Courteous Reader,

THERE are but few of God's children, however dark, weak, or rickety, but what understand something of Satan's violent assaults, blasphemous attacks, cruel accusations, and fiery darts: but, in his transformation into the likeness, character, and office of an angel of light, he is not so easily perceived, I mean when he goes of his own accord out of a man, and as an enemy, a vexer, and an accuser, leaves the house empty, swept, and garnished: when he comes also to move the passions of a way-side hearer by an eloquent orator, in order to draw out the bowels of natural affections to the carnal and hypocritical, and to excite enmity to the sovereignty of God, to the ministers of the Spirit, and to mount Zion; when he comes to furnish the head, and illuminate the mind, of a Judas, and make his light darkness; to enforce the law as a rule of life, in order to bring into bondage, to rebuke sin in pious Mary, and enforce liberality from the price of her ointment; to reform outward conduct by a blind zeal, and varnish a sepulchre, or cover with turf and old grave that appears not; when he sets Jannes and Jambres to withstand the miracles of Moses, and the disciples of Moses to confront Paul; when he speaks great

swelling words of vanity, to allure through the lust of the flesh; and promises liberty, in order to lead sinners into the bonds of corruption; when he preaches Christ out of envy, to add afflictions to an apostle's bonds; when he enforces enlargement of heart, to expel the offences of the cross; when he creeps into houses with the shew of truth, to lead captive silly women, in the bonds of iniquity-all these branches of Satan's policy and priestcraft are not so well understood by every believer as I could wish they were.

And, as for the spirit of the law-its influences and effects, the bondage that it genders, the wrath that it works, the cold chill that it communicates, the barrenness that attends it, the motions of sin by it, the legal strivings of a believer under it, and the miserable success that attends his labour-all this is less understood in our day than the policy of Satan.

I have treated lately a little upon this subject, having experienced much of it myself; and in so doing have greatly displeased some, who never were pleased with any thing but themselves.

And, that I may separate the vile from the precious, and shew the deference between a believer in bondage, and an infidel in freedom; the shame, nakedness, and emptiness, of the hypocrite, that every tried saint may stir up himself against him: and that I may yet starve the goats, and feed the sheep; plague the fool, and profit the wise; that carnal critics may display their wisdom in writing against it, and I have an opportunity of exposing their foolishness for attempting it; are the only reasons of its appearing in print.

I have interwoven this discourse with part of another preached at Providence Chapel, on Sunday morning, September 14; hoping God will bless both the warp and woof, while I remain, in the bonds of the gospel, ever thine,

W. Huntington.

Paddington
Sept. 15, 1794.

The Child of Liberty in Legal Bondage

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," Gal. 5:1

When the apostle came first into the regions of Galatia, he and his message were most cordially received. His personal deformity, which he calls the temptation in his flesh, they despised not, but received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. The weight and power of the message counter balanced all the unsightliness of the messenger. The joyful tidings that he brought so excited their gratitude, that they would have pulled out their own eyes, and given them to Paul. But love soonest hot is soonest cold.

Paul withdraws from these regions, to lengthen the cords of Zion, and to spread the curtains of her habitation a little farther; with an intent, in due time, to return and strengthen her stakes, which he had left in Galatia. But, as the enemy often sows tares while men sleep, so he often attempts the debauch of a wife when the good man is not at home. Paul, the servant of Christ withdraws; and Satan, transformed in his ministers, succeeds him. Righteousness and perfection by the law are enforced by these seedsmen of Satan, and cordially received by the simple in Galatia. Their hearts at that time were warmed with the love of God, and warm to God; and whatever God requires they were willing to perform; then they "must be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses." This was

produced, and proved from holy writ; and to this they gave heed: and as they advanced nothing but what was in the Bible, they took it for granted it must be right; and it was no more than reasonable that, as God was so good to them, they should do all they could to please him, and make him all the amends, and give him all the satisfaction they could for his numerous favours to them: and, seeing, the doctrine was scriptural, and enforced by Israelites, if not priests, who were warm zealous men, they were all zealously affected to them, and their necks were soon inclined to bow to the legal yoke.

These men were ministers of Satan. Satan had before tried to blind the eyes of these Galatians, as he does all others, that the light of the gospel should not shine unto them; but all in vain, for the light of the gospel had shined in the hearts of these Galatians. Hence it was needful that Satan should adopt another method, more likely to succeed, being less suspected: and that was by bringing them under the old veil of the law, under which the gospel is hid. Satan's gloomy shade had not been sufficient to keep the rays of the gospel out, therefore by these priests of his he would lead them to the blackness of Sinai again, and to the frowns of God in a broken law; where the light of his countenance is hid, where God in the face of Jesus never shines, and where he would appear in thick darkness to them. Paul hears of this, and opposes them - charges these ministers with witchcraft, and the Galatians with foolishness for adhering to them; telling them that they were not well affected; that these men would exclude them from Christ, that they might affect them. However, their zeal is fired for works, and for perfecting the good work begun. Paul tells them that nothing but fleshly perfection is to be had in the law; and that, if they went to the law for perfection, they must go there for righteousness also, for Christ will be all in all, or nothing at all; that, "if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing," for he will communicate no grace by the law.

However, "the law doth not exclude boasting," nor humble the proud heart. The legal leaven had begun to ferment; they were puffed up, and not to be taught by such as Paul, whom they viewed as their enemy for attempting to hinder this good work. Paul tells them that, if he was their enemy, it was for telling the truth; and passes a double curse upon that man, or angel, that should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached. He tells them that this persuasion came not from him that called them; that a little of that legal leaven would leaven the whole lump; and that they had been called to liberty; but that their liberty was not to be used as an occasion to the flesh, either in seeking fleshly perfection by the works of the law, which is a ground of pride and boasting, or in gratifying the evil desires of the flesh by using liberty as a cloak.

"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." In handling these words I will treat,

1. Of bondage.
2. Of liberty.
3. Of the fruits of liberty.
4. Of this yoke of bondage. And
5. That it is possible for a believer in Christ to be entangled with it a second time.

First, I have no call to say much to the children of God about our natural bondage, for they have all felt it. We are all of us by nature in bondage to sin. Every besetting sin, while in a state of nature, lords it over us; and, whether willing or unwilling, we are slaves and drudges to it. "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." And none, but God who kept Abimelech from touching Sarah, and Jabez from the grief of evil, can ever deliver us from this tyrant.

We are in bondage under the guilt that we have contracted by sin; which, with shame and confusion, like a chain, binds the soul over to punishment. "He bringeth out those that are bound with chains, but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

We are in bondage to the king of terrors. The guilty sinner dreads death because of a future reckoning; he does not care to come to books, to take his trial, or to come to judgment; he knows that death leads to all these, and, therefore, "through the fear of death, he is subject to bondage."

He is in bondage to Satan; he rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience; he has possession of them, and takes them captive at his will. And none can deliver from this strong man armed but he that came to destroy the works of the devil.

We are in bondage to the precepts of the moral law; bound to perform perfect obedience to it, under pain of double death: and knowing that we are sinners, the spirit of legal bondage to fear holds us fast bound to the dread of death, hell, and damnation; and in this state we are "shut up under the law until faith comes." Thus we are prisoners for infinite debts; sin is our strong hold, wrath our dreadful meditation; Satan our accuser and jailer; and justice will never, "but by the blood of the covenant, send one prisoner out of the pit," Zech. ix. 11.

Secondly, But God has ordained a release, and proclaimed it; the jubilee trump is sounded; and a surety for debtors is provided. Faith is bestowed by a gracious God, and by the Spirit it is wrought in the soul. Faith eyes the surety and the satisfaction, and sweetly applies the atonement. Release from guilt, and enlargement from the dismal cell and dark regions, are the blessed effects of it; while a feeling sense of God's eternal love in Christ, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, removes all the awful apprehensions of vindictive wrath, casts out fear and torment, and leads and attracts the

affections even to the right hand of God himself, where Christ sitteth; which is the soul's freedom of access to God. The conscience is freed from her guilt, the mind is freed from her fear, the heart freed from its native hardness, our thoughts are in harmony, and sweetly satisfied with a Redeemer's fullness, and the tongue is loosed to celebrate the high praises of God; the yoke of a Redeemer becomes easy, "his service perfect freedom, his ways pleasantness, and all his paths peace." The root of this glorious matter, the spring of this blessed felicity, is the everlasting love of God the Father, the dying love of the Lord Jesus, and the sweet operations of the Spirit of love felt and enjoyed in the soul. Which leads me,

Thirdly, To consider the fruits of this liberty, which, in a freeborn citizen, in a son of the free-woman, are conspicuous enough. Such an one cannot send away a distressed neighbour, saying, "come again to-morrow, and I will give thee" when he has plenty by him. The love of God casts out the love of money, the love of the world, and the friendship of it. But "he that sees a brother in need, and shuts up his bowels against him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" not as it did in Zaccheus, when salvation came to his house.

This liberty never leads men to countenance or vindicate the propagators of error, nor to undermine the reputation and labours of the faithful. Paul tells the Galatians that this persuasion came not from him that called them, they were bewitched into this. "In the eyes of a true-born citizen of Zion a vile person is contemned, but he honours them that fear the Lord."

A person in liberty must be at a certainty about his state; and be sound, settled, and at a point, in the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel. If his thoughts are not in harmony here he cannot "make straight paths for his feet; there is no

judgment in his goings; he stumbles at the word," and is far enough from having "his feet in a large room."

The liberty that springs from divine love does not lead men to pride, to lord it over the sheep, much less over the under shepherds. "Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; nor behaveth itself unseemly." Nor does it lead to licentiousness, nor yet to presumption, much less to be wise above what is written, and to cavil at what they cannot disprove. For unhumbled men, unbroken spirits, unexperienced, and unsavoury souls to talk of liberty, is like a whore with a brazen brow contending for modesty.

The liberty of a saint is guarded with a filial fear; which has God's goodness in Christ for its object, keeps the soul from using liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, and from abusing it as an occasion to the flesh.

Liberty that springs from the oil of joy, will make a man's face to shine. If the saving health of all nations is made known to the sinner, God will be the health of his countenance. A fallen countenance, which is the common index of a guilty conscience, ill becomes an advocate for gospel liberty. Unexperienced and self condemned men should never sound the jubilee trump of the gospel. Their sound is uncertain, and they themselves are living contradictions. I come now,

Fourthly, To the yoke. Yearly servitude is sometimes in scripture called a yoke. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour." The servant is under the master. The master's will is the servant's rule. He works by the command of his master, and expects his hire for his labour; and to this the allusion is in my text. The Galatians were not servants, but sons, and therefore should not take this yoke on their necks. This yoke is the moral law, that the Judaizing teachers had carried to Antioch; which was "Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses." At

Antioch Paul and Barnabas withstood them; the apostles, who had the keys of the kingdom, to bind and loose, at their synod at Jerusalem condemned them; the release sent to Antioch exposed them to contempt there; and the disciples of that city received their liberty with much joy and consolation. Antioch grew too hot for these ministers of Satan; therefore their master sent them into the regions of Galatia, where perhaps the apostles' decision was not yet known; and here they laboured hard with the old text, "except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The apostle Paul acquaints them with the affair at Jerusalem; of the intention of the false brethren, who came in to spy out their liberty and bring them into bondage; and of their not giving place to them for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might continue with them: but he becomes their enemy for telling, the truth. They are for circumcision, and for keeping the law; the former is to bring them in debtors to the latter. These things were found in the scriptures, and appeared right to these simple souls, and the devil's drift in it was to bring them under the ministration of the letter, and to set aside the satisfaction of Christ. And, in order to make an outward show and blind their eyes, he led them to the old Jewish Sabbath, and to other days and months and times and years. And they thought that circumcision and the moral law, and adhering to these things, would make them perfect. But Paul knew that perfection, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, were all in Christ; and that those who went to the law would neither enjoy Christ, nor any of these things in him; for he is king at Zion, not at Sinai; and all his springs, rivers, and streams, are in the city, not in the wilderness; it is the rebellious, not the obedient, "that dwell in a dry land." This is the yoke in which they wanted to entangle them, that they might leave the liberty of sons, and be influenced with the bondage of servants; that God might be viewed as a master, not as a father; that they might work for God, and not God work in them; that "the reward might be reckoned to them of

debt, not of grace;" that they might be excluded from Christ the advocate, and go to the accusations of Moses; reject the surety, and work at their own debt-book. This is the devil's witchcraft, and this is the Galatians' foolishness; and because this branch of priestcraft required much infernal wisdom and policy to entangle these Galatians in this yoke, it is called witchcraft.

The word entangled seems to be an allusion to fish entangled by a hook or net, to a bird entangled in a snare, or to a sheep or deer entangled in a bush; into which they are all brought unawares. And as believers are compared to fish, to fowls, to sheep, and to harts with horns, Satan employs various artists against the household of faith, in order to ensnare them some of which are compared to fowlers, others to fishers, who "sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag." And legal preachers, who handle the law unlawfully, make the Jewish altars and the two tables of stone, which are intended for our welfare, a trap and a stumbling block to the people. And such entangers are in their sins, and under the curse; and, while they entangle the sheep of Christ, themselves are nothing but "thorns and briars, who are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." This Paul knew, and declares that they should bear their own judgment, whoever they were, being accursed of God; and he wished those cut off that troubled them; pronouncing a curse upon all, either angels or men, that should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached. Which leads me,

Fifthly, To treat of the possibility of a believer's being entangled again with the yoke of legal bondage. This is a point that will not easily go down with many professors in our days. Men, who have been healed without being wounded; saved before they were lost; and justified by grace before they were condemned by the law; who have made their calling and election sure, without crying day and night unto God; who

understand all mysteries, but are destitute of charity; whose faith stands in the word of the gospel, but not in the power thereof; who have escaped the task of self-denial, and shunned the perilous path of tribulation; who have no changes in their life, nor bands in their death; whose own will is their rule, and whose self-sufficiency is their god, and the object of their adoration; who know every thing but their own ignorance, and all men but themselves; who have never been chastened every day, nor plagued every morning; who have defeated Satan without receiving one fiery dart, and overcome the world without one war with it, or frown from it; who are got into the large room, and into the wealthy place, without coming either through fire or through water; who are purified without either the fiery trial, or the furnace of affliction: these have not only overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, but they can defy the armies of the living God, without being able to describe one part of the experience or sufferings of a Christian soldier, or one piece of the saints' heavenly panoply. They have defied both death and the devil, without ever resisting unto blood, or striving against sin. The war of these men is not with Satan, but with Christ; not with the enemies of God, but with the ministers of Jesus; not with the worldlings, but with the saints. These are not the weak who are to say they are strong; these do not wait upon God to renew their strength, but to gainsay the mouth and wisdom that God has promised to give to his servants. God's strength is not expected to be made perfect in the weakness of these, their strength is firm: such a champion is as Solomon's lion, the strongest among beasts, who trusts in his paws, and turns not away for any. He is the he-goat that is comely in his going, whose trust is in his horns; the greyhound, who confides in his heels; and "the king against whom there is no rising up;" having, never been engaged in the fight of faith.

Some tell us that a believer cannot be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. They cannot allow that the north wind

can awake, and the south wind (which are quite opposite to each other) blow upon one and the same garden. They think it is impossible for a disciple of Jesus to be puffed up and soured with the leaven of the Pharisees; and that the Lord's kind caution to them to take heed and beware of their doctrines of free-will, self righteousness, and legal bondage, was altogether useless and impertinent. But surely the Lord says nothing in vain. And, if the Galatians were in no danger of this leaven, Paul must be in great fear where no fear was. But Paul knew what this bondage is, and could see that the greatest part of the Galatians were infected with it; he therefore tells them "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Others, who are "wiser in their own conceit than seven men that can render a reason," tell us that these Galatians were never converted at all, and therefore they might be entangled again with this yoke. If they had never been delivered from it previous to this re-entanglement, Paul's speech must be tinctured with either flattery or falsehood, when he tells them that Christ had made them free, and cautions them to stand fast in the liberty which they never had.

But these children and old women, who are our teachers and rulers, tell us that, "Paul stood in doubt of these Galatians." And he had cause enough for it, seeing the whole lump was fermented with this leaven. He might justly doubt whether they would not submit to circumcision, especially as their minds were so prejudiced against him as to count him their enemy for telling them the truth. Paul knew that, if they went to the law, their eyes and their dependence would soon be taken from the fullness of Christ: that they would thereby fall from grace; and that Christ would not leave mount Zion, and meet them at Sinai, to communicate his grace to them there; therefore, tells them that Christ shall profit them nothing. Moreover, Paul knew that, if the Saviour's easy yoke was slighted, God would soon handle the fair neck of these

Galatians, as he did the neck of Ephraim, and bring a heavier yoke upon them. They that are not satisfied with Christ, in whom God is well pleased, shall feel his sore displeasure from another quarter; and they that turn from him that speaks from heaven shall hear another voice that once shook the earth. God will not have Christ, the darling of his soul, slighted; he has not only a purging furnace for a fruitful branch in Christ, but he keeps a yoke for the heifer's neck, a rod for the fool's back, and he has his stocks for the feet of those that pervert their way. If his children abuse, slight, or misuse their glorious liberty, he will bow their necks, scourge their backs, and lay them by the heels, till they know the worth of their liberty, how to use it, and how to prize it; as others have done, who with the most piteous moan have cried out, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name; restore unto me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit."

That believers are often influenced with a spirit of legal bondage, is what I never yet heard any believer, of long standing in the church, deny, till the devil set up a prating fool, called Mr. Hector. Though he himself once, if report be true, felt such a horrible sensation, for a few minutes, as quite surprised him; and he may call it "Gad [for] behold a troop cometh."

Doctor Watts seems to understand something of this "spirit of bondage again to fear," when he says,

*"His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sin."*

And Mr. HART was not ignorant of it

*"If thou, celestial Dove, thine influence withdraw,
What easy victims soon we fall to conscience, wrath, and
law."*

Mr. Bunyan's Treatise upon the Two Covenants was chiefly intended to remove the spirit of legal bondage, though he himself was not a little influenced by it when he wrote that book, nor is he clear in it. And I know that a spirit of antinomianism on the one hand, and legal bondage on the other, have been communicated to weak believers by reading that very book which is written against it.

I come now to treat of this spirit of bondage, and the workings of it; and, when I have so done, shall appeal to the experience of all real believers; and I verily think that, where the redoubtable Mr. Hector has one believer's voice against it, I shall have an hundred for it, because I know that God's saints are in the path of tribulation, where Hector never was. In discoursing on the operation of this spirit of bondage, I shall

1. Treat of the darkness that attends it.
2. Of servile or slavish fear.
3. Of narrowness and contraction.
4. Of wrath and sensible anger.
5. Of suspicion and cruel jealousy.
6. Of rebellion and discontent.
7. Of despondency and desperation.
8. Of sensible dryness and barrenness.
9. Of backwardness and reluctance to all good.
10. Of legal striving against sin and corruption.
11. And of the miserable success of such labour.

First, of darkness.

There is a darkness upon all mankind that may be felt, which man by sin has brought upon himself. "Darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Under this dismal gloom Satan carries on his cursed works, and supports his

infernial kingdom in the hearts of the children of men. "He rules in the hearts of the disobedient." And mankind, being habituated to this darkness, and loving the works of it, hate the light, and will not come to it, because it discovers and brings to light their evil deeds; flashes convictions of sin, and gives cutting reproofs and rebukes for it. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light which doth appear, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Hence it is that "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." And Satan, the enemy both of God and man labours hard to "blind the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, and they should be saved." Hence all mankind are blinded by sin, and utterly in the dark about the things that make for their peace. There is a covering spread over the heart, mind, and understanding, of all mankind, and a veil upon all nations; which veil is one of the dreadful effects of Adam's fall, and which he himself soon felt after his dreadful apostasy. It is plain that a glorious light of knowledge was upon him in his primeval innocence; which appears by his knowledge of things, by the suitable names that he gave them, and by the knowledge he had of Eve, of her origin, and by the name that he gave her, and the reason he assigned for it. But this figure of him that was to come; this man thus made upright, sought out many inventions; this man in honour abideth not; he sinned; and his light and knowledge of God, and of good, left him; and a sad knowledge of evil found him. The veil of ignorance soon gathered upon him, insomuch that he thought he could hide his sin in his bosom, Job, xxxi. 33, and his shame from God by a leaf, and himself from his approaching, Judge by setting behind a tree. This veil hides the soul from God; and God's just displeasure at sin has hid his blessed face from man. There is-and Adam felt it-a dreadful lour, a dark, an awful, a dismal cloud of just displeasure and holy indignation to be found and felt the broken law; it worketh wrath still. Just judgment, which came

upon all men to condemnation; death, that reigned from Adam to Moses;" Adam's expulsion from Eden; the flaming sword; his labour and toil in the sweat of his brow; the curse that fell upon the earth for man's sin, and the dismal effects of it; the sufferings threatened to child-bearing women; the sad calamities that befell Adam's family by Cain; are all sad proofs of the just displeasure and wrath of God at sin, "who hides his face, and who can behold him?" And this God let Israel know when he came to revive, to promulge, and to set before them, this covenant or law that Adam, and all in him, had violated and broken. "He made darkness his secret pavilion," and not without a cause, nor yet without a meaning; and of this he informed Moses, who was a believer, who had found grace in his sight, and stood high in his favour, and was faithful before him to whom he had appeared, and with whom he had used the most unparalleled familiarity; and to whom he had never paid such a visit, in such terrible majesty, before. He therefore prepares him for it, by informing him of it, that he might not be discouraged at it, nor sink under it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud," Exod. xix. 9. "And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was " Exod. xx. 21. This dark cloud was to represent God's dreadful wrath at sin, and to let sinners know that he had hid his face from man on that account. The thunder, the lightning, the sound of the trumpet, the fire, the smoke, the trembling of the mount, and the worse "trembling of the camp, the death and destruction that was threatened to man or beast that should touch the mount," were all so many indications of the wrath of God at the sins of men. No way is open here to the blessed face of God but by the glory of Moses's face, and the light of God's countenance, promised at the mercy seat; both which point out the better Mediator, and the better throne of grace, Christ Jesus. Hence we need not wonder why the Saviour, when his disciples entreated him, saying, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," gave them this answer - "Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not

seen me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." God, as a Father, can never be seen in this world out of Christ. In the law he is not a Father, but a Master; a terrible Lawgiver, a just Judge, a sin-avenging God, a consuming fire; and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" in a broken law. In Christ he is well pleased, in Christ he has "reconciled the world unto himself;" and in the face of Christ he will ever shine, "who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

But the law, when reflected on the mind of man, is blackness and darkness; and the spirit of it is vindictive vengeance, and nothing else, which genders to bondage, and works wrath, fear, torment, jealousy, death, and eternal damnation. And, that we may know the difference of the one covenant from the other, the preciousness of the glorious gospel, and the invaluable worth of that "life and immortality brought to light" by it; that we may see and feel the need of Christ, and know how to prize him; that we may know the sad state of them that are out of him, and the blessed state of those that are in him; and be grateful to God for that free sovereign, and discriminating grace that has made us to differ. We are often exercised with the darkness of this mount, and it is a darkness that may be felt; and those professors that deny this, are in a worse darkness; for Satan keeps them ignorant of themselves, of God, of Christ, and of the law; from which ignorance the light of the gospel has delivered every real believer; and God is the everlasting light of him, and his "son shall no more go down." But it not said that his sun shall never be eclipsed.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, must feel a little of this darkness, and of the horrors of it. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abraham; and lo an horror of great darkness fell upon him; and, when it was dark, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those

pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham," Gen. xv. The beasts, which were here slain and divided by Abraham, were to lead Abraham's faith to the death of Christ, and to the covenant, which was to be a covenant by sacrifice; as the offering up of Isaac did afterward; which shewed Abraham that the covenant was not to be confirmed by a brutal sacrifice, but by a sacrifice of human nature. This great darkness, horror, and smoking furnace, which went before the burning lamp, represented not only the affliction of the children of Abraham in Egypt, and their deliverance from that, but the wrath of God in a broken law, and salvation from it by Jesus Christ, as the prophet Isaiah applies it. Read Isaiah, lxii. 1.

The children of light have been often exercised under this dark cloud, or horror of great darkness. Hence Job, "He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my path," Job xix. 8. "The Almighty troubleth me, because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face." And Jeremiah, "I am the man that hath seen affliction- by the rod of his wrath; he hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Lord, why castest thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me?" Psalm lxxxviii. 6, 14, "We wait for light, but behold, obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness; we grope for the wall like the blind, we grope as if we had no eyes." Numerous are the complaints of good men under this dark cloud; and to a child of light it is indeed "a darkness that may be felt;" it beclouds and bewilders the mind; the brightest evidences are in a great measure hid; the Bible itself is sealed, and fast closed; "we see not our signs, nor our tokens for good;" every good thing is at a distance from us, behind the cloud, and we cannot get at it; there is a dismal gloom upon our path; we know not where we are, where to step, nor which way to steer; which way God is gone we know not, but he knoweth the way that we take, and such a prayer as this

suits us well. - Seek thy servant, for we are lost; Christ is hid, and there is a frowning cloud upon the sweet countenance of God, in which he hides his blessed face or, as he did to the disciples, holds our eyes, that we should not see him. But, though this is often the case with believers, and they cannot see their path straight behind them; though all evidences are hid, and the light of the Lord's countenance is withdrawn; though no signs nor love-tokens appear; and though the life-giving commandment is hid from us, and he shews us no wonder out of his law; yet these Israelites have light in their dwellings. - They have light to see the corruptions of their own hearts; to see the workings of unbelief, legal pride, enmity, rebellion, the double diligence of Satan, and the wretched advantages he takes of them in these dark seasons. Job looked backward to past experience, but all was dark; and forward to future hope, but he could not see it. He looked on the right hand and on the left; but length of days, riches, and honours, were all gone. He saw neither his advocate on the right hand, nor providence on the left. His corruptions, his accuser, his loss, and his misery, were the chief things that appeared in view. There is a remembrance of what he has done, and but little more; and there is a hope in him, and an expectation of the fulfilment of what he has promised to do: but Job complained that his hope was removed like a tree; and Jeremiah said that his hope was perished from the Lord. To be favoured, in this cloudy and dark day, but for one minute with faith in exercise, just enough to banter the enemy, and predict a future sun-rising, is a blessing indeed. "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy. If I fall I shall arise: if I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me, and he shall bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." Hence it appears plain that this cloud of darkness on the face of the Almighty, by which he hides himself from us, is his displeasure at sin. "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends," Job, xlii. 7. Which displeasure, or wrath, is not revealed to us in Christ (for there it is done away)

but in the law. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth; I have seen his ways and will heal him, and will restore comforts unto him." Isai. lvii. 17, 18. This healing and restoration of comfort is promised to them that fear God, and is effected by a fresh believing view of Christ, "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," Mal. iv. 2. This sun is Christ, and God the Father shining in his face restores comfort. The light dispels the cloud of displeasure, in which God says, I hid me, and the comfortable healing of these beams heals the stroke that a sense of wrath has given to the soul. "I smote him, and was wroth; I have seen his ways, and will heal him." Therefore, while this cloud remains, let him that is under it turn his thoughts to the name of Jesus, if he has nothing else left. "He that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." I come now to treat,

2. Of the fear that attends this spirit of bondage. By which I do not mean filial fear; for that is a grace of the Holy Spirit, planted in the heart by him, and has the goodness of God in Christ for its object. This fear is a reverential awe of a good and gracious God, that presents us under his watchful eye, and him always before our eyes. This fear is a little sentinel, one of the post army of grace, Song vi. 13. For the church is a company of two armies, grace and corruption, which war against each other. This fear is to keep us from departing from God, in which we are counselled to walk. "My son, be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."

When any danger appears; when any error is advanced and presented to us by Satan or his hawkers; or when any trap is set by enemies, intended to be a future handle of reproach; or any temptations to sin; this little-watchman, called fear, is upon his tower. He sounds the alarm, awakens the little camp, and will not let us proceed without well weighing matters. The

understanding must be consulted, a proper judgment must be made of the case, a divine warrant must be obtained, the sentence of our judgment must be known, and the approbation of God and conscience must be had, or this little soldier will withstand us so that we cannot proceed, unless violence be offered to this diligent looker-out, which attends us in all company, and keeps upon our guard, so as to cut off the future occasion of enemies, and to forestall the devil's market. But, if this grace be opposed violent measures, hardness of heart is sure to follow, and then we may pray as others have done, "Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?" Isaiah, lxiii. 17.

But this is not the fear that I am to treat of, nor yet the carnal fear of man, which is a sin of the human heart, and has the power and wrath of man for its object; which, when it awes a believer in his profession of Christ, is evil, and bringeth a share. "Fear not them which can kill the body." Slavish fear is a principal ingredient in the spirit of bondage; which spirit of bondage is the wrath of God, and nothing else; and has the terrors of God, and his terrible majesty, for its object. And this fear works in the consciences of guilty sinners; in the fresh contracted guilt of real believers; and at times, without guilt, through the old man of sin, which works in all our members. This spirit of the law stirs up sin, and threatens us for it; and sin takes occasion by the law, and fights against that. The one is God's anger against man's sin, Zeph. ii. 3; and the other is man's enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7.

This slavish fear, whenever it falls upon a believer, awakens all his intellectual powers with an alarm of fright, as if something dreadful was coming on, some strange thing happening unto him, or some awful judgment or calamity going to befall him. "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me," Job, iii. 25. "My heart is pained within me, and the terrors of

death are fallen upon me; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me; and I said, O that I had wings like a dove!" Psalm lv. 4, 5. My heart panted, saith the prophet; "Fearfulness affrighted me; the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me," Isai. xxi. 4. "Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake," Job, iv. 14. "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias; for he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid," Mark, ix. 6. But there came a voice to them, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." By which voice the disciples were shewn which was the only way to get from this dreadful fear of the law.

Under the operations of this spirit of bondage to fear, God is not viewed as shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The new covenant characters of God, such as our God in covenant love, our Father in Christ, the portion of our souls, a present help, and a reconciled friend; which make him sweet and lovely to us, are quite out of sight and nothing but terrible majesty is seen or felt. Moses, though he was a choice believer in Christ before he left Egypt, Heb. xi. 24, was seized with this panic at the bush. "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God," Exod. iii. 6. "And David could not go to inquire of God, for he was afraid," 1 Chron. xxi. 30.

While this slavish fear works, the believer is confused, terrified, and always in a hurry. He can fix upon nothing; he can rest nowhere, thinking that every thing is wrong with him; that his faith is only feigned, and his love dissembled; his former claim upon God, as his God, presumption; his confession of him as such nothing but a lie; the goodness of his state, as he once thought, nothing but deception; all that viewed him as a believer were deceived by him; and he in the household of faith nothing but a hypocrite, deceived by Satan, and a deceiver of others.

Next comes a dreadful expectation of some evident token of perdition; and there is a looking for it, and a looking out after it. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgment," Psalm cxix. 120. "He will cut me off with pining sickness. I reckoned till the morning; that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world," Isai. xxxvii. These were his last gasps and dying groans. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord," &c. saith the Psalmist. "He hath sealed up mine iniquity in a bag; I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent," says Job. This is the workings of slavish fear, and is a principal ingredient in the spirit of bondage, which Paul calls the spirit of bondage to fear; which fear presents the wrath of God in view, and always has the displeasure of God for its object; which wrath is peculiar to mount Sinai, and under which all the bond-servants are, and which often influences even the child of God, and is no less than the reflection, of divine anger, reflected from "this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God," Deut. xviii. 58.

Real believers are always conscious of their base original both by birth and practice; of the inward corruptions of their nature; the deceitfulness of their own hearts; their easily besetting sins: and their manifold weaknesses, infirmities, slips of the feet, slips of the tongue, and daily imperfections; all which have a tendency to betray them into this spirit of bondage to fear; which fear sometimes comes upon them where no fear is; as when good tidings are coming to us instead of evil. Hence the many checks and reproofs that are often given unto it in scripture. Carnal fear is rebuked by God himself. "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield; fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt, for I will be with thee there." Slavish fear is rebuked by almost every angelic messenger of good

news; which good news is to deliver us from legal fear, and to bring gospel love and joy to us. Fear not, ye shepherds, for I bring you good tidings of great joy. Fear not Zachariah, for thy prayers are heard. Fear not, Daniel, for thou art greatly beloved. Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God; which favour in Christ is to remove God's anger in the law. Fear not, ye women, for I know ye seek Jesus which was crucified. It is I (saith the Saviour), be not afraid.

This yoke often falls heavy upon the necks of believers when God smites a hypocrite who has formerly stood high in the poor believer's favour, and in outward shew appeared eminent for piety. God smote Uzza for his error in staying the ark, and David was afraid of God on that day. This act of striking Uzza with immediate death was to shew David that the mercy-seat needs no assistance from an arm of flesh; for God is not seated on a throne of grace to receive help and strength from man, for he needs none; but to give help and strength to man in every time of his need. David himself erred in this matter as well as Uzza; for the ark was drawn by beasts upon a cart, instead of being carried by consecrated priests upon their shoulders. This copy David took from the Philistines, not from Moses. And so the yoke of slavish fear brought David to use his filial fear, and the object of it, with a little more caution, respect, and reverence. This error David confesses. "And David said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because we did it not at the first the Lord God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order," 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13. Thus, when Christ informed the apostles of the treachery of Judas, every one, in fearful surprise, suspecting the deceit of his own heart, cried out, Lord, is it I? And, when Ananias and Saphira were struck dead, "great fear came upon all the churches." And so now, when a hypocrite is discovered, and smitten with

madness, given up to a fearful looking for of judgment, or left to himself to commit suicide; this yoke of slavish fear often falls upon them that fear God; which sometimes moves them to self-examination, to humble confession, to private prayer, to greater diligence, and to learn a little how to read and judge of professors; and so is among the all things [that] "work for them that love God, and are the called according to his good to purpose." Once more, the laws and rules, which a weak believer prescribes to himself to walk by, and the vows, promises, and resolutions which he is too apt to make, and more apt to break, these often betray him into this species of bondage. I come now,

3. To treat of the narrowness and contraction of soul that attends a believer under the influences of this spirit of bondage. This legal spirit closes the heart, and bars it up against every warm, cheerful, savoury, and unctuous Christian; yea, such an one will even shun their company and their sight; finding a heart to embrace none, to receive none, to commune with none, no, nor even to seek fellowship with any but those that are in shackles, bondage and slavery, as well as himself. "Like love its like." Hence the Galatians received the Judaizing teachers and their companions, who crept into houses, cordially; they were zealously affected by them, and zealously attached to them; even to the danger of excluding Christ himself. But, as for Paul, he had no place in their hearts: no, not as a friend, nor as an apostle, nor even as a true witness for Christ; for they counted him their enemy, and a false apostle. Hence he labours, in his epistle to them, to prove his apostolic office to be by the will of God; that his mission and commission was from God alone; his doctrine by immediate revelation, without learning it from man, or so much as seeing them that were apostles before him; and that when he did see them, they gave him the right hand of fellowship, as approving both of him and his doctrine. And he expresses his warmest love to them, calling them his little children, telling

them that he travailed in birth again for them till Christ was formed in them; that is, he laboured in soul, in writing, and with God in prayer, to get them again out of that legal bondage into liberty; out of that legal fear into gospel love; that Christ might be formed in them; that is, dwell in their hearts by faith, and in their affections, as the only hope of future glory. But they called him their enemy for telling them the truth.

The Corinthians' hearts were straitened, bound, and shut up, by these disciples of Moses, in the same manner. They could suffer these fools gladly to mislead them, being themselves so wise; but as for Paul, they wanted a "proof of Christ speaking in him;" though his voice, by Paul, was not weak in them, but mighty, even at the same time. Let their instructors be who, and as many as they might, it was Paul that had begotten them, yet this would not do. They cast the father, and the faithful ambassador, out of their affections; and embraced the ministers of Satan, who were nothing but deceitful workers, "enemies of the cross of Christ," and who had no god but the god of this world and their own bellies. Paul sends letters to them. "His letters are weighty and powerful:" this even his enemies allowed; but his speech they said, was weak, and his bodily presence contemptible;" and they charge him with breaking his promise of coming to them, being puffed up with a vain conceit of themselves; while the believers, which were the seals of Paul's own ministry, these suffered fools thus to ridicule their father in Christ; yea, "they suffered these fools gladly." Thus were these Corinthians legalized, prejudiced, straitened, and as it were shut up under the spirit of bondage. But this was not the case with Paul toward them. "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as unto my children) be ye also enlarged, 2 Cor. vi. 11, 12, 13.

Furthermore, As the heart straitened by a spirit of bondage, is barred up against the saints, and the ministers of the spirit, and against the evangelical doctrines of the gospel; so it is closed, straitened, and shut up against Christ himself; no extended thoughts are hovering about him, nor meditating on him; no extended views and fresh discoveries of his glorious person, offices, and wondrous undertakings; no faith in exercise, dealings with his blood for peace, with his obedience for righteousness, with his arm for strength, and with his fullness of grace for help in time of need; no affections running out after him, nor placed at the right hand of God, where he sitteth. Hence the kind and endearing entreaties, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled," Song v. 2.

A soul that has lain long in this bondage does not care to move or stir itself in wisdom's ways. It gets cloyed with reading, hearing the word, and with private and family prayer. It is like a rickety child, ruined for the want of proper nursing; it is death to move it, much more to shake it; it had rather sit still all its days than move its limbs. A soul thus influenced walks not in the spirit, but in the wrath of the law. "O, thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these his doings?" Micah, ii. 7. Job reasoned with "unprofitable talk, and restrains prayer before God," instead of looking constantly to Jesus, confessing, and praying; which in order to obtain enlargement, ought to have been done. "Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place where there is no straightness," Job, xxxvi. 16.

A soul thus legalized is straitened at the throne of grace; he has not the whole church of God in his heart, nor yet in his mouth; he prays only for himself, and that in a very cold, lifeless, sparing manner, as if God was as poor, and his heart as narrow, as his own. Jehoshaphat seeks the Lord by Elisha only for water for his army. The prophet tells him to "dig the valley full of ditches, and there shall be neither dew nor rain,

yet that valley shall be full of water: and this is but a light thing in the eyes of the Lord;" hinting thereby that the Lord had more weighty blessings to bestow than these. But this was all that was wanted. "Ask a sign of the Lord thy God" saith the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz, "ask it either in the height, or in the depth. I will not ask, saith he, "neither will I tempt the Lord, Ye have wearied men," saith the prophet, "and will ye weary my God also? Also, the Lord himself shall give you a sign," without asking, "behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." Hence the kind exhortation to such a poor, straitened, narrow soul, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," Psalm lxxxi. 10.

A soul thus straitened is barred against all good counsel, advice, and comfort. He thinks that every person who labours to enlarge him only wants to heal his wounds slightly, and to cry, Peace, peace, where there is no peace; and so to set him down short of the promised rest. They are even afraid of light, love, and liberty. "My soul refuses to be comforted," says one, Psalm lxxvii. 2. "Look away from me, labour not to comfort me," saith another, Isa. xxii. 4. I come now,

4. To treat of the wrath that works in us, which is this spirit of bondage. "The law worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 15. All that the broken law ministers, reveals, or works, in a man, is the anger, displeasure, indignation, and wrath of God at the sins of men; which wrath is revealed in the law against all ungodliness, and is treasured up there. Fury is not in me, saith the Lord. It is not in him as considered and viewed by the eye of faith in Christ. Here God cannot, God will not, be wroth with us; but get back to the law, and there we are sure to feel it, as nothing but wrath and death can be found in that broken covenant, which is a killing letter, for God ministers not the Spirit by it. Furthermore, God's wrath can never work where there is no sin; but where sin is there it will work, if we

go to it. It got a sad hold on Christ; it melted his heart in the midst of his body, while he bore our sins upon the tree. When he got rid of our sin he got rid of his Father's wrath. And it works sadly in the conscience of a believer, and stirs up his old man, when he loses sight of Christ, and gets back to that old yoke; for the burden of that precept was never easy, nor the yoke of bondage ever light. Hence the sad complaints of many gracious souls when influenced by it. "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day. My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath made my chain heavy; when I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer. He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. He hath filled me with bitterness; he hath made me drunk with wormwood; he hath broken my teeth with gravel stones, and covered me with ashes; he hath moved my soul far from peace, and I forget prosperity," Lam. iii. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," Job, xxxvi. 18. "For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee," Isai. lx. 10. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth. I have seen his ways, and will heal him, and restore comforts unto him," Isa. lvii. 1.7, 18. "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with great mercies will I gather thee, &c. &c. Thou was angry with me; but thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Hence it appears plain that the law stirreth up the corruptions of the human heart, the enmity of the carnal mind, the old man of sin; and works the wrath and anger of God in the conscience; so that there is wrath, fear, and torment. And the workings of this anger and wrath of the law stir up the anger and wrath of man against both God and man.

Sarah, under this bondage, deals hardly with her maid, drives her from the tent, and makes her fly from her presence;

quarrels with Abraham. "My wrong be upon thee, and the Lord judge between me and thee." No peace can be had while this Hagar, this mount Sinai in the figure, is working in the heart. Job finds fault with all his friends; calling them "miserable comforters, forgers of lies, and physicians of no value;" and there was not a wise man among them.

Asaph, while this chastening rod was upon him, was "envious at the prosperity of the wicked, because they are not in trouble as other men, and because they had no bands in their death." Jeremiah finds fault with "the man who brought tidings to his father, saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always big with me," Jer. 15-17.

The best and most even tempered person upon earth, under the workings of this bondage, will hiss like a viper. It is a leaven that will ferment, and stir up every corruption of the heart, set all in confusion, and fill the soul with nothing but wrath and indignation. And if such an one has got nobody to find fault and quarrel with, he will quarrel with anything that comes in his head. Job spends a whole chapter against his birth-day. "And job cursed his day. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above; neither let the light shine upon it; let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it; let it not be joined to the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months; let them curse it that curse the day," Job, iii.

Nor does the enmity of the heart, when stirred up by a spirit of bondage, stay itself upon men and things only; but even God

himself comes in for a share. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And this enmity is a member of the old man which he will hold fast as long as he lives. Job multiplied words against God, and lied against his right. "I sat alone [saith Jeremiah], because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?" Jer. xv. 17, 18. "Thou hast cast off, and abhorred; thou hast been wroth with thine anointed; thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown; thou hast broken down his hedges, and brought his strong holds to ruin; thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries, and hast made all his enemies to rejoice," Ps. viii. 9. "Thus the foolishness of a man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord." These are some of the heavy charges that are brought against the Father of all mercies; and confirms, with a witness, the truth of his own proclamation, when he proclaimed his own name, "The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth." And if he were not so I know not what would become of us.

Thus the law worketh wrath. It communicates the wrath that is revealed in it to us; it worketh the wrath of God in the soul, stirs up the wretched enmity of the heart, and fills it with anger against every thing. Such a soul fretteth against God. It envies the happiness of the righteous, and the prosperity of the wicked. This bondage fills the soul with hatred, and makes men hateful, and hating one another. The heart is filled with madness, and full of cursing and bitterness at every cross, and every thing that lies in the way, though he doth not spit it out. Such an one views God as an enemy, and one that mars his counsels, breaks his purposes, thwarts his designs, and fights against him, when (as he thinks) he aims well and means well. It fills the soul with self-pity; and such an one sits down, and considers himself as an injured man. He will cavil

at the master of the household about every penny that is given to another; and is not satisfied with the penny given to him, thinking that himself deserved more. He will limit the Holy One of Israel, and cannot allow the Lord to do as he will with his own. He will envy the happiness and state of every body; think his own lot to be the worst that ever fell to the share of man; and therefore be discontented with every thing and grateful for nothing.

And, for my part, I know of no trial so sharp, no cross so heavy, no sensations so dreadful, no exercise so severe, no dispensation so terrible, no rod that enters so deep, as to be left to struggle with legal bondage. The smiles of a gracious Father are changed into the frowns of an angry Judge; liberty, with respect to the enjoyment of it, is exchanged for bondage; happiness for misery; peace for war; familiarity for shyness; indulgence for cold indifference; tenderness for sensible neglect; attracting love into forbidding terror; a mercy-seat for a throne of judgment; and the best of friends, into the appearance of an enemy. "Terrors are turned upon me [says Job]; they pursue my soul as the wind, and my welfare passeth away as a cloud. My bones are pierced in me in the night season, and my sinews take no rest. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me; I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me. With thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me; my harp also is turned into mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep." I come now,

5. To the suspicion and jealousy that attends this spirit of bondage. The Lord our God, "whose name is jealous, is a jealous God," Exod. xxiv. 14. "How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry for ever; shall thy jealousy burn like fire?" Psalm lxxix. 5. The spirit of bondage brings a little of this ingredient with it. The spouse in the Song felt this pretty sharply; she refused to

open to her beloved, and so he withdrew; she sought him, but found him not; she called him, but he gave her no answer. He then went down into the garden; that is, down among the more meek, humble, and lowly souls. This she knew, and begged these young daughters to stay her with flagons, and to comfort her with apples, for she was sick of love; and desired them to tell her beloved so when they saw him. Hence her own description of her feelings at this time. "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame," Song viii. 6.

It is easy to see where the penman of the Song learnt this lesson. "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this thing is done of thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it to thy servant," 1 Kings, xi. 9-11, who was Jeroboam. The prophet Abijah meets Jeroboam, and tells him that he should reign over ten tribes, because Solomon had served other gods. Moreover, God promised by him, that, if Jeroboam would walk in God's statutes, as David did, God would be with him, and build him a sure house. Solomon hears of this, and in his desperate madness fights against the very decree of God; determined to make his promise void, and his prophet a liar; "for Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled into Egypt," 1 Kings, xi. 40. Solomon, in this rage of jealousy, had quite forgotten his own proverb: "He that doth violence to the blood of any person, let him flee to the pit; let no man stay him." However, God kept him from his purpose; for Solomon was not to fly to the pit of hell as a murderer, nor to be beaten with eternal stripes, "I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever" 1 Kings, xi. 39. And the Lord stirred up an

adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; and God stirred up another adversary, Resin, the son of Eliadah; and Jeroboam lifted up his hand against the king.

Such idolatry, and alienation of affections from God, God calls "the provoking of his sons and of his daughters;" and, as Solomon had "provoked the Almighty to jealousy with them that were no gods," so God provokes him to jealousy by them which were no saints.

Sarah was afflicted with a little of this fire, when, in her wisdom, she would further the coming of the promised seed, by giving up her bed to Hagar; at whose conception the sterility of the family was fairly proved to lie at the door of Sarah, and not at the door of Abraham. She drives Hagar out of the tent, to get rid of the cross that she had brought upon herself. The angel of God sends Hagar back again, that Sarah might be filled with her own ways. How she felt this I must leave those to guess who are in the secret. I believe she was never perfectly healed of this disease till she had got the promised seed upon her knees, and the bond woman and her son out of the tent.

When the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, it doth not stay here. Such an one is not only jealous of the love and favour of God, so as to envy the happiness of all that enjoy the light of his blessed countenance; but he is jealous of his own honour, and jealous of the affections, good-will and applause of every body. Such an one cannot bear to hear another spoken well of; he views every one in any esteem a rival to him. The apostles disputed which should be the greatest, though they were ashamed to own it; "and the ten were filled with indignation at James and John," for wanting to sit at the right hand and at the left of Christ in his kingdom, which they supposed was to be a temporal one.

This jealousy often terminates in carnal jealousy. The man is jealous of his wife, or she is jealous of her husband; and such souls are preparing their bitter waters, ashes, and jealous offerings, all the day long; "for jealousy is the rage of man," and so it is of woman; "and such will not rest contented though thou givest many gifts;" nothing can remove it, but him that sent it: for it is the working of the spirit of bondage, and a terrible ingredient in it; and let those, who have felt the bitterness of it, take heed that they do not procure these things to themselves by provoking God, or others, to jealousy; for, if they do not procure them by these, they are not likely to have them themselves.

The reasons of God's sending these things upon his people are these, God is good, great, and glorious; and is jealous of his own praise, glory, and honour, which he will never give to another. God is a husband; and is jealous of the love, obedience, and affections, of his own church, and will not be provoked with a whorish heart. Now, if his people bow their knees and give his praise to idols, as Solomon did; or if any rival to God be set up, called, "the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy;" or if the affections be alienated from God, and gone after covetousness and the love of money, as Israel's heart was, which provoked God to wrath; or if inordinate affections, which are a member of the old man, be indulged to the creature, as David's was to Absalom, and Jacob's to Rachel, Jephthah's to his daughter, Jacob's to Joseph, or Eli's to Hophni and Phineas-these rivals to God are sure to be removed out of the way, or left to be a snare to the indulger. For when God is moved to anger, wrath, and jealousy, by the provocations of his people, he will then send the spirit of bondage upon them, and influence them with the same anger, wrath, and jealousy which his people provoke him to.

This may be seen in the matter of Eli - "Wherefore [saith God] kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering which I have commanded in mine habitation, and honourest thy sons above me?" I Sam. ii. 29. They kicked at God's sacrifice, which provoked the Lord; they abused the women that came to the house of God, "till people abhorred the offerings of the Lord; [which is called] grieving the Lord." Eli honoured his sons before God, by continuing them (from motives of affection) in the priests' office, whereby God was dishonoured. And all this God turns upon Eli: Samuel shall provoke Eli, as his sons had provoked God. "And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation; and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever; and the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart," I Sam. ii. 33. Thus Eli was to see an enemy, a rival in God's house, who was to consume his eyes; whom he was to view with a suspicious and jealous eye, to the grief of his heart. After this God begins to provoke him: for he speaks to Samuel, though a child, but no more to Eli. And thus God, when provoked to jealousy, puts those who provoke him, as it were, in his own place; then asks them how they like it, "and if they have not procured these things to themselves, in that they have forsaken the Lord their God," Jerem. ii. 17. And this is no more than the law of retaliation-measure for measure. I come now to the

6th head. Rebellion and discontent. Jonah is ordered to Nineveh. He rebels and goes to Joppa, in order to flee to Tarsus from the presence of God. He is thrown overboard, and sinks in the belly of hell. Then he is humbled, and prays heartily. God brings him up again, and repeats his command to Nineveh. Jonah goes, and delivers his message, which was all that God required of him. He might then have gone home again, if he would; but Jonah seeks another quarrel, like Lot's wife, who looked back to see what became of Sodom: Jonah "makes a booth, and sits there to see what becomes of the

city." He had no orders for all this; he might have left the event of his message to God. Jonah expects an overthrow of all the buildings by an earthquake, or some strange judgment; God meant an overthrow of idolatry. Jonah expects that all would presently go crying into hell; but God intended an universal cry to heaven. He begins to breathe out his anger against God; God breathes an east wind, and smites Jonah. Jonah faints; so he may - "God fainteth not, neither is weary." God raises a gourd; Jonah is pleased. God smites it; Jonah is angry again, and "does well to be angry, even unto death." Suppose he is-what of that? Nineveh shall stand in spite of him. His message was an over throw, not destruction. But God did not tell Jonah what he meant by an overthrow; then it proves (what every body knows) that "God giveth not account of any of his matters," Job, xxxiii. 13.

Jeremiah flees from the work, and is determined to have no more of it. God's anger is to come in like a torrent, and not one prophet to stand in the gap for Israel. A Jewish captain caught him, and brought him back, taking him for a traitor, who are wroth with him; they smite him, and put him in the prison, Jer. xxxvii. 13, 14. Moses desires to be killed outright, that he may not see his wretchedness.

A soul thus influenced with a spirit of bondage, while he is harassed with a legal conscience, is contented nowhere. The Psalmist wants the wing of a dove to fly away, and remain afar off in the wilderness. Another wishes that he had given up the ghost as soon as he came forth from the womb, and that no eye had seen him. Another is for a place of wayfaring men, that he may leave the people, and go from them. Elijah entreats the Lord to take away his life; which was what God never intended to do.

Every affliction under this spirit of bondage is singular, and works discontent. Had it been an enemy I could have borne it;

or, if it had been him that hated me, I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, &c. - everything but the right. Leah envies Rachel's beauty. Rachel envies Leah's fruitfulness. But nothing of this is felt while the love of Christ is enjoyed. I now proceed to the 7th particular. Despondency and desperation. The operations of this spirit of bondage, and the sensible displeasure of God felt in it, bow the soul down. "I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long." The Holy Spirit of God is grieved, and does not operate as a comforter; hence the complaint - "The comforter, that should relieve my soul, is far from me," Lam. i. 16. "Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace; I forgot prosperity; and I said, My strength and my hope are perished from the Lord," Lam. iii. 17, 18.

The sensible presence of God appears to be wholly withdrawn, and nothing left but a bitter sense of our loss, and the remembrance of former halcyon days, which the soul is ready to conclude are gone for ever. "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me; when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil!" Job, xxix. 2-6.

Looking back to former indulgences, and to former banquets, is the chief employ of a soul thus influenced. "There is bread enough in my father's house, and to spare, [saith the prodigal,] but I perish with hunger;" and fearing that he should be damned as an apostate or as an hypocrite in Zion, he wished to be reduced to the level of a common bond-servant. "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as an hired servant." Thus legal bondage, meeting with guilt in his conscience, brought him to himself.

But then it may be asked, why such good men, and especially such a man as Job, who obtained so good a report through faith, and to whom God gave so great a testimony as to call him "a perfect and an upright man," &c. &c. who was so abundant in every good word and work-why such a man should be exercised with legal bondage again? That he was abundant in good works is plain by what he advances: "I made a covenant with mine eyes, [to keep my heart chaste.] If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; if my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes; and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands; then let me sow, and let another eat. If I did despise the cause of my man servant or maid servant when they contended with me; if I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep. The stranger did not lodge in the street, but I opened my doors to the traveller; yea, I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I plucked the spoil out of the teeth of the oppressor, and caused the widow's heart to sing, for joy." He had instructed many; his words had upholden them that were falling, and he had strengthened the feeble knees. "O that one would hear me! Behold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book: surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me: I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him." I desire to "be weighed in an even balance, that the Almighty may know mine integrity," Job, xxxi. 6.

Now it may be asked, Are not these good works? And it must be answered, Yes, they are. And is not this being fruitful, and abounding in the work of the Lord? It certainly is. But he calls all these performances his own. I did this, I did that; but never

acknowledges the help and power of God, which "worked in him both to will and to do all these things." He takes all the glory of his good works to himself, and robs God of the glory of his grace. If he was rich, who made him so? If he eschewed evil, who gave him a tender conscience, and that fear? If he was liberal, who opened his heart? David says, "What am I and my people, that we should offer thus willingly? To some it is given to gather together and to heap up, but not an heart given to do good therewith." And who made Job to differ? If Job instructed many, who gave him wisdom? If he was eyes to the blind, who gave him understanding? If he strengthened the weak hands, whence came the blessing and the power? Job takes the glory of all these things to himself; but God was the agent and author of all these good works, and will not give his glory to another.

Come, Job (says God), you have performed wonders; and I must be greatly indebted to you, to be sure, for all these good fruits, which were put forth by my Spirit. You call for the Almighty to answer you. You call me our adversary, and weigh that I had written a book of your performances; you would take it on your shoulder, and bind it as a crown to you, and as a prince you would draw near to me. You desire to be weighed in an even balance, that I may know your integrity. You desire to reason with God. You tell me enough of what you have done, but you say nothing of my working in you to will and to do. Wherefore I will cease working in you. My presence, my visitations, my dew of grace, shall be withdrawn: and I will send my law and its demands into your conscience, and you shall see what that requires, and how infinitely short your obedience comes when laid to that rule; and by that law I will neither minister my grace to you, nor work in you; that law is your debt-book, that law is the handwriting that is against you. Now cast up your accounts, and see what I owe you, or what you owe me. By my law you shall have the knowledge of your sin, and in that law I will hide my

face, and I shall then see how you go on without me. "Wherefore hidest thou thy face from me, and holdest me for thine enemy? Wilt thou break a leaf; wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth," Job, xiii. 24-26. Job is now got to the black mount. God's face is hid. He feels the law working wrath in him. "Thou holdest me for thine enemy." The hand-writing is before him. "Thou writest bitter things against me." And by the law is the knowledge of sin. "I possess the iniquities of my youth."

Why do you cry out, Job? This is the even balance of my sanctuary, in which you wished to be weighed. Come, Job, I have not done with you; I will take you away from my mercy seat: the Ransom, the Surety, and the Redeemer, that I have provided, shall be out of spirit for a while; and I will draw near to you in wrath, and on a throne of judgment: for thou knowest but little of me yet. "And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me in secret till thy wrath be past; that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me," Job, xiv. 3-13.

Now, Job, you are at a throne of judgment, and you feel my wrath in the law against you as a transgressor; and where are now all your good works? Will they answer for you? Oh, no, if he will enter into judgment with man he cannot answer him one of a thousand. In this even balance you are found wanting, Job, I am indeed; therefore put me in a surety with thee. And now where wilt thou go? O let me go to the throne of grace. O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. What do you want to get there for, Job? Why to get away from a throne of judgment, from the hand-writing, from the wrath of God, and from my angry judge; for there, at the mercy-seat, "the righteous might dispute with

him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge," Job, xxiii. 7.

A child of God (like Job) who has known the benefits and blessings of a mercy-seat; who has experienced the dew of God's grace; who has been blessed with the visitation of God; who has felt the candle of the Lord shining upon his head, and the Almighty's presence with him, and the glory of God fresh in him (Job, xxix.); I say, for such a soul to be brought to the darkness of the old mount (where the face of God is hid); to be placed afresh before the hand-writing of the law; to have his corruptions stirred up by it; to possess the iniquities of his youth; to feel the wrath of God, yea the terrors, curses, and threatening, of the law; all these "arrows of the Almighty are within me (saith Job), the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me," Job, vi. 4; I say, for a soul that is thus dealt with, and sensibly set before a throne of judgment, to be shut up in legal bondage, and grasped by the hand of an angry God, under which sensible anger Satan tempted him to blaspheme the Almighty, because he appeared in such wrath against him; I say, such a law-work, works nothing but despondency and desperation. "Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate?" Job, vi. 26.

We have got some fools in a profession, who tell us that a believer cannot be entangled again in legal bondage. "It is the working of his own corruptions," say they, "and Satan's temptations." But the spirit of truth calls it "the anger of God, the wrath of God, the arrows of God, the terrors of God, the indignation of God, the burning jealousy of God, the heavy hand of God, the provocations of God, [and] the judgments of God:" and, until such fools can distinguish between the law of God and their own corruptions; between the arrows of God and the fiery darts of Satan; they are ignorant of God's teaching, and ought to hold their peace, and be swift to hear,

and slow to speak, and not set themselves up for masters, "lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil."

But the true case and state of such men is this. They are conscious to themselves that they are in a splendid profession and yet are ignorant of this divine teaching; wherefore they call the lashes of their consciences, their fears, their apprehensions, their bondage, &C. the workings of the old man, and Satan's devices against them; and that bearing up under and against these, is fighting the good fight of faith; whereas the truth of the matter is this: - it is the wrath of God, the bondage of the law, and the curse of it, working in their souls for their hypocritical profession; being destitute of the grace of God, and having never been born again of God; so that their fighting is beating the air. It is not the fight of faith, but of rebellion; not against Satan, but against both God and conscience; and God makes this manifest in every professor, whom he gives up to hardness of heart, to a fearful looking-for of judgment, to damnable heresies, to open profanity, to madness, or to self-murder. I proceed now,

8. To shew the sensible dryness and barrenness that attend legal bondage. By the law God doth not communicate his Spirit, and without his influences there can be no fruit. Refreshings come from God's presence; but in the law his presence can never be enjoyed; no good fruit, unless we abide in the vine; for under the legal yoke Christ profits us nothing, with respect to sensible union and communion; our joys withers, and love waxes cold. No blossoming like a rose, with divine enlargement; no heavenly-mindedness, no life and peace enjoyed; nothing felt within but God's anger, man's rebellion, and Satan's assaults; nothing without but gloominess, fresh scenes of troubles, and dissatisfaction with every thing. A preacher under this spirit may storm and rage, and think to frighten men out of their sins, and drive them to heaven with these lashes of legal terrors, and the thunderbolts

of damnation; but all in vain; sinners are only hardened by it, and saints are starved. It is no better than attempting to "force the Spirit of grace itself, and bind his consort liberty." Milton.

Such a soul, re-entangled with the yoke of bondage, communicates nothing but bondage to others. His conversation is nothing but complaints; groaning under sin, talking of his doubts, fears, and dreadful apprehensions. His converse savours of nothing, but horror, terror, torment, bondage, and wrath, dread, death, and damnation; and what he discourses of, that he leaves behind him wherever he does. He is barren in his soul, barren in his closet, barren in his family, barren in the pulpit, barren in the pew, barren in the church, and barren in the world. No unction, no salt, no oil of joy, no savoury meat, no water of life, comes by the law: it is a dark and dry mountain in a barren land; and he that goes there is filled with darkness, and his conversation is nothing but confusion, vain jangling, inconsistencies, and self-contradiction. Such souls are dried up like a potsherd; their joys are withered away, and they may cry, as others have done, "My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!"

And, as to those poor blind souls, who tell us that legal bondage can never again influence a child of God; but that all this bondage, fear, wrath and terror, are only the stirrings of corruption, they would do well to inform us how corruption can work without the law; for "where there is no law there is no transgression; the motions of sin are by the law; the strength of sin is the law; by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law was added that the offence might abound;" and sin takes occasion by the commandment, and works in the members through the commandment. The law is man's debt-book, and reveals the wrath of the creditor against the debtor. In Christ sin is done away, and God is well pleased; but nowhere else. And, as to making Satan the only instigator of the stirrings of corruption, is making him divided against himself. "The strong

man armed (in an unawakened sinner) keeps his goods in peace:" and his work with a back sliding saint is to rock him to sleep, or lull him into carnal security, as he did David when he fell. It was not Satan, but God by his prophet, that awakened him out of his lethargy. The law therefore is a dreadful chastening rod in the hand of God: and, though there is no vindictive wrath to a chosen vessel, Christ having answered for him; yet a believer influenced by a spirit of bondage, and gone back to the law, feels no less than the wrath and anger of God working in him; as it is written, "In my wrath I smote thee. Thou wast angry with me, but thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." "His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but in great mercies will I gather thee." Which leads me to the

9th head, namely A backwardness and reluctance to all that is good. The scripture, in many places, speaks against such a soul, who cannot exercise faith on the promises. His heart is shut up, the Bible is a sealed book to him, and therefore it gets out of favour with him. "Repent, and do thy first works," &c.

The ordinances are a dry breast. He cannot mix faith with the good tidings, and therefore comes with reluctance, rather driven with terror than drawn by love. "I have somewhat against thee; thou hast left thy first love."

The cheerful countenances of lively saints are rather a grief and trouble to him than otherwise. He cannot help envying them even in the house of God; he looks at them with a jealous eye; and often concludes that he is like Saul, who, when left of God, hated David. "Every sermon I hear," saith such a soul, "will rise up in judgment against me and occasion my greater damnation." And, were it not for the strong hand of

God upon him, the ways of Zion would be unoccupied by him. As to Christian conference, it only discovers his nakedness; instead of well set hair, he appears in baldness, and chooses at times to sit solitary, "like a sparrow alone upon the housetop, like a pelican of the wilderness, or an owl of the desert;" yea, he had rather get behind a corner, or cross the street, than meet a child of God who walks in the light of the Lord's countenance.

Family and closet prayer brings nothing in; he therefore goes with reluctance to it, and performs it with grief, under slavish fear and sensible displeasure; and, not finding nearness of access, nor success, in praying, he is backward to it. "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, and thou hast been weary of me, O Israel."

His love being chilled, and waxed cold, his heart is shut up to the cause of God, and to the poor and needy of the Lord's household; he is not a cheerful giver; far from it; and, if covetousness was one of his constitutional sins, it will hover over him again, and cleave to him, though he is ashamed of it; and, as he can get no comfort from his God, nor any with the saints, he is cold and indifferent both to God and to his people. I come now to discover,

10. His legal strivings against sin and corruption while under this spirit of bondage. He finds his soul bitter, and his temper peevish. He murmurs and inwardly frets, at everything that makes against him; and indeed nothing seems to go well with him; his spirit is stiff and stubborn; God, in a way of providence as well as grace, seems "to walk contrary to him, and he walks contrary to God. He is froward; and God shews himself froward." His enmity against God is stirred up; and hard thoughts of God possess him, which at times are unadvisedly spoken with his lips; or, as the prophet says, "his tongue muttereth perverseness." Against these corruptions he

strives hard; but they stir not a whit the less for that. He goes forth in the morning, determined to watch his conduct more narrowly, and to be more upon his guard than ever: but, when he balances his books at night, he is just where he was, or rather worse. He then resolves, he promises, and he vows; but all in vain: he breaks through all in thought, word, and deed; for there is no spiritual might communicated to strengthen the inward man by the law, no help but from the sanctuary; no strength but out of Zion.

He now determines (like Job) to give all up, come on him what will; or else to harden himself in sorrow; when another cloud of sensible displeasure rolls over him; fears, terror, and expectations of worse to come, move him again; to work he goes afresh, and soon finds himself "plunged into the same ditch again, till his own clothes abhor him." He stands amazed at what is come upon him; he cannot make a judgment of himself, nor of his state; nor does he know what to say. "If I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse; and if I am righteous I will not know my soul." He weeps, melts, and confesses; his eye pours out tears unto God. Another billow rolls over him, and as he is again hardened, feeling himself as stubborn as an ass, and as rebellious as Satan. "Let me alone (says he), that I may take comfort a little; let me alone, that I may swallow down my spittle. Thou fillest me with bitterness, and givest me with bitterness, and givest me the water of gall to drink." He wishes to examine his former profession carefully by the word of God; but he is too dark to make a proper judgment, and too confused to come to any point of certainty. Have I any claim upon God, or have I not? Is my faith genuine, or is it presumption? If the latter, I have committed the unpardonable sin. His heart and flesh fail at the thought, and the spirit of heaviness sinks him. A ray of light shines into him, which is eclipsed in a moment. A promise comes, but brings no power nor deliverance. Hope moves, and the soul melts; "but that passes away as a cloud." One single word at

the latter end of a sermon, and that is all; and sometimes even that is coyly put away, and in thought applied to another, who is more worthy. He cannot please conscience, nor will conscience be reconciled to him. He is in himself miserable, and he makes all miserable about him. Cheerfulness "is singing songs to a heavy heart;" he therefore hates it. He is a companion for none but those in the hospital; and if he meets one more miserable than himself, he will set to work to comfort him, and hold forth that consolation to his patient which he cannot take to himself.

He will sit down and quarrel with God; but, if he hears another at it, he will reprove him for his rebellion. He cavils at the word of God; but he cannot bear that another should. In his heart he will rail at the preacher, and at his sermon too; but he will not suffer any body else to speak evil of either. He wants ease, but he is afraid of it; he wants comfort, but refuses to take it; and he wants healing, but hates them that try to heal him, lest it should be done slightly, and lest they should cry, Peace! When God had not spoken peace. He diets himself, he fasts, he eats herbs: he scruples this and that-taste not, touch not, handle not; but he is barren still. I come now to the

11th head, Which is the miserable success that attends this legal labour. All his striving against sin in his own strength is like Peter's resolution, only betrays him into sin, and into the sieve of Satan; for without Christ he can do nothing. And every time he sins there is something fresh for the wrath of the law to work on, and fresh matter for conscience to accuse of; both which awaken his fears, and summon all his terrors about him. "If I sin, then thou markest me, and wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me: changes and war are against me," Job, x. 14, 17.

Hardness of heart always attends this labour in vain. The poor creature may groan till his breast-bone be sore, but his heart cannot melt; nor can he pour out either his soul, or one penitential tear, to God, without a ray from the sun of righteousness, and that is seldom more than momentary. Why hast thou made us to err from thy way, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?"

Cutting disappointments attend this legal labour. He promises himself rest in this place, but finds none; he expects relief from this book, and under that preacher; he thinks such a morning will bring, peace, and the next Sabbath will set all to rights. But none of his purposes stand. "My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of mine heart," Job, xvii. 11.

He is ready to conclude that his former experience of the divine favour was nothing but a trap, intended to set him as a fairer butt for God's indignation, and that he will take an advantage of all his former humble confessions, and condemn him out of his own mouth. "He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow," Lam. iii. 12.

A self-righteous spirit works sadly in the soul at such times as these. He will vindicate himself, and cast all the blame upon God. "Wilt thou disannul my judgments? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" Job, xl. 8.

Sad darkness and ignorance attend the soul under this legal bondage; and yet such souls have much pride and self-conceit. Hence Job is charged with "darkening counsel by words without knowledge," Job, xxxvii. 2; "uttering things which he understood not, things too wonderful for him, which he knew not," Job, xlii. 3.

There is in such a soul a strife with the Almighty, and a disapprobation of his measures; a censuring his providence, and an arrainging of his conduct. But "whoever hardened

himself against him, or whoever strove with him, and prospered? Why dost thou strive against him? For he giveth not account of any of his matters," Job, xxxiii. 13.

This is deep calling unto deep, one trouble answering another, and the ill success attending it. This bringing forth wind is all the fruit produced by one entangled with this yoke of bondage; who labours to get victory over sin by his own arm, and to get peace and comfort from his own performances. One believing view of Christ, or one propitious look from Christ, and nothing else, will deliver a soul from this grievous, this galling, yoke of bondage.

1. I shall now mention a few things that generally precede, or go before, this yoke of bondage, as procuring causes of it; and one is an itching ear. The Galatians and the Corinthians were not satisfied with the truth, nor yet with the apostle; and there-fore got this legal leaven by the ministers of Satan. They turned their ears from the truth that maketh free, and got the law that genders to bondage.

2. Rash and unrighteous censuring and judging of the Lord's people, making his preachers offenders for a word; or for condemning what they never felt, what they never understood, and what they cannot disprove, is most sure, in the end, to bring on this yoke, and themselves at the bar of judgment; for to condemn the just is an abomination to God. Hence the caution-"Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged," Matt. vii. 2. A man who judges in spiritual matters must be a person of good experience in church authority and of good discernment; and one who has truth at the root, truth in view, and the honour of God, and not his own, at heart.

3. Prejudiced conceived, and enmity cherished in the heart, against a preacher, or against a brother, without a just cause, or even if there be a real cause, is sure, sooner or later, to

bring on this yoke of bondage. The servant that obtained forgiveness for ten thousand talents, could not forgive his brother the debt of five hundred pence; he was therefore delivered to the bondage of the law, the wrath of God, the lashes of conscience, and the darts of Satan; all which tormented him till he could yield that submission and resignation to God, and that affection for his brother that is due unto God, and to his brother for God's sake. "Never," says a wise man, "judge another till thou hast put thyself in his place," lest, when "thou judgest another, thou condemnest thine own self. And thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Romans, ii. 1, 3.

4. Reading erroneous books, and attempting to be "wise above what is written," has betrayed many into the entanglement of this yoke of bondage; when a false fire, and fresh views of things, have wonderfully enamoured them, bringing fresh sparks of light and heat, whilst the old fire from the altar, and the good old wine, have been uninflamming and unpalatable to them, and they have been charmed till they were poisoned, and have been, like "Ephraim, broken in judgment," by willingly following "after the commandment," Hosea, v. 11; after the doctrines and commandments of men which turn from the truth.

And now I suppose my reader, if he be a man that fears God, a person of any long standing in the church of Christ, and in any measure acquainted with divine tuition, will hardly believe that the author of this discourse, who has been twenty-two years in the school of Christ, twenty one in the ministry, and has gone through the various operations of the spirit of bondage as herein related, and who has compared notes both with the Bible and with Bible saints, should be counted a liar for all this, and be traduced as a misguided and misinformed man, and as one who traces things up to God and to his holy law, which can only be traced up to Satan and to the

corruption of the human heart. Therefore I submit what I have written to God, and to the judgment of wisdom's children. And, if it be false, let Mr. Hacker, whom God is now making, manifest, "prove me a liar in all this, and make my speech nothing worth." If he can overthrow what I have here advanced, and prove all those things, which the Holy Ghost attributes to God, to be applicable only to Satan, and all that the scriptures apply to the law to be only the working of corruption, then the work is done.

But we are told, that "a believer's re-entanglement by the moral law is inconsistent with the abolition of it." Then this inconsistency is to be found in the word of God; and let them who are wise above what is written disprove it, or cast the blame there.

That the law is abolished and done away in Christ, the scriptures witness, 2 Cor. iii. 13. That the Galatians, who stood not fast in their liberty, but were leavened with legal leaven, were going to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage, Gal. v. 1, is scriptural also. So that this inconsistency is founded upon the very letter of scripture text. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," says the Saviour. "You suffer if a man bring you into bondage," 2 Cor. xi. 20. "False brethren were brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage," Gal. ii. 4. "Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the disciples necks," Acts, xv. 10, "by compelling them to be circumcised and keep the law?" Acts xv. 5. But, if there be no such thing as a yoke of bondage to re-entangle a believer, then the apostles were in no danger by these false brethren, nor the Galatians neither. But this inconsistency is not only to be found in the Bible, but in the experience of God's children. Luther found enough of it, as appears in his comment on the Galatians. And I have felt so much of it since I could call Jesus my Lord and my God, that I declare in the

presence of God, I would not go through it again for a thousand worlds. But it was God's will that I should know law from Gospel, not only in my head by the scriptures, but in my heart by their different operations. Paul knew what it was to go bound in the spirit, and what it was to be made "all things to all men; as under the law;" to them that were under the law;" and what it was to warn sinners "for three years night and day, with tears." And I much question if there is one child of God in this nation, twenty years old in grace, that has not felt this yoke, or at times been more or less influenced with a spirit of bondage. Thus this inconsistency is to be found in the Bible, and in the experience of all the saints of God: but there is a worse inconsistency to be found in graceless professors, and that's, "promising others liberty while themselves are the servants of corruption."

The Lying Prophet Examined.

We expect when Christ, the great head of the church, raises up a prophet under the New Testament dispensation, to have,

First, Some account of his call, faith, conversion, regeneration, and commission to his office. None are to speak in Christ's name except they believe; and the Spirit is promised to all that believe: and we are to try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this rule the true apostles tried the false ones, and found them liars.

2. We expect the power of God, more or less, to be manifested in a prophet that Christ sends; he must be endued

with power from on high: but Mr. Brothers gives us no account of any power put forth in him, nor are his writings either weighty or powerful; nor does any power through his instrumentality work in the hearts of any of God's children; nor is he made manifest in the conscience of them who believe and know the truth. We do not want to know the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power.

3. We do not expect a New Testament prophet to assume to himself any secular titles; there are to be no rabbies in Christ's church; "*Be not ye called Rabbi:*" there are to be no masters but one, which is Christ; no lords over God's heritage: he that will be great is to be servant of all: no prince and prophet over the church but Jesus Christ, the prince of peace.

4. It is no sign of a true prophet to arrogate all knowledge to himself, as if all wisdom was to die with him; for all the Lord's children shall be taught of God: "*They shall all know me, saith the Lord, from the least to the greatest of them:*" to them it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; and when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world, the Christian world, will learn righteousness as well as Mr. Brothers: his arrogating all the knowledge of the times to himself is no mark of a true prophet, but of a false One: it is not for him to know the time when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel. The apostles put this question to Christ, whose answer is, "*It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,*" Acts i. 7.

5. A prophet of God is to speak as the oracles of God do; he is to say no other things than Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, have said should come to pass. "*To the law [Moses] and to the testimony [of Jesus]; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*"

6. When men pretend to fix the day, the hour, the times, or years, which God has put in his own power, they are to be suspected. *"Of the times and seasons,"* saith Paul, *"ye have no need that I write unto you,"* Why? *"We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long,"* Psalm lxxiv. 9.

7. It is expected that the predictions or prophecies of a true prophet of God come to pass; for none of God's words shall fall to the ground, or pass away unaccomplished. *"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."*

By the above rules any simple believer may warrantably try any person that pretends to the sacred office of a prophet, and he will find, I doubt not, that Mr. Brothers is deficient by every one of them.

His account of the age of the world will never gain much credit with those who know the scriptures and the power of God: the best of chronologers are known to differ in their calculations; and as to his pretended revelation from God of the exact age of the world, few will believe, unless it is the simple, who believe every word. The times and seasons the Father keeps in his own power; yet the general hints given in the scriptures seem to me to run counter to the age of the world as fixed by Mr. Brothers:

The world was made in six days, and on the seventh God rested. That seventh day was appointed a day of rest to the Jews, and every seventh year likewise was to be a sabbath of rest for the land; and every seven times seven were to be counted also, and the fiftieth year was to be a time of general rest, in which the trumpet was to sound, and the bondservant was to go free. All these were general hints of future things:

yea, Paul tells us, that the sabbath is a shadow of things to come; which by him is called a rest that remains for the people of God; and they that believe have an earnest of it in this life, and shall enter into the rest promised, and rest from their works, as God did from his. This sabbath is pointed out to be the shadow of a thousand years; for the holy and blessed people, who have a part in the first resurrection, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years in the new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelled righteousness; that is, in which dwelled righteous persons, or persons possessing righteousness. We are twice told in the scriptures that a thousand years with the Lord is as one day, and one day as a thousand years; and hence it appears that the seventh millennium is the substance of the sabbath, and of this the sabbath is a shadow; in which the saints will reign with Christ, and rest from their works as God did from his: this was prefigured by the seventh year, when the land of Canaan had rest; for this new earth will not be cultivated; and it was typified by the fiftieth year, when the jubilee trumpet sounded: for at the beginning of this term, whenever it comes, the Lord will descend with the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: and when this angel sounds his trumpet, the mystery of God will be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets, Rev. x. 7. Thus in the beginning of the seventh day, which with the Lord is a thousand years, and at the seventh sound of the seventh trumpet, the Walls of Jericho will fall, and its inhabitants be no more; and then there will be an universal shout among the true Israelites, crying Grace, grace, to the new and heavenly Jerusalem! but the day, the hour, the time, or year, when this sabbath of rest will commence, we know not; for though the mystery is declared to God's servants the prophets, yet not the exact date when: "For of that day and hour knoweth no man: no, not the angels of heaven; but my Father only." Hence it appears that none of the above general hints agree with Mr. Brothers's age of the world: there is much to be done

before the seventh millennium takes place: much less doth he know the time that God hath fixed for the restoration of the Jews. The scriptures signify that many great things are to be accomplished before their return to their own land, and their return will be some considerable time before the end of all things.

1. We have reason to fear that much of the ground which the Protestants have gained of the Papists, will be regained by them; I Mean, where it is by law established: for we read of the outer court not being measured, because it is given unto the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2. This court is said to be without the temple: the temple, according to Paul, are those worshippers whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost; and the outer court are external and formal worshippers, of every denomination, who are not inspired, who do not worship God in the Spirit, whose bodies are not God's temple; which outer court is given to the Gentiles, as the outer court of the temple was, which is called the court of the Gentiles: the Gentiles are the Romans: to these Roman Gentiles, when pagan, Christ was delivered, and by them put to death; and to the Roman Gentiles, now papal, this outer court is given: which work is the work that is now carrying on both in England and Ireland: and it goes on apace; and this is obvious to every discerning Christian, and is discerned by every illuminated person that I know in this metropolis with whom I have conversed about these things, not me excepted.

2. The scriptures inform Us that the witnesses of Christ, the ministers. of the gospel, are to be slain, silenced, or killed in a civil sense, after this outer court is taken by the Gentiles; and their dead bodies are to lie in the streets of the great three years and a half: this will be the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall; a day when the city of Zion will be low in a low place; and when the whore of Babylon shall sit as a queen and boast that she shall see no more sorrow nor

widowhood: but the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; *"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."* And this gaining the outer court seems to be the business that will be going on under the sound of the sixth trumpet, which in all probability is the present time; but of this we cannot be certain.

3. The man of sin is to continue forty and two months, that is, a thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days or years, from the time that he was revealed the son of perdition; but whether from the time of the emperor's leaving Rome and going to Ravenna, or from the year 606, when Phocas proclaimed the pope of Rome universal bishop, we know not: if it is to be dated from the latter, his reign may have near seventy years yet to run before it be expired: *"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man."*

4. We may expect that the slaughter of the witnesses will be a little before the expiration of antichrist's reign, who are to send gifts one to another on the occasion of their death, which is to last but three years and a half; at the expiration of which term the Spirit of God re-enters them, and they ascend up into an heavenly state of mind, and appear again as a cloud of witnesses for Christ, to the utter confusion of all the offspring of Jezebel, who will be alarmed, and struck with a panic at their unexpected appearance in such an exalted state.

5. At which time the ten toes on the feet of Daniel's image, or the ten kings which have been of one mind with the beast, that is, of one religion with him; who have given their power to him; who have committed fornication with the whore of Babylon, and who have caused all the nations, which they rule and govern, to drink of the wine of her fornication; will have their hearts turned to hate the whore, to eat her flesh, and to

burn her with fire; for God hath put it into their hearts to fulfil his will, Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

6. The angel that is to proclaim that Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and another who is to come forth with the everlasting gospel, which is to be preached to every nation under heaven, are both to begin their work before the restoration of the Jews to their own land. The man of sin hath long been a stumbling-block to the Jews and a let to the fullness of the Gentiles; and the Turks or Mahometans, are now in possession of the holy land, and both will and must be removed before the Jews will ever return to Palestine: the Turks are not only in possession of the land of Canaan, but of Egypt also, which lies in the way to it; and these must and will be removed out of the way, when God smites the river Nile in her seven streams, and makes men to go over dry-shod.

7. The Jews will be converted to the faith of Christ before ever they return to their own country. The Gentiles, at the first promulgation of the gospel, sat down at the feet of Jewish preachers, and received the gospel from Christ through the instrumentality of them; for mercy came to us through the infidelity of the Jewish nation; and through the instrumentality and mercy of the Gentile saints shall salvation be conveyed to the Jews: and so it is written; "*As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*" And to this agree the words of Christ, which are spoken to the Gentile church concerning the Jewish synagogue, "*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie), behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*"

According to the scriptures there are six vials of wrath to be poured out upon the pope's dominions, under the sounding of the sixth trumpet; which trumpet is, in all probability, now sounding, and the first vial perhaps is now pouring out; and all the rest, like Job's messengers, will quickly follow one another: but it is to be feared that the man of sin will regain all that he hath yet lost before his ruin; and that he will set up his religion as the established religion, even in Great Britain, before he comes to his end: for "*He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him,*" Dan. xi. 45. We may conclude from hence that it is not the first vial, nor the second, nor the third, that will destroy, the whore of Babylon, though they will lead on to it, It is the fourth angel's vial that eclipses the pope's glory, and the fifth that destroys his seat. The fourth angel poured out his vial on the sun, and the fifth on the seat of the beast, Rev. xvi. 8-10.

According to what has been observed, the sixth trumpet must sound out, six vials must be all poured forth; the seat of the beast must be destroyed by ten kings, which shall hate the whore, and burn her with fire, Rev. xvii. 16. The Turks must be removed, and Mahometanism destroyed, Rev. xvi. 12; the everlasting gospel must be preached and spread, Rev. xiv. 6; kings must come to the brightness of Lion's rising, Isai. lx. 3, and minister to the church of God, Isa. lx. 10; the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of Christ, and with the fullness of the Gentiles the Jews will come in, and a nation of them be born at once. All these things will be done, which is too much to be done by the year 1798, before the Jews will return, or be restored to their own land; in which return or restoration Mr. Brothers will have no more hand than I shall. I shall now consider a few of Mr. Brothers's prophecies: and first he informs us, in the fifth page of his first book,

Quote. The restoration of the Jews will commence with the destruction of war, to favour their return and build the city; when all nations will rejoice with them, and once more receive from Jerusalem the commands of the living God.

Answer. I object to three things in this quotation: the

First is, that there will be war after the restoration of the Jews; for the remains of the unconverted nations of the Turks will wage war with the Jews in the land of Israel: the whole thirty-ninth chapter of Ezekiel is an account of this war: which army is to fall upon the mountains of Israel, verse "*And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set On fire and burn the weapons, both shields and bucklers, the bows and the arrows, arid the hand-staves and the spears, and they shall burn them with tire seven years; so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests: for they shall burn the weapons with fire, and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them:*" verses 9, 10. But who have robbed them? Why the Turks, who are now in possession of their country: and God says, "*It shall come to pass in that day that I will give unto Gog a place of graves in Israel, and seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them,*" verses 11, 12. And no doubt but Christian princes, who will further their return to their own land, will assist them in this war. But when is this war to commence? I answer, after the Jews' conversion: for so it is written; "*Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God,*" verse 29. Thus there will be war in the land of Israel after the Jews' conversion, and after their return to their own land.

2. I object to Mr. Brothers's account of the Jews rebuilding the city of Jerusalem at their return; for when Israel went first into the holy land God gave great and goodly cities which they

builded not, and houses full of all good things which they filled not, and wells digged which they digged not; vineyards and olive trees which they planted not, Deut. vi. 10, 11. The city of Jerusalem was standing when they first entered Canaan, though they did not possess it till the days of David; and Jerusalem is still standing, and is still a city, encompassed with a strong Wall, not less than two miles in circumference; and as God lifted up his hand at first to give them the land of Canaan after they came out of Egypt, so it will be when they are restored: for as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up, after the manner of Egypt, Isai. x. 26.

3. Instead of all nations receiving the commands of God from the Jews, when restored to Jerusalem, it is plain that the Jews themselves will receive the gospel of Christ at the hands of Gentile ministers; for Christ declares that the Jews shall worship before the feet of the Gentiles, and shall know that Christ hath loved the Gentile church, Rev. iii. 9. Not one of these three things are true, nor is the next quotation true.

Quote. And they shall look to me that was pierced; and shall mourn, like him that mourns for his only son; and shall be in bitterness, like him that is in bitterness for his firstborn. This verse will be fulfilled by the Jews after their return.

Answer. The Spirit of supplication made intercession with groaning for the children of Israel, when they were in Egypt, and God heard their groanings, and came down and delivered them: and the Spirit of life was poured upon them when they were like a valley of dry bones in Babylon, before their return to Canaan, Ezek. xxxvii. 14; and so the Spirit will be poured upon them again, and they will be converted to the faith and worship with the Gentile believers, before their return to Canaan: the Spirit will shew them marvellous things before their restoration "*According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew him marvellous things.*"

Quote. The last dispersion of the Jews, and their being trod under foot of all nations, to the time of their return in the latter days, is two thousand three hundred years.

Answer. This mystery is known to none but God. The disciples asked this secret of the Saviour, after his resurrection, saying, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*" Hence it is plain that this secret time is not to be known by man. Secondly, it is a time and season that God has concealed, and put in his own power; and therefore, before Mr. Brothers can fix it, he must prove that he is God: or else he must appear to be, what I am sure he is, namely, a false prophet.

Quote. Days are mentioned by the angel instead of years, to conceal the meaning of the prophecy till the proper time, and the appointed person for it to be revealed to: the present is the time that was then intended; I am the appointed person for it to be revealed to, and the prophet commanded to make it known.

Answer. In this quotation we learn three things:

First, That days are put for years, to conceal the meaning of the prophecy.

2. That the time there specified is the present time: and,

3. That Mr. Brothers is the person for it to be revealed to, and the prophet appointed to make it known. All of which are false.

First, Days are not put for years to conceal the meaning of it from any body; for Moses teacheth us to distinguish prophetic days from common days; and tells us that there are weeks of days and weeks of years; and teacheth us the difference

between the seventh day, which is the sabbath of rest for Israel, Exod. xx. 9, 10, and the seventh year, which is the sabbatical year, or year of rest for the land, Lev. xxv. 4; so that this mystery is not concealed for the sake of Mr. Brothers: for there are few, if any, writers of note, which have been in the Christian church, which have not taken notice of it: and indeed the former accomplishment of prophecies has made it manifest to all that have any discernment, that Daniel's weeks could never be true of weeks of days, but of weeks of years. Hence it appears that Mr. Brothers. is not the first man that hath been in this secret.

2. Nor does the present time appear to be the time of cleansing the sanctuary, nor are there any signs of it; nor does Mr. Brothers know what he means by it. The second temple is destroyed, nor is a third temple, literally speaking, ever promised, and therefore never to be expected on a scriptural ground: nor will there be any more temple worship in a literal sense: the temple was a type of the body of Christ, and, when the Jews destroyed the temple of his body, he rent the veil of the second temple in twain, and consecrated a new and living way into the holy of holies, eternal in the heavens, through the veil of his flesh; and ever since he dwells not in temples made with hands, but looks to, and dwells with, them that are of a contrite spirit, and that tremble at his word; whose bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost: as God hath said, "*I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*"

3. Nor does the time of the Jews' return to their own land appear to be revealed even to Daniel himself. It is true, the angel asks Christ, "*How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?*" And the Saviour "*held up his right hand and left hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be a time, times, and a half,*" Dan. xii. 6, 7. Which date doth not appear to take rise till the church's flight into the wilderness, at, or just before, the rise of antichrist,

when this date is brought in again. *"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness, into her place; where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."* The church's flight here seems to be taken at the appearance of a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, Rev. xii. 3; which must be at the time of the Roman empire being divided into ten kingdoms, with the pope at the head of them, and the time, times, and a half, are explained to be a thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days or years, in which she is to be fed in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 6.

Nor will the Jews be converted or restored while the church is in her wilderness state, but after her deliverance out of it; for the Jews will not be converted until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, of whose fullness there are no signs as yet; nor does the time of the Jews' return to their own land appear to have been made known even to Daniel himself. He inquires of the Saviour, it is true, and says, O my Lord, when shall be the end of these things? and he gets his answer; Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end, Dan. xii. 8, 9. The words are closed, and therefore hid; and sealed, and therefore must remain a secret till the time of the end, when the accomplishment of them will unseal them: nor have they ever been disclosed or unsealed to any, much less to Mr. Brothers.

Quote. *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch,"* meaning myself, *"shall grow out of his roots."*

Answer. If this rod and branch is Mr. Brothers, we are all in the dark: but we know that Christ is intended. He is called a plant of renown, and likewise God's servant the branch, who is to be called Jehovah our righteousness. Christ is likewise called a tender branch of the high cedar, Or one of the royal

family of David: which branch is to be set on a high mountain and an eminent; which means that God will set his King upon the holy hill of Zion; and under it shall dwell all fowls of every wing, Ezek. xvii. 22, 23: which is expressive of his universal reign, and is spoken in allusion to the king of Babylon, called a tree whose height reached to heaven, and his sight to all the earth, whose leaves were fair and fruit much; which tree was to be transplanted from Babylon to the Medes and Persians, then to the Grecians, and after that to the Romans, and then and there to be destroyed; and to be succeeded by this rod out of the stem of Jesse, who shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. God had overturned the Babylonish empire in Ezekiel's days, and said, "*I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, till he come whose right it is, and I will give it him;*" that is, he would overturn the Persian, Grecian, and Roman, until the time appointed for Christ to have dominion, whose right it is as God and Creator, and whose right it is as Map and Mediator, by the Father's gift; and hence it is said, "*I will give it him.*" Now let us see if this rod can be applied to Mr. Brothers.

1. This rod is to come out of the stem of Jesse. Mr. Brothers can produce no genealogy to prove that he is a descendant from him; and as for his revelations, we do not believe them.

2. The Spirit, with all his gifts and grace, is to rest upon this rod; which it never did upon any man but the man Christ Jesus, who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; for the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him, as he does to others.

3. He is not to judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, as all men do; which spews him to be the searcher of hearts and the trier of reins, and is expressive of his omniscience as God.

4. *"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.* Here we have four things that he shall do: he shall judge and justify the poor in spirit; and, in behalf of the meek, he shall reprove the oppressors and persecutors of his people, and that with equity; that is, he shall bring them in guilty by their own conscience, and leave their guilt and his reproofs to work there. *"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his strength,"* meaning his gospel, called the rod of his by which he rules, and which will be preached over the whole earth: *"and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked:"* by the breath of his mouth is meant the Spirit of his mouth, the voice of Christ by his ministers, in the gospel, called the dispensation of the Spirit: and slaying the wicked with it, is making it the savour of death unto death to them that believe not. This Person, called a rod from the stem of Jesse, is called Jehovah: *"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea;"* that is, when he comes to make manifest the savour of his name in every place.

5. *"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."* Here he is set forth as a standard or ensign, in whose death the banner of God's eternal love is displayed; to it the rebellious Gentiles are to seek and to repair, in order to obtain pardon and favour with God: for Christ hath received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. *"And his rest shall be glorious:"* he says to the weary and heavy laden, *"Come unto me, and I will give you rest;"* rest from the burden of sin, from the yoke of the law, and from the drudgery of Satan; and at last a glorious rest in heaven, where the weary are for ever at rest.

Now to whom does the apostle apply this root of Jesse? why to Christ, and none else. "*And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust,*" Rom. xv. 12. But this king of the Gentiles cannot be Mr. Brothers, because he cannot be a proper object of trust, being nothing but a man; for God hath cursed them that trust in man, and make flesh their arm, and in their heart depart from God. This King of the Gentiles is King of Zion, and blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Hence it is plain that, instead of the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Mr. Brothers, it is the spirit of Satan the father of lies: he is no prophet of God, nor servant of Christ; if he was, he would seek his master's honour, not his own; for Christ will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. But Mr. Brothers confesses,

Quote. I shall be called a false prophet, and every body will say I am arrogating to myself the place of Christ; for the English, as well as other European nations professing Christianity, have always supposed that the rod out of the stem of Jesse, alluded to in this chapter, meant the Lord Jesus Christ: indeed it does not, but a man composed of flesh and blood, like one of themselves, &c.

Answer. It is very strange that, as Christ is emphatically called the truth, and promises that the Spirit shall lead his people into all truth, all the European nations professing Christianity should be led to err in this great matter. The prophet informs us that this rod out of the stem of Jesse shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked, as hath been observed. Now who doth the Spirit of God apply this to? Why he applies it that to Jesus Christ. "*Let no man deceive you, for the day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is*

worshipped; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he that now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way, [namely, the Roman emperors, who let,] and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," 2 Thess, ii. In the first verse of this chapter we have an account of Christ; in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh verses, we have an account of the rise of antichrist; and, in the language of the prophet Isaiah, he is to be destroyed by the Rod of Jesse; the heresy of antichrist is to be consumed by the brightness of the Saviour's coming, and himself destroyed by the spirit of his mouth. And to this agrees Daniel: *"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire: a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame.* Hence it appears plain that the Holy Ghost, Isaiah, Paul, and Daniel, agree in the person meant by the Rod out of the stem of Jesse: Isaiah says, *"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked."* Paul says, that antichrist shall be consumed with the spirit of the Lord's mouth, and be destroyed with the brightness of his coming. And Daniel represents him as casting all temporal thrones down to the ground, and reigning as the Ancient of Days over all the earth: he represents him as coming on a fiery throne to burn the whore of Babylon, with books open, giving judgment in behalf of his martyrs, and judging those in wrath who have destroyed his people, with ten thousand times ten thousand ministering unto him, and standing before him: which is the Gentiles fullness, and the

converted Jews: and he sees him destroy antichrist, take his mystical body, and give it to the burning flame. And thus the inspired penmen, under a divine influence, are all unanimous in the person meant by the Rod out of the stem of Jesse; but not one ever dreamed of Mr. Brothers destroying the earth with the spirit of his mouth. But Mr. Brothers says,

Quote. That the Rod out of the stem of Jesse is a man, composed of flesh and blood, like one of ourselves.

Answer. And who denies that Christ is flesh and blood like unto ourselves, touching his manhood? when the scripture says that as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same and it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, whom the prophet calls a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree; by whose stripes, saith the prophet, we are healed. On account of whose incarnation the prophet calls him Emmanuel, God with us, or God in human nature; for Paul says, "*In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*" that is, all the perfections of Deity dwell in his human body: and in no other sense can he be called a rod out of the stein of Jesse but with respect to his human nature; for he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. Hence it appears plain by the scriptures of truth, and I think it my duty as a licensed minister of Christ, a servant of his Church, a loyal subject to my King, and a lover of my Country, to tell Mr. Brothers that he is a deceiver, a false prophet, and a liar in the name of God; and the times that he hath axed for the Jews' return will make him manifest, as well as this my testimony. Mr. Brothers woes on:

Quote. The married wife means Jerusalem at a former time, when rich and full of inhabitants; the desolate wife means Jerusalem at present: although she is a heap of rubbish and

levelled with the ground, the Jews will return in such great multitudes, that, when rebuilt, her extent and number of people will be far greater than at any former period. This is the true meaning of the prophecy, and not the Gentiles' deliverance, as is placed at the head of the chapter in the Bible.

Answer. The whole of this quotation is false; the whole current of scripture contradicts it; yea, the prophet himself contradicts it: "*Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear:*" but the Jewish church had not been barren to Christ, but had borne a great number of spiritual children, and therefore could never be said not to bear; nor could she be said not to travail with child, when she had brought forth the Saviour himself, and all the firstfruits professing Christianity were Jews: and therefore to be barren and not to bear, and not to travail with child, can never be true of her; for they seem to me to have been almost all that were brought forth to God for upwards of fifteen hundred years: for God says, "*You only have I known of all the families of the earth.*" But that the Gentiles had been barren and not borne is plain, for they were left without God, and having no hope in the world, and therefore could not bring forth children to whom they never knew. And this barren woman is explained by the prophet himself to be the Gentiles: "*For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and and seed shall inherit the Gentiles,*" Isai. liv.

3. The above is a promise made to the Jewish church and Jewish preachers, of their success the Gentiles; and the prophet explains it under another simile: "*Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers, [which are expressive of barrenness;] yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.*" Here the prophet tells us that thorns and briers shall come up on the holy land, and the fruitful field of the Jews shall be turned into a forest, and the wilderness of the

Gentiles shall be turned into a fruitful field, when the Spirit of God shall be poured forth from on high. The Saviour calls the Jews a fig tree, and that he came three years seeking fruit thereon and found none; and says, "*Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*" which at last he did, and then he made the barren tree of the Gentiles fruitful, as the prophet explains it: "*I have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have done it.*" This, Paul calls breaking off the natural olive branches of the Jews, that the wild olive branches of the Gentiles might be grafted in; which is explained by the Saviour himself: "*The kingdom shall be taken from you,*" which must leave them barren, "*and be given to a people that shall bring forth the fruit thereof,*" which must make them fruitful. Mr. Brothers's. explanation and application of this text is as false as God is true, and confirms his character as a false prophet.

Quote. "*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.*" This last verse is an allusion to the peace and great happiness that will be in the land of Israel. "*Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad, all ye that love her; rejoice with joy, all ye that mourn for her.*"

Answer. If this assertion be true, then the King of kings hath been almost eighteen hundred years without a royal city, and without a capital; but this is not true: the apostles were called a city set on an hill that could not be hid: Zion, God says, is my people, and Zion is the city of our solemnities; a city sought out, saith the prophet, not forsaken; and every soul that fears and loves God is no more a stranger nor a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen of the saints, and of the household of God: and why? because, saith the apostle of every believer, "*Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the*

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven; and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." The saints here are said to have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, not to heaven; for, if so, the apostle could not have written to them: nor yet to Jerusalem literally, for that city was just ready to be laid in ruinous heaps: but the church is meant by the heavenly Jerusalem, and the saints were then come to it: therefore this prophecy of Mr. Brothers, and his application of the text, is false, which once more confirms his character as a false prophet.

Quote. The new heavens and the earth mean an entire regeneration of man through the power and knowledge from the Spirit of God.

Answer. This is another false construction put upon the text. Peter tells us that "*We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth;*" which he, as a regenerated man, if this had been the sense, could not have looked for. Nor are unregenerated men ever called heaven; and therefore the regeneration of them cannot, with any propriety, be called a new heaven. Furthermore, that part of man which is called earth is the body, which is of the earth, earthy; but regeneration by the Spirit of God passeth not on the body, but on the soul of man, which is of an heavenly origin; for God breathed it into man's nostrils, and man became a living soul. The new heaven and the new earth are literally to be understood: the elements are to melt, and the heavens to pass away with a great noise; the earth and all her works are to be burnt up: which doth not mean regenerate men, for they will not be burnt any more than Lot was in Sodom: and after the melting of the elements, and burning the earth, saith Peter, "*We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*" which will

never be the case while this world is standing, let there be as many regenerated men in it as may be; for there ever will be sin in it. as well as righteousness, and more of the former than of the latter. Mr. Brothers's sense of this text is not true: but he proceeds to tell us that,

Quote. The kingdom of heaven, in the two most essential commands for them to obey, which are war and swearing, remember that. form of praying called the Lord's prayer, which says, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:*" there is no war in heaven.

To which I **answer**, the Saviour says he came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword and a fire; and what will I do if it be already kindled? From henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three, and a man's foes shall be them of his own household: the children shall rise up against their parents, and the parents against their children, and shall cause them to be put to death: yea, and ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: yea, and antichrist shall make war against the saints, and shall overcome them, and they shall fall by the sword, by captivity, and by spoil, many days; but when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, then, but not till then, shall swords be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks; neither shall they learn war any more. This assertion of Mr. Brothers is not true, but is repugnant to the plain word of God.

Quote. "*And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord,*" meaning Christ, "*will be their God, and my servant David,*" meaning his descendant, "*a Prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.*"

Answer. This text is perverted and falsely construed: the person there speaking is not Christ, but God the Father; and the person spoken of under the name of David, and in the character of a shepherd, is Jesus Christ, and not another descendant prince from David's line, as Mr. Brothers supposes; for none but Christ can do the work of this shepherd, who is to seek the lost, bring again that which was driven away, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Christ applies all this to himself: "*The whole need not the physician, but them that are sick.*" for the Lord hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach good tidings to the meek, and to set at liberty them that are bruised. Christ is this shepherd, and no other, who is to feed his flock like a shepherd, to gather the lambs with his arms, and gently to lead those that are with young. With this office the Saviour alone is invested: "*I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep; and I know my sheep, and am known of mine.*" And this I know, that Christ will never suffer a rival nor a co-partner in this office; for he declares, " I have other sheep which are not of this fold, and them I must bring; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd and this one good shepherd is called David. "*And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, my servant David he shall feed them.*" Christ is here called David, because David was a type of him, and because the humanity of the Saviour descended from David; on which account Christ calls himself the root and offspring of David; for Christ was the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, Acts ii. 30. Nor will the Jews ever have any other king or prince over them but Jesus Christ. "*For the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall he no end.*" The Jews have never had either king, prince, or any ensigns of royalty, since their rejection of Jesus, nor will they ever have any sovereign over them till they submit to him, nor any beside him. Hence it is plain that there is no room for Mr. Brothers in

this double office of a shepherd and king, which must be kept, entire; and none but a presumptuous impostor would ever lay any claim to it.

Quote. The vision of Ezekiel relative to Jerusalem alludes to the grandeur and extent of it when rebuilt by the Jews after their return in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight: it will be the capital of the world, and from it will go once more to all nations the commands of the living God.

Answer. There is not one truth in all this, for the whole of that vision is spiritually to be understood; and therefore I shall shew,

First, that Jerusalem, as rebuilt by the Jews, is not intended in the text.

2. That the Jews will not return by the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight.

3. That Jerusalem literally will never be the capital of the world: and,

4. That all nations will not receive the commands of the living God from Jerusalem in Judea.

1. Jerusalem signifies the church militant, consisting of all that love and fear God, both Jews and Gentiles: "*And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory.*" "*And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.*" Hence it is plain that this city consists of Gentiles as well as Jews, sought out of all nations; and all that are holy by the Spirit, redeemed by Christ, and sought out of the world, compose this city, which, according to

the prophet, shall never be forsaken as Jerusalem hath been: and the apostle calls every believer a fellow-citizen of the saints, and of the household of God; and Christ calls his own disciples a city set on a hill that could not be hid, and says to him that overcometh, "*I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name:*" and to this spiritual and mystical sense agrees the prophet Ezekiel, and not to Jerusalem literally, as Mr. Brothers supposes: it was round about eighteen thousand measures; ten times bigger than the whole land of Canaan:- "*And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there,*" Ezek. xlviii. 35. Hence it appears that Mr. Brothers is mistaken, for Ezekiel's vision does not intend Jerusalem literally, but the church of God spiritually; nor is that city called by the prophet Jerusalem, but Jehovah-shammah, for the Lord is there; that is, it is the city of the Lord's presence: and a large city it must be, when the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and every one that knows God is a citizen of the saints.

2. The Jews will not return by the year 1798, for the witnesses are not slain or silenced yet; and, they are to lie in silence three years and a half before their civil resurrection; and after this comes the universal joy of the antichristian party; and next the resurrection of the witnesses, Rev. xi. 7-11. Then comes the earthquake, or judgments of God upon antichrist, Rev. xi. 13; and after this the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 15. And the next place comes the conversion of the Jews; for blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, Rom. xi. 25. Thus the gospel must be preached throughout the world, to gather in the fullness of the Gentiles; and blindness will continue with Israel until this fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And to this agrees the prophet;

"Therefore will he give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." The children of Israel here spoken of are the believing Gentiles, who shall call themselves by the name of Jacob, and subscribe with their hands to the Lord, and surname themselves by the name of Israel, Isai. xlv. 5; *"For they are not all Israel which are of Israel."* The Israel of God is meant, Gal. vi. 16; such as Nathanael, Israelites indeed, John i. 47. The meaning of the prophet is this; Christ will give the Jews up till the Gentile church, which travaileth, hath brought forth her fullness; and then the remnant of Christ's brethren, the Jews, shall return to the spiritual children of Israel, the Gentile believers. Hence Christ calls Nathanael an Israelite indeed, because, like Jacob, he was a believer: unbelievers, though of Jacob, are only Israelites in name: and they are believers in Christ who are the real Jews, of whom Christ is spiritual king, and no other: *"For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly."* And to this agrees the Saviour, *"I will make them of the synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie), behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that. I have loved thee."* The above persons are Jews by name, and Jews by nation; this appears plain by their synagogue worship; but they were not Jews inwardly nor spiritually, for they did not believe in, receive, acknowledge, nor submit to, the King of the Jews, they would not have him to reign over them; on which account he hath left them without a king, and made them the synagogue of Satan; and, instead of all nations receiving the commands of God from them, Christ says they shall come and worship before the feet of the Gentiles, and receive the gospel from them. Hence we may conclude that all nations will not receive the commands of the living God from Jerusalem; but the gospel of the living God will be preached to all nations before it. is preached to the Jews; and all this shall be done before ever they shall see the city Jerusalem: for so

saith the Son of God; "*And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Thus Jerusalem is to be in the hands and possession of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles' universal conversion be fulfilled; or, as Paul says, "*Blindness is happened to Israel, till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in;*" that is, till they be come into the church, into the covenant, and into the faith of Christ; "*And so all Israel shall be saved at last.*" And, if they are the last that will be saved, it is plain that salvation will never go from them into all nations. And thus far Mr. Brothers's prophecies are as false as God is true, and he is what the scripture calls a lying prophet, and a deceiver: he knows nothing of God, nor the power of God, nor the mind and will of God, nor does he understand the scriptures; and as to the present times, he is as ignorant of them as the beasts that perish. Reader, beware, as Christ tells thee, of false prophets, which come in his name: thou hast got a sure word of prophecy to go to; the scriptures cannot be broken; and to the law and to the testimony thou must go; and, if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them, Isai. viii. Pay no regard to the dreams nor to the pretended revelations of Mr. Brothers; for the whole of them contradict the word of God, and are nothing else but lying vanities; for all the things which I have proved from the scriptures shall be fulfilled before the Jews' return, and every thing else predicted shall be accomplished exactly agreeable to scripture prophecy; as it is written: The mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets, Rev. x. 7. Thus thou seest, reader, that all things are to be finished as God hath declared them in prophecy; and sure I am that heaven and earth shall pass away; but God's word shall never pass away; it shall never pass away unaccomplished or unfulfilled.

Quote. "*And I will sow her to me in the earth, and I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy,*" meaning

Jerusalem; *"and I will say to them which were not my people,"* meaning the Jews during their dispersion, *"Ye are my people; and they shall say, Thou art our God."*

Answer. This text is perverted; it could not be said to Jerusalem that she had not obtained mercy, for to Jerusalem was given the law, the covenants, the glorious presence of God, the service of God, and the promises; to Jerusalem were all the prophets sent; of them, according to the flesh, Christ came, and to them he was sent, and all the apostles also, and thousands of them were converted by them; yea, seven thousand at once, even in the darkest age in the days of Elias, did obtain mercy; and indeed they had the experience of God's Mercy among them from age to age; for, *"You only,"* says God, *"have I known of all the families of the earth."* And therefore it cannot be true Of them that they had not obtained mercy, for they were almost the Only subjects of mercy under the law, and the first monuments of mercy under the gospel. Now to whom does the Spirit of God by the apostle apply the above text? Does he apply it to Jerusalem or to the Jews in their dispersion? No, to neither of them, but to the Gentiles; *"Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles: as he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved."* This is another false prophecy. Mr. Brothers wrests the scriptures to his own destruction.

Quote. *"In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen,"* meaning the restoration of his descendant to the government of the children of Israel, *"and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and build it as in the days of old."*

Answer. This is another false prophecy; David's tabernacle, spoken of in that text, means the synagogue of the Jews, which is so called in allusion to the tabernacle in the

wilderness; which tabernacle is now fallen, and a tabernacle of the Gentiles raised up instead of it: as it is written; *"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles."* Here the Jewish tabernacle is stretched out, till the seed of the Gentiles inherit with the believing Jews: at length the Jewish converts died off, and the Gentile tabernacle was left standing alone, the Jewish tabernacle being entirely fallen; as saith the apostle. *"Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more. their fullness?"* Rom. xi. 12. Here the prophet's meaning is this: the Jews, which David, literally speaking, once governed, being now fallen down, or fallen off through unbelief; or the Jews to whom Christ, the spiritual David, was first sent, and among whom his kingdom was first erected which since hath been taken away from them and given to a people bringing forth the fruit thereof, Matt. xxi. 43, shall be restored to them again; or the tabernacle of the Jews, now fallen, shall be raised up again, as soon as the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to them: and so the apostle explains it; *"God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name: and after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down,"* Acts xv: 14 - 16. The meaning of this is, God takes the Gentiles for his tabernacle, and leaves the Jewish tabernacle, and that falls; after this the Lord returns to them, and builds them up again: but no descendant from David, called Mr. Brothers, is to be found in all this text, nor is any such lying prince or prophet ever intended by the Spirit of God.

Quote. The Turks are descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob; but their emperor, and all his family, are descended from Jonathan, the son of Saul, king of Israel. Told me by revelation.

Answer. There is not one truth in all this; it is a plain contradiction of the word of God; most of them, which are now called Turks, the scripture calls Hagarenes, from Hagar, Psal. lxxxiii. 6; whose son was to be a wild man, his hand was to be against every man, and every man's hand against him; by his sword shall he live, and dwell in the midst of all his brethren, Gen. xvi. 12. A wild, rude, and uncultivated man he still is: and his hand is against all, and all against him, to this day. This appears to be literally fulfilled by the law of nations; for. the Turks are, I believe, in alliance with none. By his sword he has long lived; and amongst his brethren the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and other nations that sprung from Keturah, Abraham's concubine, he has long dwelt; and, if those nations. now exist, he dwells among them still. The Turks are called in scripture Ishmaelites, from Ishmael, the son of Hagar; and they have been called Saracens, because, as some say, they pretended to be the descendants of Sarah, Abraham's wife. Among these were intermixed multitudes of Scythians, and others from Turea, which, according to some, is in the Persian empire.

Nor did the Turkish emperors descend from Jonathan, son of Saul, king of Israel; for the Israelites are not to be reckoned among the nations, Num. xxiii. 9. Besides, the Scythians, and those from Turca, who are now mixed with the Arabs, came from the other side of the river Euphrates; as it is written; *"Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates; and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour and a day, and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men; and the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand."* Thus some of the Turks and Scythians came over the Euphrates, and had their chiefs and commanders with them, when they entered the Grecian Empire; so that every part of Mr. Brothers's pretended revelation is a plain contradiction of the

word of God; and, being a false revelation, it came not from the God of truth, but from Satan the father of lies.

Quote. *"And I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the Heathen: I will overthrow their chariots, and those that ride in them; their horses and riders shall come down, every one by the sword of the other."* The time alluded to by the prophet, is that which is immediately before the restoration of the Jews, in the latter days of the world; the present is it.

Answer. The whole of this is false.

The present time is not the time for overthrowing the thrones of kingdoms;

Nor yet for the Jews' restoration;

Nor are these days the latter days of the world.

When are these thrones to be cast down? I answer, Not till the gospel be spread all over the whole world; not till Christ takes to himself his great power and reigns, Rev. xi. 17; not till the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 15; not till the earth be covered with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea, Isa. xi. 9; then Christ shall reign from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth; all that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; then, but not till then, shall the thrones be cast down, and the Ancient of Days shall sit, Dan. vii. 9. And to this Daniel agrees, who represents Christ as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smites the image upon his feet, which feet were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces, Dan. ii. 34.

Now the golden head of this image was the Babylonian empire, Dan. ii. 38; the silver arms, &c. of this image is the

Median and Persian monarchy, called a ram with two horns, Dan. viii. 20; the thighs of brass is the Grecian, and the rough goat the king of Grecia, Dan. viii. 21; the iron legs of the image is the Roman empire, "*the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron,*" Dan. ii. 40; and the ten toes of the image, which consist of iron and clay, are explained to be ten horns on the fourth beast, Dan. vii. 7; which is mentioned again by John. "*I saw a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns.*" Thus it appears that the ten toes on the feet of Daniel's image are ten horns on the last and fourth beast, and these horns have ten crowns, which horns are ten kings at the head of ten kingdoms, which are in the Roman empire; and so it is written: "*And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings,*" Rev. xvii. 12.; these kings shall give their power and strength to the beast, Rev. xvii. 13; and when Christ turns their hearts, they will hate the whore of Babylon, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, for this is God's will, Rev. xvii. 16; and then these kings shall submit their rule and government to Christ; the thrones then shall be cast clown, and the Ancient of Days shall sit, for the whore is burnt with fire; or, as Daniel says, "*I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*" Thus the whole image must be smitten with the stone first, which stone is Christ, and that stone must become a great mountain and fill the whole earth; that is, as Daniel explains it, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and which shall break in pieces and consume all their kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever, Dan. ii. 24; but sure I am that the present time bears no resemblance of such a time as this will be.

I have already proved that the time of the Jews' restoration is not yet, by the many great things which shall precede it, all of which must be accomplished agreeably to the sure word of prophecy before the Jews return; and after the fullness of the Gentiles, and the restoration of the Jews; there will be many

glorious days of gospel light, love, and peace; and after these glorious days there will be a great filling off again, iniquity will abound, and the love of many will wax cold, and men will get worldly, secure, and are less, buy and sell, plant and build, marry and be given in marriage, as it was in the days of Noah and of Lot; so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh; these will be the latter days of the world, when the judge will stand before the door, and professors will be so few, as to be compared to ten virgins going forth to meet the bridegroom, and half of them fools; and so careless, as while he tarried they all slumbered and slept, till the midnight cry awoke them; then the wise were aroused and prepared for the Lord, and entered into the marriage, and the door of mercy was for ever closed, Matt. xxv. 10. This will be the latter times of the world, and not the present, as this false prophet suggests.

Quote. *"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."* The great prophet alluded to in this chapter, is the same that will be revealed to the Jews to order their return to Jerusalem before the expiration of one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight; he will possess the Spirit of God, and the power of fire, equal to Elijah; he will make known the judgments of God, that all nations may be benefited, and may endeavour to survive them when they are commanded to be fulfilled

I answer, The person, or great prophet, there spoken of, is applied by the angel Gabriel to John the Baptist, who was Christ's forerunner; for so the angel tells Zacharias, that his wife shall hear a son, and shall call his name John; that he shall be great, and shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a

people prepared for the Lord, Luke i. 17. And it is plain that the Lord himself confirms what Gabriel had said; for he declares, when his disciples asked him saying, "*Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? and Jesus answered, and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things; but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not.*" And again, "*For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and, if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come.*" Here it is plain that every thing predicted of Elias is already accomplished in and by John the Baptist, so that no room is left for Richard Brothers, either as a prince or prophet of the Jews; for the angel Gabriel, and the Son of God, both declare that the whole of that prophecy is already fulfilled, whose joint testimony serve to chew the truth and faithfulness of God, and the lies and deceptions of Richard Brothers.

Quote. The very loud and unusual kind of thunder that was heard in the beginning of January 1791, was the voice of the angel mentioned in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, proclaiming the judgment of God, and the fall of Babylon the Great; it was the loudest that, since man was created, ever was heard, and shook the whole earth every time the angel spoke; it roared through the streets, and made a noise over London like the falling of mountains of stones.

Answer. This is false; the thunder that was heard in England was not the voice of an angel, being only common, not mystical thunder; and common thunder is not the voice of angels, but the voice of God: "*God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he which we cannot comprehend.*" And as for the seven thunders that uttered their voices in Rev. x. 4, whatever was uttered, or meant by them, is not revealed to Mr. Brothers; for when he had heard the voice of the seven thunders John was about to write, but he

heard a voice from heaven saying unto him, "*Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*"

And as for Mr. Brothers's declaration, that the angel's voice in that thunder over England was the angel's voice of Babylon being fallen, there is not the least hint of its now being fulfilled, either in scripture, or in the appearance of things. The angel having the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation under heaven, doth not appear as yet either in France, Germans, Holland, Savoy, Sardinia, or Spain; nor in any other place yet conquered by the French: and, as for England, Ireland, Scotland, and our settlements in America, it is plain that popery gains ground; which can never be called the fall of Babylon: but rather this voice should be that Babylon is rising, is rising; and rise she shall, and sit as a queen, before her ruin; and then in one hour shall her judgments come: which will never be effected by any carnal means, no not by French victories, but by the Spirit of Christ: and so it is written. "*And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.*"

Quote. In addition to all that God had promised and repeated by his angel to make me happy, he was now pleased to give me another proof of his unalterable regard, and convince me by it, that, although he could not in justice to his recorded judgment spare London, yet for my sake he would skew mercy to some, and take care, by sickness and other causes, to remove the persons I desired should be saved to a sufficient distance beyond the limits to be destroyed and sunk.

Answer. If this be true, we are all greatly indebted to Mr. Brothers for our present preservation: but this I know, that all God's people are Preserved in Christ Jesus, and in none else. And, although I will not deny that Abraham interceded or Sodom, being a type of Christ, as the everlasting Father; and

Moses for his people, who was a figure of Christ as mediator; and Phineas for the congregation, as an emblem of Christ as high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec; and Samuel interferred, as a type of Christ, as the great prophet; and David for the city of Jerusalem, as being a representative of Christ as King.; and the apostles, as being shadows of him that is the high priest and apostle of our profession; yet now We have no such mediators to stand in the gap, none but Jesus, who hath made peace by the blood of his cross: for so it is written; "*There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" And hence we may conclude that for no mere man's sake is London spared: as it is written; "*Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake,*" Ezek. xxxvi. 22. But what are we to understand by God's holy name sake? Why we are to understand Christ Jesus by it. "*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place that I have prepared; beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him.*" According to these scriptures God will not shew mercy to any for the sake of the whole house of Israel; and, if not for the sake of his own elect, it is not likely that he should skew mercy for the sake of Mr. Brothers, who, according to the scriptures of truth, is no more than a deceiver of people, and a false or lying prophet, who presumes to come in the name of God: which is the blackest character out of hell, or under heaven, none excepted: for "*the prophet that teacheth lies,*" says God, "*he is the tail,*" Isai. ix. 15: the filth and scum, the common sewer, the fag end of a nation, and the last creature that ever shall be saved; for into the heavenly city shall nothing enter that loves and makes a lie, Rev. xxii. 14, 15.

Quote. After this I was in a vision, and saw a large river run through London, coloured with human blood. Exceedingly

unhappy for all that I saw, and which I knew would soon be fulfilled, I prayed and entreated the Lord God to give me one more instance of his mighty regard, by sparing London and the great multitude in it. I said, I acknowledge, O Lord my God, that the people do very wrong, but it is through compulsion and for want of knowing better. The Lord God was so highly displeased that I should, after all his former kindness, strain his affections, and entreat him to annul his recorded judgment, as to stop me, and, in a voice of great sharpness and anger, say, 'They have my blessed gospel, and will not obey it. The angel that was appointed to give me instruction forsook me in an instant, on hearing this answer, I trembled for my life, and seemed to be another man; for I was afraid of being destroyed with the city. It was three days after this before the Lord God would be reconciled to hear my prayers, and speak to me with his former kindness.

Answer. In this quotation we have four palpable lies, to which I shall reply.

1. I shall prove that this prayer of Mr. Brothers was never heard nor answered.
2. That God's affections can never be strained.
3. That a recorded judgment of God can never be annulled: and,
4. That many who have the gospel shall never obey it.

First. I am to prove that this prayer was never heard nor answered; and the reason is, because all prayers are to be put up in the faith of Christ: secondly, that no prayer can prevail unless put up in Christ's name; which is not to be found in the prayer of Mr. Brothers. James tells us that we must pray in faith, or else we get nothing from the Lord: and to believe in one God, without a mediator, is the faith of devils, who believe and tremble. And Christ tells his apostles, that "*Whatever you ask of the Father, ask it in my name, and I will*

do it." And unless the favour be asked in the Mediator's name, who can expect an answer? seeing that Christ is the only way to the Father, and that none can come to the Father but by him; and that whosoever climbeth up any other way is a thief and a robber. And can we expect that sir. Brothers should prevail, who is so bold as to approach without a mediator, and so vain as to expect an answer in his own name? Hence we may warrantably conclude that Mr. Brothers never yet prevailed with God in prayer.

Secondly, I am to prove that God's affections can never be strained; and why? because John says that "*God is love.*" and we are told that God is of one mind, and none can turn him; that he is without variableness or shadow of turning; and his own declaration of himself is, that "*I am God, and change not.*" Now if God is in his nature love, and without a shadow of turning, who can strain his affections? Noah, Daniel, and Job, could have no success in this business, Ezek. xiv. 14. Jeremiah is bid to lift up neither prayer nor cry upon this head, Jer. vii. 16; and Paul wished himself accursed from Christ for Israel's sake, but they are without Christ to this day. Hence it is plain that none have ever yet strained the affection of God but Mr. Brothers, who I believe to be in the sight of God as great a deceiver and liar as ever Simon Magus was.

Thirdly, I am to prove that no recorded judgment of God can ever be annulled; and the reason is, because what God hath declared in truth, he is bound in faithfulness to make good; and instead of God's word falling to the ground, it is to be settled in heaven, Psalm cxix. 89; and hence it is that the scriptures cannot be broken; that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Lord's word shall never pass away: the thoughts of his heart and the words of his mouth shall stand fast to a thousand generations; not a tittle of the law is ever to fail, and the message of peace is an everlasting gospel, and the author of both is in_ variable, unchangeable, and immutable; and

therefore Mr. Brothers must be the first and only man that ever made God annul a recorded judgment: this the Almighty asks any man to prove against him; "*Wilt thou also disannul my judgement? wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?*" And can we suppose that Mr. Brothers hath thus prevailed by a prayer, without faith in Christ to give it energy, and without the name of a mediator to give it acceptance? and thus condemned God as a mutable being, that he might appear righteous in meriting a grant from God to save London: for so he affirms, that after the prayer put up to annul God's recorded judgment, he was caught up to heaven, and God spake to him, saying, 'All, all: I pardon London and all the people in it, for your sake.'

Fourthly, I am to prove, that many who have the gospel shall never obey it; it is to be preached to every creature, but some shall never obey the voice of it, notwithstanding that; "*Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*" Thus I have proved that Mr. Brothers's prayer was never heard, that God's love was never strained, that a recorded judgment was never by him annulled, and that many who have the gospel shall not obey it.

Quote. That all men of wisdom and discernment may understand, on reading the Revelation, that there are two cities mentioned in it spiritually under the names of Babylon the Great, I will assist them by clearly marking out the distinction.

Rome, the spiritual Babylon mentioned in the seventeenth chapter, is described in the third verse, to be a way into the wilderness; meaning, by the words into the wilderness, that the city is situated inland.

But London, the spiritual Babylon also, mentioned in the eighteenth chapter, is described by St. John as the greatest sea-port for ships, wealth, and commerce, in the world.

Answer. In this quotation we are informed,

1. That there are two cities spiritually called Babylon.
2. That Rome is described to be a way in the wilderness,' meaning by the words into the wilderness inland. And,
3. That London is the spiritual Babylon also, described by St. John as being the greatest seaport. Not a word of all which is true.

There never were but two cities which went by the name of Babylon; the first is the capital of the Chaldean empire, that was situated on the river Euphrates; which city has long been a den for dragons, and a court for owls, God having swept it with the besom of destruction.

Now as this city was noted for its size, wealth, pride, idolatry, and for its cruelty to God's people, the Jews, in allusion to it, Rome is called Mystery, Babylon the Great, which has been very large, wealthy, proud, idolatrous, and cruel to the saints of God. She is represented as a type and figure of old Babylon, built by Nimrod, a figure of the pope, and a mighty hunter before the Lord. And whenever the gospel comes to shine round about mystical Babylon, it will be discovered to be as old Babylon was, a hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, and God will destroy it with a double destruction.

This spiritual, or mystical Babylon, is but one city, and not two, and is by no means represented, as Mr. Brothers describes it, to be a way in the wilderness, because it is situated inland, Rev. xvii. 3. The wilderness means the place where John stood to see the city, and not the place where the city stood,

which he saw; and so it is written, "*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will spew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns,*" Rev. xvii. 1-3. Into the wilderness, being a quiet and retired place, John was carried in the Spirit to behold, in the visions of God, the mystical city. The first thing that John saw when he came there, was a woman, which the angel explains to him, saying, "*And the woman which thou sawest is that great city,*" in the singular number, "*which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*" This woman is said to sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast; the scarlet colour is to point out the dress and colour of the pope and his cardinals, Which were scarlet, and likewise the deep stains of righteous blood with which the woman is polluted: for, "*in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth,*" Rev. xviii. 04.

The beast that carries the woman, or that supports this mystical city, is explained by the angel as having seven heads and ten horns. And again, "*The beast that thou sawest was, and is not,*" Rev. xvii. 8; that is, the beast which thou sawest with ten horns was shewed to Daniel, by the iron legs and ten toes, which the stone is to smite, but it is not smitten yet; this beast was shewed to Daniel as having ten horns, and another, an eleventh horn, coming up among the ten, and before which three fell, Dan. vii. 7. 20; but is not come to that state and appearance yet. This beast is the Roman empire, which was in the hand of emperors, but is not so now, being in the hand of the pope; and it was the Roman empire, the

religion of which was pagan, but is not so now, being of the popish religion.

This beast is farther described by the angel to John by his ascent and descent; "*And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition.*" The Pope's office as Christ's vicar, and his titles as his holiness and head of the church, his murder of the saints, and his doctrines with which he has influenced the empire, is not of God but of Satan, for it was the Dragon that gave him his power, his seat, and great authority, Rev. xiii. 2; and therefore, as his office is not granted of God, he is represented as ascending out of hell and as going into perdition, which will be the case when Daniels vision of this beast is fulfilled. "*I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame.*"

Now this before-mentioned woman is further described by the angel thus: "*The seven, heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth,*" which woman is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Hence it appears that this beast is the Roman empire, now popish, with the pope at the head of it; in which empire, and under the head of it, the popes have been, or still are, ten horns with crowns on them, or ten crowned kings; which ten kings, under whom, and.. among whom, the empire is divided into ten kingdoms, have or do support this woman, or this city of Rome, in all her former and present grandeur; and hence the beast with his ten horns is said to carry her: and from this city, and from the pope and his cardinals in it, have gone the doctrines of angel worship, of dead men's bones, and of images, into all nations: on which account all nations are said to be made drunk with this whore's fornication. First, the kings of the earth are said to have committed fornication with her; and by embracing her religion, have circulated it and allowed it, in their dominions, till

all those kings, and the inhabitants of the earth under them, are both made drunk with the wine of her fornication, Rev. xvii. 2.

Now this woman, or city, is said to sit upon seven mountains, and as being the capital of an empire now divided into ten kingdoms; and all these kings have been, and some of them still are, of the popish religion, on which account this city is represented as reigning over them: "*And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*"

Hence it appears that there are not two cities which are spiritually called Babylon, as Mr. Brothers supposes, one in the wilderness, being inland, and the other London, being maritime; for there is but one city that is spiritually or mystically called Babylon, or Sodom, and that city is neither to be found in the wilderness, nor on the banks of the Thames; for a city upon seven mountains, which reigns over the kings of the earth, is not to be found in either of those places to answer the description here given: for this woman, or city, sits upon a beast with ten horns, and the beast with his horns are said to carry her, and over these she presides; and these ten horns, as sure as God liveth, shall by and by dismount the whore, and shall carry her, and support her pride and grandeur no longer; for so it is written. "*And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; for God hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman that thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*"

Now here we are at a point; we know that the scriptures cannot be broken, and that all these mysteries, touching mystical Babylon, shall be fulfilled, as God hath declared to

his servants the prophets. This beast is the Roman empire, now popish, with the pope at the head of it; the seat that the Dragon gave to this beast, is Rome; this beast has ten horns, all of which have been, and some now are, of one mind with the beast, and have given their power to him; and ten kings in this empire, or on this beast, shall be found, when this time comes, for judgment; for God says, the ten horns which thou sawest on the beast, these shall hate that whore, and burn her with fire. And sure I am, that heaven and earth shall pass away, before these words of Christ, the faithful and true witness, shall ever pass away; nor shall Richard Brothers, and all his advocates, no nor old time itself; ever make the a liar in this my testimony for Jesus Christ, or make my speech nothing worth.

But my reader will object and say, some time ago you said that antichrist shall be destroyed with the spirit of Christ's mouth and be consumed by the brightness of his coming; well, and so saith the scriptures. But now you say, that the whore of Babylon shall be burnt by ten kings in the Roman empire. I have so said, and say not the scriptures the same? Have I not done as I am commanded? Have I not spoken as the oracles of God? But now to reconcile this difficulty, take the following scriptures: Paul says, we are a savour of death unto death, and of life unto life; that is, we are the savour of death unto death in them that perish, and of life unto life in them that are saved.

Now when the slain witnesses are raised, the everlasting gospel is to be preached to every nation under heaven, and among the rest, in Italy also; and those that are God's elect, which will be in the communion of the church of Rome at this time, will hear the gospel and embrace it, and consequently obey God's call to them; which is, *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her*

Plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities," Rev. xviii.4, 5. Thus the gospel is preached to them, and it is a savour of life unto life to these. for they hear and obey the call of God, as Lot did in Sodom, and so escape the devouring flame; the others obey not, but, like Lot's sons, despise and ridicule the warning; and to these the gospel is a savour of death unto death. And thus Christ smites the earth with his gospel first, and then calls his own out of danger. The others reject this caution, and therefore he calls forth the ten kings with the sword of war to slay the bodies of those whose souls he hath slain with the sword of the spirit, or with the spirit of his mouth. And to this agrees the prophet; "*They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger, and in my fury.*" And thus Babylon is spiritually slain in soul by the sword of Jesus Christ, and their bodies will be literally slain by the sword of war in the hands of ten kings, whom Christ will convert to the faith of his gospel, and employ in this work: for they shall fulfil the will of God, and burn that whore with fire, Rev. xvii. 16, 17. And sure I am, that it is easier for heaven and earth to fail, than for one tittle of these words ever to pass away. And hence I conclude, that Mr. Brothers's two cities, mentioned under the names of Sodom and of Babylon the Great, &c. appear to be no more than one; the other never had any existence but in the whims and fancies of Mr. Brothers; the one of which, he says, is in the wilderness, Rev. xvii. 'but London, the spiritual Babylon also, chap. xviii. is described by John as the greatest sea-port for ships, wealth, and commerce, in the world.' The wilderness is the place where John stood to see the city, Rev. xvii. 3; and the eighteenth chapter gives an account of those that stand at a distance and lament her ruin, Rev. xviii. 17. who, like Abraham on the plains of Mamre, stood to see the smoke of Sodom; to which the allusion seems to be, and on which account Rome is called Sodom, because the same catastrophe is to attend the one as the other; the one hath

been, and the other is to be, destroyed by a conflagration. Rome is also called Egypt, because the plagues that are to come upon her, are the same that came upon Egypt, and are compared to them, and for the same crimes, idolatry, cruelty, murder, and oppressing the people of God. Hence the first plague on Egypt brought boils and blains, Exod. ix. 9; and the first vial brings noisome and grievous sores upon the beast, Rev. xvi. 2; the second vial brings on blood, like one of the plagues of Egypt; the third vial turns the rivers and fountains into blood, in allusion to smiting the river Nile, and turning it into blood; the fourth angel brings a great heat, in allusion to the hail and fire of Egypt; the fifth vial brings on darkness, like the dreadful darkness that was in Egypt; and the sixth vial brings frogs, as Moses did on the Egyptians, which filled all their houses. Hence it is plain that Sodom, Babylon, and Egypt, in this book, mean one and the same City.

Quote. The following would have been the condition of England, which the Lord God shewed me in the month of July 1791, had his judgment of desolation on the world been suddenly fulfilled at the appointed time in 1793.

Answer. There is a time for every purpose; and God's purposes, decrees, and appointments, can never be frustrated nor postponed; the appointed time of the church's suffering, of antichrist's reign, of the spread of the gospel, of the Jews' call, and of the judgments of God upon the world, are all fixed by the Almighty, and confirmed by the oath of the faithful and true witness. "*And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer,*" Rev. x. 5, 6. God is unchangeable in himself; his decrees and appointments are immutable things; the strength of Israel cannot lie; nor will he

ever be perjured in his oath. Let God be true, and Mr. Brothers the greatest of liars.

Quote. The thunder that was heard in the evening of the third of August 1793, was the voice of the angel mentioned in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation standing in the sun.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice," meaning the thunder, "saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God."

Answer. There is not one truth in all this: the voice is not the voice of thunder, but the voice of the angel, Rev. xix. 17. Nor can this voice which invites the guests to God's sacrifice be expected to be heard as yet, because of the things which are to precede it; which are the judgment of the great whore, and the ascent of the smoke of her torments, Rev. xix. 9., 3; the glorious reign of Christ, and the marriage of the Lamb, Rev. xix. 6, 7; the call both of the Jews and Gentiles to this marriage, Rev. xix. 9: and when these multitudes are converted, and the hearts of the ten kings turned, or converted to the faith, Christ is then exhibited at the head of an army of his own people, executing vengeance on the unconverted reprobate part of mankind, which he destroys by the sword of his mouth and the sword of war; and the armies of heaven follow him, who hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 14, 15, 16; the former expressive of divine majesty, and the latter of eternal victory. And then appears the angel standing in the sun, inviting the beasts and birds to God's sacrifice, Rev. xix. 17; but not an Angel by nature, but an angel by office is there meant; a gospel minister, such as the seven angels of the seven churches were; and this appears plain by the place where he stands: for Christ is a sun and shield, Psal. lxxxiv. 11, to his people; and the sun of righteousness, who at this

time will rise on them that fear God with healing in his beams, Mal. iv. 2, and be their everlasting light, and their sun shall no more go down, Isai. lx. 20, And the angel's standing in the sun shows that popish darkness is now dispelled, and the true light now shines: and that the ministers of the gospel now stand in the Lord's light, and are burning and shining lights in him. But there was no sign of these things in the year 1793, no, nor yet; for although there are great armies mustered in the world at this time, yet they do not appear to be such as have heard the gospel, nor such as are converted from popish delusions to the faith of Christ, who are born from above, and are heirs of heaven, and of the heavenly glory; and therefore they cannot mean these armies, which are called the armies which were in heaven, upon white horses, which shew they are heirs of salvation, Hab. iii. 13; clothed in fine linen, clean and white, which shew that they are righteous persons, and made kings and priests unto God, Rev. xix, 14; nothing of which can agree with the great armies that are now mustered on the continent. All these things are lies forged by Satan, and circulated by Mr. Brothers, who is a child of his, and does his works, John viii. 44, and not the work of God; for against all such liars the heavenly Jerusalem is shut, Rev. xxii. 15.

Quote. The second thunder that gave notice of God's approaching judgment was on Wednesday evening the 7th of August, 1793, as is mentioned in the seventh chapter of the Revelation, and was the voice of the angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.

Answer. The voice of this angel is not the voice of thunder, proclaiming the approaching judgments of God, but quite the reverse; for he commands the four angels, saying, "*Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,*" Rev. vii. 3; which cannot be called the voice Of judgment, but of mercy. This angel is Jesus Christ, coining with the seal of the living God, which is the holy Ghost; as saith Paul, "*The day you believed,*

you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise:" and a hundred and forty-four thousand, bearing the names of the Jewish tribes, are said to be sealed; and a multitude of all nations, which could not be numbered, were sealed also, Rev. vii. 4, 9. But sure the year 1793 exhibited nothing of the appearance of Christ in all this glory, much less in sealing such multitudes; nor could it then, nor can it now, be said that he is commanding the destroying angels not to hurt the earth, sea, and trees, Revelation vii. 3; when earthlyminded men, the bishop's see of Rome, and corrupted trees, are much hurt, and killed too, and that by thousands.

Quote. The next and last thunder, if the judgment had not been suspended for my sake, would be on the eleventh of August following, and would be according to the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation, the fourth angel pouring out his vial on the sun.

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial on the sun, and power was given him to scorch men with fire."

Answer. There is no appearance of that angel's vial yet; and when the time is come, that judgment will not be suspended for the sake of all the saints in the world, much less for the sake of Mr. Brothers, who is no prophet of God, but a prophet of Satan; for God's children are not liars: *"For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour,"* Isai. lxiii. 8. But Mr. Brothers belongs to another family, for he writes nothing else but lies, and therefore must be a child of him who has the seniority of all liars, being the father of lies. Nor, does that angel's pouring out his vial on the sun mean scorching the fields and hedges, as this deluded prophet supposes. The sun, in a figurative sense, means the glory of a nation or people: God dwelling between the cherubims in the temple was the glory of the Jewish nation, and when they forsook him for idols they turned their glory into

shame; and when the Saviour rent the veil of the temple, and left their house desolate, and withdrew himself and his gospel from them, their sun was turned into darkness before the great and terrible day of the Lord's judgments on Jerusalem by the Romans came, Joel ii. 31; and so Peter applies it to the apostolic days, Acts ii. 20. The sun was the chief deity among the pagan gods, and when Constantine rooted up and destroyed the pagan priesthood and pagan worship, and conquered the heathen princes, it is thus recorded. "*And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the kings of the earth, the great men, and the captains, &c. themselves,*" Rev. vi. 12, 15, 16.

And as to the popish nations, their glory is the pope; he is their Lord God, as they call him, and Christ's vicar, as they tell us; he is the head of their church; from his authority come their bulls, indulgences, absolutions, &c.. and those among them who are canonized for glory, it is he that does it; he is their glory, their boast, as Peter's successor, and 'their light, being infallible, the key-keeper of heaven, and the only interpreter of the scriptures: but there will be a vial of wrath poured out upon this sun; the everlasting light of the gospel will discover the light that is in him to be darkness, Matt. vi. 23, and so enlighten men's minds as to see the man of sin to be the son of perdition; which will eclipse his glory, and bring him into contempt; and the wrath of God proclaimed against him, will work in him, and till him with rage and blasphemy, but will not convert him; and therefore he will scorch others by influencing and inflaming them with that desperate rage and malice that influences him, and will draw them in to assist his declining and almost ruined cause, as the high-priest of the Jews influenced the Pharisees against Christ, but all in vain; for the next vial destroys his capital, which is Rome itself: and and so it is written; "*And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with a great heat, and*

blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not, to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they blasphemed the God of heaven." Thus we see that men are scorched, and not fields and hedges; and that the heat is the wrath of God; and not the rays of the sun; and it is the pope and his capital that are the subjects of this vial, and not the ground: and that it terminates in the destruction of antichrist, and not in a temporal famine; and it works wrath and blasphemy in the souls of reprobates, and not a hungry belly in all the human race.

Quote. That light I mean, which is often called a certain something, an internal monitor, that applauds man for courting wisdom, for being just, and doing good; but that never fails to reproach him for embracing folly, and doing evil: it is indeed no other than the Spirit of the living God.

Answer. There is no truth in all this; for it is not the true light that is in all men: all the light Of nature never discovered or found out the Almighty; "*The world by wisdom knew not God:*" the heathens had much natural light, but, notwithstanding that, they were without God, and had no hope in the world, And as to Mr. Brothers's internal monitor, that applauds man for courting wisdom, being just, and doing good, and that never fails to reproach him for embracing folly and doing evil,' it is the natural conscience, or law of the heathens; for these, saith the apostle, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; their thoughts and conscience accusing or excusing one another: but this conscience, which is allowed to be the law of nature, can never be the Spirit of the living God; for, although the heathens had this law, they were without God, and had no hope in the world: and certain it is that this law of nature has led many to call evil good, and good evil. Paul thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus; which

he did; and others, when they killed God's saints, have thought that they did God service. But Mr. Brothers's 'internal monitor, applauding and reproaching for good and evil,' deceived them all, and therefore could never be that anointing that is true, and is no lie. However, we may learn by this paragraph what it is that has influenced and inspired this prince and prophet of the Jews to his double office, and we see that it hath deceived him as well as Paul and the Jewish Pharisees; for there is nothing but infernal lies through all his book; and therefore the Spirit of truth had no hand in it, and hence we may call Mr. Brothers Barcosziba, the son of a lie.

Quote. Therefore my present poverty is no obstacle to my future elevation, neither is it of much concern to myself; for the time of my being revealed with power from heaven is nigh, when God, to manifest his regard, will give me favour with many, and influence all the people of London to help me.

Answer. If I thought this to be true, I think I should never close my eyes to sleep again through grief at the sight of the inhabitants of so large; a city, and which has so many that love and fear God in it, setting their hands to help an impostor in undertaking a work which he will never perform. Indeed such an universal deception would make one conclude that Simon Magus was risen again, and that Satanic art was once more spewing forth itself in him: it is said that he bewitched the people of Samaria till Philip preached the gospel to them, which caused the unclean spirits and wizards to pass out of the land; and I am sure that the gospel must pass out of London, and the inhabitants of it must be given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie, before Mr. Brothers obtains this universal help: besides, if God sends him about this business in a similar manner to Moses in Egypt, and with an additional power, as he pretends, he will want no more assistance from the citizens of London than Moses did from the natives of

Egypt; for, if God be a man's helper, he need not fear, for what can flesh do against him?

Quote. I was an officer in the English navy, and necessarily so, although I did not know it, that the judgment of God on David, king of Israel, might be fulfilled, which was, that the sword should never depart from his house.

Answer. That divine threatening to David doth not necessarily imply that all the descendants of David should enter voluntarily into a military capacity, any more than God's promise of a son to Abraham implied that he should take Hagar: drawing the sword against others is not the meaning of the text, but that others should draw the sword against him; nor does the word, never, always imply to the world's end: the text might be fulfilled in the death of David; for it is clear that the sword of war was not upon David's house in the days of Solomon; according to God's promise to David: "*Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon [that is, peaceable]; and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.*" Furthermore, Mr. Brothers informs us that the Jews will return at the destruction of war, when swords are to be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruninghooks at which time the sword, of course, must depart from the house of David: and hence it is plain that the sword was not on David's house for many years in the days of Solomon, nor will it in the latter day glory; and therefore Mr. Brothers had no call to go on board a ship to fight with cannon, in order to fulfil a divine threatening which respects a house and a sword.

Quote. The government of the Jewish nation will, under the Lord God, be committed to me, that the everlasting covenant from him to David may be manifested in the visible prince and governor of the Jews.

Answer. The prince and governor of the Jewish nation hath been long since pointed out by two infallible prophecies. *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince, of peace."* And again; *"And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me,"* Jer. XXX. 1. This is the prince and governor of Israel, and the government is to be upon his shoulder, and upon no other. And sure I am, that this governor that approaches to God cannot be our prophet, Mr. Brothers, for God will not suffer a liar to tarry in his sight: and as for the covenant that was made with David, and with Christ in David's loins, it stands fast in Jesus; for Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh: and so it is written; *"Therefore being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne,"* Acts ii. 30. Thus the prince and governor of Israel appears to be Christ Jesus; and God's covenant of royalty shall stand fast with God's Holy One: for he is raised up as a mighty horn of salvation in the house of God's servant David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end: and consequently, there is no room left for the reign of Mr. Brothers.

The notion of the little horn, in Daniel, being the king of Prussia, is a strange conceit, and has no truth in it. However we are not left altogether in the dark about that little horn; for, if we trace the scripture account of it, we shall find it out. *"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns"* Dan. vii, 7.

This. beast is the fourth; the Babylonian, begun by Nimrod, was the first; the Median and Persian the second; the Grecian the third; and the Roman the fourth. This beast is the iron legs and ten toes in Daniel's image; and here it has iron teeth and ten horns; and it is diverse from all the other beasts, because it is partly civil and partly ecclesiastical, which shew that it is the antichristian beast. And the next account exhibits the pope at the head of the empire, as presiding over the ten horns: "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by *the roots: and, behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*" The pope is here called a little horn, being at first no more than a common bishop: and before him there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, so as never to appear in the head of this beast again. This little horn is represented as springing up among the ten horns, that is, when the barbarous nations broke into the empire and set up ten kingdoms in it, this horn sprung tip among them: as it is written; "*And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast; these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*" Here it is intimated to John, that these kings had received no kingdom in John's time, and that they received power one hour with the beast, that is, they received their power at the the same time, or in the same hour, that antichrist received his; and these ten kings have one mind, Shall be of one religion, as all the ten kings have been. and shall give their power and strength unto the beast; that is, they shall be his horns to surport him and fight for him, as they all have done formerly. Now, before this little horn, the pope, Daniel tells us that there were three horns plucked up by the roots; which, according to a learned bishop, were the campagnia of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the region of Pentapolis, which were destroyed by Pepin and

Charlemagne, two kings of France, and given to the pope; and it was and still is, called the patrimony of Saint Peter.

It hath been thought by many that this little horn, in Daniel, was Antiochus Epiphanes; but Mr. Meed has proved that he died 160 years before the birth of Christ, and that he belonged to the third beast, and not the fourth. Whereas this little horn is to continue 1260 years from his open rise to his ruin; yea, Daniel says, he shall continue till the fifth monarchy takes place, that is, till the universal kingdom of Christ is set up; then, but not till then, shall this beast be destroyed; for so it is written, as I shall prove hereafter. This little horn is said to have the eyes of a man, to point him out to be a watchful sagacious creature; and a mouth speaking very great things: to be called head of the church, Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, key-keeper of heaven, to bind and loose, absolve or retain sins, fetch souls out of purgatory, and canonize persons for heaven, to give charges to St. Peter, and even to angels, to admit and receive whom they send thither, are very great things.

Daniel fixes his eyes steadfastly upon this fourth beast, and the little horn, to see what becomes of them; and he informs us, that this beast and horn Continue till the universal kingdom of Christ takes place, who gives judgment against him, and avenges the blood of his saints. *"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of Days did sit; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. I saw in the night visions one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His*

dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Here Daniel tells us that this beast, and his born, shall continue till Christ comes; and Paul says that the Lord shall consume that wicked one with the brightness of his coming; Daniel tells us that his body shall be given to the burning flame; and John says, the whore shall be burnt, and the beast shall go into perdition, Rev. xvii. 8. At the destruction of the beast, saith Daniel, the son of man shall receive his dominion that all nations should serve him; and John tells us that at the destruction of Babylon the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 13-15.

The next description that we have of this little horn is as follows: "*Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*" Here we are informed that this horn is to make war with the saints, until Christ comes to execute vengeance on the murderers, take to himself the kingdom, spread his gospel throughout the world, and fill the earth with the knowledge of himself, and reign as king of Zion and king of grace, from the river to the ends of the earth. This war with the saints he has carried on at times for many years, and began pretty soon after he was made universal bishop by Phocas: and this war shall continue, and he shall tread the holy city of Mount Zion under foot, till his time of 42 months, or 1260 years, be run out, and then he shall come to his end.

The next account that we have of this little horn is as follows: "*Neither shall he regard the the God of his fathers, nor the desire of wiving [as saith Mr. Meed], nor regard any God, for he shall magnify himself above all,*" Dan. xi. 37. We know who it is that calls himself the successor of Peter the prince of the apostles; but this horn regards not the God of those holy fathers. And we are not at a loss to find out who it is that forbids marriage; nor where to find him out that is called our Lord God the pope, and God on earth, &c. Paul applies all this to antichrist: "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience scared with an hot iron, forbidden to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.*" All this is fulfilled in the pope; marriage is forbidden the priests, monks, friars, and nuns; and abstaining from meats in Lent, and at numberless other times, without a licence or grant from the pope to the contrary, is manifest enough to all.

The next account Daniel gives, is, that he shall magnify himself above every God, Dan. xi. 36; which Paul describes thus: "*For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,*" 2, Thess. ii. 4. Here the apostle intimates that God would have a church, or temple, at Rome, as he had in Paul's days and in the days of Constantine, in which church, or temple, when it began to decline, the man of sin should sit, and claim himself to be God, above all civil magistrates that are called gods, and above God himself in some things; that is, in sending, as he pretends, the saints to hell for heretics, and canonizing sinners for heaven for the sake of money, which is acting above God himself.

The apostasy of Rome from Christ to antichrist is a fulfilment of Paul's prophecy in his epistle to the Romans; "*Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off,*" as they now are.

Now, to find out the mystery of iniquity and man of sin, we must take the hints that God gives us, and apply them where we find them applicable. The

First is, He shall make war with the saints, till the Ancient of Days sets up his universal kingdom. This the pope has done, and it has been done by his instigation, which began soon after Phocas proclaimed him universal bishop: and hence it is said, that in Babylon shall be found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth, Rev. xviii. 24.

2. He is to exalt himself above all that are called Gods. We have long since heard of his kicking the crown from the head of emperors, and making them hold his stirrup while he mounted his horse, and of ten kings that have given their strength and power to him.

3. He is to forbid marriage. This is published to the world in the pope's decrees.

4. He is to command to abstain from meats. The red-letter days, in their almanacs, and fasting in Lent, is notorious enough: this nation is still filled with the remains of that rubbish.

5. We know who they are that are beguiled by a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, Col. ii. 18. The worship of angels and saints departed is well known to be enjoined by antichrist.

6. We know who they are that make a shew of wisdom and will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, Col. 23. Beating and thumping the crow, whipping themselves, penance, and pilgrimages, are obvious enough. And these are God's marks of antichrist, and we know where to apply them.

7. Is, that no man might buy or sell, except he has the mark of the beast in his hand, or his forehead. All trade, commerce, and dealings, with those that the pope calls heretics, have been prohibited by the decrees of popes and councils, unless they received the marks of the beast in the forehead, that is, to profess popery; or in the hand, that is, to defend it.

Now this beast is to take the outer court, or gain. the outer-court worshippers over to him, Rev. xi. 1, 2; and then he will kill or silence all the Protestant ministers of Christ, Rev. xi. 7; and this will be the time of trouble, such as never was before; and at that time shall Michael stand up, Dan. xii. 1. This will be the hour of temptation that will try the whole world that is called Christian, Rev. iii. 10. And, when he hath gained all the outer-court worshippers that he can, and has slain the witnesses, he will set up his tabernacle in this island, and make his own religion once more the established religion of this country. And this is the work that is now in hand, and it goes on apace, but it will not last long: "*He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*" I much question but there are some thousands of infants now born into the world, who will, in their future hoary heads, either rejoice or lament the destruction of the whore of Babylon; for that man of sin will soon have grey hairs upon him, though he will not know it; and if he continues in his greatness threescore and ten years from this time, I have lost my mark: but of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man.

This man of sin was long hatching. There were many antichrists in the apostles' days, who, by broaching various heresies, were preparing materials for the son of perdition. "*The mystery of iniquity doth already work,*" says Paul. This was antichrist in embryo, or the spirit of antichrist leavening and influencing the minds of heretics and impostors to receive and embrace him whenever he should appear; this was previous to the revelation of him: but Paul says there was a bar in the way. "*Only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked be revealed.*" The Roman emperors, while they kept their seat at Rome, hindered the appearance of the little horn; but when Constantine moved the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople, where all the eastern emperors resided afterwards, and the emperors of the west residing chiefly at Milan or Ravenna, Rome became vacant, and then the fourth beast in its antichristian state appeared, and the little horn, the pope, at the head of it; as it is written: "*And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the Dragon gave him his power, his seat, and great authority.*" And now Phocas, who had murdered his master, proclaimed the pope of Rome universal bishop; and this was the revelation of the man of sin. The Dragon, or Satan, gave him his seat, power, and authority; Phocas gave him his title; Pepin and Charlemagne gave him his patrimony; and the world wondered after the beast, and gave him homage: and God will give him his destruction.

The Wise and Foolish Virgins Described:

William Huntington (1745-1813)

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO SERMONS,
DELIVERED AT MONKWELL STREET MEETING
FEBRUARY 14 AND 28, 1797.

*The light of the righteous rejoiceth, when the lamp of the
wicked shall be put out. Prov. xiii, 9.*

The Wise Virgins Described - Sermon 1.

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps," Matt.
xxv. 4

THE intention of this parable is, to shew to the saints the case and state of the church of God towards the close of time, when the Judge will be standing before the door; when the sun of righteousness will be going down over a sinful world; when the shadows of the evening, of the gospel dispensation, will be stretched out, and the midnight cry just ready to be ushered in.

Then, "then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." By the kingdom of heaven here is not meant ultimate glory, nor the gospel; though both these are called the kingdom: nor is the empire of grace in the heart intended; but the visible crowd of professors, whether real or nominal. The subjects of Christ's kingdom are what is here meant, consisting of two sorts: some real subjects, internally so by grace; and others only externally so in appearance and by profession. The number *ten* shews the small quantity of professors that will be found in the world at that time; for it will be as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. When the Son of

man cometh the world will be very busy, professors very few, and vital godliness at a very low ebb.

The title given them is that of *virgins*, because of their outward and apparent adherence to Christ, his truth and worship, and to an open profession of his name.

Their "going forth" intends their turning their back upon the world, and joining themselves to, and associating, with, the children of God.

What they had in view at their setting out was, "to meet the bridegroom." This is what they all aimed at. They expected that he would appear as their lover, not as an angry judge, and to be embraced by him, and received into his presence. This was their hope and expectation, as appears by the confusion they were in when shut out, and by their earnest entreaties to be admitted. But they were disappointed of their hopes, and their expectations were cut off; and no wonder, for one half of this company was wrong, at their first setting out, and so they were at their journey's end. For "five" of them were "foolish." These took not their vessels, nor had they any oil with them; and therefore their lamps went out when they had the greatest need of them, namely, at *midnight*. Nor did the spiritual Aaron, our great high-priest, either trim their lamps, or feed them; and therefore they of course went out; and, when out, they were left in the dark, which to them is an earnest and a prelude to ever-lasting darkness.

My design is to handle these two sorts of virgins separately, that you may see the one from the other. I intend to discourse on the *wise* virgins at this time, and at some future period I will treat of the *foolish*. Now for the words of my text.

"But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." In handling this subject I will endeavour to describe,

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|------|-------|----------|
| I. | The | virgins. |
| II. | Their | wisdom. |
| III. | Their | lamps. |
| IV. | Their | vessels. |
| V. | Their | oil. |

And,
Lastly, How they fared at their journey's end.

First, I am to treat of these *virgins*. The term virgin is given to a young unmarried woman, who has kept herself chaste and undefiled. Hence we read of virgins whom no man hath known.

Sometimes it signifies a young woman newly married, and who hath lost her husband by death: "Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth," Joel, i. 18.

This name is often given to a city which hath not been forced by siege, nor taken, conquered, sacked, or rifled. Hence we read, Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate, Isaiah, xlvi. 1. So we read of the virgin the daughter of Zion, and of the virgin of Israel; and, indeed, "there are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number; but my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, and the choice one of her that bare her." But the virgins in my text are so called on a religious account, because of their faithful and close attachment to the Son of God, and on account of the purity of their consciences, their lives, doctrines, and worship: they had not suffered themselves to be seduced, defiled and corrupted, from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The virgins here mentioned, which are called wise virgins, are heavenly and spiritual virgins, as the bridegroom they go forth to meet is the heavenly and spiritual bridegroom. They are elected or chosen persons; chosen in Christ, and given to him

before ever the world was made, and were secretly espoused to him from all eternity in God the Father's purpose, and in the cordial acceptance of them by Christ himself; on which account he calls himself their husband before they are openly espoused to him. "Fear not, for thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, &C.

But there is an open espousal of them in time, by the power and presence of Christ attending the gospel preached, as saith the apostle; "I have espoused you to a good husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Indeed, before Christ is known, we are wedded to the law of works, until we find that the law worketh wrath in us, and ministers death to us; that it is weak through the flesh, and therefore can give us no help; a killing letter, and can give us no life. This makes us die to all hope in it, and it appears a dead letter to us; then, when faith comes, we get from under it, and are no more bound to its rigorous exactions, being redeemed from it by the crucifixion of Christ, and delivered from it by the grace of Christ. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God," Rom. vii. 4. Hence it is that a poor soul, mourning under his sins, and condemned by the law, is compared to a desolate widow, until Christ betroths the soul to himself: "Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more; for thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name," Isaiah, liv. 4. Here we forget the shame of our youth, guilt being, purged away; and, as for Satan, law, and conscience, they can no longer reproach us with being, without Christ, and having no hope in the world, for we are to remember the reproach of our widowhood no more; old things are passed away, and all things are become new. The name of *widow* is

rubbed off, and the name of *virgin* is given. And when this reproach and shame are purged away, and all our reproachers are silenced, then it is that the union takes place between the heavenly bridegroom and the poor distressed soul; love is shed abroad in the heart, and nothing but love is discovered in the altogether lovely Jesus. This love knits the marriage-knot, cures all our love-sicknesses, and its cruel attendant raging jealousy. Love casts out fear and torment, joins the soul to Christ, and it is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God. Such, saith Paul, are "presented as a chaste virgin to Christ."

This mystical marriage was pointed out under the former dispensation. The high-priest, who was a type of Christ in his priestly office, was strictly forbidden to take any person to wife but a virgin: "And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A willow, or divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take; but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife," Levit. xxi. 13, 14. In allusion to this, all the followers of the High Priest of our profession are called "virgins."

But again. This virgin is one who strictly adheres to her marriage covenant, by which "she is betrothed to the Lord for ever, even betrothed to him in righteousness, in judgment, in lovingkindness, and in mercies: yea, I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord," Hosea, ii. 19, 20. The covenant of grace, in which she was given to Christ, and in which Christ was given to her, is highly esteemed by her: she knows that, in the ancient settlements, in the divine counsels of old, "a certain man made a marriage for his son," and in the day of her espousals, she sets her seal to the truth of this it is the whore that forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God, whose ways take hold on hell, going down to the chambers of death," but this virgin abides by the doctrines of Christ, and hath both

the Father and the Son: she hath God to her father, and Christ to her husband.

Moreover, this virgin is embraced, in all her bridal attire, as a bride prepared for her husband. God imputes the wedding garment of his dear Son to her; her faith apprehends it, and puts it on; God the Father draws her to her beloved, and he receives her as the Father's gift, saying, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "Evab," the mother of all living saints, and "Hepzbibah," for my delight is in her. "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church Loving-kindness crowns her head, imputed righteousness enrobes her person, meekness and quietude adorn her soul, modesty and bashfulness appear in her countenance; and she often blushes at a sight and sense of her own unworthiness. An illuminated understanding and faith are her eyes; the bond of the covenant and its promises the chain of her neck; her shoes are *peace*, and *truth* her girdle: and so sure as a bridegroom decketh himself with his ornaments, so sure is this bride thus adorned with her jewels.

Furthermore, her faith and affection to her royal consort are sorely tried. Many of Satan's procurers try hard to degrade and debase her spouse, in order to lessen him in her esteem, and to rival him in her affections; many old pimps sit at the seats of their doors, and lie in wait at every corner, in order to ensnare and beguile her, saying, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But these know not the thoughts of the Lord," Micah, iv. 11. Neither Satan, the arch seducer, nor any of his forestallers; neither Jezebel the witch, nor Babylon the whore could ever finally alienate her affections from her covenant Head, or so damp her love as to get her to relinquish her hold of him, to embrace the bosom of a stranger, to follow other lovers, to admire their bed when she saw it, or to discover herself to another, so as to expose herself to be judged, as a woman that breaketh wedlock is

judged; nay, so far from it, that she will not suffer lawful love to the creature to grow into inordinate affection without checking it, disapproving and disallowing of it, so as even to cry to her husband about it: "Draw me, and we will run after thee." If thou dost not draw me, I shall be drawn away from thee. She is not like that easy, quiet whore in the city, who was to be stoned to death for her sinful compliance, and for not crying out, Deut. xxii. 24. In short, at the worst of times this virgin can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" And, if misled and detained a captive, yet, as soon as she gets loose, she will say, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now." I come next to treat of;

II. The *wisdom* of these virgins. The other virgins are called *fools*; but these are said to be *wise*. The first appearance of their wisdom is in learning, to bring distant things near. They dare not cause the seat of violence to approach while they put far away the evil day. The day of judgment and they are daily conversing together, however terrible the meditation, or shocking the appearance. This is one part of the wisdom that God calls for: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would but consider their latter end. The wise man foresees the evil and hideth himself; but the wicked pass on, and are punished." To foresee the evil day is to bring it near, to cite ourselves at the bar both of God's law and our own conscience, in order to judge ourselves, that we may not be judged, and that we may accept the punishment of our iniquity, and not be condemned with the world; and to search and see which way a poor sinner may fly from the wrath to come; and, when Christ, "the hiding-place from the storm," is discovered, to betake ourselves, with all our grievances and troubles, and with all our confessions and petitions, to him, in order to embrace him as the only refuge that God hath set before us: and when faith gives us access to love of his heart, we are bid; and under his shadow we shall dwell in safety till every calamity be overpast. That which prompts us to this is

the alarm of God in our conscience, which awakens a whole army of terrors and fears about us; and this "fear is the beginning of wisdom," and operates upon us as it did upon Noah when God apprised him of the future deluge: "He was moved with fear, and prepared the ark." We are moved with the same fear, and betake ourselves to Jesus, for fear of being drowned in destruction and perdition.

This wisdom farther discovers itself by making the heart honest and humble, to tremble at, and to come to, the light of divine revelation. The heart that is endowed with this wisdom, and implanted with this fear, moves in concert with the lively oracles of God. If God threatens, the sinner trembles; if God forbids, he tries to forbear; if he contends, he stands mute; if he smites him, he falls under it; if he pleads against him, his unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God; if he says, Come, let us reason together, he keeps his distance; if he sets his sins in order before him, he knows they are not all there; if he fills him with wrath and rebuke, he expects worse; if he writes bitter things against him, he aggravates every circumstance in the hand-writing; if he is inclined to be propitious, he refuses to be comforted; if mercy melts him, he coyly refuses it; and, if God appears pacified toward him, he abhors himself in his own sight for his iniquity. Not so the fool: he hates the light; Prophecy smooth things, prophecy deceits, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us, saith he; heal our wounds slightly; cry peace, peace. "These have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is there in them?" Jer. viii. 9.

Their highest wisdom consists in this, they know their Saviour, and their interest in him; they know whom they have believed, and that their faith in him hath purified their heart; the blood of and the Spirit bears his witness to sprinkling speaks in them, their sonship; and this is "to be made wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ."

Such a soul knows that there is no other way into the holy of holies, but that which Christ hath consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and, as he received him, so he endeavours to walk in him; and everything that has a tendency to stagger, stumble, or impede him in his way; to fetter him, clog him, damp his zeal, or check his diligence; he endeavours to avoid. "The fool believeth every word, but the wise man looks well to his way."

If anything stumbles his judgment, he prays for instruction; if he cannot make straight path for his feet, he waits for God's counsel; if the standard be lifted up, he mends his pace; if his heart be enlarged, he runs; if the sun shines, he lays by every weight, and the sin that so easily besets him, the worst of which is unbelief. "The wisdom of the wise is to understand his way."

Such a soul knows that God's way is not his way; that it is not obvious to the light of nature; that, unless God shines upon it, it cannot be discerned, although so many eminent men have been employed in casting it up: hence he tries it by the word, seeks direction of the best guides, feels for God's arm, leans on his beloved, and observes the dictates of the Holy Spirit; and, when he has the approbation of Christ and conscience, wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: and this way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." The wisdom of this poor soul lies in his knowing what is acceptable to God. Without forgiveness of sin he knows there can be no admission to heaven; for "the unclean shall not enter without holiness (by the Spirit) no man shall see the Lord" without an imputed righteousness no acceptance; "the unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom:" and without truth in the heart all religion is vain; for truth must be settled in heaven; but he cannot come there "who loveth and maketh a lie." These things he seeks, after these he follows, and these best gifts he covets, as things that

accompany salvation; and all these things he has in Christ, and he enjoys them by virtue of union with him: "And this is the wise man, who builds his house, digs deep, and founds it upon a rock; that when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon the house, it stands fast, being, founded upon a rock."

Once more: The wise man knows the connexion that Christ sustains, and in what covenant relation he stands to him; that he is made of God unto him wisdom as well as righteousness; and to know him and the power of his resurrection is the quintessence of all wisdom; and all wisdom short of this he deems folly. "If any man will be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise for all human wisdom is foolishness with God, as it is said, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, vain in their imagination, and their foolish hearts were darkened." Which leads me,

III. To describe their *lamps*. This parable seems to have an allusion to a Jewish wedding, which came on after the espousals. The night being arrived for the young couple to come together, the bridegroom and his friends set off with their lights, from his father's house, to meet the bride; at which time she and her female attendants set off from her father's house to meet him, in order to be conducted to the house which he had provided for her. And so it is here. Christ leaves heaven, his father's house, and comes with all the saints and angels attending him; when the bride, and her companions, shall be brought to him, "with joy and rejoicing, shall they be brought, and shall enter into the king's palace;" namely, the new earth first, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," and shall spend a thousand years with him; at which time he shall present her to himself a glorious church, "having, neither spot nor wrinkle;" and afterwards he will present her unto his Father at the delivering up of the kingdom, and place her at

his own right hand. "On the right hand stood the queen in gold Ophir."

The first account we have in scripture of a lamp is in Gen. xv. 17. Abraham was commanded of God to take "an heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon." The beasts he divides in twain, but not the birds. " And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abraham," which was followed with", an horror of great darkness. And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "Unto thy seed I will give this land." It is thought, by many, that the sufferings of Israel in Egypt were represented by this furnace, and their great deliverance by the lamp. But I believe the slain beasts prefigured Christ; Abraham's darkness and horror, the bondage and wrath of the law; the smoking furnace, the suffering's of Christ under man's crimes and God's wrath; the lamp, the glorious salvation that should follow his crucifixion; for it is his death that ratifies and confirms the covenant of grace, and secures the heavenly country to all Abraham's mystical seed. And for this construction of the words we have the authority of the prophet Isaiah, who quotes this burning lamp, and applies it to the salvation of Christ. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteous thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth," Isaiah, lxii. 1.

The brightness, brilliancy, lustre, and glory, of this righteousness, spring from the glory of the great personage that wrought it out; it is *the righteousness of God*. Glory, and the rays of infinite divinity, attend it to every soul to whom it is imputed; and the time will come "when the righteous shall shine forth (in it) as the sun, in the glory of their Father's kingdom, for ever and ever."

The salvation here mentioned is called "a lamp that burneth." Salvation from guilt and filth, from fear and bondage, wrath, death, hell, and damnation, comes into the soul like a flaming torch: the sun of righteousness arises upon us with healing in his beams, and conveys such divine heat and everlasting light as shall never be quenched nor extinguished; and it is attended with such a flame of heavenly love as melts the soul, kindles in the breast, and makes the heart burn within us. This makes a man a burning and a shining light; yea, it makes a minister a flame of fire. In short, salvation by grace is a lamp that never goes out; for "we are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."

Some tell us that this lamp is a lamp of profession; but this is saying, nothing, as we have no scripture that calls a profession by that name. The lamp, as above described, is the lamp which these wise virgins took; had they taken any other, they had been just as foolish as the rest. Which leads me,

IV. To describe their *vessels*. By their vessels I understand their *hearts*; for religion without the heart is like the white of an egg without salt; it can be no more than bodily exercise, which profiteth nothing. If we draw near to God with our mouth, and honour him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him, in vain we worship him; and to set off for heaven and dream of getting there, while our hearts are set on the things of time and sense, is going without a heart; for "where a man's heart is there is his treasure." God promises to take away the stony heart of our flesh, and to give us an heart of flesh: "Yea, a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will give them an heart to know me, for I will pardon them whom I reserve; and I will circumcise their hearts to love me, that they may live."

Where there is no heart in religion, there is no faith, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and where there is no heart there is no Christ, for he dwells in the heart by faith; and without the heart there can be no grace, for grace is the hidden man of the heart."

Furthermore. God looks with compassion on them, and only them, that tremble at his word; nor will he dwell with any but those that are of a broken and a contrite heart, "to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones." A whole-hearted sinner needs not the physician; nor does the commission of Christ reach him, for he was sent "to bind up the broken-hearted."

These wise virgins knew the deceitfulness, the bitterness, the treachery, and the plague of their own hearts; and they knew the change that God had made therein. Hence we may see that every thing, which these wise virgins were, and all that they had, came down from the Father of lights. They were all of them by nature sinners, dead in trespasses and sins; but God chastened them, and taught them out of his law, and then he drew them to Christ, that they might find rest in him "till the pit be digged up for the wicked;" and Christ received them as his Fathers gift: this entitled them to the name of *virgins*.

God revealed his Son in them the hope of glory, and they had "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:" this made them *wise virgins*.

He gave them "the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins," which was attended with a feeling sense of the dying, love of Christ, that, having much forgiven, they might love much: this was their *lamp*, and this made them "wise virgins with their lamps."

God circumcised their hearts to love him, and wrought faith in their hearts to believe in him for life and salvation: this raised their affections above, and sent them out to meet the bridegroom for where should they be but where their hearts and treasures were? They never set out in hope and expectation of meeting the bridegroom till they were furnished with those things that would procure their reception, and make them meet for it. I come now,

V. To treat of their *oil*. The Jewish high priests, the prophet Elisha, and the kings of Israel, were all anointed with oil to their offices by the command of God; and HE that is now our prophet, priest, and king, was anointed also, and that with the Holy Ghost without measure. The holy penman, in his account of the anointing of Christ, is very particular, as you read "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows," Psalm iv. 5, 6, 7. It is plain that the marriage of Christ is set forth in this psalm. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." Here is Christ, and a company in the ivory palaces making him glad; and next we have the church and her company mentioned; Kings' daughters were among thy Honourable women; upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." In the next place, he orders her to quit her father's house, and come forth to meet him Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." He then tells her what a kind reception she shall meet with by so doing: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Next mention is made of more bridemaids, even from among, the Gentiles; and some of the great ones of the earth, too, shall entreat the queen's favour: "And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift, even the rich among the people

shall entreat thy favour." Now he applauds her: "The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold." And next comes her glorious admission into the royal palace: "She shall be brought unto the king, in raiment of needle-work;" and with her are brought the pure attendants that follow her, even the same persons mentioned in my text: "The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee, with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace," Psalm xlv. Out of this psalm, and the book of Proverbs, the Lord took this parable of the foolish and wise Virgins. And it is beautiful to see the gradation that appears in this psalm; for, first, here is the chosen spouse set before Christ, at the sight of whom he is much taken. 2. He is anointed to be a priest, to redeem by his sacrifice, and as a prophet to instruct her; and hence he calls upon her to hearken to him. 3. He is anointed to his kingly office, and tells her that the king, greatly desires her beauty, and then gives her the title of queen, suitable to his rank, and promises to bring her to his palace, and there to place her on his right hand. And these things were enforced with the most endearing affection, to induce her to quit her own family and father's house, and go forth to meet her bridegroom.

There were two things in the Saviour's view which rejoiced his heart when the oil of gladness was upon him; the one was, the day of his espousals: "Go forth, O daughter of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in his day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." The other thing was, the glory that was to be put upon his human nature at his ascension to heaven, and the fullness of joy he was to have there. Hence you hear him speaking: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for

evermore." This was "the joy that was set before him," for the which he "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Now let us look at the *oil* of these wise virgins, and see what it is. Solomon makes this flaming oil of the wise to be *joy*. He tells us that the light of a just man burns with joy, when the "light of the wicked is extinguished: "The light of the righteous, rejoiceth, when the lamp of the wicked shall be put out."

And the prophet Isaiah calls it "the oil of joy;" for, prophesying of Christ, and what he should do when he came, he tells us that he shall "comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified," Isaiah, lxi. 3. Hence it appears that the spiritual and heavenly joy, with which the Holy Spirit fills the new-born soul, is this oil which the wise virgins took in their vessels. This appears still more evident, because it is opposed to mourning, and is promised to the mourners in Zion: and nothing can be more desired by poor souls mourning under sin than this joy of the Lord; yea, even the foolish virgins craved it when their lamps went out; "Give us of your oil." Which verifies the saying of the wise man, There is a treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise," Prov. xxi. 20. And this proverb is fulfilled in my text, "for the wise had oil in their vessels."

We know that oil is a furious thing, to burn; and sure I am that nothing, destroys grief, sorrow, misery, and mourning, more effectually than the joy of the Lord in the heart. This oil makes a man's face to shine, however fallen, sickly, sad, dejected, or gloomy, it might appear before. Prosperity and joy, adversity and pensive consideration, are opposed to each other: "In the day of prosperity be joyful, in the day of adversity consider;

God hath set the one against the other." When our spiritual might abates, and our joys flag, we may prophesy as David did, My horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn; I shall be anointed with fresh oil."

Moreover, oil is of a very predominant nature; put it into what you will, unless it mixes, it will be uppermost; and so the greatest felicity of heaven is set forth by it: "In his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." According to Paul, joy is the second fruit of the Holy Spirit of God: "Love, joy, peace." Anointed with this oil, shall the sons of God return to their father's house: "They shall come with songs, and everlasting joy upon their head; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing, shall flee away." The Lord fill us with all joy and peace in believing.

Once more. What can fill the bridegroom's heart so much as joy, when he is going, to take the desire of his eyes home to himself? Or what can fill the bride's heart but joy, when she is going, to the bosom of him who is supreme in her affections? And how doth the scripture set this comparison of, and interweave it with, the soul's espousal to Christ? Thou "shalt no more be termed forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate: but thou shalt be called Hepbzibah, and thy land Beulah for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For, as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," Isaiah, Ixii. 4, 5.

This oil of heavenly joy is an inestimable treasure, and so it will appear to the wise whenever the midnight cry comes. When the children of this world will be in their greatest security, buying, selling, building, planting, marrying wives and giving in marriage; when all on a sudden the archangel, and

the trump of God will alarm them all; then to reflect upon the work of regeneration, and to look forward with a good hope through grace, and feel a love to his appearing to see and know that now is an end to all sin and sinning; to all sorrow, sadness, and suffering; and to have nothing before us but eternal felicity, and the bridegroom coming to be admired in all that believe, and to receive the darling of his soul home to himself; this will make the oil burn brighter than ever. I now hasten to shew,

VI. How they fared their at their journey's end. We are informed that "the bridegroom tarried;" he was not quite so quick in his motions as they were in their expectations; and perhaps the cause of this was, somebody had been too busy in fixing the time of his coming, as many speculators have been very forward it fixing, the precise time for many events which God hath not revealed: beyond this time limited by some and expected by others, the bridegroom tarried; "and they all slumbered and slept." Faith was out of exercise, hope was not looking out, nor expectation on her watch-tower: patience had no troubles to exercise it, love was grown cold, diligence was worn out, grace lay dormant, and all the senses became drowsy: nothing awake but poor honest conscience, and he was not attended to. "I sleep, but my heart awaketh. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love." Though the spouse was asleep, her heart was not; and, however dead asleep, yet she knew the voice of her beloved and says, "It is the voice of my beloved that knocked." These words of the church Christ himself quotes: "Let your loins be girt about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching," Luke, xii. 36.

"And at midnigt there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." At *midnight* was this cry made. The creation of the world is called *morning*, and the angels who then sang their anthems are called "the morning, stars that sang together," Job, xxxviii. 7. The prophetic age is called *noon*, Amos, viii. 9. In Christ's days it was called *supper time*, Luke, xiv. 16, 17. But this cry is at the close of time, and therefore called *midnight*: and there is an allusion to the midnight cry in Egypt, when the first-born in every house lay dead, and Israel all in perfect safety, "who kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them."

However, God will always have some watchmen on the walls of Zion to give the time of the night, as was the case here; there were some that cried the hour even at *midnight* for at that time the cry was made: surely "God will not do any thing, but revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets."

Before the flood, Noah was let into the secret of the deluge. Before the destruction of Sodom, Abraham first, and then Lot, was apprized of it. To the destruction that came upon Egypt Moses was privy. Jeremiah was informed of the duration of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Daniel was informed when the Messiah would come. And both Daniel and the Messiah himself gave many broad hints of Jerusalem's desolation. And so likewise of the day of judgment, some watchmen will be informed of that, lest the Lord, coming suddenly, should find his spouse sleeping.

"Behold, the bridegroom cometh." This watch-word was not given to the world, for he is not a bridegroom to them; the warning was given to Zion, and to the inhabitants of that city; and they, and only they, took the warning, and were alarmed and roused up by it.

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." The foolish, as well as the wise, being in communion one with another, received the warnings. But I shall not take notice of them at this time. The wise "trimmed their lamps:" by which it appears that their evidences were begloomed, and their spirits dull; the grace of God in their hearts, and their past experiences, much obscured; their lights very dim, and their love cold; much sin unconfessed and unrepented of, and the great day of accounts put far away. But this cry alarmed them, and awakened all their fears about them: their backsliding reproved them, their base ingratitude stared them in the face; and their carelessness and cold indifference terrified them. This led them to self-examination, and that led them to humble confession: fear moved them, and prayers were fervently put up for pardon, peace, and a revival of the work; when a fresh application of the atonement was applied, meekness and humility were granted, and they restored to the joys of his salvation, and furnished and upheld by his free spirit. They saw that their guilt was purged, and their wedding garment on truth was about their loins, and love in their hearts; the Spirit's witness within, and a serene heaven without; faith in exercise, and hope in vigour: and, being thus ready prepared, as a bride adorned for her husband, they cry, "Come, Lord Jesus. come quickly!"

And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." This marriage is not in heaven, or in ultimate glory; for Christ at this time comes to raise the dead who died in faith, and to change the saints that shall at this time be found alive upon earth; and, when the one is changed, and the other raised, they enter into the heavenly Jerusalem, which at this time will be let down out of heaven from God. "They will mount up to meet the Lord in the air;" when he will burn the world, and all the wicked in it, as he did Sodom and Gomorrah; and then "create all things new. The elements shall melt, and the heavens pass away with a great

noise; the earth, and all her works, shall be burnt up, and a new heaven and a new earth appear," agreeable to his promise, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." This will be the last jubilee, and the last Sabbath; and now shall "the meek inherit the earth, and the elect long enjoy the work of their hands;" for they will, in this state, outlive all the antediluvians; for "they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years." This will appear a heavenly country, and Zion "a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." This will be "the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city," and the camp of the saints; and the thousand years rest that remains to the people of God, of which the Sabbath was a sign; and here we shall rest from our works, as God did from his. At this time we shall meet all the flock: this will be "the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven." And at the close of the thousand years the wicked shall be raised and judged; and, when banished and imprisoned, the saints will ascend to ultimate glory, the scaffold will be struck, and time will be no more; but heaven will be the saints' final home, and God will be all in all.

Now suffer a word of counsel and advice. As the midnight cry in Egypt was emblematical of this midnight cry at the end of the world, so God's direction to Israel will serve as a guide to us. Israel was a typical people, and prefigured the whole Israel of God; they were all the sons of God by national adoption: "Israel is my son, my first-born; let my son go, that he may serve me:" and, as such, they represented all the sons of God, who were predestinated to the adoption of children; which preadoption is manifested to them at their believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every household of Israel was to take a lamb; and every little congregation belonging to the household of faith must by faith take hold of the lamb of God; and this lamb, our passover sacrificed for us, must be eaten; his flesh is meat indeed, and

his blood drink indeed. This sacrifice is a sweet entert 159d
ainment for a restless, disquieted soul, who hungers and
thirsts after righteousness, life, pardon, peace, reconciliation
with God, and eternal salvation; and will nourish faith and
hope: it will satisfy a barren, empty, perishing, mind; and
quiet, compose, and becalm an accusing conscience, and
gratify it to the highest decree. This lamb was to be roasted
with fire: and the faith of a believer sees and feels the cruse,
the burning, fire and smoking jealousy, of a sin-avenging, God
revealed in a fiery law, poured forth upon the Lamb of God,
who suffered in the room and stead of his people so that he is
redeemed from the wrath to come, and delivered from going
down to the pit, by the life of Christ, laid down a ransom for
many. The blood of the Lamb was to be put upon the two
side-posts, and upon the upper door-post of the houses.
Christ does condescend to visit his elect while we dwell in the
houses of these our earthly tabernacles, and demands
entrance by the everlasting doors of our hearts; and when the
King of glory comes in, he not only puts a little sweet-smelling
myrrh upon the handles of the lock, but with this blessed
atonement he sprinkles the heart from an evil conscience;
which saving benefit being applied, procures his admittance
ever after, and makes his company so desirable. This
sacrifice was to be eaten with unleavened bread, which Paul
says is "sincerity and truth." Sincerity is opposed to hypocrisy,
and truth to falsehood: hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness, is
called old leaven. "And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins
girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand."
"The truth (as it is in Christ), received in the love of it," and
with it "the love of the truth," or the love that God promises in
the word of truth to reveal in us, is, according to Paul, the
saint's girdle; "having, your loins girt about with truth." The
loins of the mind being girded up, keeps from a loose and
scandalous profession, and from embracing the damnable lies
and Heresies that abound in our day. To walk humbly with
Christ, and to enjoy peace in him, and in our own conscience,

is "having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The staff must be in our hand. Christ, in his office of a shepherd, has his *staff*, and, as king of Zion, he hath his *rod*, or sceptre; of which David speaks. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," for I am a sheep of his pasture; the Lord is my king, working, salvation in the midst of the earth; and he will magnify this staff by his tender care of me, and shew himself worthy of "a right sceptre," by destroying my enemies and defending me. "I will fear no evil, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." This staff is the gospel, which is the power of God to salvation, and by which mighty power we are kept through faith. But the lamb must be eaten with bitter herbs; with bitter herbs shall they eat it." These are not palatable, but profitable; they are not intended to fill the belly, but to purge and strengthen the stomach. When bitter trials cease we get lifeless; and when lifeless, Satan gets little injury, and God gets but little glory. The only remedy against slumbering and sleeping is diligence and watchfulness; for all the time we are diligent our souls gather fatness, and God is glorified, which is what Satan cannot bear. It is when the soul is pressing, forward to Jesus that Satan buffets him; and it is when he would do good that evil is present with him. Let his diligence abate, and Satan is undisturbed; let him cease to do good, and the old man will not so strongly annoy him. This brings on slumbering and sleeping, the offence of the cross is ceased.

A worse slaughter than that of Egypt will be made at the midnight cry, I mean among those who will be found in their first-born state. Let us, therefore, keep the passover and the sprinkling of blood.

Again: Israel was to abide in their houses; and the saint should abide in the house of God, for there the midnight cry will first be made, and there the warning be first given. Once more: At this passover Israel was to begin to reckon time; it was to be the beginning of months unto them; and at the last

midnight cry suffering time, sinning time, the devil's time, and the time of sinners plaguing the saints, will be over; and a whole thousand years complete will take place, and run out, before Satan and his adherents come forth to judgment. They shall all be in prison during this term, while Christ will reign before all the antediluvian and postdiluvian saints, and that in a glorious manner; for so it is written: "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," Isa. xxiv. 20, 21, 22, 23. God grant we may be found among this number. Amen

The Foolish Virgins Described - Sermon II.

William Huntington (1745-1813)

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them," Matthew, xxv. 3.

SOME time ago I gave you a discourse upon the wise virgins, and now I will endeavour to give you a description of the foolish ones, that you may see the difference between them, and judge for yourselves which class you belong to.

Such scriptural accounts of hypocrites as these which describe their setting out in a profession, the name virgin being given to them, their taking their lamps as well as the wise, to shew that they made in their profession, their constant company with the righteous, the lengths to which they run, and their continuance in their course, even till the midnight cry proclaimed the day of judgment at hand, and even then to awake and begin to trim their lamps, expecting to be admitted into the marriage chamber as well as the others; when, instead of that, they were sent away as workers of iniquity: such accounts as these, I say, are very trying to young Christians. I see more and more the need of deep and heart-searching preaching in our days, for we swarm with professors: but what are they? They know not what they bear in the general, nor in what they believe. The fan therefore, must come, and will come, to purge the floor.

About seven years ago I was much exercised in soul, for many months. Scenes of calamities and troubles were continually before me, and destruction in various form. After having carried this heavy burden for six or seven months, it wore off a little "God speaketh once, yea twice; but man perceiveth it not."

At length the present war broke out, about which I have had many night visions. These things led me to search the scriptures, and to seek the face of our heavenly Father, by prayer and supplication, for a little instruction in these things. It appears to me, that one of the heaviest times that ever fell upon Christendom, the most universal and the sharpest, is now before us. It may not last long; and it may lead on to the last conflict that ever mount Zion will have with the children of men.

This is mentioned in Daniel: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of

thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," Dan. xii. 1. Whatever sufferings fell upon the Jews under Antiochus, or whatever they suffered in their last desolations by the Romans, it is my opinion that this text hath never had its full accomplishment yet; and for this reason, because it is mentioned by John in his Revelations, which book was (I believe) written after Jerusalem's destruction. The words are these: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" Rev. iii. 10. Now this cannot have reference to the Jews, which were at this time dispersed: and besides, these things were sent to the seven churches in Asia. If the time of trouble mentioned in Daniel had been fully accomplished by Antiochus, it would not have been repeated here as something yet to come; and if it had been fulfilled in Jerusalem's desolation; it would not have been revealed as a prophecy to the Gentile churches in Asia. Nor do I believe that this storm ever fell, with all its weight, upon any one of those seven churches to which these epistles were sent; but that it is something yet to come.

However, there is some consolation to the children of God in both these passages; for "at that time Michael shall stand up." He will not be a careless or an insensible spectator; He will stand up, as he did at the martyrdom of Stephen, and exert his power in the behalf of those who suffer for his sake; for, if he be a present, yea, "a very present help in time of trouble," much more so in this time of trouble, which is to be such as never hath been since the world began. And he is "the great prince which standeth for the children of Daniel's people;" by which is meant, not the Jews, but the people of God's covenant, as Daniel was; and his sort of people, real believers, and brethren in the faith, being the spiritual children

of Abraham according to the promise. "Michael stands up for these;" to support them, to give strength according to the day; to regulate the heat of the furnace; to stay the rough wind in the day of the east wind; to let the race of his enemies out, and to restrain the remainder of their wrath; to give them presence of mind in times of trial; to furnish them with wisdom how to act; and to make a way for their escape; for it is said, that "at that time thy people shall be delivered, even every one that shall be found written in the book," Dan. xii. 1. God's elect shall be delivered, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, slain from the foundation of the world. And with this account in Daniel John agrees in his Revelation about the deliverance of God's elect: "And, because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation," &c. The word of Christ's patience is the gospel; keeping of it, is believing in it, holding it fast, and abiding by it, in the face of all opposition, and endeavours of the wicked to wrest it out of our hands.

1. It seems by this as if those who walk in craftiness, and handle the word of God deceitfully, and those that are hypocrites in their profession, and mere formalists, will suffer a little, if not the most, in this perilous hour. And no wonder, for such persons are often the most secure; and this storm will fall very suddenly, for Christ, who threatens it, immediately adds, "Behold, I come quickly," Rev. iii. 11 ; that is, I come quickly to inflict this punishment.

2. The righteous are, in some measure, in God's secrets, but the wicked are not. God will give his people some notice of it, as he did to his disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, that they might flee from it, while the rest fled to Jerusalem for safety, and perished with the city. Moreover, this time of the most perilous and dreadful struggle is called an hour, a very short time, perhaps not a month; in which the Lord may hide his own in this day of his fierce anger: "Because thou hast kept

the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them." Those that keep the word of his patience are called the "few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments: they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

That which is to lead on, and pave the way, to this trying hour is scattering the power of the righteous: "And, when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished, Dan. xii. 7. By this power is meant, not the power of God, for who can scatter that? By this power I understand the strength and power of human laws, which keep the nations in order, and the wicked in awe, and which tolerate and protect those that fear God in their worship unmolested; and when these fences are broken down, and this power scattered, we know what must be expected.

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he lifted up his right hand, and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people all these things shall be finished," Dan. xii. 7. The man clothed in linen is Christ in his priestly habit. The duration of Zion's suffering under Antichrist is to be a time, times, and half a time; which, in the prophetic style, is three years and a half, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years. And it appears that when these years are run out, or nearly so, the power of the holy people shall be scattered, and this perilous hour shall come on; and this, with the slaughter of the witnesses, will be the end of Zion's sufferings by the hand of the wicked, and the last triumph of her enemies and of this we are assured by the promise and oath of Christ himself. Now we must go to John.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Measure the temple of God, and the altar, and

them that worship therein." Here John, or those ministers whom he personated, is ordered to take the word of God, and to describe a real church, the altar, and the use of it, and the real spiritual worshippers of God. By the temple I understand the church at large; by the altar Christ, and the use that must be made of him by all believers; and by the worshippers to describe the true from the false. An allusion is here made to the temple at Jerusalem, on the outside of which was a cloistered walk, called the court of the Gentiles:" next to this, and in the temple, was the large court which held the national church of the Jews; next to this was the sanctuary, where was the altar of burnt-offering, and where the priests entered to perform their service; and next to this the holiest of all. Now, under the gospel, all real believers are called "a royal priesthood;" yea, they are made "kings and priests unto God." The temple was a type of the whole visible professing church; in which there are some real worshippers, who are priests in the sanctuary; some national worshippers, who worship with their bodies only, and are graceless and undevout worshippers; and without this court is the court of the Gentiles, the papists. The outward court is not to be measured, because the Gentiles, who are in the cloistered walk, are to have it. "But the court which is without the temple leave out" [cast out], "and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles," Rev. ix. 2. This outward court I take to mean protestants who are unregenerate men, let them be of what sect, name, or party, they may, whether churchmen or dissenters: these are given to the Gentiles, they are ranked among, the papists, and will be gained over to them. And, as to the spiritual worshippers, the real citizens of mount Zion, they shall trample upon them: "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Here Daniel's three years and a half are called forty and two months, which I believe mean the same length of time. This is the whole time of Zion's suffering under the man of sin, but when they began, or when they will end, I know not; the vision will speak in time.

During this term of years the gospel shall be preached notwithstanding all the opposition made against it; for so it follows: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth," Rev. xi. 3.

"And, when they shall have finished their testimony;" when Daniel's time, times, and an half; when the forty and two months; when the one thousand two hundred and sixty years are expired; then their testimonies shall be finished; and then "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them," Rev. xi. 7. This will be Daniel's "time of trouble;" the prophets' last mourning days; the last furnace that men will heat for Zion, all Antichrist's last triumphant festival. This killing of them doth not mean so much the murdering of them as the silencing or slaying, of them in their ministry, or as ministers; so that the word of life shall not be held forth by them as witness of God, for so it follows: "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified," Rev. xi. 8. This shews that, wherever these witnesses are, there they will be slain or silenced; and, as the place where they lay dead is called the street of the great city, it is plain that the countries where the witnesses lay must be gained over to the Roman church, or else they cannot, with any propriety, be called "the streets of that great city."

The time that they are to lie silenced, or dead, as witnesses, is three years and a half "And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth." By these two prophets I understand

ministers and churches, (read Rev. xi. 4) for the churches are the ground and pillar of what the prophets preached, or the living epistles of what the prophets wrote. It seems father evident that this mystical slaughter of the witnesses will be universal, wherever they are, because different people, kindreds, tongues, and nations, shall see them; and shall make, merry, send gifts, and rejoice on this occasion.

This, as before said, will be Zion's last trouble, and the hypocrite's last triumph; for so it follows: "And, after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them." The Spirit of God inspires them afresh for their great work, and they ascend into a state of heavenly-mindedness, and appear again as a cloud of witnesses for God: and now Babylon falls; "and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. xi. 15.

Now here are two different times of suffering mentioned. The one the slaughter of the witnesses, which will last three years and a half; the other, "the hour of temptation, which is to come upon all the world to try them." Now I take these two scenes of suffering to be distinct things, and to come on at two distinct periods, for the following reasons; namely, from the hour of temptation those are to be kept who keep the word of patience; and the world is to be tried; yea, all that dwell upon earth shall be tried: whereas, in the slaughter of the witnesses, the people of God are to stiffer, and the world are to rejoice, make merry, and send gifts one to another. And there is also a difference in the duration of these two sufferings seasons; the one is called "an hour," the other "three years and a half." But what this trying hour is, or when the heaviest of it will come on is unknown, though the thing,

itself hath been in a measure revealed to some already, and will be revealed more plainly to them who have kept the word of his patience; but to the whole crowd of professors at large I believe it will be hid, and will fall upon them when they are most secure. "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know What hour I will come upon thee," Rev. iii. 3.

It is not easy to tell in what part of scripture the late revolution in France, and the dreadful war that succeeds it stands. No commentator, that I have seen, has described it: some, in our day, have thought that this was the earthquake and the downfall of the tenth part of the city mentioned Rev: xi.13; but that cannot be (though it may be an earnest of it), for the witnesses must be slain, and lie three years and a half, and rise, and ascend, here that earthquake comes on; for so it is written: "And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them: and the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell," &C. Rev. xi. 12. 13.

We have more need to fear a certain army in the bowels of our own country than all the combined forces on the frontiers: the damnable heresies of every sort that are revived and spread in the open face of the Sun of Righteousness; the hourly insults that are offered to the dignity and majesty of his highest nature, and all the perfections of it; the daily elopements of women from their husbands, and the unclean spirit of whoredom that so universally reign and rules among the higher class of people, who ought to set an example to the lower ranks; the numberless swarms of professors, who have no more, than a form of godliness, and who hate the power thereof; the many upstarts and presumptuous pretenders which have lately appeared in public, and the deluded multitudes which have been led astray by them; the presumption of some who have pretended to take the Jews to

the land of Canaan; the daring pretensions of other novices to convert them; the universal clamours of the call and commission of others to convert the heathen nations, without any account given to the Christian world of their own conversion, much less of their call or commission from God to such a work. Another thing which I fear is, the threatened stroke of heaven upon his oppressor. The last hard frost gave the coal merchant his opportunity of grinding the face of the poor to the uttermost; which will never be forgotten in the days of this generation. The year following the whole staff of life was confined in the hands of the farmer, the monopolist, the mealman, and the miller, who exhibited such unparalleled hardness of heart, covetousness, and cruel oppression, as is not to be found in the annals of time. "But will not God visit for these things, and shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Yea, he will; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." I have run on here till I have almost lost myself and my text too. I was to describe the foolish firms; and I believe there never were greater numbers of this sort in a profession than in the present day; and surely never was there less of the pure gospel preached, nor less faithful dealing than at this time; for it appears to me that the whole work of the greatest part of our present preachers is to collect, varnish, and ornament, just such virgins as those in my text, and nothing else; and, in handling these words, I will endeavour to describe them in the following manner:

- I. Treat of their virginity.
- II. Of their folly.
- III. Their lamps.
- IV. The blaze they made. And,
Lastly, The cause of their going out.

First, I am to treat of their virginity. It seems that our Lord Jesus Christ is determined that no soul shall ever be a loser

by him; all that follow him, shall gain something; and they generally gain what they seek after: "None shall kindle a fire upon his altar, or shut his doors for nought." Many followed him formerly for the loaves and fishes, and they were fed twice; many, in our days, follow him for nothing else but to get business, and they succeed. Some follow him from a real sense of their need of his mercy; and when they have got that, they follow him in faith and affection; and these get both the kingdom of heaven, and all other necessaries into the bargain; and many follow him only to get a religious name, and such obtain it. The antediluvian professors, who married the daughters of Cain, were called, on account of their profession, the "sons of God." The thousands that passed over the sea of Tiberius after Jesus, were called his disciples: "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Judas obtained both a title and a fiddle; the name of an apostle, and an empty gift: "He took part of this ministry with us," says Peter. Now, as all these have gained something by trading, it can hardly be thought that the fools in my text should go altogether unrewarded. No, no. Virgins they are called, and that by the Son of God himself. There is certainly something glorious, heavenly, and honourable, in real godliness, or else the worst of creatures would never wish to imitate it. The devil himself sees something so beautiful in God, and in his glorious perfections, that he has always tried to imitate him, just as a monkey does a man; and has had more human worshippers and admirers than ever God had; yea, we read of "the devil and his angels;" so that he has got angelic adorers as well as human; and he has obtained the name of a god, for he is called "the god of this world:" and sometime he tries to transform himself into the likeness of an angel of light: and, as Satan tries to mimic God, so his children try to mimic the saints. Hence the fools in my text are called virgins; and every where in London would like to be called, and to be thought, the same. But God hath set such a brand of infamy on their

foreheads, that nothing under heaven but evangelical repentance can ever deface it.

The name Virgin, of right, belongs to the real spouse of Christ; and here it is given only on the account of a profession. They had nothing but the name, not the thing signified by it; by name they were virgins, in religion fools, and by practice workers of iniquity: and such the Judge calls them when he bids them depart from him. A professor of Godliness and a worker of iniquity is as great a contradiction in terms as an undefiled whore. Spiritual virginity lies in a soul's holding itself not its own, but sacred to its only and eternal lover; barring the heart, mind, affections, and judgment, against all rivals and bold intruders; preserving all its charms, such as the strongest affections, secret recess of the mind, most earnest desires, choicest praises, stable confidence, sweetest words, and firmest trust, for the service of the best beloved, and none else: "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." But the virginity of this fool lies only in name, in outward shew, and in word; they kept their carcasses out of the world, but not their hearts; they joined themselves to the saints, but they were never of one spirit with them; they went forth to meet the bridegroom with their feet, but never walked by faith; they learnt to talk of Jesus as the saints did, and as a parrot learns to speak man's words; and the parrot knows just as much what it means as these fools did of the Lord Jesus; for he tells them at last, "Depart from me, I know ye not;" and, if he did not know them, it is not likely that they should know much of him. Which leads me to consider,

II. Their folly or foolishness. These fools were not idiots; for such persons have not sense enough to act the part of an hypocrite in so complete a manner as these did, even to deceive the wise virgins themselves, until the midnight cry undeceived them. Nor can these fools mean persons of weak capacities, for the same reason: an arch hypocrite, in the

general, is a cunning, subtle, sharp, keen, crafty person, as Judas, Simon Maous, Ananias, ahitbopbel, &c. These virgins are called fools on a religious account, because they deceived themselves, and were deceived; and because they took so much pains to gain an empty name, which only at last entitled them to the greater condemnation, which is threatened to an hypocrite in Zion; or else their foolishness lay in their certain expectation of heaven in their own thoughts, when of all fools they were the farthest from it.

A fool in religion is one that is ignorant of the corruption of his own nature; of the enmity, rebellion, deceit, and hypocrisy, of his own heart; of his being destitute of all righteousness, holiness, wisdom, strength, and power, either to will or to act for God; he is ignorant of the sting of death that is in his heart, and of the strong man armed that keeps his soul in a false peace; and therefore he never was chased out of his refuges of lies; he is in covenant with death, and with hell at an agreement, and rests carnally secure in flesh and blood: and "he that trusts in his own heart is a fool."

In all this fool's profession there is no self-examination, no diving into the heart and conduct, no pondering over, or reflecting upon, the long black list of crying crimes that lie behind; and in all his hearing there is no appropriation; he is charmed with the sound, as some horses are with a fiddle; and the more noise the more music. The sword of God makes no incision in him, reproof and rebuke make no impression on him; he hears the letter by the preacher's voice, and, with a feigned faith, and in carnal security, he reclines himself upon it, "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it." This fool never felt the burden of sin and the wrath of God sink him, and therefore never

searched deep to feel for the rock to rest his burdened soul upon; it is a dead soul, resting upon that which is a savour of death unto death.

There are none more certain, or more at a point, than this fool. To attempt to convince him, counsel him, or to undeceive him, is pulling him down from his excellency; and you may just as well turn a swine as persuade him, he sees his way clear, he knows where he is going, and where he shall end; "the way of a fool is right in his own eyes," if it be wrong in the eyes of every body else.

Wisdom asserts that the confidence of this fool is as strong as his way is nigh: he is not one that is given to stagger; few fits of incredulity fall to his share; and no wonder, for his faith is never tried; he walks boldly, and well he may, for against him there is no rising up. He has neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil to cope with. Not the world, for that loves its own; not the flesh, for his confidence is in it; not the devil, for he is the author and finisher of this faith; and he is not divided against himself. If his confidence meets with any checks, it is now and then brought on by a stroke from the lips of the righteous: this sometimes touches him a little; and this he highly resents, and calls it making the righteous sad, whom God would not have made sad; such are not builders up, but destroyers of God's heritage: and he deems it the effects of a bad spirit, of narrowness, of pride, of bigotry, and contraction of soul; and, in order to keep all light and conviction out, and to fortify himself against all truth and equity, he storms till he has silenced his adversary, and contends with the more violence for his full assurance of faith; fully persuaded in his own mind that no legal bondage, fear, trial, or trouble, will ever move him: his heart is fixed; and he daringly persisteth in his presumption. "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but the fool rageth and is confident," Prov. xiv. 16.

This fool often deceives the simple by a collection of such general terms as are peculiar to religious characters: the words truth, righteousness, faith, experience, grace, the Spirit of God, the old man, temptations, persecution, good hope, the fear of God, election, the gospel, the trial of faith, the inward man, the children of God, the promises, the covenant of grace, sanctification, justification, the saint's final perseverance, progressive work, instantaneous work, the good work of grace, the buffetings and conflicts of God's people, &c. when he knows not what he means by any one of these phrases; nor can he explain, define, or clear, one of them. But poor, simple souls, who are used to gospel language, they hear and find that these are such terms as they have been used to; and therefore swallow them down, and admire his sound speech, and his experience, only because they hear the names of these things mentioned; but, when troubled souls come to seek unto him to solve their doubts and fears, they find the voice to be Jacobs voice, but the heart and hands both belong to Esau. "Excellent speech becometh not a fool; much less do lying lips a prince."

The whole work of this fool lies in one single branch of exercise, and that is, "the talk of the lips." Self-denial the daily cross, the furnace of affliction, the perpetual warfare between flesh and spirit, the plague of the heart, the stirrings of corruption, the hiding of God's face, legal bondage, doubts and fears of miscarrying, never trouble him; he eats the lamb without the bitter herbs, and drinks his wine without mingling; his days are prosperity, not adversity; his soul knows its own joy, but not its own bitterness; his heart is in the house of feasting, not mourning; his religion lies all in his mouth, as cathedral worship does in an organ; it is all wind music: "For a dream cometh through a multitude of business, and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words."

The fool is bomb-proof against all the artillery of a good soldier of Jesus Christ; no bow bends him, no arrows enters his reins; no weapons, however mighty, bring down his imaginations, nor any high thing in him that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; no thoughts of his heart are brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; Satan keeps full possession of his palace, and God the Saviour lets Satan hold his own: "He is joined to fools; let him alone." The hammer of truth never smites him, the fire of God never melts him, the sword of the Spirit never pierces him, the incarnate word never searches his heart, nor tries his reins; all attempts at his conscience is beating the air, getting one's self a blot, or braying a fool in a mortar; for a presumptuous sinner thus swollen and puffed up with pride, seated in the scorner's chair, and hardened in perilous presumption, is seared with a hot iron, and past feeling. Hence the scriptures represent one word in a living soul to have more effect than a flogging at a cart's tail hath with a callous hypocrite. "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool."

The folly of this fool is further described by his inverting all truth, and acting counter to all the paths of it, and to all the pillars and grounds of it. Hence Paul tells us that the Galatians were bewitched, that they should not obey the truth, but lies; that another gospel and another spirit suited them best; and poor Paul became their enemy, and they of course hated him, for telling them the truth. These were wise men; they submitted to circumcision, that the cross of Christ might profit them nothing; they went over to the law to be justified by the works of it; and, having begun in the spirit, or with the dispensation of the gospel, they were going to perfect the same by the works of the flesh. This was a way that seemed right in their own eyes, but the end thereof is the way of death. From this the apostle tried to dissuade them; but he was their enemy, and truth was the cause of it. Those who preached another aospel, and influenced them with another spirit, were

the men; those that Paul wished to be cut off for troubling them, were their only comforters. Truth was error; the gospel became a handmaid to the law; the work of the Spirit led to the perfection of the flesh; justification by faith was to lead them to the law to complete the work of righteousness; and falling from grace was to be the completion of life, and rendering Christ unprofitable to them was the only way to gain by trading. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?"

The fool in my text is one that is very fond of displaying his own abilities, that he may appear to be as wise in the eyes of others as he is in his own conceit: and we seldom read of one fool contending with another, for this would hurt the common cause, which every fool is under some obligation or other to support. The antagonist of this fool is, in the general, some poor, simple soul or other, that loves and fears God; and if, by brow-beating, an inch of ground can be gained over one of this stamp, this is a feather in his cap. "The fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes." I shall now,

Consider the lamp of this fool. "They took their lamps and went forth," &c. They did not all take one and the same sort of lamps: the wise took the lamps that were peculiar to them, and the foolish took the lamps that were peculiar to them; as at a Jewish wedding, every one took his own lamp or torch. I proved, in my last discourse, from the prophet Isaiah, that "salvation is a lamp that burneth:" but no fool ever took this; if he did, it would never go out; for we are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed or confounded world without end. This lamp we receive from the Saviour, and it is given to the daughters of Zion. "The Lord hath chosen Zion; this is my rest for ever. I will abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for

mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish," Psalm cxxxii. 16, 17, 18.

The lamp that the foolish virgins took is the law: "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light," Prov. vi. 23. Salvation by grace is the lamp of the wise, and the law is the lamp of the fool. When God writes his law of faith on the sinner's heart by his Spirit, and puts his fear within him; when he appears to be merciful to his unrighteousness, and to remember his sin no more; this is his lamp; he takes it, and in faith and love goes forth to meet the bridegroom. And, on the other hand, the fool who has got "the works of the law" (as Paul says) "written on his heart," he must of course go forth with this, for he has no other. The works of the law are written in his heart, and all the dreadful contents of the law are in him; the curse, the wrath, the fear, the bondage, and the torment, of the law are in him; only, being carnally secure, and dead in sin, he neither knows it nor feels it. Hence you read, "The curse of God is in the tabernacle of the wicked. He that believes not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him." Bondage, fear, and torment, are in him: love never made him free, then he must be bound; love never cast fear and torment out of him, then they must be in him.

The alarms of heaven have not roused his conscience; no army of terrors have awakened him the strong man armed keeps possession of the palace, and his goods are in peace. He was drawn by love, but never chastened; he is reconciled to God, though he never felt his enmity; he loves the Lord, though he never knew what it was to hate him; he believes, but never felt himself shut up in unbelief: this is the new wine put into the old bottle, and the new cloth put upon the old garment. He rages and is confident in his life; and it sometimes happens that he has no bands in his death, but his strength is firm; his life and his lamp both go out together: "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of

his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his lamp shall be put out with him," Job, xviii. 5, 6. One blessed effect of the new birth is to clear the soul of bondage, fear, wrath, and torment: and the other is to make it meet for heaven. But a man feels no more the wrath and bondage of the law than he does of his own guilt, sin, and misery, till he is alarmed, awakened, and quickened, by the Spirit of God. And how shocking must that sinner's state be whose soul is daubed over with a profession, while all these dreadful combustibles lie at the bottom undiscovered and unsuspected. This is healing the wound slightly. But the midnight cry alarms the fool, and stirs all this army of terrors up, and out goes his lamp, and all the blackness and darkness of Sinai succeed. I come now,

To speak a little of the blaze that these fools made before their lamps went out, for their going out presupposes that there was something of a light. This light I take to be a little head knowledge, which at times greatly pleases the fool, and of which he is sworn with pride: "Knowledge puffeth up." Hence you read of some that "rejoiced in Jobn's light for a season;" and of others who "heard the word, and anon with joy received it." Their passions were moved; their natural affections were stirred up and drawn forth, and with much glee it was received, and they rejoiced in it; and well they might, for they felt no wounds. The word was not a hammer to them, nor a fire, nor a sword; there was no piercing, smiting, cutting, reproving, nor rebuking; the wolf lay fast asleep, and the sheep-skin was put on. I have thought, at times, that the devil applies the word to such hypocrites on purpose to deceive them, and that it is he that fills them with their joy, in the same manner as he will sometimes throw a person into fits, and sometimes deprive others of their rationality, and set them to laughing ready to kill themselves, and keep them at it for an hour together; for I know some in a profession who are always joyful, all the year round, and sometimes quite filled with it,

and yet have no more experience or hope than the devil himself. Such joy is not called the joy of the Lord, nor the joy of faith, nor rejoicing in the Spirit; but it is called "the joy of the hypocrite:" and their laughter is called, the laughter of fools;" and their light is called darkness. "Take heed lest the light which is in thee be darkness. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." We know that the hypocrite is the devil's own child; and no wonder if the devil furnish him with this light and joy upon hearing the word; for he hears it, and anon with joy receives it, and suddenly springs up into a profession.

The carnal mind is influenced with a feigned faith; the corrupt affections put on a dissembled love; Satan, transformed into an angel of light, shines into the understanding; much knowledge of the scriptures is given to puff up, but no knowledge of the sinfulness of the human heart. Just so the devil acted with Eve: he highly applauded "the tree of knowledge," and the wonderful effects of it, but not one word in praise of "the tree of life:" and so here Satan highly extols the scriptural knowledge of his child, but not one word of the knowledge of his own wicked heart, for this the devil was the author of; and to attempt to discover it would be exposing his own work, and acting against himself.

That the devil is the author of the whole stock of this hypocrite's professing materials may be gathered from this: they have some bowels of mercy, and mantles of love, for every rank of sinners, and for every tribe of hypocrites under heaven; but for the poor broken-hearted, honest, faithful sinner, that believes on Jesus Christ, they have no affection, pity, compassion, bowels of mercy, or mantles of love, neither for them, not yet for their characters. Take them to your table and keep them; bed them, board them, make them your counsellors, guides, companions, and familiar friends as David did Ahithopbel; give them titles of honour, gifts; make

them your purse-bearers, and stewards of the household, as Christ did Judas; and all will not do; they will still hate you in their hearts with perfect hatred, and be plotting for your life: and the reason is, the God of heaven is in the one, and the devil himself in the other; and who can bring God and mammon, Christ and Belial, light and darkness, faith and infidelity, together? The north and south poles will as soon meet together as any union ever subsist between such parties.

When the devil has influenced, varnished, polished, set forth, and equipped, such a professor as this, he persuades him that his hearing the word, his receiving it with joy, his springing up in zeal, in knowledge, in a profession, in a reformation, and in a separation from the world, and joining, with God's saints; that this is conversion, it is regeneration, and the joy that he felt is the power of God, and the confidence that attended it is the work of faith wrought in the heart with power. And he furnishes the world with preachers to confirm such in their profession. To counterfeit every distinct operation of the Spirit of God is the devil's masterpiece; and to set a sinner down in a false hope, and under an infernal influence, is the fool's deepest cell, the next to that of utter darkness.

When the devil sends one of his ministers to counterfeit the first operation of God's Spirit, the deceiver may be discovered by the following appearance: he comes with a gloomy countenance, and commands a solemn awe; his deportment is grave, his voice hollow, his looks declarative of pensiveness and deep thought; he deals much in mortality, death, and judgment to come; his eyes stare, his face is pale, and his accents are weighty; a solemn gloom, dismal sensations, follow, and are communicated to all the audience; a cold chill runs through the blood, and every thought of the heart is brought into captivity to the house appointed for all living. This

is a solemn meeting, and a solemn opportunity; and is called the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit: whereas this influence, according to scripture, used to be brought on by necromantic art, such as lodging in the tombs, consulting the dead; and was produced in king Saul by the peeping and muttering of the witch of Endor, who brought up Samuel; and may now be obtained by attending the play of Macbeth. "But should not a people seek unto their God, to the living from the dead?" Old wives' fables about then night-mare, will-o'-the-wisp, and apparitions, will bring on this influence even upon children, till they will conceive that the whole house is haunted.

The second branch of this deception Satan carries on by those who come to us with all the terrors and bondage of the law, driving us to the obedience of faith with the repeated discharges of hell and damnation; terrifying and frightening us out of sin, out of self and the world, and into holiness of heart, lip, and life, by resolutions, vows, fears, and toiling, in our own strength. These tell us that they have been shook over hell, and they are got out of all the storm without either the witness of God's Spirit, the voice of the blood of sprinkling, or the sweet "yea of everlasting love." This passes for deep experience, for the real convictions of the Spirit of God; whereas it has been found in Cain, Judas, Esau, Ahab, and in every reprobate that is given up to a fearful looking-for of judgment; in all the surprised hypocrites in Zion, in all the fallen angels, and in all the damned in hell. It is not an experience of the wrath and curse of God, but an experience of deliverance from it, that worketh hope.

The third branch of this mimicry is displayed by the unhumbled, unpardoned, unsanctified, and unrenewed Antinomian, who has the word assurance on his tongue, evangelical scraps in his head, hardness in his spirit, filthiness in his life, and Satan in his heart. These mount the scorner's

chair; arrogance comes out of their mouth, and they talk exceeding protidly; they brow beat and banter both law and conscience, and bid defiance to both; and, like Balaam, call God their own: they urge their plea, put in their claim, and puff at meekness, righteousness, peace, charity, contrition, godly sorrow, and repentance; they become men, and put away childish things; and, having made shipwreck of all feeling, they are safe ashore, out of the reach of all fear, storm, wind, or wave, under this hardening, daring, presumptuous, spirit; the alarmed, the awakened, the seeker, the watcher, the waiter, the sick, and the wounded, are often deceived; they leave their couch and quit their cells, and up into the fall assurance of faith they leap, without the operation of pardoning love, or repentance unto life. But, alas! they soon find that they have all this ground to go over again. Such believers make haste, and, like Ishmael, come forth before the time of the promise. If you tell them that they spring up too soon, that they will wither for want of root, deepness of earth, and moisture; this is making the heart of the righteous sad, whom God would not have made sad. Under the influence of this spirit Korah raised his company to confront Moses, to assert the holiness of all the people, and to invade the priest's office. Under the same influence the false apostles swayed the Corinthian church. Numbers of them, all on a sudden, were fit for orders: these were zealous of spiritual gifts; others flocked to the idols' temples; another kept his father's wife; and these desired a proof of Christ's speaking, by Paul.

The fourth branch of this deception of Satan is intended to imitate brotherly love. This is carried on by those who "allure through the lust of the flesh and much wantonness." This influence, according to Paul, is carried on privately, "by creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women;" by using, exhortations which favour of "deceit, uncleanness, and guile," 1 Thess. ii. 3. Milton represents this in its first operation on Adam and Eve after the fall as so intoxicating that they

thought that new divinity was springing up within them. Some of Paul's wanton widows, under this influenza, "kicked against Christ, waxed wanton, and turned aside after Satan." Eli's sons were both priests of Belial; men of this cast, who used such guile in their office as led them to sacrifice to Venus at the porch of the tabernacle. These professors are great admirers of love feasts. Peter tells us that they were spots in their feasts of charity, feeding themselves without fear; that they turned the orace of God into lasciviousness, had eyes full of adultery; cursed children, that could not cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. The way to find such men out is, to look at their congregations; and, when you see two or three women to one man, you may be sure that Belial is in the pulpit; for God has fixed it as an eternal rule, and we may judge by it, that there shall be, "like people like priest."

The fifth influenza is intended to counterfeit the melting operations of the spirit of love, which is produced by those who are skilled in empty oratory. Such feel out and play upon the corrupted passions of flesh and blood; they make their bowels yearn and sound like an harp. This produces a voluntary humility, natural meekness, weeping, and lifting up the hands; glee, joy, and the raptures of the way-side hearers, follow. This is called a refreshing time; every plant is watered at such seasons as these. I once heard of an old lady who went into a meetinghouse accidentally to hear a sermon, and there was an orator in the pulpit; and the good old matron was wrought upon, and went after the sermon was over and offered herself to the minister as a member; informing him of the power that she had felt, and of her conversion under the discourse. He wanted to know what part of his discourse it was that had done the execution; but her heart was so big, and her tears flowed so fast, that she was obliged to give some vent to her passions before she could speak. The word, she said, she should never forget as long as she lived; and at last, with a mighty burst of noise, passion, and tears, she said

the word was Mesopotamia; that is the name of a country. From this sort of fire the foolish virgin gets her spark; for this is strange fire. "Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled: this shall you have at my hand, you shall lie down in sorrow."

Hence it is plain that the joy of the Lord which is produced in the soul under the operations of the Holy Ghost, is the oil of the wise virgin; and the joy that springs up in the heart at the stirrings and motions of natural affections, is the light and blaze of this foolish one. Their zeal, fervour, gifts, and profession, spring, up from the heat of inward passions; and so the Saviour intimates: "He receives the word with joy, yet hath he not root in himself, but endures for a while, and in temptation falls away." This the Lord calls withering; and when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered. "All the trees of the field are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men," Joel, i. 12.

There is no mention made in my text of any vessel that these fools took: "They took their lamps, but took no oil with them." I have shewn it as my opinion, that the lamp of this fool is the law; and by their having no oil we may see that God doth not minister the spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith; nor does grace flow in that channel; faith comes by hearing of faith, and grace is communicated by God's giving testimony to the word of his grace; and all real joy is produced by the Spirit of God; nothing of all which comes by the preaching of the law, nor by the works of the law. The reason that there is no mention made of a vessel is, because all this profession is carried on without the heart; they took their lamps and went forth, but their hearts stayed at home in the world: "Their heart is far from me, therefore in vain they worship me." God requires a heart sensible of its own plague, a broken and a contrite heart; a believing heart, and a heart circumcised to love him; and without this vessel all religion is

nought, and without the "oil of joy," all worship is a task. I come now,

Lastly, To shew the cause of these lamps going out, and what it was that extinguished them. Sometimes the light of these hypocrites is from God; and I believe that the light of some others is not from God, but from Satan. It is said that "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in his way, and his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face." Hence he so often boasts and says, "Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, hath said; he hath said which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." And what does he see? He sees his own way to be perverse before God; he sees beforehand a drawn sword, which was to shew him, had he understood it, that he should fall in his rebellion by the sword of Israel, and afterwards be cut asunder with the sword of justice, and have his portion appointed with hypocrites and unbelievers. And this every hypocrite sees in this world, who, in strict justice, is given up to a fearful lookin-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries; and all other hypocrites, who die without these awful visions, will have them hereafter; for we read of some who in hell lift up their eyes. But Balaam's eyes were opened in this world; and he sees the safety of Israel, the death of the righteous, and the destruction of Amalek, and perhaps his own banishment: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh." He would see him at the day of judgment, though not now; and he would in hell behold him, but not nigh; for there is a great gulf fixed between these two parties. How lofty, how pompous this poor, proud, boasting hypocrite speaks; how does this knowledge puff him up! and so it doth all others, as well as he, who never knew the plague of their own heart.

The light that Jehu had in the scriptures, which he discerned when he executed God's judgments on the house of Ahab, seems to be from the same fountain with this of Balaam. But the light of some hypocrites seems to come from another quarter; for, if Satan can transform himself into the likeness of an angel of light, there must be some sort of shining rays about him, which must be intended to deceive some of his own children, who are given up to his strong delusions. Saul saw that David would surely be king, and that the kingdom would be established in his hand, and that he should go on and prosper. But who could shew him this? The Lord was departed from him long before, and an evil spirit troubled him. This light was from Satan; and so was the light of Haman's wise men, and of Zerish his wife, who told Haman that, if Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews, he should not prevail against him, but should surely fall before him. The light that was in Judas seems to come from this transformation of Satan. "Take heed," says the Saviour, "lest the light that is in thee be darkness:" and in this darkness are all those who in their hearts hate the saints of God, let them have what light, knowledge, or understanding, they may: "For he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." And this was the case with Judas; he hated Christ in his heart, though he followed him in order to get into the ministry, to get the name of an apostle, and to bear the bag, and rob the common stock; he hated Christ, betrayed him, and sold him; and Christ plainly called him a devil, for the devil shined upon him, and actuated him, and at last entered into him, and took full possession of him. But the devil would not kill him when he had got him, for that would have been Satan's sin, and not Judas's; but the devil tempted him to kill himself, that the sin of suicide might be added to all the rest: and here we may see the wisdom of the serpent. Thus it appears that God opens the eyes of some hypocrites, as Balaam, Jehu, and the Egyptians in the Red Sea, when "the

eye of the Lord looked through the cloud, and troubled the host of Pharaoh; and they said "Let us fly from Israel, for the Lord fighteth for Israel against the Egyptians."

The false rays of these hypocrites may be discovered by the discerning Christian by the following observations. I have, in the general, perceived that they are noted for finding out some new mysteries, or some new discoveries, or some new interpretations, of scripture, which, as they think, never were seen before. This makes them intolerably proud; and, when once Satan has deceived them in this way, their wisdom is exalted as if it was almost infinite; for, after this, all who attempt to undeceive them, are fools. Hence the Spirit tells you, "They hold fast deceit; they refuse to let it go." When the devil has got a man safe in his net, he will roll and tumble him farther and farther, till he is bound both hand and foot, so that "he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? A deceived heart hath turned him aside, and he feedeth upon ashes." Hence the cautions that God gives his children, "Reprove not a scorner:" and again, "He that remains an heretic, after the first or second admonition, reject; knowing, that such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being, condemned of himself."

The ways that the devil leads these hypocrites are various. Those which I have observed are these: some are led to stumble at the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Here Satan drives them, by pride, into most daring and desperate presumption, and all manner of errors, and God resists them as forcibly.

Others are continually working, at the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, until they stumble, and take offence at the Rock of our strength, which they are sure to do, sooner or later; for they have no light but in the head, which lifts them up; no feeling, sense of their own ignorance to

keep them humble; nor the Spirit of God to guide them. Almost every arch-heretic mentioned in the history of Eusebius, stumbled and fell here.

Others, like Pelagius, begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh. Satan sets them to exalt themselves, and debase the grace of God. These leave the doctrine of the Trinity alone; as the papists, arminians, and others.

Others he deceives by stuffing their heads with high notions and setting them up to be something when they are nothing. This draws many poor, simple souls to look up to them as wonders from the Lord of Hosts; and then Satan tempts them to final apostacy. This stumbles and staggers many poor souls, who used to view them as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. However, God's elect must pluck out these right eyes, and cast them from them, and cut off those right feet whose apostacy offends them, and cast them from them, and enter into life halt and maimed, rather than, having such eyes and such feet, to be cast into hell fire.

This light of the foolish, which goes out, never shines into their heart. It is not that candle of the Lord which searches all the innermost parts of the belly: it shines only in the head. "But God, who caused the light shine out of darkness, shines into the heart (of his people), to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This is "searching Jerusalem as with candles." It discovers the enmity, rebellion, wickedness, and hypocrisy, of the heart, while dreadful rebukes and reproofs follow. "All things which are reprov'd are made manifest by the light which doth appear; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And this light leads the believer into an experience which no foolish virgin, nor hypocrite in Zion, ever attained to, and that is to "love God, because God

first loved him;" and to love Christ who loved him, and gave himself for him; and to love the saints for Christ's sake, and because of the grace of God which is in them: and so it is written, "Again, A new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." This new commandment is given by Christ: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you," John, iii. 34. "This commandment," John says, "is true in him and in us." It is true in him, because he loved us, and gave his life for us; and it is true in us, because we love him, and the brethren for his sake: and where this is, the true light is now shining, and there is none occasion of stumbling in such, for such are passed from death unto life. The world loves its own, but hates the saints; and real saints hate the world, and love one another.

One cause of the lamps of these foolish virgins going out at the midnight cry is, Satan at this time laid aside his transformation, the business was done, the prey was safe in the trap. Besides, at this dreadful period Satan cannot use such trifling, deception as this; he must appear in all his madness, rage, and desperation, for he himself believes and trembles at God's judgments, and is as much afraid of future torment as the hypocrite himself; hence his outcry, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?"

2. This alarm made these secure hypocrites set about a work which they had never done before, and that is, self-examination; upon which they soon discovered that their "lamps were out," and that they had "no oil with them;" which is what they never found out till now. This sudden alarm awakened them out of their security, and began to terrify them; their false notion of being drawn all the way to heaven by love failed them, and left them doubtful; their speculative

knowledge fled; the joy that sprung from the stirrings-up of natural affections withered away; blind zeal, external reformation, feigned faith, and dissembled love, were soon blasted; when all on a sudden the enmity, rebellion, deception, hypocrisy, and deceitfulness of their own hearts, began to appear; for this dross and tin had never been discovered, nor purged off in the furnace of affliction. Upon the back of this, the terrors of God, the bondage and slavish fear of the law, the wrath and curse of it, began to stir up in them; for all these things are in the tabernacles of the wicked, as was the case here; and they are in every one else, except those where perfect love hath cast them out. Their deceitfulness in their profession, the wicked works that they allowed themselves in, stared them in the face, for such they were; and "workers of iniquity" Christ calls them. Conscience now began to lay about him, and to act his part; and at this their hope perished, and it gave up the ghost, and all their trust became a spider's web. The motions of their natural passions, under the empty oratory of the ministers of Satan, which used to pass for godly sorrow, become of no use here, for at this time their spirits appeared hardened, and as callous as a rock; and the checks and rebukes of conscience, which used to be called the workings of Satan, and the struggles of the old man, and be resisted as such, must now be attended to as a worm that never dies.

All these things were found out when they came to "trim their lamps." Well may Solomon call their joy "the joy of the hypocrite, which is but for a moment. They heard the word, and anon with joy received it;" but they had no root in themselves; and now the world has left them, and all their joy is withered away: "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." These knew who had oil, though they had none themselves. This they might easily discern, by the composed frame that the wise were in, by the health and cheerfulness that shewed itself in their countenances; by the life, fervour,

and power, that appeared both in them and in their devotions, even in the worst of times; and they might know this from what they had heard and seen of their past experiences; and from the many suspicions which the wise had had of the state of these foolish ones in times past, and by the repeated reproofs which they had received from them. And I have seen not a little of this in my time; not a few, who have hated me and my doctrine too, have on a sick-bed craved an interest in my prayers, and wished to see me.

"Give us of your oil;" speak to us, try to comfort us, and pray for us, and communicate some of your joy and comfort to our hearts. But the wise knew pretty well what preachers and what doctrines used to suit them best; and therefore they say unto them, "Go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." They did not go to Christ to buy without money and without price; but they went to some of their former favourite preachers, who had extolled the power of man's free-will, his faithfulness to grace received, and the talents which fall to the share of all men, and the improvements of these; for none but such as these, and the pope of Rome, ever pretend to sell these things; and these foolish souls knew that these wise virgins were averse to all these tenets, and therefore they never offered to buy of them, but to beg; "Give us of your oil." But they sent them to those that pretend to sell; Go to your old builders-up, to those that used to daub you with untempered mortar; those who prophesied smooth things to you, and whom you used so much to applaud; who have got such power, such talents, such a stock of inherent grace to improve, and a power to come to Christ if they will, and to stay, away if they please; to keep the whole law, and to work out a righteousness for themselves. And to these they went, in hopes they would confirm their former doctrine, and not to Christ; for "while they went to buy, the bridegroom came," and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut; "and afterward came the other virgins, saying,

Lord, Lord, open to us." But it was too late; the top-stone was brought forth, the door of faith, the door of hope, and mercy's door, were closed; and none were within but the regenerate, nor any without but the workers of iniquity. An open door is now before us; the gate of life still admits weary and heavy-laden sinners. Enter this, and you shall enter the other: Strive "to enter in at the strait gate," for this stands at the head of the way of life; "and they that enter here shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."

William Huntington

A Watchword and Warning from The Walls of Zion

Not Available

Discoveries and Cautions from the Streets of Zion, by a Watchman of the Night

- Rev. 3:5

William Huntington (1745-1813)

TO THE REV. MR. HUNTINGTON.

A SERMON, DELIVERED AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL,
OCTOBER 22, 1798

*Go set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth. I am set in
my ward whole nights. Isa. xxi. 6-8.*

Dear Sir,

THE request we are going to make, we trust is under an impression from Him who has left it on record, that, when he was upon earth, he prayed to his heavenly Father, not for his disciples then with him alone, but for those also who should in future believe on him through their word; taking, into his view and expressing the love of his heart for, all that his Father had given to him, which were afterwards to appear in the world, down to the last hoof, which is not to be left behind, or the last stone that shall be laid in the building of mercy. We have heard the word this night from your mouth, not as the word of the man who delivered it, but as of God, who, we are well convinced, gave it to you. And, as we know it concerns not us only, but the elect of God at large, and the rising generation that are to succeed us, we wish it to be spread in the present

day, and handed down to those whom it may concern when time with us is no more. With this view, having reason to bless our gracious God for condescending so eminently to enlighten, teach, and instruct you, so as to cause you to go not only before us, but before any we have heard or known of, either in the present day or for ages past, we wish you to be at the trouble to write down, as nearly as you can, the Sermon this evening delivered, and to permit us four to be at the expense of printing and publishing the same; in doing which we believe you will not only oblige and serve us, but thousands besides in the present day, and also unknown numbers of Gods children yet unborn. Remembering that light is sown for the righteous, let us not spare some pains and expense to communicate and hand down to others a little of what it pleases God to shew you.

We remain, Dear Sir,

Affectionately yours,

V.

M.

E.

O. T.

L.

C.

T.

Monday Evening,

22d October, 1798

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels," Rev. iii. 5.

The church of Sardis certainly was a type or figure of the church of God in the present day; which appears from the next mentioned church, called that of Philadelphia, having an

open door set before the angel of it, which no man can shut, and which shews the universal spread of the gospel, till the earth be filled with the knowledge and glory of God as the waters cover the sea; and when that glorious time shall be over, the last church of the seven will appear, and which will end with the world; for what is said to that church exactly agrees with the account of the wise and foolish virgins in Matt. xxv. when the bridegroom will come, and find professors slumbering and sleeping, which is there called, luke-warm in their souls; when he will shut the door, and spew all careless and lifeless professors out of his mouth, they having, no abiding, place in the bowels of his mercy. Hence he tells the last church of the seven, that he stands at the door and knocks; and, in his account of the last days, he blesses that servant who, when he cometh and knocketh, shall open to him immediately. Moreover, when he writes to the Laodiceans he styles himself the Amen, to shew that he then comes to give the finishing stroke both to the church and to the world. Hence it appears that these seven churches were typical, which seems to be the reason why these seven churches in Asia are written to, and no others; no, not so much as the church at Jerusalem, which was the metropolitan church, and the mother of all the rest; and which in all things had the pre-eminence, by being the mother of Christ, for he was born there, and of her, according, to the flesh; and it was she that first trusted in him, and from whom the word and the law came forth to all nations; and yet even she is not named in these epistles, though no doubt but she is included in one of the types; no, nor any church in Africa, nor any in Europe; which shews plainly that they were types of churches which should afterwards appear in the world. And, as Philadelphia prefigures the next glorious appearing of the church, and the universal spread of the gospel in the world, and that of Laodicea agrees with the Lord's account of his coming to judgement, so the church of Sardis represents the church in

our day and every thing, that is said to this church exactly agrees with it in its present state.

In addressing, the church of Sardis, Christ styles himself "he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars." By the seven spirits of God is not meant angels; for it can hardly be thought that angels are joined with God the Father, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, in sending these epistles to the churches, as in chap. i. ver. 4, 5; but the Holy Ghost, with all the fullness of his gifts and graces, is meant; and by the seven stars the seven ministers of the churches, which, like stars, have a little light in them, and which is reflected from Christ; and their being in Christ's hand shews their weakness, and the need of his power to support, protect, and keep them.

I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." The works that Christ requires are the works of faith, the labours of love, and the patience of hope, performed in his strength, by persons interested in him, and who abide in him, who enforce and defend his truth, who embrace it, hold it fast, and abide by it. All works short of these are dead works, performed by persons dead in trespasses and sins, and under the curse of the law, and the sentence of their own conscience; and what is most dreadful of all, they are damned by the gospel; it is a savour of death unto death to them, being only hypocrites in Zion.

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." There is nothing, more common in the present day than to hear a poor canting hypocrite crying out, O! what a lively minister that young man is! What a lively congregation such an one hath! That and this young man, how lively they are! They are alive to God indeed! When, at the same time, if you ask ninety-nine out of an hundred, either ministers or people, what the quickening operations of the Holy Spirit are; what the application of the word of life is when sent with power; what it

is to pass from death to life by faith; what it is to be delivered from the sting of death, the fear of death, and from the law, which is the ministration of death; and what a lively hope is, what repentance unto life means, and what the circumcision of the heart to love God with all the heart, that we may live, means; or what it is to have Christ living in us; they will give you just as good an account of these things, as an Hottentot, and no better: "they have a name to live, but they are dead." And those who give them this name to live are such as only judge according to appearance and not righteous judgment. Nor does their appearance of life spring, from divine things, but from human inventions, such as the missionary business. This kept many of the flying troops and scouting parties for a long time in life and motion: novelty gives life to many thousands. Such a precious soul is coming up, and preaches his first sermon at "lo here;" such an one takes his leave at "lo there;" but divine life is neither enforced nor described by one in fifty of them; for, if life was insisted on, they would be badly attended by those who have only "a name to live."

Many ministers are obliged to have recourse to an organ before a little false glee can be raised; others study the art of moving the passions by empty oratory, and a great noise; others are kept in life and motion by abusing the civil powers, and crying, up the majesty of the jacobins; and not a few thousands are fed and kept in life and motion by those who blacken the gospel, by charging it with the opprobrious names of antinomianism and contentious doctrine, and by ridiculing the power of godliness, and those who preach it, and those who enjoy it. "The name to live" springs from these things, and not from the Holy Ghost's operations.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." The first of these words contain a reproof for blindness of mind, carnal security, idleness, and inattention. And blind they must be, with a witness; for, when the hour of

temptation came on, they expected no less than the destruction of all rule, government, order, and distinction, among men, and that anarchy was to ride in triumph; whereas God sent it as a fan to separate the vile from the precious, and as a trap to discover and by the heel the impostors and hypocrites in Zion; and they take are so desperate at the success that God gives to our forces, that it is a vexation only to understand the report, and will terminate as the prophet foretold it would, namely, that "they shall fret themselves, and curse both their king and their God, and look upward."

"Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." These things are the vessels of mercy in the furnace of affliction, half starved for want of the bread and water of life, and nothing to attend but wells without water, clouds without rain, and shepherds that cannot understand; they want their state described, and the kind invitations and encouragements of the gospel spoken experimentally to them; and they go from city to city to find it, but all in vain. And there is scarce a large town in the nation, but what you will find here and there a little company sensible of their lost state, labouring in bondage and misery, but none to feed them; hypocrites are fed and nourished up in their presumption, and such as these are quite starved. These are called, "The things which remain;" which implies that great numbers are fallen off; and this is most certainly true with respect to our day of profession. Mr. Winchester, who laid a foundation for hope in hell, overthrew the faith of many, both of them that stood in the pulpit, as well as those in the pew. Mr. Brothers, the lunatic, who promised a basis for hope in the Saviour's sepulchre, and that we should once more seek the living among the dead, hath slain his thousands; but Tom Paine has slain his ten thousands; and there is not one in a hundred of them that remain that Christ takes any notice of; it is only "the few things which are ready to die" (not them that have a name

to live while they are dead) that he cares for; "for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." His complaint is,

"I have not found thy works perfect before God." The perfect work of a gospel minister is doing the work of an evangelist, or the work of a minister of the Spirit; and he that doth it must be one that is born again, and interested in the love, favour, and finished salvation of Christ, and in union with him, who shines in his light, stands in his strength, burns in his love, and enjoys life, righteousness, peace, and rest, in him; and so spreads the truth of his word, the power of his hand, the favour of his name, the mysteries of his kingdom, and the benefits of his cross; and by enforcing these things influences others, by the good hand of God upon him, who promises to give testimony to the word of his grace, and to no other doctrine: this is a divine work, and therefore called a good work, because it brings souls to believe in Jesus, to love him, and to worship God in spirit and in truth, to glorify him, and to ascribe the glory of their salvation to him. But the works here complained of are of another sort; timeserving, walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully; which is legalizing and carnalising of them, beginning in the spirit and ending in the flesh, confessing truth, and publishing it at the beginning of their profession, and then departing from it, and condemning it; swearing allegiance to the king, and then preaching against him; subscribing the Articles of the Church, and then lampooning them and all that maintain them. These are the works of the present day.

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." How the church received, and what she at first heard, may be seen in the above mentioned articles, predestination and election, redemption by the blood of Christ, pardon and peace by his sacrifice, and justification by faith in Christ righteousness; as may be seen in Luthers works, in Calvin's, and in the Church Articles: these are the things

which used to be heard and received, but can we say that these are held fast in our days? No; so far from it, that the generality of professors wage, war with every one that preaches them and the experience of them, and with every one that professes them and abides by them. The Lord's exhortation to us is, to hold fast,

"And repent," for the generality of professors are without repentance, and altogether ignorant of it, and so are the generality of preachers; they think it consists of a little natural sorrow, springing, from self-love, a sense of guilt, and fear of future punishment; but this is the repentance of Judas when the devil entered into him; whereas true repentance follows upon the devil's departure out of the sinner. True repentance is not pressed, squeezed, nor extorted, by the workings and violent struggles of guilt and wrath, fear and torment; but it flows out under the sin-pardoning, operations of the Spirit of love, accompanied with the blood of atonement, attended with a believing view of Christ and of interest in him, and of God's appearing reconciled and well pleased in Jesus, shining upon us in his blessed face, accepting us in the beloved, and blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him: this is repentance unto life, and is the gift of God. In the next words our Lord calls for watchfulness.

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." No doubt but this is spoken to our watchmen in Zion, the generality of whom are stone blind; who are so far from going about the city, that they do not know the way into it, Eccl. x. 15; and, instead of standing on Zion's walls, which are salvation, they are for the most part dead in trespasses and sins. A watchman is to give the time of the night, to sound an alarm in times of danger, to take up thieves and loose persons, and to observe the motions and approaches of invaders, and to give timely notice to the citizens, that they may be upon their guard: this is God's account of a

watchman; but who comes up to the character? Most of our watchmen indeed are boasting of our great light, and the wonderful spread of the gospel, when I think that we are sinking into one of the darkest nights that ever came upon gospel Zion; and, so far from the gospel being universally spread, even in this country, I do not believe that one sermon in a thousand that is preached among us bears the least resemblance of it, if Paul's description of the gospel be a true one. He tells us that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth:" that it is "the ministration of life and of righteousness;" and that a real minister of it is "a minister of the Spirit." And, if this be true, where shall we find such gospel and such ministers? Nor can we say that our watchmen have apprehended or taken into custody any thieves or robbers, but rather consented with them. I know of no worse thieves and robbers than Papists, Arminians, Arians, and Socinians, for they rob God; but many of our blind watchmen have wished God speed even to the French, and said "A confederacy" to all the other dens of thieves; and, instead of barking or giving tongue at the devil when he came down among us, the most of them were dumb dogs, and rather fawned upon him than otherwise. If therefore thou shalt not watch,

"I will come on thee as a thief." The thief generally comes when people are most secure, and when he is least expected: and sure I am that Christ fulfilled his word in this hour of temptation; for he stripped many wolves of their sheepskins, and made them go naked, that others might see their shame; he stripped many of their hearts of all their inward decorations, sweepings, and garnishings, and let Satan return again to his house whence he came out. And this was visible by the rebellion, revenge, blood, and slaughter, they breathed forth; so that their hearts might truly be called the dragons, and their mouths the holes of the asps. Some the Lord bereaved of their houses and goods, of their preferments,

families, and friends, and even of their own native country, by transporting them to strange lands, as unworthy to remain in their own; others he cooped up in prisons, depriving them of the common liberty of strollers and fortune-tellers; and some he sent out of the world by a halter, as unworthy of life; and great numbers which remain among us have had their one talent taken from them; many, who had some sound notions of the gospel, and some good views, and who were capable of sound speech which could not be condemned, were given up to the devil and Tom Paine, that they even sucked in the rebellion, blasphemy and carnal logic, of that man, till they could not produce one argument but what was point blank against the will and word of God: these were too wise to be ruled and governed by that, and their wisdom hath perverted them. Others, who had not much in hand, but a deal in hope, have been stripped also; I mean those who have been long predicting and expecting the ruin and destruction of all the civil rulers in Europe; promising themselves from week to week French liberty by the sword of France and by the destruction of their own country these have hoped in Bonaparte and the Irish Papists, and have cried up the majesty of the people, by which they meant none but themselves; these our Lord has deposed from their imaginary thrones, and from all the princely dignity that they have fancied, and demolished all their hopes by sending the Irish murderers out of the world, the French fleets into our harbours, and the blasphemous Rabshakebs into the land of Ham instead of Jerusalem, giving Egypt for our ransom. Thus has our dear Lord come as a thief, and unmasked the impostors and hypocrites in Zion, and hung them up as polluted with perjury, rebellion, and blood, to contempt before all the righteous in both worlds.

"And thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." This hour of our Lord's coming was to be a profound secret till he was pleased to make it known; and a secret it hath been, and hid in God; for no one commentator hath ever described

it, or hit the mark about it; which shews that prophecies are best understood by the fulfilment of them. And, when this hour of temptation did come, we were all at a loss to know where the prediction of it stood in scripture, and what it would terminate in; and those who seemed to be the wisest about it were the farthest from it. It exercised my mind not a little for near five years, till the Lord told me upon my bed, by a voice from heaven, that "this is the hour of temptation;" and I knew the voice, and who it was that spoke it; and an hour of temptation it hath been with a witness. Many thousands hath the devil tempted to dig pits and set traps and snares for the lives of others, who, by the justice of God, Haman like, have fell into them themselves. Not a snare has been set by Satan or his agents, not a vile plan hath been laid either on the continent, in our own country, or on board the fleets, but what our God has discovered and marred, and thrown most of the contrivers headlong into their own inventions; so let thine enemies perish, O Lord, but them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength, and let our land have rest forty years.

This hour of temptation hath exercised and tried the hearts of many of the children of God. whether they would be led away with the error of the wicked, whether they would fall from their own steadfastness, and follow a multitude to do evil or not. Many impostors in the pulpits and hypocrites in the pews have tried them not a little, besides the sly and private pimps and lacqueys of the devil, who daily went their rounds with Tom Paine's books, inflammatory pamphlets, jacobine newspapers, and lunatic prophecies. By these tempters, and their temptations, God hath tried his people, that their faith and obedience might be seen when once God's judgments should return unto righteousness, that the upright in heart might follow that. Some were not a little staggered in their confidence, and for a while halted about a confederacy: but God healed them that halted; nor will he suffer them that are

of a broken and a contrite heart, and who walk humbly with him, to be finally deceived; their falls into troubles, their trials and temptations, shall be sanctified to purify them and to make them white: and so it is; for when God makes manifest the hearts of the contrary part, these stand the stronger, shine the brighter, and see the better, and appear the more plain by having God's will, word, providence, and grace, on their side, and by their having the mind of Christ, and by God's hearing and answering their prayers; when the prophecies, desires, wishes, prayers, hopes, and expectations of the hypocrite, all perish together. This has been the case in our day; and so it follows.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." This is spoken by way of wonder and astonishment, that in our days there should be any of this number left, when so many thousands both of ministers and people were carried away in this hour of temptation: but so it is; there is a few names left; for, when the lion and the bear go through the whole flock, "the shepherd will recover a leg and a piece of an ear," Amos, iii. 12.

Now these choice ones are called names, not persons, in which (I think) the mystery is couched. These names cannot mean the name Evangelist; for those who have styled themselves the Evangelical Association are, for the most part, either in the trap of Tom Paine or that of John Wesley. These names may be considered as names which impostors, wolves, and hypocrites, may give them on account of their steadiness, staunch adherence to truth, and singularity, just as the first saints and faithful followers of Christ were called Nazarenes, Acts, xxiv..5; especially as it is well known that many who are called Antinomians, dangerous men, men of a bad spirit, bigots, narrow souls, and even spiritual blackguards," by some men, whom the devil himself, nor all

his agents, cannot defile, expose or degrade, by all the wiles that are used in this hour of temptation, no more than he could stain the reputation of Paul by calling, him a mover of sedition, and his doctrine heresies. But, if these names are sacred names, as is most likely, I mean such as God gives to his people, then we can soon come to a point about them, as our God is so particular in pointing them out, and even what names are to be laid aside, and what are to be adopted; for instance, "Thou shalt no more be called Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." The usual name of the Gentiles, by which the Jews called them, was that of forsaken, in opposition to themselves; and their land desolate, in opposition to the holy land which God had chosen to dwell in on which account Canaan and its Jewish inhabitants were called a fruitful field, and the Gentile world a wilderness. But God promised to make a change in the world, and that was, "that he would turn the wilderness into a fruitful field, and the former fruitful field should be accounted for a forest:" and this was done when the kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to a people that should bring forth the fruit thereof; from which time the Gentiles, on account of the elect among them, were not to be called forsaken, nor was their land (as God would dwell in it) to be any more called desolate. "But thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." The name Hephzibah is applicable to all in whom God delights; and we are told that the prayer of the upright is his delight; and another scripture says, "the upright love thee;" then the name Hephzibah is peculiar to them that love the Lord and call upon his name; and "Beulah" is applicable to that land in which the upright dwell; for the whole country is espoused for the sake of the Lord's Hephzibah, even as all the children of Israel were called God's sons by national adoption for the sake of the few that were his by faith and regeneration, and they were even all

called his wife for the sake of the few that were espoused to him.

Hence it appears that Hephzibah is the upright that love God and pray unto him, and Beulah the country which is the seat of the church which is espoused to him; and hard work has the devil had, and all that have laboured in conjunction with him, to defile this our Zion, and to make our land a field of blood. But we are just where we were; and they who have watched for our halting and for our destruction are left in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, for God hath appeared to our glory, but to their shame.

Another of the names by which Gentile Zion is to be called, is this: "Let not the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree; for thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things which please me, even to them will I give in my house, and within my walls, a place and a name, better than of sons and of daughters. I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off." This name which is to be given, and which is to be better than that of sons and daughters, is said to be written upon them, Rev. iii. 12, Faith is a law written on the mind; and our sonship is manifested to us by faith. This name appears to be that of adoption, or the name "son of God," which is much better than that of being a father to sons and daughters, and is an everlasting one, and never shall be cut off; for Christ will bring these many sons to glory; therefore it will be acknowledged, even in heaven; nor can it be cut off, seeing the promise is sure to all the seed; which seed are not to be cut off with a shilling nor the entailment of their inheritance to be cut off; for Christ's throne shall endure for ever, and his seed as the sun before him. The other names which they are to go by are these: "One shall say I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." He that is

to say I am the Lord's, is one to whom the atonement is applied, who says, "I am not my own, I am bought with a price." He that is to call himself by the name of Jacob, is one that hath run away with the birthright, or one that is born again, and who has got the blessing, of eternal life in his heart. And is not such an one rightly called Jacob? And he that surnames himself by the name of Israel, must be one that hath prevailed at a throne of grace, and got an answer to his prayers, for this name cannot be applicable to any other. Another name which is given to the saints, and which is a now one, and peculiar to the New Testament, is that of a Christian; and it is a very sacred name, and is taken from Christ himself, and signifies anointed, and belongs to none but those which have received an unction from the Holy One. "Now he which hath called us, and anointed us (saith Paul), is God, who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit, but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, and of course no real Christian, for he hath nothing of Christ in him. Now our dear Lord, because he would not discourage us too much and sink us too low, or add grief to our sorrow, tells us that there are a few even among us who bear these names, and to whom they are applicable; and sure I am that, "if the Lord had not left us this very small remnant, we had been as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah." But these are the salt of the earth. These few names "Have not defiled their garments." These garments cannot mean the righteousness of Christ, which is called the wedding garment, the garment of praise, and the garment of salvation. It is called a wedding garment because Christ accepts us in it as soon as the Father imputes it to us; a garment of praise it is called, because we cannot bless God and praise him with joyful lips till he hath justified us by faith in it; and it is called a garment of salvation, because he shall never be cursed or damned that wears it. It is God that justifies, who can condemn? And it is a truth that whom God justifies, them he glorifies. Nor doth this garment appear to be the garment of humility; for a man that truly

wears that has a conscience too sore, and a heart too tender, to wallow in pollution. I confess I am rather in the dark about these garments; but if I tell you all that I know, can you expect more?

Job says, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was a robe and a diadem," Job, xix. 14. The good man is not here speaking of the righteousness of the Redeemer, for we cannot put that on of ourselves, no, nor yet pull it off when it is on. It is God's work to put this on. "The Lord" says Zion, "hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" Isaiah, lxi. 10. Job is speaking of himself as a civil magistrate, and of his faithfulness and uprightness in his office, and therefore he must mean civil righteousness, or equity, or righteousness between man and man, so as to acquit himself at the bar of his own conscience, as he himself confesses: "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live," Job, xxvii. 6. This in the Old Testament is called "walking with God in peace and equity;" and in the New Testament it is called "keeping a conscience void of offence and blessed is the man that condemns not himself in the thing which he allows. This was Job's garment, and he did not defile it; however, we read of some who have defiled it, and it hath been washed again.

Job tells us that his "judgment was a robe and a diadem." If so, it was pure from gross errors, or damnable heresies, both in the court of justice and in the court of conscience. We read of false doctrines and corrupt principles both in civil and in religious persons, whose mind and conscience are both defiled; these garments should be kept clean.

We read also of "wolves in sheep's clothing," which means hypocrites; and a hypocrite is a graceless sinner, in the external garb of a saint. Now, if a wolf can appear in a sheep's skin, in order to deceive the sheep, a real sheep must have a

skin which of right belongs to him, and which I take to be the who's of a saint's profession, his life, walk, and conversation, in this world, after he is converted, or after he is saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; and hence we read of the teeth of a flock of sheep (which I take to be ministers and their helpers) being aborn, and coming up from the washing, each bearing twins, and not one barren among them.

Again, we are exhorted to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in him." A congregation thus adorned is a woman clothed with the sun indeed, and has the moon under her feet. However, there are not a few that put him on in shew, as Alexander and others have done, and who have greatly dishonoured him afterwards; and this is called polluting his holy name among the heathens; it brings a disgrace upon his cause, and is crucifying him afresh, and putting him to an open shame, which is polluting his holy name indeed.

Once more. Our bodies are a kind of garment to our souls, even as our Lord's human nature, in which the fullness of his Godhead dwells, is called "a garment dipped in blood." And we read of a heavenly company who are said to come out of great tribulation, and to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; which robes appear to be their bodies, which were cleansed by the blood of Christ as well as their souls. Hence we read of the redemption of the body, and of being ransomed from the grave and redeemed from death; and, when this is done, these bodies of ours will be washed, yea, changed. He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body, that we may be like him, and see him as he is. Therefore, he that keeps himself unspotted from the world, keeps this garment undefiled.

We read of some in this book who were not defiled with women; which means, they were not defiled with the doctrines of Jezebel the witch, the Roman church; nor with the filthy practices of the whore of Babylon, the city of Rome, which is full of spiritual fornication, and all other uncleanness; and she has polluted thousands with the doctrines of devils, the pollutions of the flesh, and by crying up the filthy rage of her own boasted righteousness.

Now, that there should be a few such names, and such undefiled ones, in such a day as this, must be for signs and wonders from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion: but the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin, and God will keep his own from the paths of the destroyer. Nevertheless, there are some sins which will leave a stain on the character of the brightest saint as long as the world stands, even though he be complete in his covenant head, and without fault before the throne in him; and that is, "adultery with a neighbour's wife. A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away," Prov. vi. 33. We may see this in David. Every atheist and deist will, to the present day, throw this at him, even though he is in heaven; but they never mention his repentance of it, nor of the sufferings he underwent on the account of it; for their stomachs are so vitiated that they can eat up nothing that is to be found in God's people but their sin. Blessed be God our Saviour for ever, that he should preserve and keep, in such a day of apostasy, heresy, and hypocrisy as this, a few such names in such robes, and give them such a character and such encouragement as that which next follows.

"And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Our Lord here gives us to understand that it is sin which separates between him and the soul; yea, it is sin that hides his face from the sinner, so that he will not hear his prayers, for he is far from God by wicked works. The conscience must

be purged from sin before we can be made nigh by the blood of Christ. Pardoning love brings us nigh to him, and unites us with him; and the soul that fears him with a filial fear, and that cleaves to him in love, walks with him. "They shall walk with me." Levi walked with me in peace and equity, saith the Lord; that is, the Lord gave him, or revealed to him, the covenant of life and peace, and he enjoyed the peace which the Lord gave him, and kept a good conscience before him, and towards him.

Walk humbly with thy God saith Amos. This shews that pride separates between us and God. But, the poor soul that knows the vileness of his own heart, and what a debtor he is to unmerited and unexpected grace, will see enough of himself, in the Lord's light, to debase him in the dust before him, however upright God may keep him. It was the presence of the Lord with Daniel "that turned all his comeliness into corruption, and stripped him of all his strength." To walk with the Lord, is to exercise faith in him, and to trust in him; it is to walk in his favour, in the light of his countenance; to hope in him, and expect all needful supplies from him; to exercise patience towards him; to be accountable to him, and give up our accounts in his fear, as in his immediate daily before him; to walk in his fear, as in his immediate presence, under his eye and narrow inspection, and as interested in his blood and righteousness, and relying, upon his wisdom to make our way plain, and to direct our steps, and in a constant dependence on him for strength and support.

"These shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." White, and white raiment, are mentioned in my text, and therefore I shall speak to that point in my further discourse. But that which puzzles me most of all is, what can be meant by the phrase, "they are worthy." I never saw any worthiness in myself before I was called, nor since I have been called; nor have I ever seen either worth or worthiness in any other; no,

not even in those who say they are perfect in the flesh, and that they can live, and do live, without sin, or sinning; for these, I believe, of all men, are the most unworthy, having given themselves up to lying, or to speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron. "For, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," I John, i. 8. John owns that, if such words were to drop from his own mouth, he would be a man deceived by the devil, and that no truth, nothing but lies, could be found in him. If this worthiness is mentioned on the account of grace, all grace is from the Lord, and so is every good and perfect gift. The preparation of the heart, and the fruit of the lips, are his own work; and so is all usefulness or fruitfulness to our fellow-creatures in this world, for he works in us both to will and to do; and, as for our flesh, and the evils in it, they work continually against both willing, and doing. I read of some that shall be "accounted worthy to obtain the world to come, and the resurrection from the dead," Luke, xx. 35. But on what account they shall be so accounted, I cannot tell, unless it be the Lord praising his own righteousness put upon them, or applauding the Holy Spirit's work in them. For the robe of his righteousness is of inestimable worth, and so is the Spirit's productions in them; the former sets the saint forth as "all fair and comely without;" and the latter, as all glorious within." And now for the words of my text.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." This overcomer must be an Israelite indeed, or one that has overcome the accusations of the law, and Satan, and conscience; and overcome his own guilt, shame, fear, and confusion of face, at a throne of grace, by prayer. He is one that has cried day and night for victory over these, and deliverance from them; for, if he never did prevail with God against these, they will prevail and overcome him. But the

kingdom of God, or the empire of grace, or the superabounding love and power of God, which is promised to overcome and subdue our sins, doth suffer violence, and the violent, which are sorely distressed, and cry without ceasing, who cannot rest, nor will not give up, do take it by force, in spite of all the bulwarks and batteries that the devil casts up to obstruct us in the siege. Those deceitful workers and warriors,, which Paul examined and palmed upon the devil, were detected by this part of their examination will know," says Paul, "not their speech, but their power;" that is, what power they had with God, and what power he had displayed in them, and what power had been communicated to others by them. To this touchstone Jeremiah brought the legion of false prophets in his days. Jeremiah declared that Israel should go into captivity to Babylon, and all the vessels of the temple, some of which were gone, and the rest were to follow. Satan's agents prophesied a deliverance, in two full years, and the restoration of all the vessels then carried away. Jeremiah calls for a proof of their being prophets by their power with God: "But, if they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the Lord, and in the house of the king, of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon," Jer. xxvii. 18. The prophet could not get them at this; they were more expert in predictions than they were at petitions. Besides, Satan had suffered loss by this kind of proof before; Elijah caught four hundred of his prophets in this trap on mount Carmel previous to this.

An overcomer must be a believer; "for who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" There is but one war that can be strictly called a holy war; and but one real religious fight of faith, in which no infidel can succeed, though he may engage, because he can only beat the air. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." But how can he engage the opposers

of faith's fight who has no faith to be opposed? And how can he fight to lay hold of eternal life in heaven, who hath no life of grace in his heart, nor life of glory in hope? The poor quickened soul that labours under wrath and bondage, and who believes in the justice of God, fights hard to lay hold of Christ by faith; and, when this is done, he engages in a continual fight to lay hold of a life of glory in heaven. "So run I," saith Paul, "but not at uncertainty; so fight I, but not like one that beats the air." And this warfare and our life end together; for, till death interfere, there is no discharge from this war; the deathbed decides the victory: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me."

Moreover, faith lays hold of the true riches, and is the confidence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Thus she is beforehand with the victory, is sure of the spoil, and always shares with certainty, by taking hold of the victory which Christ hath already obtained for us: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

But again. Faith always works by love; for love is the banner under which she fights, and love is with the parties on whose side she fights: and it is the love of the great Sovereign that constrains us to engage in this mysterious war, and will constrain every good soldier to bear the fatigue of it; and surely "we shall be more than conquerors through him that hath loved us."

Again. If they overcome Satan and Antichrist, it must be done "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and by a love that is stronger than death," Rev. xii. Pardon, peace, life, justification from future punishment, and redemption from wrath, from the world, from all the evil of it, from death and the grave, by the blood of the Lamb, is great encouragement to fight. Moreover, by the blood of the Lamb

we get a good conscience, a good state of health, and a good countenance; and, should we contract guilt by a partial giving way, or faint retreat, the blood of the Lamb purees it away, so that we do not fight under a load of guilt, and the dread of damnation which at times will make the most courageous men fainthearted.

Again. "The ransom of a man's life is his riches." And who will not fight for his whole estate? Besides, every believer knows, that to turn his back upon Christ, and submit to the devil and sin, is couching down between two burdens, misery in this life, and despair of the next; for he loses both worlds. Besides the blood of the Lamb secures strength equal to the day, and the presence of the Lord himself. The believer is not his own, but his Lord's; and the Captain will not lose his own men.

The word of their testimony is a great encouragement to fight. Truth makes us free, and is both shield and buckler; and the testimony of it in the heart is the Spirit of power that applied it, and that bears his witness to our election, justification, and adoption, through it; and loving God better than a miserable life makes us more than conquerors indeed. It was this that made Stephen's face shine when the stones were flying about his head.

There is a war between the flesh and the spirit; or between the law in the members and that in the mind; or between our in-bred corruptions and the grace of God: nor will all the fleshly perfection in this world ever make peace between these two different nations, and opposite parties, in the believers heart. God proclaimed a war in Eden between the serpent and the woman; and between the generation of vipers united to the old serpent, and Christ and the chosen seed in him. God himself hath put enmity between these; nor hath he ever appointed or invested any one with the office of a mediator, to stand in this gap. Christ came not upon any such

errand I came not to send peace upon earth, but rather divisions; yea, to send a sword and a fire between these parties; and what will I do in future if it be already kindled? He that takes upon himself to remove this enmity, and to demolish this offence of the cross, had his investiture from the same god that the pope had his from; and we may say of him, as the Holy Ghost does of the other, that the dragon gave him his seat, his power, and great authority. Christ hath chosen us out of this world, and tells us that the world will hate us; yea, You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But then those that are labouring to remove these bounds which God hath placed between the wilderness and the fruitful field, are in religion, as an amphibious creature is among the brute creation, which is sometimes in the waters among, the fish, and sometimes on land among the beasts. These are shunned by both, and fit companions for neither; and so is the hypocrite: in the world he is not approved, because he mimics the holy tongue; and in the church he is hated, because he is unsavoury; none admire him but those that speak half Hebrew and half Ashdod.

But what is said to us in the type and figure of Sardis, no doubt respects the hour of temptation, by which the church hath been tried; and it looks to something future, by which she will be tried for every church of the seven, and those represented by them, have their own particular trials; nor are these trials to be understood of the particular trials of private believers, but of such trials as shall exercise the whole church, and all those who profess to belong to it; for Christ speaks to the whole body, to those that have a name to live, as well as to those few names which have not defiled their garments. Now this hour of temptation hath exercised us all. It is called a temptation, because every thing seemed to our view to run quite out of the usual channel of Providence. It is the comfort of faith that Christ is king of nations, and king of Zion; but when we see the devil let loose upon us, and the

basest of all nations, and such a general confederacy among ourselves with them, our hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved, and as the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were when "they heard that Syria was confederate with Ephraim." We had the preparations and threats of an infernal convention abroad, and a most damnable faction at home; so that we had work enough to keep our hearts from fear, and from fainting between the tails of these two smoking firebrands," Isa. vii. 4. It looked as if the Lord of hosts had resigned his government, and turned us over into the hands of a fierce king, and a cruel lord: the devil and the convention are both these. We know that it is by Christ that kings reign, and princes decree justice; but, when we saw one throne fall, and another become vacant, and heard nothing from Baal's prophets but the immediate destruction of all the rest, we might well wonder; for, if the olive-tree give us up, and the vine be not suffered to govern, we know the bramble will; and not a few, both at home and abroad, put their trust under that prickly shadow, "till a fire went out of the cedars, and began to consume the bramble," Judges, ix. 15. When Christ was invested with his offices, God laid the foundations of the earth, that he might plant the heavens, Isa. li. 16; but, when we saw the foundations of the earth out of course, and the dark places of it full of the habitations of cruelty, we staggered, both at the work of God's hands, and at the word of his grace; for, if the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do? By the apparent frowns of heaven, and the terrible fierce anger of men, "God seemed to turn us to destruction," but one smiling providence said, "Return, ye children of men." Then judgment, which seemed to favour the wicked, returned unto righteousness, and the upright in heart were glad enough, both to see it and follow it.

What made this temptation the more complicated was, the sudden spring of a copious crop of tares. We were all on a

sudden swarming alive with prophets; and many, who never had one ray of light into divine revelation, saw wonders in the womb of providence; but they prophesied nothing good to the quiet of the land. God was but a little displeased, but these helped forward the calamity. In a former reign, which stunk of popery, the two points of doctrine then in use were, passive obedience and non-resistance; but in our day, under a prince that leaveth the King of kings to reign and rule unmolested in the conscience, we have heard of two more—the rights of man, and the majesty of a mob; and under these two heads, sin and death have reigned, ill millions have lost their property, and tens of thousands have lost their lives. But Tom Paine gave the word, and great was the company that published it. Thousands fled to America to escape the threatened destruction; and those that tarried at home saw the salvation of God.

The touchstone of this hour of temptation always appeared to me to be this: Those who had received the spirit of French liberty in the power of Satan (which always accompanied it), soon spake as this spirit gave them utterance. Nothing was to be heard but reviling, the gods, speaking, evil of rulers, laughing at authority, casting off all fear of God, and debasing, the king; resisting the ordinance of God, and hoping for a temporal deliverance from all superiors. Surely the old serpent cast this water out of his mouth like a flood, to cause the bride, the Lamb's wife, to be carried away with the flood: but the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and received the waters of the flood; for not the broken and contrite, not the heavenly-minded soul, but those that were earthly, sensual, and devilish, and only they, found a sweetness in these bitter waters: and it is true that many died of these waters, because they were made bitter. Hence we see, that neither the doctrines nor the politics of devils can work effectually in the souls of the righteous; only in them that perish.

By this hour of temptation God tried thousands that were under the oaths of allegiance, and not a few who had subscribed the articles of the established church, that we might see what restraint oaths and subscriptions have upon the consciences of hypocrites and in this balance many of high degree were found to be a lie, and those of low degree vanity. But those whom the grace of God had exalted to safety, were kept by the power of God. Here was the patience and faith of the saints.

The great heat of this hour of temptation is abated; for, what with hanging, transporting and going to America, God is causing the evil spirits to pass out of the land and, when he hath scattered these kings from it, I hope it will be as white as the snow in Salmon. It hath been our lot to live in the age of reason, in which such numbers have lost their senses some their souls, and many all their religion. But, for the elect's sake, the Lord hath shortened the days of this unreasonable age.

This hour of temptation was most remarkable for the conjunction that appeared in it. Every one that drank into the gall of bitterness, whether at home or abroad, were all soon cemented together in one solid bond of iniquity. Little was heard of but the corresponding societies; and to make this league with death, and this covenant with hell, the more firm, it was ratified with the sacred oath of God. By the means of this firm compact some were emboldened to shed much innocent blood; while many, who were unfaithful both to God and mammon, crept into corners, and bid them God speed; others shouted at their victories, and one mourned at their ill fate: and by these means God brought them in heirs, and joint heirs, in the guilt of all the blood shed abroad, and of all the rebellion at home, as sure as the builders of the prophets sepulchres shared with Cain in the blood of Abel. "One woe is past, and behold there come two woes more here-after."

The next enemy that we shall have to overcome after these four winds upon the great sea have ended their present strife, will be of a different nature from this. In this war between Michael and the dragon, the dragon hath appeared in his ancient hue, which is red, agreeable to his ancient character, that of "a murderer from the beginning." But Satan, as well as a Frenchman, can both fawn and fight. His next appearance will not be that of a warrior, but of a fowler; not with fire and sword, but with trap and net. We read of a certain beast that hath long made war with the saints, and who hath a great work to accomplish in a little time; which work is, "to scatter the power of the holy people," which will bring Zion to her last furnace of affliction, and antichrist to his last triumph, Dan. xii. 7. After this the Gentiles "let," and the "Jews" "stumbling-block," will be removed, and the hoary head of the man of sin will go down to the grave in blood, while sorrow and sighing within the walls of Zion will be heard no more. When this red dragon is destroyed, the woman with child will cast out her sorrows, and a nation shall be born at once. There is an outer court, that lies crooked with the angel's reed, which is not to be measured, Rev. xi. 1, 2. The church, which Christ hath purchased with his own blood, is called the temple of the Holy Ghost, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them. This is God's house, let the materials of it be of what sect or party they may. Then what can the outer court be but such as compass their Maker about with lies and deceit; who draw near to him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him? To gain over these to the son of perdition is the work which is now on the wheels; and look whichever way you may see it. The last blast of God upon the continent has scattered the emigrants into all winds; and, while some of our watchmen sleep, these sow tares, which spring up apace; while the bastard race, which are nearest the holy place (I mean such as have escaped the rod of God, and the forcible application of truth), these are meeting them half way. I have always considered the leader of the Arminians a true servant of the

pope, and the son of his handmaid, I mean the whore of Babylon; yea, the model of his daubed wall came from Rome. Female class and their leaders were taken from the nuns and their mother abbesses; men classes and their leaders from the monks and their superiors; and the other bands, perfect or select, from the different orders of monks, friars, and nuns. And, as for the foundation article, justification by works, they all meet and centre in this. And the works of supererogation, and that of sinless perfection, both amount to one and the same lie; and we know that no lie is and as they agree in the foundation and superstructure, so are they cemented in one spirit; for neither the one nor the other can endure to bear of the sovereignty of God, nor of his electing grace among the children of men. Hence we hear confederacies and coalitions; Arians, Socinians, Sabellians, Arminians, and those who have for some time held the truth in unrighteousness, are now all collecting into one heap of materials, which will, ere long, be used to build up and complete the tower of Babylon. The election of God, which chooses us out of the world; his holy call, which separates us the application of Christ's blood which redeems us from among men; and the operations of his Spirit, which make us to differ from them; yea, the whole offence of the cross, and the discrimination of the grace of God; is now called, even by doctors, "walls of bigotry;" which, with respect to such doctors and the world, may be true, but not with respect to God's elect and the world; for they are chosen out of it, nor are they of it. Upon this ground the whore of Babylon will flourish; for as soon as these heavy calamities are over, the whole bulk of the papists which have suffered will be called upon by the priests to reflect upon the judgments which have been on the earth; and instead of telling the truth, that God sent these judgments on the continent to avenge the blood of his saints which hath been shed there, they will tell them it is for ill-treating Christ's vicar, for neglecting the mass, despising the images, and lightly esteeming the religion, of the holy see. And, as the devil speaks these lies by the priests, so

he will blind the eyes of the credulous that they shall not see them, but believe them; and by these means will that goddess rise to boast "that she sits as a queen, and shall see no more sorrow, neither widowhood, nor the loss of children," when both will overtake her in one day.

We have for some time heard much about the want of more liberty to the Catholics; and, though it hath been acknowledged that this cry was nothing but a pretext to overthrow the government, yet it is plain that the devil had a wheel within that wheel: for what he wants is, to bring the Catholics into power; for antichrist will have some to protest against him till he can "accomplish to scatter the power of the holy people." By which I do not understand the power of God, for who can scatter that? But the toleration act; the protection of the civil powers in the different countries where God hath inclined the hearts of rulers to grant it. In this last onset of Satan he had three engines at work against this impediment which lies in the way of antichrist: one was, the cry for Catholic emancipation; the other was, the rebellion, perjury, and sedition, of some who were tolerated by this act; and the third was, the confederacy of those who, by uniting, their forces together, are paving, the way for the man of sin. They have made it manifest that their's was not the camp of the saints; but, having enlisted themselves into the perfect hand, they are on their "March toward the triple crown." The overcomer in my text must overcome these; and I have no doubt but many will; "for those to whom the Lord speaks with a strong, hand, and whom he instructs, dare not walk in the way of this people, nor say, A confederacy, with them Isa. viii. 11,12.

Hence it appears that popery is spreading both at home and abroad, and will spread, that the hypocrites in our Zion may be gained over to the papists; and the Catholics must come into office, and into power, that the toleration acts may be

universally taken away. Then shall the power of the holy people be scattered; "the sun shall go down at noon, and the earth shall be darkened in the clear day." Then will the holy of holies be ransacked the third time, and the witnesses for truth be slain. This will be the day of the great and last slaughter, when the towers fall: "Alas! who shall live when the Lord doth this?"

But after three years and a half the spirit of life from God descends, and a cloud of witnesses once more appear for the God of Jacob, to raise up the city, which, till then, will be low in a low place. And blessed will those witnesses be "which will sow beside all waters, and send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass."

For near seventy years will this present work be carrying on but before 1870 it will be completed; "the golden city will cease." when the papal sun shall be turned into darkness, and the Turkish moon into blood; then shall the former be confounded, and the latter ashamed before the Lord of Hosts, who shall rise to reign in mount Zion; when he will collect the fullness of the Gentiles, restore the preserved of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. And in this present interval is the denunciation of Heaven applicable; "But woe be to him that worshippeth the beast." And it is plain that the cause of Satan's great wrath in the late hour of temptation was because he knoweth that he hath but a short time; for the vial that is poured upon the popish sun leads on to that on the "seat of the beast," which passes to the Turk, and ends upon the "prince of the power of the air." Read Rev. xvi.

But some, more wise than well read, have objected that this cannot be "the hour of temptation," because it is not universal, so as to reach to all the inhabitants of the terraqueous globe. Let such take the parallel texts which follow: There went out a

decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," Luke, vii. 1. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, Rev. xii. 9., and all the world wondered after the beast," Rev. xiii. 3. To the first text it may be replied that none of the natives of America were included in Augustus Caesar's taxation; nor did all the Mahometan nations wonder after the Romish beast, but fought against him and beat him. No more doth this hour of temptation extend itself to the East Indies, the Friendly Islands, Botany Bay, or New Holland, unless some of our disaffected who trade their, or some rebels who are banished, or missionaries, have spread it there, which I think self-preservation will teach them to forbear; for though many here have chanced their God for Tom Paine's image of human reason, and others have cast off all affection for their sovereign, and ascribed majesty to themselves yet heathen nations seldom change their gods, which indeed are no gods;" nor do they so readily cast off all regard to their chiefs.

The epistle out of which my text is taken, and the one which succeeds it, are directed to the angel of the church of Sardis, and to that of Philadelphia, and to the two churches succeeding each other, which were typified by them; but is there any thing said to these angels, or to the churches of Christ which they presided over, that can be applicable to the American Indians, the rude Arabs, the natives of Negro-land, Lapland, or the Hottentots! The contents of the epistle are reproofs, rebukes, and threatenings, to them that have a name to live when dead in trespasses and sins; and the approbatory and encouraging parts of the epistle are directed to a few sacred names, who are clean from the corruptions that are in the world through lust, and from the spiritual pollutions of the whore of Babylon, which cannot have to do with the kingdoms of Benin or Japan. This hour of temptation was sent to discover the hearts of the hypocrites in gospel Zion; their disaffection to rulers, and their unruly spirits;

the corruption of their hearts, their rotten principles, their perjury, their presumption in assuming the ministerial office, and their craftiness and deception in it; that the godly might see them and shun them; and that such as have long called themselves the Evangelical Association, might, by slow degrees, go over to the holy see. And, on the other hand, Christ, by this trying hour, hath made manifest those few to whom he hath given an honest and good heart, that these might take to themselves the encouragement that he holds forth to them; and by being, tried might appear the brighter. And this end is now answered; the devil has got his chaff, and the fan will soon be laid aside. And the Saviour's concluding oration confirms what I have said, and all the churches shall know: he doth not say all the seed of Adam, but "all the churches shall know that I am he which try the reins and the hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works." I must now pass on to my second head, which is to shew that the overcomer.

Shall be clothed in white raiment." This shews us that temptations and fiery trials are, under the wise management of Israel's Holy One, of a purifying nature; because God sends them to stir up, discover and bring to light, and to our own feelings, the base metal that lies at the bottom, more or less, of every chosen vessel; and that the operations of his Spirit may purge the same, empty us of self, and renew us more and more in the spirit of our minds. Moreover; in an hour of temptation like this, when the accuser of the brethren was let loose; when destruction rode in triumph; when anarchy struggled for the reins; when hypocrites and abjects assumed the honour of majesty; when many were swayed in their minds, and those who stood fast had death presented to them in a thousand forms when flesh and blood urges all her pleas, strengthened and seconded by carnal reason and unbelief; when all the dreadful consequences of apostasy and a denial of Christ be considered and imagined; here is a long lingering

martyrdom, a dying daily, till submission to the will of God take place, and the mind is at a point, and the fears and doubts be removed by the Holy Spirit of God, and a fellowship with Christ in his sufferings be felt, and the mind be made conformable unto his death. A soul that has felt the pains of hell and the joys of heaven, and had the honour of Christ at heart, had not a few of these workings in his mind; as for the time-server, he can warp to the strongest side, and hold the vicarage of Bray to the end. However, these trials, and falls into trouble, temptation, and distress, are intended by our good God to purify us; and so it is written; "And some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end," Dan. xi. 35; and some that have been tried of late do walk with Christ in white.

Again, white linen raiment was always the garments of God's priests; the ephod in which they drew near to him was made of white linen. Hence this white raiment is expressive of their priestly office, of their belonging to the royal priesthood, and of their having nearness and access to him, and of their honest confessions, prayers, praises, thank offerings, and every other spiritual sacrifice being acceptable, well pleasing, and delightful to him ; and walking with him shews his great condescension and familiarity, in admitting such poor creatures to have any fellowship, intimacy, or communion, with him.

Again, this white raiment is the saint's wedding, garment, that justifies us freely from all things, and which will procure our admittance into the ivory palace. Hence Zion's triumph; "I will rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Here Zion confesses that it was her God that clothed her with this garment, and her Lord who

covered her with this robe. Nor can it be supposed that the King of kings would take a poor wretch from the dust, and lift a beggar from the dunghill, and espouse her to himself, and take her home to his ivory palace, or mansion of glory, covered with nothing but her own rags and tatters; and yet we see that neither the Arminians nor the Papists trust in any other. But, if all Zion's own righteousness's were but filthy rags, then what must theirs be? Besides, the white raiment of Christ's spouse is the Lord's grant, not the work of her own hands; and so it follows; "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints," Rev. xix. 7, 8. Hence it appears that souls who walk with him in white are espoused to him, and are in union with him; flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; and are joined to him, and one spirit with him.

Once more. It was a custom in the east countries, for overcomers in games, particular persons at feasts, and on days of great rejoicings, to be clothed in white raiment. And to this agrees my text, that the overcomers shall walk in white; and at our feast the wedding garment must be worn, for it is well known that the king cast him from among his guests that had not on a wedding garment; and I before told you that the cause of Zion's joy was, because her Lord had covered her with the robe of righteousness.

Moreover, this walking, with the Lord in white denotes their innocency; they were clean through the word that he had spoken unto them; they were complete in him; all fair and without spot; for such a character he gives his church in one of his love speeches in the holy song. Nor is this walking with him in white confined to this present world; but she will appear in this robe on the throne at the grand as size, and walk with him in the realms of bliss, and share in his glory, titles,

majesty, and honours, in the world to come, and that to all eternity.

"And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." This clause at first sight appears strange, because of the stability of the covenant, the promises of it being all yea and amen in Christ; and because of the faithfulness of God, whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; and because of the satisfaction of Christ, the justice and immutability of God, and of the promise being sure to all the seed. For, if by this book of life we are to understand God's decree of election in Christ, in whom we were chosen, and to whom we were given, in whom we were ever loved, and in whom God, that cannot lie, according to the promise of eternal life, which he gave us in Christ before the foundation of the world; yea he ordained us to it, and sent his dear Son to give it; and he hath brought that life and immortality to light by the gospel. This is God's decree, and it is confirmed by an oath, that the heirs of promise might have a strong consolation arising from the certainty of their enjoyment of it. Could this decree, oath, and promise, fail; could one single name included in that decree, or recorded in the divine mind, memory, and love, be blotted out; we should stand in jeopardy every hour, nor would there be much cause for "us to rejoice because our names are written in heaven."

Besides, the Holy Spirit never dictates one petition in the heart of the righteous against blotting our names out of God's decree of election, which he most certainly would if there was the least possibility or danger of it, for he searches the deep things of God, and makes intercession for us.

There are other books beside this of election; though this is called the Lamb's book of life. There is the book of providence, in which all creatures that live, move, and have their being stand, as it is written; "for yet seven days, and I will

cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: and every living substance that I have made will I destroy (blot out) from off the face of the earth," Gen. vii. 4. Moses desired to have his name blotted out of God's book, unless he would forgive the idolatry of Israel; and God's answer to him is, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book," Exodus, xxxii. 33. It is plain also, that there is a book of this present life, which is said to be not on high, but under heaven, where earthly creatures live. Thou shalt blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it, Dent. xxv. 19. Again, "Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a great nation," Deut ix. 14. But neither of these books are intended in my text. Whatever book is meant, it certainly respects not the few names in Sardis which shall walk with Christ in white, but those that "have a name to live while they are dead." But then what book of life can dead lifeless hypocrites have their names in? Not in the book of election; for all persons who have their names there are ordained to eternal life, and God is the covenant God of them all; I will be their God, and they shall be my people: but these referred to in my text have only a name to live, but are dead; and "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

The holy scriptures are the book of life, as well as election. Search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me, the promise of life: and Christ's word, which is spirit and life, is found in them. In this book of life we have the number of all the children of Israel that came out of Egypt; but they sinned grievously against God, tempted him and provoked him, until he blotted them all out of his book, except those whose names stood in the book of election. For, when Moses numbered them the second time, none were found alive of that evil generation, save Joshua and Caleb; these did not provoke; he only destroyed them that believed not.

Judas stands enrolled among the apostles; but, when he sold his Master, he is styled the traitor; and, another taking his office, his former office character was blotted out. The fools that took no oil in their vessels are called virgins; but they are bid to depart, and called workers of iniquity: this blots the former name out. The antediluvian professors are styled the sons of God; but when lust prompted them to marry with the cursed race of Cain, God saw that their wickedness was great, and he destroyed them; and they were ungodly men, and no other, that were destroyed, for "God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." When they are styled wicked and ungodly, their former nominal titles are blotted out. And so the children of Israel have the following, names standing, in the scriptures of truth: Ammi, my people; Ruhama, having obtained mercy: but Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah blots the former out; and so says God, For ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Again, She is not my wife, neither am I her husband. Read Hosea, chap. i. ii. This divorcing, putting away, changing, of names, and blotting out, took place when the Jews had filled up the measure of their sins by persecuting, rejecting, and murdering the Son of God and his apostles, when the kingdom was taken from them and given to the Gentiles; and this is expressly called blotting them out of the book of the living, as it is written: "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous," Psa. Ixix.

Now, in the matter before us, this epistle is written to a church under the type of Sardis. A church is the household of faith, or a congregated body of believing souls; and all that believe are passed from death to life; yea, he that believeth hath everlasting life, and shall live, and must live; for the just shall live by faith. The word church includes the whole of them; and they have not only the name church put upon them in this epistle, but a living name, "a name to live, but thou art dead;" the last word, "dead," blots out and disannuls the name "live." And so they are considered by us: we do not consider Judas in his professing name, nor in his apostolic office, but as the traitor and son of perdition; and so we consider all the rest of the apostates and hypocrites, not according to what they were in their profession, but according to their real character when God made them manifest. Hence the name Israel in the best sense is now denied to the posterity of Jacob; they are not all Israel which are of Israel. This name is now put upon the Gentile church. Read Isa. xciv. 5. And so the name Jew is not now allowed to them: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; I will make them of the against both God and the king; sins which Christ never suffered one of his apostles to be guilty of, or fall into: so far from it, that the Holy Spirit, which spake in them, commanded every soul that professed Christ to be subject to the higher powers, to obey magistrates, to fear God and honour the king; to be subject not only for wrath, but for conscience sake: yea, these warned the unruly, and vehemently exclaimed against those that were self willed, presumptuous, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities. But many of ours, who had a name to live, have quite broken the yoke, and burst the bands; and Christ in this epistle has blotted out their name, which was but a name to live, and has put them upon another list, in the eyes of his people; not among the killed and wounded, but among the dead, who never had the Spirit of life in them; and their flocks are gone with them. God hath taken away their names out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things

which are written in this book, Rev. xxii. 19. For their name, whether in the city or in the book, is only a name to live. Hence it appears that this book of life is the lively oracles of God, the scriptures of truth. I proceed.

Are not the scriptures of truth written on the minds, and put into the hearts, of God's saints? Does he not promise that the new covenant and the blessings of it shall be experienced by his people in the pardon of their sins, and be written on their minds, and on the fleshly tables of their hearts, so as to make them living epistles, known and read of all men? Yea, the same Spirit that dictated the scriptures, and inspired holy men to write them, Paul says, writes the same on our hearts. Ye are our epistles, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart. And not a few who have had their names written here in this book, in these living epistles, and who have had a place in their mind, judgement, memory, conscience, heart, and affections; of whom we could say, and have said, as Paul did, "Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you." But God blots many out of this book of life: and it is to be remarked, that it is common among men, when they discover a person to be a different man from what they once thought, to say, "He, or such an one, is quite out of my books." Nor could Paul say of Alexander the coppersmith, Demas, Philetus, Hermogenes, and Hymeneus, that these were in his heart to live and die with them. No, God had made them manifest that they were no true fellow-labourers, or yoke-fellows, with Paul. God blotted out the above names from his book, and from the heart and affection of his faithful servant Paul. And so it is in this epistle written to us; many, by subscribing, the articles of the establishment, and then joining with them that hate the truth, are discovered by the word of God, and by their own conduct, to be none of them that love the truth and peace, or who received the truth in the love of it; for not such, but those that do not receive the truth in the love of it, shall be given up

to strong, delusions, to believe a lie and be damned. A real child of God will hold fast that which he hath till Christ come; for it is he who keeps the word of his patience that he will keep from the hour of temptation; and it is they who keep Christ's sayings, and only they, that shall never see death. These are blotted out of the book of the sacred scriptures, where their name to live stood; and this epistle declares them dead; and the Lord's manifestation of them shews us where to apply his declaration of them. And God will make them that are not his work themselves out of children's books too; for, when they exhibit their pride, stiffness, stubbornness, and inflexibility, before the word of truth, that they will neither bow, yield, nor submit to divine revelation, and the will of God made known therein, we know by our own experience where they are; for neither the unruly, presumptuous, nor rebellious, stand on the list of God's obedient ones, "but they dwell in a dry land." And he will blot them out of the affections and prayers of his people, howeve 149d r painful it may be; as we see in Samuel. Saul had a strong, standing in the heart and in the prayers of Samuel; yea, he mourned for Saul, even till God rebuked him for it. "And the Lord said to Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?" Saul had turned his back upon the word of God, and had not kept that which the Lord had committed to him when he sent him against Amalek; for which a heavy charge was brought in against him, for he had refused God's orders, and followed his own will, as appears by the charge following:

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected synagogue of Satan." The latter name blots out, makes void, and disannuls the former altogether; for the name Jew is a sacred name, and in the best sense applicable to

none but to a real subject of the King of the Jews; for "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." And not a few spoken to, and pointed out, in this epistle have had their names blotted out by the discovery that Christ hath made of them in this hour of temptation. Many, who before were looked upon to be upright men, and lively ministers of the word, were soon discovered to be guilty of perjury, insurrection, and rebellion, the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king, I. Sam. xv. 23. After this, all Samuel's affections and mournings to God for him were of no avail; nor did God ever after hear or answer his own prayer, either by dream, vision, or prophet; but an evil spirit from the Lord was soon sent upon him, which influenced him with a murdering disposition, till he killed all the Lord's priests at Noph, and sought the life of David, and went from bad to worse; first to inquire of the witch of Endor, and from that to suicide; and next to the devil; for "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," I John, iii. 15. Thus God doth blot the disobedient out from under heaven by death, and out of the holy scriptures, and from any part in that which is written therein, when he makes them manifest, and out of the hearts and affections of his children, however beloved by them. Nor have I a single doubt upon my mind but that this whole epistle, out of which my text is taken, speaks to us; and I believe in my conscience that God hath given me the true sense of the Holy Spirit in what I have written upon the subject; and that the whole is applicable to those whom God hath discovered, and to whom the Lord himself applies it.

But this shall never be the case of God's elect, of the few sacred names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments: no; these shall walk with Christ in white; and I will not, saith the Lord, blot their names out of the book of life. No; not out of the book of God's decree to life, for they are ordained to eternal life; nor out of the scriptures of truth, for they have a good report of the truth itself, therefore "their seed and their

name shall remain there;" nor out of the book of God's remembrance, for the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance; nor out of the hearts of the saints, for they are in one bond of love; nor out of the conscience of sinners, for God makes them manifest there, as may be seen by the foolish virgins applying to them for oil when their own lamps went out; and in their consciences they shall abide as a witness against them for their enmity, and that even in hell itself. I will not blot his name out of the book of life,

"But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." This is opposed to disowning, disapproving, and denying a sinner at the last day; which lies in these words, Depart from me, I know you not. This shall not be the case with the few names in Sardis: no; I will confess them before my Father; I will own them, and acknowledge them; I will accept them, and embrace them; I will applaud them for their faithful adherence to me and my truth; and I will present them to my Father with a "Behold me, and the children which thou hast given me." Yea, I will shew you plainly of the Father, and he will accept and bless you, and glorify you in me, and with me, and you shall be made perfect in one. And I will confess you before the angels of heaven as my faithful followers and servants, who have suffered much dishonour, disgrace, and reproach, for my sake, and who have come through great tribulation; and they shall own and honour you as the heirs of glory, and as my spouse and bride, and shout and rejoice when you shall enter the royal palace. Thus will the Lord confess his faithful followers. And what he says is affectionate and fervent, in truth and sincerity, and may be safely depended upon and expected when a few more days have rolled over our head.

The Lord bless what hath been spoken. I add no more.

William Huntington S. S.

